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The Irish Career of Charles Gavan Duffy, 1840-1855

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THE IRISH CAREER OF CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY, 1840-1855

by

Terrence J. LaRocca

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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On a more personal level, I wish to thank my wife for her patience, encouragement, love and for all her efforts above and beyond, goes my deepest gratitude, for without her this study would never have been completed.
VITA

The author, Terrence James LaRocca, is the son of the late Carmen Alexander LaRocca and Mary (Nanuco) LaRocca. He was born August 22, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois.

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Mr. LaRocca married the former Rose Marie Augustine in April, 1970. In August, 1971, their first child, Elizabeth, was born.
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CHAPTER I

UNDER THE ELM TREE

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (1816-1903), Irish nationalist, journalist, author, and colonial statesman, was born in the town of Monaghan on April 12, 1816. His father, John Duffy, was a shopkeeper; his mother was the daughter of Patrick Gavan, a gentleman farmer. His boyhood days were difficult because his family was not affluent; and young Duffy, at an early age, had to rely mainly on his own energies. When he was nine, Duffy heard his father speak of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel and their refusal to work with George Canning, because he was friendly to Catholic emancipation. Duffy never forgot this and gradually developed a passionate love for Ireland and a strong desire to serve her. As there were few Roman Catholic schools in Ulster, Duffy received most of his formal education at a school kept by a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend John Buckley. On the whole, however, Duffy was self-educated and read almost everything available while developing a talent for journalism.
His strong passion to serve Ireland was fed by everything he saw and heard around him, especially the local folklore in which he immersed himself. But even more, it was his talks with three friends who represented three totally distinct elements of Irish society that really helped form his views. One friend was Matt Trimble, son of a British army officer, who was afterwards an occasional writer for The Nation; another was Henry MacManus, the artist, who later, with John Hogan, the sculptor, presented a National Cap to Daniel O'Connell at the monster meeting of Mullaghmast; the third friend was Terence Bellew MacManus, who later stood in arms in Ballingarry. Duffy and Terence MacManus spent their Sunday afternoons rambling through the countryside together, listening to the Orange drums and speculating what might be done to regain for their people the position that had been taken from them. The Orange processions made it impossible for them to forget the past and, as every Orange lodge had a supply of arms, these were used freely and provocatively at the annual Twelfth of July celebration.¹

On one of these occasions, Duffy saw a Catholic butcher shot in the street. The butcher had spoken offensively or perhaps thrown a stone, but, whatever the cause, death was the immediate penalty. He was carried to the grave in a coffin with red ribbons to signify that he had been murdered, but no prosecution followed.² Religious persecution was not a thing of the past. It was actively present and called for redress. The question was, how? A Quaker neighbor who had been a United Irishman a generation earlier laughed at the idea that it was a question of kings and governments. What mattered was the land from which the people got their bread. "In '98," he said, "we spouted Gallic sentiments and sang the Marseillaise and the Shan van Vogt...while what we ought to have borrowed from France was their sagacious idea of bundling the landlords out of doors and putting the tenants in their shoes."³

Duffy's health was feeble and uncertain and was a constant preoccupation throughout what proved to be an abnormally long life. From a health journal

³Ibid., p. 16.
which came his way, he adopted a maxim which served him well: Keep your head cool, your feet dry, and your skin clean, your digestion regular, and a fig for the doctor.  

Duffy had begun to write and already was probably thinking of taking up journalism, when unexpectedly one day "a stately venerable gentleman" walked into his mother's house and asked his help in promoting a newspaper, The Northern Herald, which he was about to start in Belfast. This was the United Irishman, Charles Hamilton Teeling, who in the previous generation had swept the British forces out of two counties. Duffy reflected that what men had done before, they might do again—and do better. Through this encounter he began reading all the books he could buy or borrow so that gradually he came to understand the epic of Irish resistance. 

He sent prose and verse to Teeling for his newspaper, and the more he wrote the more the desire grew in him to be a professional writer. He was not a precocious writer, however. Rather he formed his

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5 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 19-20.
style slowly. He never believed that writing was solely based upon inspiration; instead it was an art to be cultivated.\textsuperscript{6}

Duffy had his first contacts with practical politics in the Monaghan election of 1834 by acting as secretary to a group of Catholics and Liberals. In 1836, Duffy went to Dublin and was accepted on the staff of The Morning Register, the Catholic Associations daily. His first surprise was to find that the editors of the three Catholic papers that supported Daniel O'Connell were all Protestants. The reporters were a sorry lot in whom national spirit had evaporated with the collapse of the first Repeal movement.\textsuperscript{7}

A greater surprise and disappointment was O'Connell himself whom Duffy began to see daily in the Courts and at public meetings in Conciliation Hall. He was not the romantic figure he had conceived, the successor of Grattan, but a practical man of affairs, in whom humor, fierceness, vulgarity and a capacity for cold logical analysis were mixed.\textsuperscript{8} Duffy fell

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., p. 22.

\textsuperscript{7}Duffy to Terence MacManus, June, 1836 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., July, 1836 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
afoul of O'Connell when the Liberator alleged that a speech attributed to him in The Register was a misrepresentation. The Register insisted on the accuracy of the report and this drove O'Connell to attack the paper and reporters in general at a meeting of the Precursor Society. Duffy, who was present, immediately gathered up his papers and walked out followed by three colleagues. The demonstration led to a reconciliation between O'Connell and The Register, and the Liberator ceased abusing reporters.9

Duffy was very concerned about the rights of newspapermen and proposed the formation of a press association that started in 1838, but was short-lived. On Duffy's motion, members of the staffs of periodicals were admitted to the Association, including James Clarence Mangan. Duffy recommended the poet because he was one of the most accomplished and popular writers for the University Magazine.10

In April, 1839, Duffy became the first editor of a Belfast bi-weekly, The Vindicator, which had been established in that city in support of O'Connell.

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Four months later, in August of the same year, Duffy bought the newspaper, and gave it a tone of originality and movement that no other journal had at the time. His reward was a sale of 1,300 copies which was remarkable in that time, particularly in the heart of the enemy's quarters. The Catholics of the North were rarely consulted on political matters, and were ordinarily expected to follow the lead of the Whigs, who at the same time denied them a fair share of the municipal offices. Duffy encouraged them to speak out, to be prepared also to drop the Whigs and to select leaders of their own choosing, if that should become necessary. His urging had immediate results. Repeal meetings were organized all over the northern counties to the delight of O'Connell and to the fury of the Orange press. O'Connell declared that the spirit of the North had been aroused; "that excellent journal, The Vindicator, had caused a new light to dawn upon the people of Ulster, and still continues to do incalculable service to the cause of freedom."

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11Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 43-45.
12Duffy to Thomas O'Hagan, April, 1840 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
With such success in the North, O'Connell announced to the astonishment of many that he would hold a provincial meeting in Belfast. The Tory papers defied him to come to the Orange capital but in January, 1841, O'Connell made his way into the city, eluding the Orangemen who had gathered at various points along the route to deny him entry. Given the strong anti-O'Connell Protestant sentiment in the North, an open public meeting was out of the question. O'Connell, however, spoke to fifteen hundred people indoors, and Duffy helped to smuggle him out of the city on his return journey.  

Duffy did one other thing of importance while in Belfast. He wooed and won the hand of Emily MacLaughlin, the daughter of a well-to-do Catholic merchant. From this time on, the ambitious Duffy realized that his talents required a wider scope for their exercise and he turned to Dublin. He had the immediate dual goal of starting a newspaper there and admittance to the Bar. In the Michaelmas Term, 1839, he had enrolled as a student at King's Inns. Three years later he left Belfast and The Vindicator, and settled in Dublin. There, somewhat earlier, a young

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14Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 50-54.
barrister, John Blake Dillon, whom Duffy had first met at the office of *The Morning Register*, introduced him to Thomas Davis in the committee room of the Repeal Association in the old Corn Exchange. 15

Duffy found Dillon frank, serious, sympathetic and confident. He had admired Duffy's own writing in *The Vindicator* and had drawn Davis's attention to it. Davis pleased Duffy less knowing of his contributions to the *Citizen*--which had become the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*--Duffy had no doubt of Davis's ability, but he thought the young Protestant, Trinity College graduate dogmatic and self-opinionated. 16 Since both Dillon and Davis were fundamentally unlike any of those Duffy had met in journalism, he opened up to them the project of a new national newspaper, which would contain most of the characteristic features of *The Vindicator*. This was excellent news for them, for as Davis put it, they had long wanted to see a journal that would be "more decided than Mr. O'Connell's organs and less Romanist than *The Freeman's Journal*." 17

15 Ibid., pp. 61-62.
16 Ibid.
result was a conference under an elm tree in Phoenix Park facing Kilmainham and a decision to establish a weekly with Duffy as its editor and proprietor.

The decision was a bold one in view of the fact that "Mr. O'Connell's organs," The Freeman's Journal and The Register, were so solidly established. It was quite a risk for Duffy, who was putting his limited fortune at stake. The three men showed that they were under continental influence both by the decision to call the paper The Nation after the Paris journal of that name and also by propounding in their prospectus the nationality which was their first great object—one which would not only raise the Irish people from their poverty by securing them the blessings of a domestic legislature, but would influence and purify them with a lofty and heroic love of country and embrace Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter.18

The three men had their own particular predilections as to what, inside those general lines, the paper should emphasize. Duffy argued that what Ireland most needed was education; without it nothing could be accomplished. Davis agreed, but added that

they should make a special appeal for the help of the classes already educated, particularly the Protestant middle class. Duffy did not oppose this, but doubted whether the Protestants of Ulster would cooperate at all, for, in his view, Tone and Russell and the other men of 1798 had had no successors. As for Dillon, his primary concern was with the condition of the peasantry so that his interest centered around the land question. Duffy discovered after some time that his first impressions of Davis were "extremely unjust." They became the closest of friends and often discussed intimate matters.

On October 15, 1842, the first number of The Nation appeared and it had a spectacular success. Within a few weeks the paper, which combined news, literary criticism, poetry and social and political commentary, was being read all over the country. Those who could not afford sixpence to buy it, borrowed

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., p. 70.
it or read it in the Repeal Reading Rooms. 21 Within three years it had acquired fame outside Ireland and had brought a measure of affluence to Duffy. Its chief claim, he thought, was the frankness with which it discussed the truths which had formerly been only heard in whispers. The case of Ireland was no longer the lament of a beggar who showed his sores to excite passion, but the remonstrance of an injured and angry partner, who insisted either on fair play or an end to the partnership. 22 The excesses of the landlords were boldly exposed, and the principles of public polity were applied to the operations of the Government. The journal had other qualities, those which Lecky noted when he said that seldom had a journal exhibited a more splendid combination of eloquence, poetry and reasoning than did The Nation under Gavan Duffy's editorship. 23

Duffy insisted that the first want of the Irish people was the knowledge long withheld by a

21 Lawrence McCaffrey, The Irish Question (University of Kentucky Press, 1968), pp. 41-42.

22 Duffy to Clarence Mangan, July, 1843 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

jealous master. From ignorance came sycophancy. Slaves looked upon their masters with superstitious awe and upon themselves with superstitious distrust. Therefore, Duffy maintained that the people must educate themselves in order to obtain freedom. 

The poetry side of the paper was particularly effective. Duffy in The Vindicator had begun the experiment of appealing to the people in passionate popular verse, a collection of which appeared later in book form as The Ballad Poetry of Ireland. He did not know any Gaelic but he realized that the translations of the songs he had heard in his youth were an element that linked the Irish people with their past and could be used to animate their political ambitions. He had also tried his hand at writing original ballad poetry, and encouraged some of his friends, among them James Clarence Mangan who was a poet of real ability with no interest in politics, to do the same. Beginning with the publication of his own Fag a Bealach in the third issue, he repeated this experiment in The Nation. Davis followed Duffy's

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24 Duffy to Dillon, May, 1843 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
25 Duffy to Mangan, July, 1843 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
lead and was delighted to find that he could compose with facility; and gradually the idea spread until the whole corps of writers associated with the paper were writing in verse. A great deal of this was understandably of inferior quality but many rousing poems were produced that have retained their popularity down to the present day. 26

The unique character of The Nation owed a great deal to the intimate companionship that Duffy helped to foster among the contributors who could come to his office as often as they liked. It became the movement's headquarters. Saturday night was planning night: the inner group of five--Duffy, Davis, Dillon, Pigot and John O'Hagan--and others met by arrangement in one another's homes from tea-time to supper-time, and into the early hours of the morning literary and political projects were debated and decisions reached as to what was to be written and by whom. 27 These meetings were kept secret for fear of suggesting "erroneous notions." In this fashion high standards were achieved, the writers

26 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 77-79.
27 Ibid.
exposing themselves at these meetings, and in correspondence with each other, to frank criticism. Davis, from the start, was the leader among the writers and helped with the editing. This enabled Duffy to devote more time to the managerial side of the paper, a job which he was so competent.

Most of The Nations contributors discovered their literary talents in the politics of the paper but remained amateurs. There were others, like Mangan and Carleton, whose interest in the paper was entirely professional. They never ceased to find in Duffy an editor who understood and appreciated them as few editors did. From about 1836 when Duffy first met Mangan in Dublin, he was on the closest terms with the poet. With time, however, Mangan became a slave to drugs or drink and Duffy tried desperately but unavailingy to save him from self-destruction. He paid him in advance for copy that was sometimes not supplied and largely financed the publication of his Anthologica Germanica. Duffy

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28 Ibid.
29 Kevin Nowlan, "Charles Gavan Duffy and the Repeal Movement," (lecture delivered at the National University of Ireland in 1963).
30 Louise Guiney, James Clarence Mangan (Massachusetts, 1897) p. 57.
also managed to maintain a friendship with Carleton who was much hated for abandoning the Catholic faith. Duffy took no part in the campaign against him. On the contrary he recognized Carleton's unique worth as a man who had risen up from a humble cottage to describe a whole people.31

The militant tone of the poetry of The Nation and its constant looking backward was bound to be misunderstood, both in Ireland and across the Channel. The friendly English literary critic, Leigh Hunt, wished that The Nation would retain all its fire and generosity with none of the vi et armis part of its spirit. He wanted the horrible possibility of an appeal to arms in Ireland kept out of sight. Like Lord Chancellor Plunket, Hunt recognized that the tone of The Nation was Wolfe Tone.32 The government felt the same way. The police were set to watch the young men and their contacts. Duffy discovered that a police agent, a brother of the important historical writer, John Cornelius O'Callaghan,

31 Duffy to Davis, September, 1843 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

32 Hunt to Davis, February, 1843 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
who had contributed items to the first issue of The Nation, was following him around. A search for papers was a possibility and writers for The Nation were warned to put their correspondence out of the way. "Any rash phrases," Davis told R.R. Madden, "could be used to persuade the Parliament that there was some plot here. There is not; we are too wise to conspire." Madden, who was living in England at the time; gathered from the newspapers that the agitation in Ireland might end in bloodshed, but Davis set his mind at rest. "You in England quite overrate the likelihood of war here...we are making more way with the upper classes than you fancy."

Many of the people Davis referred to had not, as yet, joined the Repeal Association. However, a good number of them were attracted by the Federal idea that had been sponsored by the Northern reformer, William Sharmon Crawford, as an alternative to outright Repeal of the Union. Under Federalism Ireland

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33Duffy to Dillon, March, 1843(Gavan Duffy Papers).

34Davis to R.R. Madden, March, 1843(Gavan Duffy Papers).

35Ibid.
would have a domestic legislature of a subordinate character, along the lines of the Home Rule of later years. Davis believed that if the Federalist Party that was about to be formed, was managed by bold, clear-minded men, it would impose its own terms on England in two years.

We Repealers hold peace and war in our hands. O'Connell could in three months have possession of Ireland, but he is adverse, wisely humanly adverse to fighting save in the last extremity. He prevailed in '29 by the power of fighting, not the practice of it; may he not do so again? You will say, no, for England is dead against us. What's the proof of her being so? I see little. On the contrary, I believe a portion of the intelligence and half the populace of England will aid us, if things go on peaceably, as they are going.

While armed rebellion was not then contemplated the glorification of national heroes and the stress on English iniquity undoubtedly stimulated the feelings that produce rebellion. And later on, some of the Young Irelanders began to express themselves in favor of a resort to physical force instead of the moral force on which the Repeal movement had relied. To O'Connell, on the other hand, the use of force was unthinkable. He had no

36 Ibid.
objection to commemorating the heroes of the remote past and he was at one with The Nation group in desiring a union of all Irishmen, whatever their class or creed. But he differed, for instance, in his attitude to the United Irishmen and particularly to Wolfe Tone whom he blamed for providing the excuse for the Union. While others, like Davis, could rhapsodise about his grave at Bodenstown, O'Connell regarded its occupant as a miscreant. 37

All of this is not to say that O'Connell did not welcome the strength that The Nation brought him personally. Though nearly seventy years of age he was as vigorous and as brilliant as ever, the unquestioned leader of the people, and a world figure whose every move and word was widely reported. He had brought Ireland out of obscurity, had lifted his people from the gutter, and had secured the emancipation of Catholics throughout the British Empire. He had also espoused other movements of radical reform including the cause of anti-slavery. Realist and pragmatist to his fingertips, he had allowed the movement for repeal of the Act of Union to remain stagnant between 1835 and 1840, recognizing that

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37Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 92-97.
his Whig allies were not prepared for any such measure. But in 1840, the emergence of a Tory government under his old enemy, Sir Robert Peel, inspired him to renew the agitation. The Repeal Association was re-formed and the income from Repeal rent increased considerably.38

By the time The Nation came on the scene the agitation was already well under way. (This weekly newspaper brought something new to Ireland. While fully supporting O'Connell it introduced a more intense and emotional content into Irish nationalism.)

Sir Robert Peel, the British Prime Minister, reacted to Repeal by declaring that there was no power available to the government that would not be employed to resist dissolution of the Union even if civil war was the result. He flooded the country with soldiers to show that his words were not idle threats. O'Connell never had the intention or the means of resorting to force, but his speeches at the time gave the impression that the people would resist government oppression. He said he would violate no law and assail no enemy, but suggested that others might.39 Many people, therefore, were dismayed when

38 McCaffrey, pp. 32-48.

the government called off a monster meeting to be held at Clontarf and O'Connell acquiesced in the face of a concentration of horse, foot and artillery. That decision, as Duffy put it, deprived the Repeal movement in a moment of half its dignity and all its terror.  

But on reflection the Young Irelanders realized that the alternative to proceeding with the meeting and risking a mass slaughter was out of the question. They swallowed their pride and turned their energies to projects of education and discipline.  

Following the Clontarf incident, Duffy along with O'Connell and six other Repealers, two of them journalists like himself, was arrested and charged with conspiring to excite ill-will among Her Majesty's subjects, to weaken their confidence in the administration of justice, and to obtain by unlawful methods a change in the constitution and government of the country. They were tried in January and February, 1844, by four Protestant judges,

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., pp. 390-92.
one of them a notorious political partisan, and a jury on which no Catholic was permitted to serve. The outcome was a term of imprisonment which Duffy found "as little unpleasant as a holiday in a country-house." The prisoners lived together. They had two large gardens in which to exercise, a sitting room and bedroom each, and they enjoyed visits from friends and received deputations. They gave dinner parties and produced plays, and Bishops competed for the favor of celebrating daily Mass for the nationalist prisoners.

In prison Duffy continued to edit The Nation without interruption, and during the first week of their incarceration, he arranged that it was printed with green ink to express hope and confidence for the future. An important effect of the prosecution, conviction and imprisonment was to make William Smith O'Brien the deputy leader of the Repeal movement. O'Brien had formerly led the Irish Whigs in the House of Commons and only joined the Repeal

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43 Duffy to Davis, May, 1844 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

44 Ibid.

45 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 95-97.
Association after the collapse of the Clontarf meeting in protest against the coercion policy of the Tories. He was a man of very considerable ability and experience and has been well described as perhaps the most upright as well as the least fortunate of all Irish political leaders. 46 At the end of three months the prisoners were discharged after the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords reversed the original decision of the Dublin Court. O'Connell received an enthusiastic reception from the people. O'Brien and Davis organized the demonstration. Duffy was also honored as he journeyed with friends from Dublin to accept an invitation from O'Connell to visit him at Derrynane. His visit was intended as a leisurely restful tour but the people wanted to honor the former prisoner, and so they met him everywhere he went with bands, bonfires, and addresses of greeting. 47 In spite of all the fuss, Duffy enjoyed himself. The scenery was new and the historic association of the places he passed through--Kilkenny, New Ross, Waterford, Cork, and Killarney--fascinated him.


47 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 96-97.
At Derrynane, by the Atlantic, O'Connell welcomed Duffy graciously and made him feel at home. O'Connell's entertainment was on a princely scale: for breakfast alone there was "a pot roast or two, grilled fowl, smoking potatoes, slim-cake, delicious fresh honey, home-made bread..."48

At Derrynane there were letters awaiting Duffy from Davis, who was looking after The Nation in his absence. In one of the letters Davis begged Duffy to impress on O'Connell the need for more Repeal reading rooms and books. "Damn the ignorance of the people," he wrote, "but for that we should be lords of our own future; without that much is insecure."49 Duffy had reported the results of his visits to schools, reading rooms, teetotal societies and bookshops. In some places there were no reading rooms; in others, reading rooms were bookless shelves. Some of the books were "detestably English: no Irish novels, poems or plays except by accident."50

48 Duffy to Mrs. Duffy, August, 1844 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
49 Davis to Duffy, August, 1844 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
50 Duffy to Davis, August, 1844 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
It seemed to many Irish people that the time was ripe for a fresh advance in nationalism but O'Connell read the signs differently. During his imprisonment he had become afraid of an unprepared popular rebellion and on his release he had hastened to issue a reminder that the greatest and most desirable of political change could be achieved by moral means alone, and that no human revolution was worth the spilling of a single drop of human blood. It was, no doubt, he said on one occasion, a very fine thing to die for one's country, but in his opinion, one live patriot was worth a whole churchyard full of dead ones. The path of freedom would be long and arduous. This, the Young Irelanders as they were now being called, were prepared to believe. But O'Connell astonished them by proposing to dissolve the Repeal Association and to replace it by another body free from the vulnerable features that the state had attributed to it in the course of the prosecution. He did not press this proposal because of the opposition it aroused, but

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51 McCaffrey, pp. 62-64.
he again alarmed the young men when he expressed a preference for the Federal system.52

O'Connell declared it as "tending more to the utility of Ireland and the maintenance of a connection with England than the proposal of simple repeal."53 Duffy challenged this apparent change of policy in an open letter to O'Connell, published in The Nation. It was immediately reprinted in scores of other papers, giving very evident solace to the English Tories who saw proof in it of a division among O'Connell's followers.54 This publicity was galling to O'Connell. It stiffened him against the Young Irelanders who had been adopting an ascetical attitude to him that he understandably found irksome. They had been critical of him for surrounding himself with yes-men, for refusing to give an account of how the repeal rent was expended, and for helping his relatives and friends into government jobs. Others thought that he had turned the Repeal Association into an almost wholly Catholic body.

52 The Nation (Dublin, October, 1844).
53 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, P. 99.
54 Ibid., pp. 100-02.
An ultimate break with O'Connell was, therefore, a real possibility and Duffy's open letter did nothing to prevent it. He wrote it in haste and without consulting his colleagues who were out of town. Davis was actually negotiating with the Federalists at the time. He was prepared to give Federalism a fair chance, while recognizing that it could not be a final settlement, and he was sorry when O'Connell issued what was described as a recantation. Davis felt this taking up and dropping of Federalism could only do harm to a movement to which they all were sympathetic. It could not do O'Connell any good either; and Duffy was given credit for having put the Liberator back on the right track.55 "How grateful I felt to heaven," wrote R.D. Williams, "that The Nation at least will be no party to a step that after all that has been said and sung and acted, must cover us with the laughter and contempt of Europe. Repeal is a magic word and it is trebly hazardous to resign even a sound that has become so holy to the heart of Ireland."56 And

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55 R.D. Williams to Duffy, November, 1844 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
56 Ibid.
at a meeting in Limerick mention of Duffy's name evoked a great cheer.

A much more serious problem occurred in 1845 when Sir Robert Peel proposed to increase the grant for Maynooth College, and to establish colleges in Belfast, Cork and Galway to be affiliated to a Queen's University. The first of these proposals was unobjectionable. The second, which was designed to give the Catholic middle classes the educational advantages that had formerly only been open to Protestants and the more affluent Catholics, sparked off a conflict as to whether Catholic and Protestant students should be educated together or not. The Young Irelanders believed that they should in order that prejudice and bigotry might be killed in the bud. The O'Connell faction followed the lead of some Catholic bishops who wanted sectarian education. The Young Liberator, as O'Connell's son John was called—it being recognized that he was being groomed for the succession—declared that an attempt was being made to undermine religion and morality in Ireland.57

57Duffy, Young Ireland, pp. 624-30.
Following his son's lead, O'Connell denounced the measure as a huge scheme of godless education. He wanted Catholic colleges to be situated in Cork and Galway, Belfast college could be Presbyterian, while the existing Trinity College, Dublin, could be left with the Protestants. Davis advocated the English radical view that all the colleges should be strictly nondenominational. Duffy, on the other hand, appeared to take a fairly common line that the colleges, even if not Catholic in character, could be freed of anti-Catholic objections. He saw education as the essential and indispensible preliminary of freedom and was anxious that the opportunity the bill provided should not be missed. He surmised that O'Connell's motive for rejecting the bill was to help the Whigs by preventing Peel from securing any popular kudos. He could understand, however, that O'Connell might be genuinely afraid of the measure endangering the faith of Catholic students, but a prime minister who desired to make peace with Ireland would surely not oppose the

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58 The Nation (Dublin, April, 1845).

59 Duffy to Davis, March, 1845 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
enactment of the necessary safeguards.  

While the bishops pondered the situation, a great debate ensued within the Repeal Association. Davis, in a long correspondence with O'Connell, discussed what he believed was the threat of religious bigotry. O'Connell was no bigot. He desired religious freedom for everyone, and was genuinely prepared to jettison Repeal if it prevented any Protestant or Catholic from believing or saying whatever he felt was consistent with truth. But he failed to convince Davis. 

The bishops' position was that they were willing to cooperate with the government in founding provincial colleges but they pointed out the lack of provision for the religious and moral discipline of the students and other dangers to their faith and morals. They suggested amendments which would make the measure acceptable. At the next Association

60 Ibid., April, 1845 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
61 The Nation (Dublin, May, 1845) Repeal Association Meeting.
meeting O'Connell in a two hour speech interpreted the bishops' declaration as a rejection of the scheme. He was supported in a wild speech by Michael George Conway, a young man who was taking revenge against the Young Irelanders for a slight he believed he had suffered at their hands. O'Connell, according to Duffy, cheered every offensive sentence in this speech and finally took off his cap and waved it over his head triumphantly. Later, when Davis replied, O'Connell believing that Davis was suffering from Protestant monomania, constantly interrupted him and accused him of sneering at the Catholics. 63

He then made a second speech which ended with a peroration that has become famous.

The principle of the Bill has been supported by Mr. Davis, and was advocated in a newspaper (The Nation) professing to be the organ of the Roman Catholic people of this country, but which I emphatically pronounce to be no such thing. The sections of politicians styling themselves the Young Ireland Party, anxious to rule the destinies of this country, start up and support this measure. There is no such party as that styled Young Ireland. There may be a few

63 The Nation (Dublin, May 1845) Repeal Association Meeting.
individuals who take that denomination on themselves. I am for Old Ireland. 'Tis time that this delusion should be put an end to. "Young Ireland" may play what pranks they please. But I do not envy them the name they rejoice in. I shall stand by Old Ireland; and I have some slight notion that Old Ireland will stand by me. 

Smith O'Brien and Henry Grattan, the Younger, protested, and the fundamentally generous O'Connell rose to withdraw the nickname of Young Ireland, as he understood its implied association of Davis and his colleagues with a reactionary English Tory group was resented. Davis, in spite of reconciliation, claimed that he was glad to get rid of the assumption that there were factions in the Association. He and his friends, he said, were bound by a strong affection towards O'Connell; and as he spoke these words he broke into tears. The altercation thus ended on a happier note, but a schism was apparent from which the Association never recovered. Distrust and suspicion widened the breach. John O'Connell was credited with circulating the story that Davis was a dangerous intriguing infidel and that his

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.
friends acquiesced in his dark desires. 66 This rumor made a strong impression on the Catholic clergy and the sale of The Nation suffered in consequence. Dillon could only find one priest in the whole of County Mayo who was not unfriendly to the newspaper. 67

While the Repeal Association began to show the effects of this rift in a growing paralysis, Davis renewed the attempt to organize the Federalists. He first planned a quarterly review and then proposed to buy a Whig evening newspaper that appeared three times a week and expressed Federalist opinions. 68 Duffy was actually advising on the doubtful economics of these ideas when he was summoned urgently one September morning in 1845 to Davis' house on Baggot Street where to his horror he was shown the corpse of the man he loved and respected so much. Davis had died of scarlatina after only one week's illness. It was, said Duffy, "as if the light had suddenly gone out of the sky." 69 He likened the loss of

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66 Duffy to Dillon, May, 1845 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
67 Dillon to Duffy, June, 1845 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
68 Duffy, Young Ireland, pp. 730-35.
69 Ibid., pp. 750-53.
Davis to the removal of Ireland's guiding mind when Brian Boru died at Clontarf, when Hugh O'Neill's life ended in exile, when Roger O'Moore expired on the threshold of a great conflict and when Owen Roe died leading the army which had conquered at Benburb.70

There was a large element of romantic exaggeration in these comparisons for, in truth, Davis was little known outside Dublin, so that if national calamity had befallen them the bulk of the Irish people were unaware of it. Duffy himself was better known, because he basked in the reflected glory of O'Connell during the days they had spent together in Richmond Gaol. Davis was, however, a potential figure of national dimensions, and many years afterwards he did become such a figure as the result, principally, of the presentation of him in Duffy's widely read writings.

Davis and Duffy had come to be regarded as Young Ireland's Siamese twins. Their close associates rarely spoke or wrote about one of them without mentioning the other. Duffy conceded leadership in political thinking to Davis, who was his senior by a year or two; but in business and organizational

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70 Ibid.
acumen, Duffy's contribution to the combination was of a higher order.

It never crossed Duffy's mind to dispute Davis' primacy in the evolution of the Young Ireland brand of nationalism in which were fused a Catholic democratic tradition, European Romanticism, and continental liberal radicalism associated in Ireland with the name of Wolf Tone. He was himself a product of the former tradition and at the time he met Davis his vision was limited by the desire to set up again the Celtic race and the Catholic Church. "Davis it was who induced me to aim ever after to bring all Irishmen of whatever stock into the confederacy to make Ireland a nation."71 It was, therefore, a shock to him to discover after Davis' death that the man he had so long idolized had taken umbrage because some English journalists regarded Duffy as the original teacher of the "nationality" which The Nation disseminated. In a note found among his papers Davis insisted that the nationality theme had originated with him. And he wrote rather patronizingly about Duffy who, he said, had been editing "an ultra-

Roman Catholic paper and was full of patriotism and

71 Ibid., pp. 755-59.
ambition when he came to Dublin but had no distinct notion of national independence or national policy."\(^{72}\)

That notion, Davis emphasized, belonged mainly to Trinity College Protestants, whereas Duffy's education and opinions were those of a Catholic English Radical and that Benthamite education was his chief wish. "However," he added, "Duffy's flexible mind soon caught up our purposes and carried them into his writings with great clearness, zeal and genius."\(^{73}\)

Duffy's flexible mind also enabled him to do other things. He finished his law studies, for instance, and was called to the Irish Bar within a month of Davis' death. A few weeks later Duffy had to endure an even more personal grief than the death of Davis when his wife died of a slow consumption following the birth of their second child, John, who in his mature years became a cabinet minister in Australia. The first child, a girl whom Duffy called Anna Eva after his mother, had not survived.\(^{74}\)

Duffy was the recipient of a great volume of sympathy, and of promises to share the heavy burden

\(^{72}\)Ibid., pp. 753-55.

\(^{73}\)Ibid.

of The Nation with him, but the men after Davis from whom he would have learned most were no longer available to him. Dillon was under doctor's orders to winter in a warmer climate, O'Hagan and Pigot had gone to London to study for the English Bar. Duffy's own health was anything but robust. A friend described him as having a dyspeptic appearance, and contrasted the strength of his mind with the weakness of his body. The two blows he sustained exhausted him for a time, filling his mind with darkness and then with a craving for renewed labor. Like a general when a campaign begins, he was immediately in action, planning, suggesting or negotiating; his manner frank, short and decided. He employed John Mitchel, a Northern attorney, to be The Nation's manager and latter appointed him chief writer. Mitchel had contributed a volume to the shilling a copy Library of Ireland series that Duffy edited and published to elevate the intellectual tone of Ireland.

He also brought over from London a trained journalist whom he had known as a schoolboy. This was Thomas D'Arcy McGee, whom he rated as the most

75Ibid.

76Prior to returning to London McGee had worked in Boston on the Pilot.
gifted of the Young Ireland poets after Mangan and Davis. Other men who came into the movement were Thomas Francis Meagher and Richard O'Gorman. With Mitchel and McGee these formed the backbone of what Duffy called the second Young Ireland party and their considerable debating power lent it exceptional strength.77

CHAPTER II

UNITY, DEATH AND DISASTER

Davis' death profoundly affected Duffy's career. Before this time the life he had lived, despite its close connection with public agitations of the day, was essentially a journalist's existence, and the student side of him found platform work and exhibitionism of any kind distasteful. He was now compelled to give up the hours as he had previously devoted to reading and reflection, and to pass his life in the fever and tumult of political action. Somebody was needed to succeed Davis as the recognized leader of the group and though Duffy was the senior member available, he neither then nor later manifested ambition for the role. Instead he used his influence to promote William Smith O'Brien into that position despite the common criticism of his formal manners and English accent which contained too much of the Smith and not enough of the O'Brien.¹

¹Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 1-5, and My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 125-30.
Duffy wanted to see Young Ireland continue to make a broad appeal. In particular he was anxious to avoid a drift to the left or the adoption of any policy that might alienate the property classes. He believed that O'Brien as a man of property and a Protestant could best achieve this. The men of property, he felt, would not listen to young men who were mostly Catholics and who had sprung from the trading classes.² O'Brien had been a neutral, neither an Old Irisher nor a Young Irisher and had been O'Connell's loyal deputy and a peacemaker among the conflicting elements. He had been an intimate friend of Davis and now he became a close ally of Duffy, agreeing with him about the need to be watchful for any ultra-democratic and ultra-Catholic tendencies.³ O'Brien was older than any of the Young Irishers and had the advantage over them of having a seat in the House of Commons. His selection had the effect of making Duffy a sort of deputy leader, an informal position which he continued to discharge from his editor's office in

²Duffy to Smith O'Brien, October, 1845 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
³Smith O'Brien to Duffy, October, 1845 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
D'Olier Street which continued to be the Young Ireland workshop and meeting place.

The policy of this group was as always to support O'Connell in the pursuit of repeal, but increasingly they distrusted the old man, however much he insisted that repeal was written on his heart. An important development hastened the disruption of relations between Old and Young Ireland. O'Connell allied himself with Lord John Russell to defeat the Tories under Peel and to put a Whig Government in office. This, the Young Ireland group feared, would lead to the undue deferment of the major national objective and its possible abandonment in exchange for lesser favors including a share of patronage appointments. These appointments duly came, and O'Connell rejected an effort on the Young Irelanders' part to challenge the unopposed return to Parliament of Richard Lalor Shiel, the member for Dungarvan, on his becoming the Master of the Mint. For the time being, however, a major clash was avoided, and when it came, it was on the issue of the place of

4 Nowlan, Politics of Repeal, pp. 93-106.
5 Nation, (Dublin, November, 1845) Repeal Association Meeting.
physical force in the context of Irish nationalism.

In 1846, Duffy put Mitchel in temporary control of The Nation and went into lodging in the hills above Dublin in order to complete a book about the rising of 1641, a period that had always fascinated him. The work was never finished. He had to return to Dublin to deal with labor trouble in connection with the printing of The Nation. But more disturbing were the complaints he began to receive about Mitchel. H.T. Wallis, one of Davis' most trusted friends, accused him of dealing with financial questions with appalling recklessness, and with foreign politics in a way that invoked the laughter of experts. 6 John O'Hagan and Pigot, whose opinions Duffy accepted more readily, protested against the increasingly violent tone of the paper. O'Hagan called upon Duffy to resume immediate control of The Nation and to concentrate on the issue of the famine which was destroying the country. 7 Duffy, however, first contented himself with reminding Mitchel that insurrections were not made to order in the back

6 H.T. Wallis to Duffy, March, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

7 O'Hagan to Duffy, April, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
office of a newspaper. This was 1846, and the priests were not in agreement with them as they were in 1843. Perhaps, this extended even to the people. And where were the military leaders with the skill and knowledge needed for such an enterprise as Mitchel had in mind?8

Before Duffy resumed editorship, serious trouble erupted over what became known as the railway article in The Nation. The famine had caused food riots throughout Ireland. A government newspaper made various suggestions on how to deal with the outbreaks. It insisted that agitation for repeal ought to be regarded as treasonable, Conciliation Hall closed, and that troops be transported to riot areas via the newly constructed railways. Mitchel replied that if the railways were so used, the people should fill up the cuttings and level the embankments. It might be useful, he wrote, to promulgate throughout the country a few short and easy rules for dealing with the railways in case the enemy made hostile use of them.9 These rules would

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8 Duffy to Mitchel, April, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

9 Nation, (Dublin, May, 1846).
be read by the repeal wardens to the people in their respective parishes. Duffy did not quarrel with the substance of this, but he saw that Mitchel had erred tactically in associating the Repeal Association with his threat. This was playing into O'Connell's hands. 10

Mitchel saw his mistake and sought to remedy it, but O'Connell brought the matter up at the next meeting of the Association and insisted that the safety of the organization was endangered by rash counsels of this kind, and that he must disassociate himself publicly from them. 11 The government also moved, charging Duffy with seditious libel. But neither this nor O'Connell's anger prevented him from publishing a leading article in which he justified the railway article and defended Mitchel. 12 In doing so he was supported by Smith O'Brien and other prominent members of the party. O'Connell pressed his point. He sent for Duffy and Mitchel and asked for an assur-

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11 *Nation*, (Dublin, May, 1846).

12 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 149-53.
ance that The Nation would not oppose the decisions of the Association. Otherwise he would have to disconnect the Association from the paper. Duffy assured him that no one could be more anxious to act habitually with the Association than The Nation circle. They would not seek a quarrel, but they reserved the right to consider the future decisions of the Association on their merits. 13 O'Connell then took the matter to the central committee, and after a strenuous debate, action was begun to ensure that The Nation would be kept out of the Repeal reading rooms. 14

The result of Duffy's trial which began on July 16, 1846, seemed a forgone conclusion. With Blackburne, the subtle and vindictive Chief Justice presiding, conviction was certain. But Robert Holmes, the brother-in-law of Robert Emmet, now approaching his eightieth year, split the jury with a defense speech which the Judge said had never been surpassed in a court of justice, and Duffy went free. 15 The news was received throughout Ireland with what Duffy

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13 Ibid.
14 Nation, (Dublin, June, 1846).
15 Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 157-59.
called a paroxysm of joy. "I wish," said Smith O'Brien, "we could have such language in Conciliation Hall as Mr. Holmes is not ashamed to utter in the Queen's Bench." Holmes argued that Ireland was being treated as a conquered country. Yet, the people of a country so treated had certain natural rights, including the right to resist the use of force to stifle public opinion. These were precisely the rights that were being insisted upon in the railway article. With O'Connell in the chair, the Association thanked Holmes for his speech, and sought his permission to print and circulate it at their expense. They also voted to pay Duffy's costs out of the Association's funds but Duffy declined the offer.

Before the Whigs assumed office in the summer of 1846, and with Duffy's sedition trial pending, Lord John Russell attacked The Nation, accusing it of giving expression to the ideas of a party which excited every species of violence, which looked to disturbance as its means and regarded separation from England as its end. Duffy described

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16 Smith O'Brien to Duffy, July, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
17 Nation, (Dublin, July, 1846).
this outburst as calumnious but he regarded it as humiliating to defend the journal in public and did not do so.\textsuperscript{18}

With his colleagues, however, he continued to assail the Whig alliance and to repeat that the Repeal policy was in danger. He believed that O'Connell, in his old age, and under the influence of his malicious son, was about to wreck not only himself but the cause to which he was pledged and the people who loved him so tenderly.\textsuperscript{19} O'Connell denied this in every mood and tense. Repeal was still their goal but that should not prevent them from squeezing the government to do other things that would be of social and economic benefit to the country. Meanwhile he took steps to bring Young Ireland to heel. He called upon the Repeal Association to adopt a resolution outlawing the use of physical force in every circumstance. Anyone who refused to accept this doctrine would cease to be a member. "I do not accept," O'Connell said, "the services of any

\textsuperscript{18}Duffy, \textit{Four Years of Irish History}, pp. 165-69.

\textsuperscript{19}Duffy to Smith O'Brien, May, 1846(Gavan Duffy Papers).
man who does not agree with me in theory and in practice."

The Young Irelanders consulted among themselves and decided to avoid the trap that had been laid for them by not retiring from the Association, no matter what resolutions were adopted. They also agreed to deny any intention of violating the rules of the Association or of using it for any but peaceful purposes. Mitchel actually declared that, as constitutional agitation was the very basis of the Association, nobody who contemplated any other method of bringing about the independence of the country had the right to attend the Association meetings.

This and other statements in the same vein did not influence O'Connell, and John O'Connell at a meeting in his father's absence insisted that the resolution to outlaw force must be adopted unequivocally. If the resolution was rejected the Liberator and his friends would leave the Association. In these circumstances O'Brien walked out of the meeting and

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20 Nation, (Dublin, July, 1846).

21 Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 222-30.
was followed by the Young Irelanders.\textsuperscript{22} So, what seemed at the time as a rather theoretical point, caused the break that the Young Irelanders had determined to avoid. Within a couple of years, however, the issue proved to be anything but theoretical.

This strategic victory for O'Connell was seen by Duffy's correspondents as having been accomplished in part by churchmen. Duffy's Kilkenny friend, Dr. Robert Cane, told him that it was the result of the prearranged blackening of the Young Irelanders' characters in the minds of the Catholic clergy. In his own area Duffy and friends were regarded as little better than infidels and most inimical to the Church.\textsuperscript{23} Elsewhere it was largely the same story. The Bishop of Ardagh gloried in the fact that in his diocese there were no physical force men nor, thank God, any schoolboy philosophers.\textsuperscript{24}

But Young Ireland had clerical friends too, even in the episcopacy. Dr. McGinn, the Bishop of

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Nation}, (Dublin, July, 1846).
\textsuperscript{23}Robert Cane to Duffy, August, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
\textsuperscript{24}Duffy, \textit{Four Years of Irish History}, pp. 245-46.
Derry, who had a high regard for Duffy, supported the "schoolboy philosophers." Duffy received letters from all over Ireland in support of Young Ireland's stand against the Association. Fearing misunderstanding, he explained the policy of the Young Irishers in The Nation.

It is not to conciliate our accusers we exercise forbearance--not to get this journal taken once more into favour--emphatically we say the The Nation can do without Conciliation Hall better than Conciliation Hall can do without The Nation--but because we should feel this sin and shame lie heavy on our own souls if we were conscious that we had done an act or written a word to perpetuate or exasperate these mad quarrels. Better that The Nation, and all who contributed to it, were sunk in the Red Sea that they should become the watchword of faction, the pretext of division, the rock wheron to make shipwreck of so noble a cause.

The campaign against The Nation continued. Already banned from the Repeal Reading Rooms, the paper was publicly denounced by O'Connell in terms which Duffy described as a denial of all Robert Holmes had argued so successfully in the railway  

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25 McGinn to Duffy, August, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

26 Nation, (Dublin, September, 1846).
prosecution. The result was that within a few months the Repeal Association became a wilderness. The remonstrances that poured into Conciliation Hall were ignored but Duffy published them in The Nation and opened a special section of the paper under the title of Phalanx to discuss the issues that were at stake. 27

Impressed by the reaction in favor of the seceders, O'Connell, at the next meeting of the Association, moved to close the ranks in face of the growing famine in the country. He proposed a conference with Smith O'Brien, but O'Brien would not come to Dublin and haughtily told an O'Connell emissary that he had no intention of debating peace resolutions which were merely a pretence for getting rid of troublesome members of the Association. 28 This was an attitude with which the seceders in general did not agree, and Duffy with Dillon and John Haughton availed of an opportunity for meeting O'Connell. The interview was a failure from the start. O'Connell told them that it was melancholy to think that the

27Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 258-68.
28Smith O'Brien to Duffy, November, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
Repeal Association had to negotiate with the compositors' room of a newspaper office and he refused to look at the letters Duffy had brought with him. These letters, from forty districts where secessions had taken place, specified the terms on which they would be willing to return to the fold. It was all over, O'Connell said; the Association would work as best it could despite the paltry machinations of the Little Ireland gang. What sins had the Association committed that it should be condemned and handed over to such executioners as Duffy, Mitchel and the Young Irelanders? He would rather see it emptied to the last man than submit to their dictation. 29

With re-union out of the question, the seceders formed in January, 1847, what they called the Irish Confederation, a development which D'Arcy McGee credited to Duffy primarily. "Duffy projected the Confederation. He made it. He won over all the considerable men who joined it, one by one, by dint or argument and exhortation. He gave it its impulses and policy. He was the Confederation." 30

29 Duffy to Smith O'Brien, December, 1846 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

30 McGee, Memoir of Charles Gavan Duffy, pp. 80-90.
this through his chairmanship of the organization committee. He prepared a program for the formation of Confederate clubs in every parish in Ireland and told them what they were to do. They were to be what would now be called pressure groups, bringing the force of public opinion into play. In the town they had special duties. They were to encourage the use of Irish manufacturing, promote knowledge of the history and resources of Ireland, and work for the extension of popular franchise. They were also to procure attendance at lectures and classes of youths of ten years and upwards so that they might learn the history of their country which was being kept from them in the National schools.  

The country clubs were given special duties also directed towards procuring full recognition and protection of the rights of tenant farmer and laboring classes, and were to diffuse knowledge about agriculture and discourage secret societies. For all clubs whether in the towns or country Duffy had this injunction: they were to pursue their labors in love and charity so

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31 Ibid.
32 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 359-60.
as to promote harmony among all Irishmen. They were, therefore, to ask Protestants for their help but, he said, "When you ask them, if you do not mean to protect the religious liberty of Protestants in all contingencies as zealously as you would protect your own, you are hypocrites, unworthy of liberty."33

These political developments, it should be remembered, took place in a country that from 1845 onwards was suffering a calamity unparalleled in its history. Famine, disease and death were rampant as a result of a potato blight that first put in an appearance in Ireland in the month in which Davis died. The remedies that were devised to deal with this situation were utterly and hopelessly inadequate, based as they were on an ignorance of Irish conditions and on a rigid economic and social theory implemented by an equally rigid governmental machine directed by the British Treasury from Whitehall.34

It has been said that the English despite the fact that they had been so long in the country knew less about Ireland than they did of the distant

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parts of the Empire. The Confederation, through their local clubs, counselled the farmers in 1847 to hold the harvest until the needs of their own families were supplied, and this may have prevented some food leaving the country, but it did nothing to ease the situation in areas of greatest need where cooking any food other than the potato had become a lost art.35 O'Connell, sick and sore in spirit, and seeing the membership of the Association dwindle to a mere handful and the Repeal movement he had created disintegrate, tried to bring the House of Commons to an appreciation of what was happening in Ireland but could raise little more than a pathetic whisper. Then, on the advice of his doctors, he took himself to the Continent where he died.36

The greatest popular leader, in Gladstone's opinion, the world had ever seen, a statesman who never for a moment changed his end and never hesitated to change his means. His death in May, 1847, caused a startling revulsion of opinion which manifested itself in the general election that was held that summer. In the

35Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 198-203.

36Ibid., pp. 206-08.
towns the Confederates held whatever support they had accumulated, but such popularity as they had achieved was forgotten in a moment in the rural areas. The people of Munster flew into a mad rage believing that the Young Irelanders had killed their leader. Only two Confederate members, one being Smith O'Brien, were returned.37

The trouble with the Confederates was their inability to agree on a common policy and their extraordinary preoccupation with plans that could yield no short-term benefit. People were dying or emigrating in hundreds of thousands, yet O'Brien looked to the land-owning gentry of whom he was one to declare themselves for self-government; he believed they would do this if their fears of democracy could be allayed. But what was wanted and needed, others thought, was immediate control of the national resources. It was at this stage that a rather unknown man, lame, deaf and near-sighted, James Finton Lalor, wrote to Duffy outlining in startlingly original terms his plan for associating the land problem with that of national independence.38

37Ibid., pp. 209-10.

38James Finton Lalor to Duffy, January, 1847 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
held that beside the land, repeal was a petty parish question. A fight for the land would unite North and South. But the fight could not be waged unless the Young Irelanders abandoned the pledges they had given to employ only legal means in the prosecution of their rights.

As regards the use of none but legal means, any means and all means might be made illegal by Act of Parliament; and such pledge, therefore, is passive obedience. As to the pledge of abstaining from the use of any but moral force, I am quite willing to take such a pledge, if, and provided, the English Government agree to take it also; but if not, not. 39

In another letter he made it clear that he did not advise insurrection in a form in which the Irish could not hold their own against the army of occupation. The small farmers and farm laborers would never wield a weapon in favor of repeal. They could, however, be relied upon to carry out a policy of moral insurrection, of disobedience to selected laws, and he proposed that they should begin by withholding their rent. 40

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39 Ibid.

40 Pinton Lalor to Duffy, February, 1847 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
The letters, which Duffy circulated, made a profound impression on the Confederates and especially John Mitchel and Father Neil Kenyon. Smith O'Brien, on the other hand, was of the firm opinion that the doctrines enunciated in them would dissipate all hopes of winning any section of the gentry. Seeing the growing unlikelihood of agreement on a policy, O'Brien made it known to Duffy that he would be happier if he could retire from politics. O'Brien made it known to Duffy that he would be happier if he could retire from politics.41 Duffy, who had been instrumental in placing O'Brien at the head of the movement and who continued to be his mentor, insisted that there was no course for any of them but an onward one. If they could not agree on a program for the famine, they could at least proceed to formulate a plan for restoring the Irish Parliament, which was common ground for them all.42 O'Brien was asked by the Council of the Confederation to prepare a forward-looking policy along these lines, but his draft, when it came, was considered unsatisfactory. Duffy was the principal critic of it. It was, in his opinion, not specific. What they wanted

41 Smith O’Brien to Duffy, March, 1847 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

42 Duffy to Smith O’Brien, March, 1847 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
was a rational answer to give to the practical but timid people who asked how they meant to repeal the Union. It was not enough to prepare the public for action and leave them there.  

The natural upshot of this criticism was that Duffy himself was asked to prepare a plan. While he was thus engaged Mitchel made up his mind that Lalor was right and declared that the Confederation and *The Nation* should pronounce for Lalor's policy.  

This change of front was, understandably, ill-received by the Council. Duffy, Dillon, and O'Hagan in particular were convinced that Mitchel was going to destroy himself and probably the Confederate cause as well. They strove hard to make him change his mind but to no avail. 

While their negotiations were continuing, Mitchel tried Duffy's patience by stating opinions in leading articles for *The Nation* which Duffy said Mitchel knew that he would never sanction. In one 

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43 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 477-78.
44 Mitchel to Duffy, May, 1847 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
45 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 490-95.
of them Mitchel defended the perpetual slavery of the Negro, and in another he objected to the emancipation of the Jews. Duffy struck out the objectionable passages and then made it known to Mitchel and Lalor that while they could advocate their opinions in *The Nation* in letters over their own signatures they would not be permitted to do so in leading articles. Mitchel met this situation by establishing a paper of his own, *The United Irishman*, to which he gave Tone's motto, that if the men of property would not help the national cause, then the non-propertied would carry the national banner. The paper boldly advocated Lalor's policy and attracted wide attention. Thus came a separation of Duffy and Mitchel after nearly three years of close association. In parting, Mitchel gave Duffy credit for having always acted from good and disinterested motives, with the utmost sincerity, and with uniform kindness to himself personally.

Duffy duly presented his report to the Confederation on the way and the means of obtaining

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46 Ibid., pp. 500-01.  
47 Mitchel to Duffy, January, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
an independent Irish Parliament. Since the death of O'Connell, there was no "authority" in Ireland recognized by the whole nation. According to Duffy, a national movement, to be successful, would have to recreate such an authority, beginning with a small nucleus of able, honest and devoted men from which such a power would grow. They would win authority in the most legitimate way, by deserving it. The first condition of success was that they should be governed not only by fixed principles but by a scheme of policy carefully framed and worked out in detail. The sudden explosion of an outraged people, he argued, had sometimes given liberty to a nation; but mere agitation with no definite plan of action never. The Repeal Association was a disastrous example, a great steam power which turned no machinery. 48

A Parliamentary Party was the first step. It did not necessarily have to be a large one, for even a handful of Irish members of capacity and character could effectually use the House of Commons to teach all Europe how to understand the iniquity of English government in Ireland. This course would not only revive the sympathy of foreign nations,

48 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 502-05.
but would win that of just Englishmen and gain the trust of the Irish people by effectual work done on their behalf. Such a party could rule the House of Commons, divided as it was among weak party leaders.

There had never been such a Irish Party in the British Parliament, and Duffy insisted that it would not be by consent of Parliament, but in spite of it; not by its grace and favor but because of its utter impotence against claims of justice, vigorously asserted, that they would succeed. The Irish Party had to be kept pure and above suspicion by a pledge never to ask or accept favors for themselves and others from any government, and must exhibit no preference between Whig and Tory. Such a party encamped within the walls of Parliament would be "more formidable than armed insurrection."^{49}

At home the Confederates could work to secure the election to corporations of men of trust, intelligence and perseverance, and use these representative bodies as local parliaments supplying as far as possible by counsel and guidance the existing want of a legislature.^{50} Duffy felt that if power

^{49}Ibid., pp. 508-10.

^{50}Ibid.
were wisely used, hurting no Irish interest, some of the grand juries could be won to the same views as they had held in 1843. Once the representatives in Parliament had made the case of Ireland plain to all men, and had established that they were the undoubted spokesmen of the nation, then it would be their right and duty to stop the entire business of the House of Commons until the Constitution of Ireland was restored. From such a position there seemed but two outlets—the Irish demand would be conceded or the Irish representatives would be forcibly ejected, in which event they would fall back upon the organized people whom they represented. Duffy believed that a nation of seven million persons united in a single purpose and guided by trusted counsellors, would know how to enforce their will.51

The Council of the Confederation adopted Duffy's ideas by fifteen votes to six, with the opposition being led by Thomas Devin Reilly, who put forward Lalor's plan as an alternative.52 The issue was then put to a public meeting of the Confederation,  

51Ibid., pp. 512-15.  
52Ibid.
consisting mainly of young men, in a series of resolutions proposed by Smith O'Brien but possibly drafted by Duffy. These declared that the Council was established to obtain an Irish Parliament and that no means of a contrary character could be recommended or promoted through its organization while its fundamental rules remained unaltered. Mitchel moved an amendment declaring that the Confederation did not feel called upon to promote or condemn doctrines promulgated by its members in letters or speeches. He had no faith in a Parliamentary Party, and pointed out that repeated attempts to obtain a combination of classes had ended in failure.53

John Pigot, Michael Doheny, P.J. Smyth, and Thomas D'Arcy McGee were among those who supported O'Brien's resolutions. Mitchel wanted to stop payment of the Poor Rate (this was a variant of Lalor's original proposal) but O'Brien pointed out that the effect of this would be to deprive the starving poor of their principal source of relief. Doheny rejected Mitchel's policy because he claimed it lacked all possibility of success. Smyth reminded the meeting that to rely on a single class, the poor, would be

to expose themselves to the mobs which in Limerick and Belfast had assailed the Confederates. With the upper and middle classes in hostility, as well as the priesthood, it would be impossible by speaking or writing to induce a single parish in Ireland to rise in insurrection. D'Arcy McGee opposed the new policy, not because it was treason against the law, but because it was treason against common sense.\textsuperscript{54}

Here was the beginning of a schism that lasted into the 20th century, a schism that divided Young Ireland into a republican minority that was prepared to resort to force to achieve its goals, and a majority that, through constitutional action, though not closing the door to the possibility of revolutionary action in certain circumstances, sought an independent parliament. When his amendment was defeated, Mitchel left the Confederation accompanied only by Reilly. His former friendship for Duffy was replaced by a bitterness which grew enormously with the passage of time. This showed itself in flaming words that burned into the mind of Duffy and made him miss no opportunity of retaliating. Mitchel, as a result of this controversy, Duffy wrote, was

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
"the most disabled and discredited politician in Ireland. He had pluck, men said, and rhetorical power, but not a tittle of the supreme faculty which estimates forces accurately, and encounters difficulties successfully, called in its modest form good sense." 55

The second part of that statement was true but the majority of the Confederate leaders were to demonstrate that they too were supremely lacking in common sense. They certainly failed to estimate accurately the forces on which they could rely and those that were ranged against them. And they allowed themselves to be overwhelmed emotionally by the situation that confronted them on the abdication of Louis Philippe and the proclamation of the new French Republic which occurred in February, 1848, within a month of Mitchel's secession from the Confederation.

55 Ibid., pp. 526-27.
CHAPTER III

1848!

When revolution broke out in France in 1848, it encouraged oppressed peoples elsewhere to revolt. It thus affected Ireland profoundly. The French were Ireland's ancient allies and, on more than one occasion, offered officers and men to lead an Irish revolt. Once again the French were raising the torch of freedom for Ireland to grasp, or so the Confederation thought. When news of the revolution reached Dublin, Duffy was separated from his principal colleagues who were down in Waterford contesting a by-election for which Thomas Francis Meagher was their candidate. On his own initiative Duffy rhetorically asked a meeting of the Confederation what they ought to do. It seemed to him that they had no honorable choice. In the recent controversy with Mitchel, he had voted against rash words and rash courses. But Duffy had declared that he would embrace any chance of fighting for Ireland in which not a class but the country, Old Irelanders and Young Irelanders, Protestant and
Catholic, gentry and peasant, could unite. Now the occasion had come.

In the next issue of *The Nation* Duffy declared that Ireland's opportunity, thank God and France, had come at last. Its challenge rang in their ears like a call to battle, and warmed their blood like wine. They had to answer the challenge, if they were not to be slaves forever. "We must unite, we must act, we must leap all barriers but those which are divine: if needs be, we must die, rather than let this providential hour pass over us unliberated."¹ He urged his friends as they returned to Dublin, to end the feud among nationalists and to get ready to act quickly in concert with the countries on the Continent which daily papers indicated were rising to end misgovernment.² A conference with the Old Irelanders was arranged. Duffy agreed to move in the Confederation that Mitchel and his supporters should be invited to return. At Dillon's suggestion, he also volunteered to seek an agreement with Mitchel on ways and means of attaining their goal. O'Brien, a

¹ *Nation* (Dublin, February, 1848).
² Duffy to Dillon, February, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
reluctant leader, delayed coming back to Dublin from Clare because he wanted the Confederates to choose their own course of action. But Duffy urged him to return without delay in a letter indicating that he shared O'Brien's preoccupation with the problems of class and his horror of mob law.

O'Brien did return to Dublin and told the Confederation at their next meeting that while he had never promised speedy success, the end was within view. Discretion was indispensable. If an outbreak took place immediately, O'Brien said, it would be put down by the government in a week. He made proposals for uniting all repealers and for fraternizing with the French people. He spoke of a deputation to the United States and for the formation of an Irish Brigade there which would serve as the nucleus of an Irish army. But when Duffy and his colleagues reminded him of the necessity of obtaining arms, money and some

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3Smith O'Brien to Duffy, March, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
4Duffy to Smith O'Brien, March, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
5Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 548-49.
trained soldiers from France or America, O'Brien asked for patience. He felt that a section of the gentry, large enough to complete the national character of the movement, would declare for self-government, but he could not invite gentlemen to do so if they had entered into negotiation to commit high treason. 6

In contrast with O'Brien, Mitchel told Duffy when they met that there were enough arms in the country already, and that the people must find their own leaders. All the people needed was a prize worth fighting for, and he would show them such a prize by proposing to found an Irish Republic. 7 Duffy would comment years later, rather unfairly, that never was a man so metamorphosed. At the time, Duffy and Dillon were appalled by Mitchel's extravagance. To their way of thinking the French Revolution had not made Mitchel's proposal of a peasant war any more reasonable. And his suggestion of a Republic, they felt, would drive away the Old Irelanders friendly to reunion as effectively as his

6 Ibid., pp. 550-51.
7 Ibid., pp. 552-54.
former policy had driven off the middle classes. However, Mitchel did return to the Confederation at the end of March, 1848, but this did not prevent him from following his usual independent line.

A deputation led by O'Brien went to Paris to congratulate the French Republic but failed to obtain even a declaration of sympathy. In their absence Duffy looked after the Confederates' affairs. He was unable, however, to control the extravagances of The United Irishman though O'Brien had asked him to try and do so, fearing as he did that Mitchel would ruin the cause of Repeal. One article of his, which recommended that vitriol should be thrown on soldiers whenever an uprising should take place, was widely quoted in the English press. Excitement in Ireland mounted as it began to appear as if freedom could be had for the asking. The popular uprising in France had been followed by others equally successful in Austria and Germany. When O'Brien returned, he with Duffy and their close associates applied themselves immediately to the task of conciliating the divergent

\[8\text{Duffy to Dillon, March, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).}\]

\[9\text{Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 558-59.}\]
elements within the country in order to present a common front to the government and the world.

They were not very successful. A Protestant Repeal Association was founded with Samuel Ferguson at its head, but all efforts to induce representative members of the Conservative party to join it failed. They did not trust the Catholic masses. Duffy, one of them said, "is no bigot, but he must know well that he could not find ten men of his own creed in Ireland who would be as tolerant as himself." 10

Meanwhile, the government was not idle. They prosecuted a number of the Confederates for seditious speeches and kept them all under close surveillance. According to the prime minister, treason had never been so blatant in any country as it was then in Ireland. The government could not be blamed, he said, for not being able to distinguish between Mitchel's little group of fanatics and the majority who increasingly recommended that the people arm themselves in order to achieve a peaceful solution to their more moderate aims. 11

10 Ibid., pp. 570-71.
11 Nowlan, Politics of Repeal, pp. 194-95.
The government had other and potentially more dangerous troubles with which to contend nearer home. Under the influence of the events in Paris, the discontented English workers had joined the Chartist movement in vast numbers and, under the demagogic leadership of Fergus O'Conner, threatened to overthrow the established order by force of arms if necessary. But O'Connor's move was frustrated, as O'Connell's had been at Clontarf, when the government employed a large army of police, military and special constables, to prevent a march on London. Public opinion rallied in the government's favor. When Smith O'Brien ventured to explain to the House of Commons the significance of the delegation he had led to Paris, he was shouted down by the jubilant and disorderly government party. He returned to Dublin convinced that there was no hope of a peaceful arrangement with England.\(^{12}\) He proposed to the Council of the Confederation the formation of a National Guard, and then he set out on a tour of Munster.

Mitchel was one of the party assigned by the Confederation to accompany O'Brien, but O'Brien told

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\(^{12}\)Smith O'Brien to Duffy, March, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
him frankly that he could not appear on the platform with him without doing violence to his feelings. But when he got to Limerick, he found Mitchel there before him and was so deeply offended that he asked the organizing committee to postpone the meeting. This, however, they were not willing to do. The large Old Ireland element in the city which had hooted Mitchel on his arrival gathered outside the building in which the meeting was to be held, and attempted to set it on fire by burning an effigy of Mitchel close to the window. When that failed, they broke down the main door. O'Brien, in an effort to pacify the mob, was hit in the face by a stone. The next day he announced his intention of withdrawing altogether from public life.

No man was regarded at that time as so important to the cause as O'Brien and messages from all over the country besieged him to reconsider his position. He agreed to continue as an active member of the Confederation only on condition that Mitchel and Reilly retire, which they immediately did. Duffy

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14 Ibid., pp. 175-76.
was among those to appeal to him.\textsuperscript{15} He did so through the medium of an article entitled "The Creed of the Nation" in which he "liberated his mind" and exposed himself to transportation which a recently enacted Treason Felony Bill had made the penalty for speaking and writing sedition. The article gave O'Brien extreme pleasure. He declared that he was fully prepared to hold himself, both morally and legally, responsible for the sentiments contained in it.\textsuperscript{16}

Duffy believed his Creed to be substantially the creed of the Irish Confederation. Liberty was their goal and was to be obtained peacefully, if at all possible, but if not it would be won by the use of force. If liberty came by force, it would come initially in the form of a Republic and would be welcomed as such. But, he would prefer a settlement by negotiation to a Republic won by insurrection, because violence would plant deadly animosities between men of the same Irish race. Moreover, the sudden transition from provincialism to republicanism, passing through no intermediate stage, was an experience

\textsuperscript{15}Smith O'Brien to Duffy, May, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

\textsuperscript{16}Smith O'Brien to Duffy, May, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
for which the Irish were not ready. If Britain conceded an independent parliament, elected by the widest possible suffrage, and a viceroy of Irish birth, members of the Confederation would defend such a settlement against all aggression, either from without or from within. A native government would inevitably establish tenant right and abolish the established church. It would also compensate existing interests and settle the claims of labor. But Duffy believed it would not go one step further in the direction of revolution.17

The Creed recounted the disaster that had recently overtaken Ireland. Other peoples had been protected from starvation because their rulers were of their own blood and race. This was not the case in Ireland. The revenue of three years was squandered in one year by ignorant and audacious experiments made in defiance both of counsel and of remonstrances from all classes of Irishmen.18

At this point in time there was no difference between Duffy and Mitchel in their fundamental

17 Nation (Dublin, May, 1848).
18 Ibid.
thinking as it was then expressed in their papers. They differed only as to method but Mitchel was the first to be arrested on May 13, 1848, under the new Treason Felony Act. This development presented the Council of the Confederation with an urgent problem. They realized that no stone would be left unturned to secure a conviction against Mitchel leading to his transportation. So, a proposition was examined by a minority of the members to rescue Mitchel. 19 The result of the inquiries was far from encouraging. In Dublin city and county there were thirty Confederate clubs numbering from one hundred to five hundred members each. The membership of clubs in other cities was about the same. But in the countryside, despite what Lalor and Mitchel had assumed, there was not a single club. And the trampled peasants were soon to show that without arms or training they had not the courage for insurrection. 20

On the other hand, the government had ten thousand troops in Dublin, about forty thousand more in the country, and all the strategic points were

19Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 634-37.

20Ibid., pp. 640-45.
guarded. There was not a week's supply of food in Dublin and, apart from growing crops, the rest of the country's supplies were in warehouses which and English army could easily destroy. But the chief difficulty of a rescue, according to Duffy, was Mitchel himself. He had scoffed at the necessity of systematic preparation and insisted that an emergency would produce its own leader. But now that the need for action arrived, there were no trained men available, no arms worth talking about, and money to buy them. Meagher and O'Gorman made a personal inspection of the Dublin clubs and arrived at the conclusion that an attempted rescue, with people unprepared, unorganized, unarmed and undisciplined, was out of the question. And earlier O'Brien and Dillon had convinced themselves that a rescue could not be undertaken without ruin to the cause.

The time was inopportune. It was May and their idea was to wait until the autumn, until the

\[\text{21 Ibid., pp. 648-50.}\]
\[\text{22 O'Gorman to Duffy, May, 1848(Gavan Duffy Papers).}\]
\[\text{23 Dillon to Duffy, April, 1848(Gavan Duffy Papers).}\]
harvest was in and the farm laborers were able to leave their employment. With a union of parties perhaps achieved, and money and arms secured, a general and simultaneous rising could be embarked upon. Within a week of his arrest, the government tried and convicted Mitchel and carried him off to penal servitude overseas without a hand being raised in protest.  

Mitchel was disappointed, naturally. And so were his close associates. One of them, Father John Kenyon, came to Duffy's house the next day along with T.B. MacManus to ask what could be done. Duffy replied that the delay in making preparations had nearly ruined their chances, but that they ought nevertheless to push ahead with the preparations that Mitchel had derided. He emphasized getting help from France in the form of officers and men (from the revolutionary clubs in Paris presumable because the government would have nothing to do with them) and to America for officers and money. MacManus promised that he would seize a couple of the largest Irish steamers at Liverpool and load them with arms and ammunition to be obtained from the army depot at

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\(^{24}\) Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, pp. 190-98.
Chester Castle. 25

A meeting was arranged which Duffy, Dillon, John Martin, Devin Reilly and Father Kenyon attended, and for the first time attention was given to practical measures for obtaining supplies of money, arms and officers. Plans were laid for a diversion in England in which the Chartists had promised to cooperate. Smith O'Brien was informed in general terms of the project. "It was," said Duffy, "a secret relief to men who loved him, and made full allowance for the peculiar difficulty of his position, that they could take this risk wholly on themselves. Enough was said to keep good faith; not enough to create responsibility." 26

About the same time, the long-delayed conference between Old and Young Ireland was held and agreement was reached to dissolve both the Repeal Association and the Confederation and to replace them by a new body to be known as the Irish League. 27

The Confederate clubs were to remain in existence as the nucleus of a National Guard and could

25Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 277-78.
26Ibid., pp. 278-80.
27Nowlan, Politics of Repeal, p. 206.
arm themselves if they chose. John O'Connell would have nothing to do with the new organization. 28

In June the workers of Paris revolted against the Republic they had created only a few months earlier. The Archbishop of Paris was murdered in the course of a peace mission, and in Italy a concession on the part of the Pope had been rejected with scorn. The government took advantage of the wavering state of Irish public opinion and began, rather tentatively at first, to strike at the Confederates. They were well informed. The proceedings in the clubs were open to the public, and from April onwards John Donnellan Balfe, who had been employed by Duffy to help with the organization of the National Guard, kept Dublin Castle posted with particulars of the Confederates' plans, differences and personal rivalries. 29 And the police made efforts by bribes, threats and falsehoods to get men to testify against the Confederate leaders. One person they approached with offers of up to £500 was Matthew Fannin, who had been in the same club as Duffy. He insisted that he

28 Ibid., pp. 207-09.

29 Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 655-60.
had never heard Duffy uttering any word incentive to war. He had always, according to Fannin, preached obedience to the law without which, he said, no security could exist. Fannin had heard Duffy say that the men who advocated war were desperadoes, men of no character whom he would not trust with sixpence. And as for rifle clubs, they were nothing but fooleries. But that was not the whole story.30

Duffy was the first to be apprehended and was committed to prison on a charge of publishing articles of a treasonable nature. It was on Saturday evening, the ninth of July, 1848, that three detectives arrested him outside his house in the Dublin suburbs and took him off to Newgate, but not before he had taken leave of his family and had given instructions to his wife for the secret disposal of important papers.31

Early in 1847, he had married a second time; his new wife was his first cousin, Susan Hughes, a sister of Mrs. Margaret Callan, who later saw an edition or two of The Nation through the press while

30Ibid., pp. 662-64.
31Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 281-82.
he was locked up. Susan was a highly cultivated woman who had studied music under Franz Liszt and Frederic Chopin. Neither Duffy nor any of the children she bore him were musically inclined, but the task of raising them and looking after her husband gave Susan Duffy little time to feel disappointed about their deficiencies.32

The police also seized The Nation's office and as the prison van containing Duffy passed by the office a crowd that had congregated there shouted "Take him out!" D'Arcy McGee mounted the steps of the van and whispered to Duffy that they were going to rescue him but Duffy would have none of it. "No, no," he said, "a rescue will only be a street riot, unless we can take Dublin and hold it, and you know we can do neither. And we must wait for the harvest."33

The governor of Newgate made Duffy as comfortable as he could in the long condemned unsanitary jail. He was able to get food from a nearby hotel and move freely among the other prisoners. Among them

32 Ibid., pp. 205-07.
33 Ibid., pp. 282-83.
were John Martin who had established The Irish Felon, to carry on the teachings of Mitchel's United Irishman; and R.D. Williams and Kevin O'Doherty, who had jointly started another paper called The Tribune. Duffy was allowed to have visitors whenever he liked. O'Brien and Dillon were among those who came to discuss future policy with him. And as The Nation and the Irish Felon continued to appear, Duffy and Martin sent out their editorials from the jail. The prisoners had plenty of time to consider their personal predicament. The likelihood of a jury trial in their favor was nil. Because of this they made no preparation for their defense. And as their property would pass to the Crown on their conviction they proceeded to divest themselves of whatever possessions they owned. Duffy, for instance, auctioned his library and pictures in the interest of his family.\textsuperscript{34}

The first meeting of the Irish League was held within days of Duffy's arrest and a program of organization was announced. But before they could meet again the government tightened the security arrangements by directing a strict search for arms and by suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. They were
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\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., pp. 283-90.
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now in a position to arrest and detain whomever they chose.\textsuperscript{35} This confronted the Confederate leaders who were still free with the choice of either allowing themselves to be taken or banking on a premature rising without the help they had sought from abroad. They decided to revolt. It was an extraordinary decision for the situation was not materially different since Mitchel had called on the famished, apathetic population to strike for a republic.

Dillon sent the news to Duffy. Confederates were to seize Kilkenny and set up a provisional government there or, if that proved impracticable, to raise followers in the neighboring counties and take to the field. McGee was sent to Scotland to open up a channel through which it was believed arms and volunteers could be brought over to Ireland.\textsuperscript{36} Duffy and John Martin were asked to pass the word along to the Dublin Confederates and other reliable persons. This they did through the staff of their journals whom they called into the prison. Some of the men urged that Dublin should not be omitted from the

\textsuperscript{35}Nowlan, \textit{Politics of Repeal}, pp. 211-12.

\textsuperscript{36}Dillon to Duffy, July, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
rising. The fall of the Castle, they claimed, would be a certain stimulus to the country. Others more wisely said that the leaders should permit themselves to be arrested and after a term of imprisonment they would be able to resume preparations with a greater chance of success.37

But all debate ended when O'Brien accepted the plan which was brought to him from Dublin and announced his intention of leading the rising. Duffy's comment years later was:

It was a spectacle strangely out of harmony with the sceptical scoffing generation in which it befell. A gentleman of mature years, of distinguished lineage and station, the descendant of a great Celtic house, the husband of a charming wife, the father of a household of happy children, a man rich in the less precious gifts of fortune called opulence, staked his life to save his race from destruction. The chance of overthrowing the rooted power of the British Empire by insurrection was manifestly small, but a profound sense of public duty made him accept it with all its consequences rather than acquiesce dumbly in the ruin of his people.38

37 Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 663-65.

38 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 298-301.
Duffy, finding it increasingly difficult to carry on the paper from his place of imprisonment, handed over the editorship to his cousin and sister-in-law, Mrs. Callan (Margaret Hughes). She was helped with a leading article written by the colorful Miss Elgee who used the pen-name "Speranza", and was to be better known later as the mother of Oscar Wilde. Duffy managed to smuggle out a few articles too. According to Duffy, there was no remedy left but the sword. Neutrality was no longer possible. Men had to choose sides and either abandon liberty or look for glory beneath the green banner of Ireland. The issue of The Nation containing these calls to arms was ready for dispatch when the police pounced upon the plant, seized the type and arrested the staff. The other nationalist journals had already received similar treatment.39

For a whole week Duffy and his fellow prisoners were without news from Kilkenny. The daily newspapers were silent. A messenger sent to O’Brien failed to reach him. Escape was considered but found to be impossible. And then suddenly, word came

39Duffy to Mrs. Hughes, July, 1848 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
through of the inevitable disaster.\textsuperscript{40} Reilly came back to Dublin in disguise and was seeking means of escape to America. Doheny and MacManus were said to be in the Galtees, and Meagher and Dillon in Waterford, vainly striving to raise the country, while O'Brien after making a pitiful stand at Ballingarry, had been arrested. With Dillon and Meagher he had gone through Kilkenny and Tipperary urging the people to get arms and to be ready to rise.\textsuperscript{41} Crowds greeted them everywhere but his immediate object appeared obscure, and the priests warned the people against being led to the slaughter. They dispersed and O'Brien found himself leading a few hundred half-clad and unarmed men. The police fired on his untrained army, killing some and wounding others.\textsuperscript{42}

All seemed over and yet worse was to come. Many people in Dublin began to blame the failure on O'Brien. They claimed he had deliberately betrayed them and made a real insurrection impossible. It is

\textsuperscript{40}Gwynn, \textit{Young Ireland and 1848}, pp. 246-49.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., pp. 254-56.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., pp. 260-66.
hard to determine who was responsible for this rumor but many with Old Ireland prejudice welcomed it.

Three months later Duffy heard in Newgate that an attempt was being made to lead the Dublin Confederate clubs into an insurrection and that the viceroy, Lord Clarendon, was to be seized. He immediately sent out a message denouncing any such attempt.

It would end in a massacre for the clubs and afford an excuse for hanging O'Brien. I beseech and entreat every Confederate who regards my advice to set himself against it. I would rather be hanged tomorrow than lend it the smallest countenance.

He also refused to have anything to do with a new journal that Lalor suggested should be started to represent such underground elements as remained in the post-rising chaos.

O'Brien, Meagher, MacManus and Patrick O'Donoghue were subsequently tried and sentenced to death but the sentence was remitted later to transportation for life to Van Diemen's Land. Duffy's

43 Mrs. Hughes to Duffy, January, 1849 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

44 Duffy to Dillon, January, 1849 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

45 Gwynn, Young Ireland and 1848, pp. 268-73.
fellow prisoners in Newgate fared relatively better. Kevin O'Doherty and John Martin were transported for terms of ten and fourteen years respectively. Duffy himself was the last to be arraigned. He expected little from Lord Clarendon, who he believed had conceived a personal dislike of him, including the circulation of a slander that he had thrown himself on the mercy of the executive and would not defend himself. 46 A letter had been produced that Duffy had sent to O'Brien when he was about to embark on the Munster meetings. This stated that while he knew O'Brien had no desire to lead or influence others, there was no half-way house for him now. He was the head of the movement, was loyally obeyed and would have to shape out the course of the revolution. The revolution, however, was to be conducted with order or the mere anarchist would prevail and the revolution would be a bloody one. There was little hope for Duffy in light of the letter if one considers that O'Brien had already been found guilty of treason. 47

46 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 300-05.
47 Ibid., pp. 308-10.
Duffy was brought to the bar of Green Street on the eighth of August on a charge of felony. But with the discovery of his letter to O'Brien the trial was delayed because the charge against Duffy could now be changed to high treason. He was sent back to prison, Duffy thought, to prepare for death. He remained there for another five months. 48

D'Arcy McGee, who had escaped to America, summed up Duffy's character as if he were already dead.

All his life through he was a disciplinarian, an architect of systems. The teeming fertility of his mind was marvellous. Always and everywhere he was projecting some new move for Ireland. The large throbbing vein that descended from his forehead used to swell and blacken like an inky cord from the strain that events kept up under the power-wheels of his intellect...49

McGee so idolized Duffy that Dillon in May, 1849, said that he was under pressure to attack McGee for writing as if Duffy were the only man who had any intellect and that Smith O'Brien and Thomas Meagher were mere puppets in his hands.50

48 Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 728-30.
49 McGee, Memoir of Charles Gavan Duffy, pp. 100-03.
50 Dillon to Duffy, May, 1849 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
On October 26, 1848, Duffy appeared in Green Street for the second time. Only on the night before was he told what the charge would be, and when the court opened it was found that, without notice to him, the Crown lawyers had transferred him from the city of Dublin to the County in order to improve the chances of finding a jury to convict him. Duffy put his general defense in the hands of Isaac Butt, a burly bison-headed barrister who had begun to manifest nationalist sympathy. Also on the case were Sir Colman O'Loghlen and John O'Hagan, who were among his barrister friends.51

This able combination blew holes in the Crown case in the prolonged preliminary skirmishes, and it was the fifteenth of February, 1849, before Duffy finally appeared before a jury and pleaded "not guilty." He knew that no legal skill or oratorical power could save him so long as the system of jury-packing continued. So, before this crucial point was reached, he drafted a notice to the Attorney-General raising a doubt as to whether he would get a fair trial.52 This document was widely publicized, and

51 Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp. 755-56.
52 Ibid.
Archbishop McHale of Tuam suggested that the country should have an opportunity of pronouncing on the administration of the law. With this in mind, Dr. Murray, professor of theology at Maynooth, prepared a remonstrance to the Lord Lieutenant. This secured the signatures of forty thousand people but it was rejected by the government.53

It is not apparent what good, if any, these moves had. But when the actual jury to try Duffy was empanelled the government felt obliged to include one safe Catholic among them. The choice fell on Martin Burke, the proprietor of the Shelbourne Hotel, who the government felt sure would do their work. He was known to be a prudent man who had never taken part in Catholic affairs. But, knowing Burke's background, wanted to object to him being on the jury. Duffy prevented him from doing so for the excellent reason that he had been so advised by Mrs. Duffy. She had told her husband that Mrs. Burke had called on her to say that she and her daughter would be sitting in the gallery facing the jury box and if her husband went against Mr. Duffy, he could not return home. Burke stood for acquittal and with the jury in

disagreement, Duffy was put back for retrial.54

The retrial took place in April, 1849, nine months after Duffy's arrest. The jury was chosen from a list of special jurors but they could not agree as to whether the prisoner was guilty or not. Perhaps they had been influenced by the public remonstrance in favor of Duffy, perhaps the persuasive talk of the defense lawyers had won them over, or perhaps they were just sick and tired of "the Queen vs. Duffy." In any event they could not agree and were locked up for the night. In the morning they passed sentence in favor of acquittal. "And so," said Duffy, "I saw the daylight again."55

54 Duffy, Four Years of Irish History, pp.743-45.

55 Ibid., p. 755.
CHAPTER IV

INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION

Following his release from prison Duffy toured parts of Ireland with Thomas Carlyle, and both of them subsequently described their experiences. Carlyle noted the enthusiastic reception Duffy received whenever he was "discovered." In Dungarvan the whole population turned out and in Castlebar a young woman shyly thrust a bouquet, with a verse attached, into Duffy's hands.¹ What struck both men was the degradation and starvation they found everywhere. That same summer Thomas Macaulay, writer and politician, spent some time in Ireland and witnessed the same horrors. Macaulay commented that between English peasant and Irish peasant there was ample room for ten or twelve well-marked degrees of poverty. Political agitation was dead and buried; he had never seen a society apparently so well satisfied with its rulers, and the

¹David Alex Wilson, Thomas Carlyle (London, 1923-9), pp. 305-07.
Queen on her recent visit had made a conquest of all hearts.²

The poverty and dire consequences these men witnessed was not confined to any one part of Ireland. In County Kilkenny, for instance, the Earl of Desart had been an active exterminator, and he had cleared out some five hundred people since the commencement of the famine before two Catholic curates in Callan decided it was time to call a halt to his gallop.³

They formed the Tenant Protection Society. Its aims were to secure fair rents, employment and tenant right as practiced in Ulster. In a short time they had many imitators, even in the North where rapacious landlords had begun to threaten the traditional Ulster custom. Since 1846, an Ulster Tenant Right Association had been in existence, and its leader, Doctor McKnight, who was the editor of The Banner of Ulster, the official organ of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, was well known to Duffy.⁴

³Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 320-25.
McKnight was, in his own words, "an old block-mouthed Presbyterian" and the inheritor of Gaelic traditions. Those streams of common interest, North and South, Catholic and Presbyterian, inevitably began to flow together. They flowed all the more easily because of the help Duffy and Frederick Lucas were able to give them. Lucas was English and a Catholic convert from Quakerism. During the early part of 1850, he transferred *The Tablet*, of which he was the editor, to Dublin in order to better serve the interests of the church and the Irish poor. Some months earlier, in September, 1849, Duffy reactivated *The Nation* and espoused the movement for land reform as the best means of halting the creeping destruction of the common people. He summoned a private conference of nationalists and told them that the protection of the farmers was their most urgent business. For nationality little could be done except to keep alive its traditions. Independence would only come as the end result of previous victories. This was essentially an acceptance of O'Connell's pragmatic attitude of politics and indicated that Duffy was now convinced of the impractica-

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bility of the revolutionary line that the Young Irelanders, including himself, had followed.

For as far ahead as Duffy could see the path to be followed was that of reform, not revolution. But the change of front, this "rosewater" policy as it was scornfully called, was anything but pleasing to some people. The mildest of them, John Martin, as he went into exile in June, 1849, had felt that "poor Duffy" was to be pitied more than any of them for he had on his shoulders a great and difficult responsibility. Martin was confident that Duffy would meet the difficulties of his position with sound determination.7 But a year later, having read the files of the new Nation that Duffy sent out to the prisoners in Australia, Martin was somewhat disappointed. He preferred Duffy the poet to Duffy the politician who was now saying that it was madness to talk of Ireland seizing her freedom by the strong hand.8

Duffy had admirers as well as critics. Among the admirers were Carlyle and the brilliant though erratic H.T. Wallis, who had exercised so much influence

7Ibid.
on Thomas Davis in his formative years. But the paper never again sold as well as it had before 1843. Financial reconstruction had to be undertaken and Duffy's difficulties were made more difficult when a member of his staff left suddenly with the newspaper's funds.9

Duffy's approach to the land problem took two forms. He thought, first, of a new plantation of Ireland, not this time by strangers but by natives making use of the Encumbered Estates Act that had just been passed. The method was to be the establishment of a Freehold Land Society, on the model of others then appearing in England. It would buy land wholesale and resell it to small holders.10 The Society was formed but subsequently lost its impetus upon the resignation of Duffy from the managing committee when John Sadleir sought to have the funds placed in his own bank and to foist upon it some properties he had already acquired.11

Duffy's second project was to unite with the Ulster tenantry in obtaining a reform of the land code.

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9Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 7-15.

10Duffy, The League of the North and South, pp. 24-32.

11Ibid.
This was the idea enshrined in the Irish Tenant League which was established in August, 1850. It had a council representative of the entire country. Its goals were to achieve through deputations, through the publication of tracts, and through contested elections, the principle of fair rents fixed by valuation, fixity of tenure, and the tenant's right to dispose of his interest. These principles were conceded in an Act of 1881, but thirty years earlier they seemed to many people a startling program, outside the reach of practical politics. They went beyond anything O'Connell considered feasible in his day. Although the League from the beginning encountered opposition from the government and Irish members of parliament, the people warmly welcomed its existence. County meetings drew tremendous crowds.

At the first meeting at Enniscorthy, the farmers within a radius of twenty miles attended on foot and horseback. A couple of days later, eight thousand farmers walked into Kilkenny to hear speakers from the north and south of Ireland. From Kilkenny

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12 McCaffrey, The Irish Question, pp. 73-74.
the League moved to Ulster. There the speakers were received by processions which came with bands and ornamental banners and with messages of welcome from prominent Protestants and Catholics. The organizers travelled all over Ireland achieving such success that by the time the first general meeting of the League was held much progress was reported. Hope, which had died out of the hearts of the people with the failure of the Repeal movement was rekindled. Money began to flow into the League. Local societies were started in nineteen counties, laying the basis for subsequent parliamentary action. In more than thirty constituencies, members pledged to return to parliament only candidates committed to the principles of the League; men who could be relied upon to withhold support from any government that refused to advance those principles.

A consensus fully accepted that the real battle for the tenants would have to be fought and won in the British House of Commons. The League wanted

14 Duffy to Mrs. Duffy, September, 1850 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

as far as possible to replace the sitting Irish M.P.'s by representatives of their own. Duffy personally had little use for the existing Irish M.P.'s. The few honest men among them were politically ineffective. He described a majority of them as habitual jobbers who were not above selling the petty appointments that they had authority to parcel out.\(^{16}\) But Duffy's comment on the situation as a whole was that a muscle had been wrought, that the unity of North and South for which Grattan and O'Connell had fought had been achieved by weaker hands.\(^{17}\) This was a considerable exaggeration. Since the League was never more than a Southern movement with a few Northern allies, it had to face considerable opposition. McKnight and his Northern colleagues were assailed by the landlord press in Ulster. In the South, John O'Connell announced once a week that Duffy, who had proved to be such a dangerous leader in 1848, would be sure to tempt the people into illegal courses.\(^{18}\)

\(^{16}\) Duffy to F. Lucas, November, 1850 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

\(^{17}\) Duffy, *League of the North and South*, pp. 52-60.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., pp. 64-67.
The League's first big test arose when, following the assumption by the English Catholic bishops of the titles of their dioceses contrary to the statute law, the prime minister, Lord John Russell took action. Russell, who had achieved office in 1846 with the help of the Irish Catholic vote, raised the no popery issue by introducing in parliament the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, applicable to both England and Ireland. The bill repeated in more precise terms the prohibition already contained in the Emancipation Act of 1829 against the assumption of territorial titles in England by Catholic prelates. The enormous outburst of anti-Catholic bigotry this provoked seemed bound to affect the young Tenant League as it swung precariously on its North-South axis, while the inescapable Catholic reaction could not but be offensive to Irish Protestants.

At this point, as Duffy mentioned in his own writings, the remarkable figure of Cardinal Cullen appeared for the first time. Duffy writes of him simultaneously with two notorious laymen, William Keogh and John Sadleir. Keogh, the Catholic Whig member for Athlone, was a political strategist whose parliamentary seat had been bought for him by a Birmingham banker.

19Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 105.
John Sadleir was a lawyer who, since his entry into the House of Commons, had become a banker and speculator. The two occupied the center of the stage, while the supposed leader of the Irish Whigs in Parliament, George Henry Moore, and honest, able, but impetuous man, stood in the wings. 20

Cullen, formerly the rector of the Irish College in Rome, had been appointed Archbishop of Armagh and apostolic delegate. Duffy was very critical of Cullen. He saw in him none of the qualities of a great ecclesiastic usually sent on national missions. But he did concede that Cullen was a devoted churchman and a man of prodigious zeal. His greatest defect in Duffy's eyes was that he paid no regard to the character or aim of the Irish members of parliament. As long as they were fighting, as he thought, the battle of the church, he gave them his whole sympathy but he used any influence he could command to subvert those whom he considered the enemies of the church. 21

Into the first category Cullen put Sadleir and Keogh and the other Irish Liberal members whose

21 Ibid., pp. 30-34.
opposition to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill had won for them the honorable title of the Irish Brigade and who joined in supporting a Catholic Defense Association that had been formed in Dublin. Into the second category he put Duffy and those who like him were afraid of the damage the Brigade might do to the Tenant League, in both the North and South of Ireland. Lucas, unlike Duffy, at first considered it feasible for the Catholic Defense Association to exist in parallel if not in actual alliance with the Tenant League, for Lucas felt they both wanted to act independently of the existing British political parties. Being the editor of a Catholic journal, he naturally disliked and wanted to avoid a falling out with the bishops. When the claims of the church conflicted with secular interests he did not admit that there was any choice for him. Therefore, while he used his influence in private to prevent the new Catholic Defense movement from conflicting with the interests of the Tenant League, in his paper he kept in as close relation with their public action as his judgement permitted.

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22 Ibid.
23 Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, pp. 106-09.
Duffy, on the other hand, stood aloof from the Catholic Defense Association. In matters of discipline he was prepared to listen to the bishops with deference and submission. But when it came to politics, he said, "I must follow my own judgement and conscience, and I declined to seek counsel which I might not be able to follow."\(^{24}\) He had little knowledge of theology. His ultimate concern was with getting self-government for Ireland and he was willing to apply himself to any task likely to promote that end. Knowing the Irish situation better than Lucas did, he refused to accept Sadleir and Keogh as men in whom it was safe to have any confidence, regardless of whatever support they might pick up in the country. The keenness of his judgement was to be shown in a very short time. But before that could happen Cullen was to be transferred to the see of Dublin in May, 1852.\(^{25}\)

Nearly forty years later as Duffy looked back on the appointment he recalled how it had been hoped that Dublin would receive a worthy successor to the patriot prelate of the 12th century, Saint Laurence

\(^{24}\) Duffy to Lucas, August, 1851 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

O'Toole. Actually, no man ever held the office who was more essentially a foreigner than Cullen. He only regarded Ireland as a convenient fulcrum for the foreign policy of the Vatican. He might have been a good bishop but assuredly he was a bad Irishman whose policy was to transfer the government of Ireland to bishops and laymen prepared to accept the lead of the church without criticism.  

His fundamental fault, in Duffy's eyes, was that he mistook his own imperfect acquaintance with facts for profound knowledge. To that end he acted on his prejudices as if they were inspiration. He saw the nationalists of Ireland as a reproduction of Italian nationalists. He failed to realize that in Ireland the church had been the ally and confederate of the Irish Nationalists, and the nationalists had been loyal to the church. But The Nation had at one time warmly written up the Carbonari, so Cullen had a superficial reason for thinking of Duffy as an Irish Mazzini. They had met occasionally with Cullen concealing his feelings but friendly ecclesiastics had warned Duffy of the truth. Lucas told Duffy that the archbishop had

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26 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 40-44.
Duffy's description of the archbishop is inaccurate in important respects. Cullen did not seek—consciously at any rate—to transfer the government of Ireland to the bishops, or to make himself, as was said, the leader of the Irish Whigs. Neither was he in any sense a Castle bishop although that was widely alleged against him. He never attended Castle functions and refused invitations to serve on government commissions. He wanted to be a political neutral. In Rome and in Dublin he kept a watchful eye on every British move to obtain unfair advantage. He was as vehement against the Young Irelanders as against the McHaleites, against the McHaleites as against the English. In the process he coldly disapproved of the appointment of Young Irelanders to the staff of the Catholic University, and may have kept Duffy out of the chair of Modern History. This would explain a great deal of Duffy's dislike of the prelate.

Cullen's involvement in politics arose out of the nature of his position and of his basic concern for church discipline. He worked with a large measure of success to give his fellow bishops a sense of unity.

27Ibid., pp. 62-66.
which hitherto they had lacked. And through them he defined and restricted the role of priests in political matters. This action was naturally susceptible to misinterpretation and Cullen was subsequently blamed by Duffy and others for intervening only against priests who supported the Tenant League, though this was not the case. He had withheld his support from the Tenant League because Duffy's policy of independent opposition stood in the way, he thought, of obtaining urgently needed redress for the poor people of the country. He disliked Duffy simply because he was the re-incarnation of what Cullen always saw as a manifestation of continental liberalism. He also seems to have linked in his mind the Young Irelanders' concern to establish a political union of Protestants and Catholics with the proselytism that had begun with the so-called Second Reformation and that continued to be practiced in the famine years and afterwards. Protestants were not to be trusted. O'Connell, he felt, had been betrayed by every Protestant he put in a


prominent position, including Davis, Mitchel and Smith O'Brien.30

During those difficult times Duffy used The Nation to keep the Tenant League united and to prevent either its southern Catholic or its northern Presbyterian supporters from taking undue offense in the bitter arguments that arose over the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. For a time he appeared to be successful, and the League held together against external pressures. But the tests from within its own ranks were harder to endure. In Limerick a League candidate was beaten into third place in a three-cornered contest for the opposition of the local Catholic bishop.31

While the Tenant League was staggering under such blows the Catholic Defense Association, supported enthusiastically by the majority of English and Irish bishops, was flourishing. Keogh, its leader, had an initial success when he induced Sharman Crawford to join forces with him in presenting a land bill to parliament.32

30 MacSuibhne, Paul Cullen, p. 325.
31 Duffy, League of the North and South, pp. 110-15.
32 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 47-50.
Duffy was appalled that an honest, intelligent man like Crawford could join "a gang of shameless jobbers." But Crawford's defense was that the League had not at that time a single representative in the House of Commons. He wanted to get something done and so turned to the Irish Brigade, which he could see had the solid backing of churchmen.33

The Catholic Defense Association made other moves in 1852. It established a newspaper called the Catholic Telegraph in opposition to the Tablet and at half the price. This was aimed at Lucas, who from being a supporter of the Association had lost confidence in it and had begun to scoff at its members' affectation of patriotism. When an Englishman, Henry Wilberford, was appointed secretary of the Association, Duffy cautioned the people in The Nation against the denationalising process of introducing Englishmen and Anglo-Irishmen into positions of power and influence.34 Archbishop Cullen thought it reasonable and proper that Wilberford should be appointed because the Catholic Defense Association was a United Kingdom affair. Archbishop

33 Ibid., pp. 52-55.
34 Nation (Dublin, February, 1852).
McHale of Tuam thought differently and a compromise was achieved by giving Wilberford an Irish assistant. 35

When, following the defeat of Lord John Russell on a militia bill and a short period of office for Tories under Lord Derby, a general election was called in 1852. The Irish Tenant League was not in the best shape. Funds were low, and the leaders were embarrassed by "wealthy nincompoops" who were only interested in the League as a stepping stone into Parliament. It was difficult to find in a poor country like Ireland fifty or sixty candidates with the necessary property qualification who could afford to live in London for six months out of the year at their own expense. 36

But the Council of the League made the attempt and Duffy in The Nation explained the policy by which alone he believed the cause might be carried to success, the policy of independent opposition. In the parliamentary struggle Ireland held the key to effective government. She was ready to say to the opposing groups--"debate and divide gentlemen, it is your right; but Ireland must


36 Duffy to Lucas, March, 1852 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
decide who shall have the majority. This was the policy which would open the ears of the English parties to the Irish Question. Whatever party could obtain control of the House of Commons would rule the Empire. Fifty disciplined Irishmen of integrity and capacity could overturn any ministry simply by walking across the floor of the House.

The Catholic Defense Association had their own ideas about candidates for the election. They knew, for instance, whom they did not want. Lucas was one such person, and when the Leaguers suggested his name for Meath the Association, with the support of the bishop, tried to keep him from getting the nomination. Many of the people of Meath resisted such a move and Lucas was nominated. In due course, he won with a majority of four to one.

Duffy was one of three candidates proposed by the Council of the League for consideration by the local election committee in New Ross. He was advised to present himself to the constituency in the company of Father Tom O'Shea, one of the famous Callan curates. When Duffy arrived in Callan he found Father O'Shea sick

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37 *Nation* (Dublin, March, 1852).
with bronchitis. Despite his condition and the bad weather, Father O'Shea insisted on travelling to New Ross, where he also made a preliminary call on Father Doyle, the senior curate in the town, who was understood to exercise a decisive influence over the election committee composed mostly of Old Irishers. Father Doyle was a hard nut to crack. He had nothing against Duffy personally but he would not agree to propose him. Later, however, when he talked things over with Duffy and Father O'Shea together, he consented to let the candidate be interviewed. The next day eighteen members of the committee assembled for that purpose and were joined by Father Doyle who told them he had come to look on but would take no part in the proceedings.

There were other passing onlookers who evidently were impressed with Duffy. He got the nomination and found himself opposed in the election by Sir Thomas Redington, the former undersecretary for Ireland, and Henry Lambert, who had represented County Wexford twenty years earlier. Duffy was supported valiantly by Father Doyle. He considered himself fortunate to be running against Lambert and Redington.

39 Ibid., p. 193.
40 Ibid., p. 195.
The former had been elected as a Repealer in 1832 but had deserted O'Connell in the House of Commons. Duffy was able to attack Redington for having, as a minister in Russell's government, armed the Orangemen against the Repealers in 1848. Redington canvassed the borough preceded by a troop of dragoons, a company of infantry and three detachments of police. 41

Interest in such an election could not be confined to the constituency. It was a topic of conversation everywhere and the newspapers were full of it. The Reform Club in London was reported to be putting up money to secure Duffy's defeat. Money for Duffy came from America through the efforts of John Dillon and Richard O'Gorman. The upshot of the whole episode was that Duffy won a resounding victory. Redington withdrew from the contest, and left Lambert, aided by the town landlord and a small Tory following, to face the bulk of the electors. Among the voters were some of Duffy's bitterest Old Ireland opponents in the election committee. But by noon on election day the contest was over and Duffy had a majority of more than two to one. 42

41 Ibid., pp. 200-01.
42 Ibid., pp. 203-08.
The result of the general election was that nearly fifty Irish Liberals went to Westminster in November, 1852, committed to the principle of independent opposition. This number included, of course, the Catholic Defense Association brigadiers who had allied with the Tenant Leaguers. They entered parliament effectively holding the balance of power provided they acted together, voting for every measure of benefit to Ireland and rejecting those that were harmful to Irish interests. 43

It was not long before there was a change of government. Disraeli, who was Lord Derby's chancellor of the exchequer, introduced his first budget. The Irish party might have supported it had not Derby made it known that under no circumstances would his government accept the principles of Sharman Crawford's bill which the Irish had sponsored. 44 The Tories were defeated by a majority of nineteen and were replaced by a combination of Whigs and Peelites under Lord Aberdeen. It was at this point that the so-called independent opposition suffered a blow from which it never recovered.

43 Whyte, Tenant League and Irish Politics, pp. 42-47.
44 Duffy, League of North and South, pp. 232-34.
On the publication of lists of junior ministers it was found that Sadleir had been appointed a Lord of the Treasury and Keogh Irish Solicitor General. Other appointments from the ranks of the Irish were rumored. 45

For the moment, however, attention was focused upon Sadleir and Keogh. These men had pledged themselves never to support, much less to take office from, a government that did not pledge to repeal the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, to abolish the established church, and to deal with the land problem on the lines drawn by Sharman Crawford. Here was a government to whom these things were plainly impossible. A storm of protest arose against the deserters. They were denounced in the national press and from public platforms. G.H. Moore, who had supported Keogh, now accused him of a breach of morality. Five bishops headed by McHale denounced him. 46 It seemed an unmitigated disaster, and yet the loss of numbers was offset by a temporary gain in spirit for those who remained loyal to their pledges. These men drew closer together. Trouble, however, arose in another quarter. It was noted that Archbishop Cullen

46 Whyte, Tenant League and Irish Politics, pp. 54-59.
remained silent when Sadleir and Keogh defected. Now Duffy saw him at the head of a conspiracy of bishops. "We failed at that time and place because we were betrayed by prelates in whom the people had a blind confidence."47

Duffy found the incessant parliamentary round and the demands of the Irish clients exhausting. Yet he had to work simultaneously at his profession as a journalist. He was The Nation's parliamentary correspondent as well as its editor and this imposed upon him several tasks. He had to supply the paper regularly with an elaborate comment on the proceedings of the House. But it was not only the burden of work that affected him. The Whig majority that scoffed at Irish claims, the Irish deserters who had been elected by a suffering people, and Tory agents of Irish landlords all affected him deeply.48 These men, he kept on emphasizing, were supported by the majority of the Irish bishops. Yet Duffy, and Lucas who shared these feelings with him, fought off the despair, and in The Nation and The Tablet they told their readers

47Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 82-86.

48Duffy to Fr. Doyle, January, 1853 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
to have patience because success in the English parliament was a notoriously slow process. 49

Things got worse instead of better. The Ulster Tenant Right party sided with the deserters in the select committee that examined Crawford's bill and Crawford advised the tenant farmers to accept a measure more modest than his own. What upset the League leaders most, however, was Crawford's implied belief that the two men who had accepted office had not violated their pledges but had put themselves in a position to advance the tenant's case. 50 When by-elections occurred, as they inevitably did, the League candidates were beaten by a combination of government supporters, landlords, and the local clergy. 51

Corruption was so triumphant that national feeling became almost afraid to show itself. Duffy cited three cases to justify this condemnation. O'Connell's youngest son had resigned his seat to accept a consulship. When the deal fell through he was helped by the clergy into another seat in Tralee from which he

49 Nation (Dublin, February, 1853).

50 Duffy, League of North and South, pp. 249-50.

51 Ibid., pp. 253-54.
supported the government whenever they needed it. In the course of the election a furious mob howled down the League candidate for daring to oppose the son of the Liberator. In Clare two men who had supported the government and who had been unseated for intimidation were re-elected. In the third case a bigoted Protestant candidate was deliberately imported from England in order to create an atmosphere in favor of the election of John Sadleir as the champion of Catholic interests.52

The Leaguers tried to save the policy of independent opposition by holding another conference of their supporters. This was sparsely attended, and it was apparent from the outset, that the delegates were divided on the right or wrong of Sadleir's and Keogh's action. Charges were followed by countercharges and while a vote of confidence in the Independent Party and a censure on the deserters were ultimately adopted, it had the effect of driving the men from the North out of the conference.53 McKnight charged Lucas with treachery to the cause of land reform. Lucas denied the allegation emphatically, but his word was not accepted. After the

52 Ibid., pp. 267-69.
53 Whyte, Tenant League and Irish Politics, pp. 69-74.
conference, Crawford, in a letter written for publication, stated he would do no further business with Lucas except in the presence of witnesses. The northerners always feared Lucas as an incurable bigot and McKnight took pains to warn Duffy against him. But Duffy was convinced that Crawford was misled into being grossly unjust to Lucas. The League finally had to make a choice. Duffy made the choice for it by taking sides against his old northern allies and supporting Lucas who, he said, was a man of the highest integrity.54

The Lucas-Duffy combination did not last long. It was shattered in an affair with the bishops which began with the removal to an inferior rural parish of Duffy's friend and ally, Father Doyle. Father Doyle should not have been surprised by the treatment. At the general election he had carried his zeal for Duffy to the point of publicly insulting his parish priest, who supported another candidate.55 Father O'Shea of Callan was recalled and narrowly escaped suspension for campaigning miles away from his parish and diocese. Actually, in both cases the exercise of discipline was not out of

54 Duffy, League of North and South, pp. 275-80.
55 Ibid., pp. 295-97.
Yet in both instances Duffy and Lucas were left with a feeling of uneasiness in their minds.\textsuperscript{56} After a third incident involving Father Matthew Keefe, the other Callan curate, Duffy and Lucas were convinced that a campaign was being waged against them from within the ecclesiastical province of Dublin.\textsuperscript{57} In a private letter Father Keeffe had reproached the local member, Sergeant Shee, for abandoning his colleagues on some matter of parliamentary tactics. Shee retaliated by publishing the letter with his reply. At that point Father Keeffe was forbidden from taking any further part in politics by the Bishop of Ossory. The bishop's act seemed thoroughly arbitrary. And, if it became a precedent, no priest who supported the policy of independent opposition could be safe in giving his aid to that party. So, following a public demonstration in Callan, Lucas carried an appeal to Rome on behalf of the members of parliament in which all their grievances were raised, including recent synodal statutes which limited the political activity of the clergy.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56}Lucas to Duffy, April, 1853 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

\textsuperscript{57}Lucas to Duffy, May, 1853 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

\textsuperscript{58}Duffy, \textit{League of North and South}, pp. 302-06.
Lucas, despite ill-health, diligently prosecuted what has been described as an unnecessary appeal to Rome. It was unnecessary because of the League’s misinterpretation of Cullen’s policy for which Cullen, who was indifferent to public relations, was largely to blame. The Pope in private audiences appeared sympathetic and suggested a conference with Cullen who was in Rome for the Vatican Council. This, when held, proved a disaster. In the course of it Cullen broke into a violent tirade against Duffy, whom he described as a wicked man. To act with him after his conduct in 1848 was impossible until he fasted fifty years on bread and water. Lucas defended Duffy and mentioned the evidence of Bishop Blake and Bishop Moriarty at his trial. Moriarty testified that he considered Duffy to be a man of the highest and purest principles of integrity and honor, a peace-loving man and an enemy of anarchy.

At this the cardinal became more violent. He blamed Duffy for getting the people massacred. Then he turned to Lucas and said it was unpardonable for him to say a word on behalf of such a man, or to act with

59 Lucas to Duffy, December, 1854 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
60 Lucas to Duffy, January, 1855 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
The particular cause of this passionate outburst was some articles in *The Nation* which Duffy admitted were very plain and direct but not disrespectful. In one of these Duffy said that if some of the best priests in Ireland had been sent to rot in bogs, and if political profligacy had lost much of its honor in the eyes of the people, the chief cause was the alliance between the Archbishop of Dublin and the Catholic agents of Dublin Castle. This was untrue in its most important point. Far from being in collusion with Dublin Castle, Cullen completely kept away from it. His sole visit, so far as we know, took place years later. Its purpose was to obtain a reprieve for a Fenian condemned to death.

When Duffy met Lucas he hardly recognised him. He had wilted terribly under the strain of his Roman journey which Duffy conceived had failed although the Pope had not yet pronounced on Lucas' mission. Duffy came to the conclusion that Lucas and he should retire and that the Tenant League should be dissolved. He felt only by such drastic action would the Irish people

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62 *Nation* (Dublin, March, 1854).
realize the calamity that had befallen their cause. Lucas did not agree nor did he accept Duffy's description of the state of Irish politics. Bishop Moriarty also tried to dissuade Duffy. But there were those who agreed with him that all hope in Irish affairs was dead and buried, justifying Duffy's phrase that until a full change occurred there seemed to be no more hope for the Irish cause than for the corpse on the dissecting table.

Duffy told his constituents in a farewell address that the Irish Party was now reduced to a mere handful. The popular organization had been deserted by those who had created it. Prelates of the Irish Church thronged the ranks of their opponents; priest was arraigned against priest and shameless political recklessness was openly applauded. He summed up by saying that their opportunity had been bartered away to an English faction, and the ultimate aim for which many had labored, to give back to Ireland her national existence, was forgotten or disclaimed.

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63 Lucas to Duffy, June, 1854 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
64 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 101-03.
65 Ibid., pp. 106-07.
Actually Duffy alone resigned. Lucas died soon after and his paper passed into Whig hands. Moore lost his seat in the next general election, and the League gradually dissolved. 66 Duffy's subsequent career in the House of Commons has been described by the Irish historian, J.H. Whyte, as rather a disappointment. During those three years he was less influential than at any other period in his career, and his speeches made little impact. At the request, however, of the Irish in Sydney and Melbourne he was very active when the constitution framed by the Australian colonies came to Westminster for confirmation. In the session of 1854, he did not speak at all because of ill-health. Yet he was a significant figure in the House and he was understandably impressed by some of the men he met there—Bright and Cobden in particular. 67

While still a member of parliament Duffy was involved in another controversy which was to be prolonged and bitter. His antagonist was John Mitchel who escaped from Australia, and went to New York where he began to publish his Jail Journal. It included comments on the

66 Whyte, Tenant League and Irish Politics, p. 98.
67 Ibid., pp. 106-11.
news that reached him from Ireland. In this series, which he later brought out in book form, he accused Duffy of having encouraged "poor O'Brien upon his Tipperary war" of which he was particularly contemptuous. Sarcastically, he denied being angry with Duffy who could not be expected "to get himself hulked for any principle, object, of cause whatsoever." He also alleged that when Duffy was released from prison and announced his intention of reactivating *The Nation*, he had urged the government to put no obstacle in his way, for the paper would be perfectly constitutional and safe. His final insult was to call him "Mr. Give-in Duffy", the candidate for New Ross. 68

Duffy was naturally outraged by all this. Even if the accusations were partly true, and they were not, he would have been angry. As Arthur Griffith pointed out, the articles in *The Nation* which were supposed to have sent O'Brien out on his Tipperary War were not written by Duffy. 69 As for the prison accusation, what Mitchel did not know was that Duffy had rejected a government offer to release him if he would


plead guilty formally. Duffy answered Mitchel along these lines in The Nation. He also counter-attacked. Mitchel, he said, was a recklessly violent man, who had rhetorical power but no commonsense.70

Duffy made up his mind to quit the "blind and bitter land" of Ireland and gave as his reason for doing so that an Ireland where Mr. Keogh typified patriotism and Cardinal Cullen the church was an Ireland he could not live in.71 But this, though one reason for going, was not the only one. He had an abiding sense of personal failure, for all the movements with which he was associated had come to nothing. His health was also very bad. Overwork and anxiety had frequently brought him to the point of danger. "I have laboured until my health wore down," he told Smith O'Brien, who at the end of 1854 was still a prisoner in Van Diemen's Land.

I have neglected my family and lived only for the Irish cause and at every point I have found myself thwarted by men who thought themselves justified in abusing me for my share in the affairs of '48--landlords, bishops and government officials--or for resisting O'Connell. After twelve years of fruitless struggle my heart

70Ibid., p. 112.
71Duffy to Dillon, April, 1855(Gavan Duffy Papers).
is weary and longs for tranquility...\textsuperscript{72}

He thought of Australia, a country that had been on his mind because of the part he had played in connection with the confirmation of the constitutions of the colonies. He was sure the climate would be beneficial to his health and from his consultations with Australians he believed that in Victoria there would be opportunities for becoming a successful lawyer and living a contented social life. He had much to do before he could leave. His principal concern was with the future of Smith O'Brien and of Maynooth College.\textsuperscript{73}

He campaigned among supporters of the government and the opposition for permission for O'Brien to return to Ireland. He also used whatever influence he had with the Parliamentary select committee that had been appointed to investigate the affairs of Maynooth. He did this on behalf of his friends at the college who feared a move by Cullen to obtain personal control over the institution.\textsuperscript{74} Of course, he also had to dispose of

\textsuperscript{72}Duffy to Smith O'Brien, June, 1855 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

\textsuperscript{73}Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 113-18.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid.
his interest in The Nation. He sold it to A.M. Sullivan and Michael Clery. It was arranged that they were to retain Cashel Hoey as editor. He had been associate editor since the revival of the paper in 1849. With the help of a loan from Thomas O'Hagan he cleared the debts that had arisen as a result of his public career.75

In October, 1855, he sailed on the "Ocean Chief" with his wife and three of his children with only £20 in his pocket. The emotional strain was oppressive as Duffy considered the step he had taken, to leave Ireland for a country on the other side of the world where he knew almost no one. "My ribs seemed to close on my heart with a painful and perilous responsibility but my wife bade me trust in God, and we faced the future without trepidation."76

75 Ibid., p. 123.
76 Ibid., p. 128.
CHAPTER V

AUSTRALIA

Charles Gavan Duffy may have considered himself a "failure" in Ireland but in Australia he was a success in early 1856. He and his family arrived in Victoria about the same time that news arrived from Ireland that John Sadleir, who speculated and lost the large sums of money entrusted to him, had committed suicide. Melbourne was no more than a thriving village, but it was here that Duffy received a hero's welcome from an enormous crowd of Irishmen who came to meet him. They were led by John O'Shanassy who was known to his enemies as an Irish papist demagogue.

Although tempted to settle in Sydney, which he found to be about a hundred years ahead of Melbourne and where there was a much larger Irish population, Duffy preferred Melbourne where he quickly acquired clients for his legal skills. Here, too, despite his original intentions to shun politics, he allowed himself to be drawn by his friends into active state affairs. Picking up a silly sentiment that was rather common at
the time, he declared that some day Australia would claim as its inheritance the thousand teeming islands of the Pacific which would carry Christian civilization into the swarming hives of China; and in the fulness of time would grasp the sceptre of India.  

He had arrived at a turning point in the history of the colony, when local parliamentary influence was replacing government from London. The first Victorian parliament sat from 1856 to 1861 and in those five years there were to be six ministries and a bewildering assortment of factions and shuffling alliances. Duffy found his starting point in this medley without any difficulty. The rising Popular party nominated him for a constituency which was largely Irish and purchased for him a residence and property to provide him with qualifications required by the constitution. He was victorious following a campaign conducted on lines familiar to him at home.  

To his astonishment, in Australia, Duffy found an eager curiosity about Ireland, and a knowledge of the

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1Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 132-33.

character of its leaders that surprised him. He experienced peace of mind for the first time in many years, and a feeling of achievement. If not for the absence of old friends he would have been very happy. "If you were not encumbered with an estate," he told G.H. Moore, "I would strive to seduce you here. What a career you would have! We are making a new and better America. All is growth and progress...." But he told the novelist Carleton that while he never for a moment regretted having left Ireland where Keogh and Cullen predominated, there was no country like the old country and no friends like old friends. A letter he had from Moore made him ask again if there was any hope for Ireland. Since he left, word from Rome came forbidding some Meath priests from attending meetings of the Tenant League without Cullen's express permission. Duffy exploded when he heard of this. "It makes my blood boil to think of a peasant in a mitre, a shallow, conceited dogmatist, a dense mass of prejudice and ignorance, squatting down upon the Irish cause and smothering it." His contempt for the primate had not waned.

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3Duffy to G.H. Moore, January, 1856 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

4Ibid., March, 1856.
He was a most constructive member of parliament, introducing or supporting proposals for abolishing property qualifications, for the federation of the colonies, and for reforming the procedural methods of the new parliament. When the government was defeated, the governor asked O'Shanassy to form an administration pending an election. He did so and appointed Duffy minister for public works and commissioner of roads and buildings. By this time Duffy's reluctance to re-engage in politics had completely evaporated. He was obsessed by the need to demonstrate that the Irish could succeed in Australia where they had failed in Ireland. But while Duffy insisted that the Irish were quite equipped to bear the burden of state, his political opponents thought otherwise. Some recalled Ireland's political and religious background which had made Duffy not merely an Irish rebel hostile to all peaceful government but a bitter papist that would never be content until the Pope was proclaimed sovereign of the Australians.

O'Shanassy's first ministry lasted only three months but he was back in office after a short interval.

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this time with Duffy as president of the board of land and works. In the government Duffy found himself in a minority. Part of his difficulty was that sometimes he was too arrogant and sharp in controversy. Duffy began to disassociate himself from O'Shanassy and ultimately resigned. At the following general election the Irish among the electors stood by Duffy in spite of his break with the popular O'Shanassy, whose government was defeated at the polls. In the new parliament, O'Shanassy's group occupied only a corner of the opposition front bench. They became known as the Corner Party to distinguish them from the main opposition which gathered around Duffy, and made him their leader in recognition of the reputation he had brought to Australia as a political organizer.7

The differences between O'Shanassy and Duffy were never healed. They were deep and bitter, recreating on Australian soil the Irish feuds of the previous decade. It was not merely the confrontation of a blunt and honest man with an educated gentleman. O'Shanassy was essentially the Catholic and Duffy the Irish spokesman. O'Shanassy was an O'Connellite who had migrated before the rise of the Young Ireland party and was hardly touched

7Ibid., pp. 177-79.
by the liberal influences of the day. He once claimed that control of education by the Church was an essential dogma; Duffy argued that it was, rather, a practice and a policy. Duffy had been educated at a Presbyterian school where he was the only Catholic boy, and he should be sorry to think, he said, that he had violated any dogma of his faith. Irish Catholic emigrants tended to take sides for one or other of the two men and scandalous stories were put into circulation, among them that Duffy had been an informer in 1848. 8

Duffy's new position at the head of an opposition group appealed to him. It gave him an opportunity to organize and train his followers for government. In Ireland opposition had meant pulling down the existing order. In Australia it was an opportunity of employing whatever was best in the habits and institutions of free countries to build up the new state of Victoria. So far as policy was concerned, his aim was to hold a middle-of-the-road position between the working classes and the land monopolists. 9

8Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 185-88.
9Ibid., pp. 202-10.
In the following general election the government was badly beaten and the problem arose of finding an alternative ministry among the varying opposition parties. Dr. Quinn, the Catholic bishop of Brisbane, who was a friend of Duffy's, brought him and O'Shanassy together in an uneasy truce so that together they were able to give Victoria a strong and able administration. Duffy was once more in charge of the land department and introduced a comprehensive measure, known as the Duffy Land Act, to make the possession of land as nearly universal as possible. He had particularly in mind to give the large class of diggers something to turn to when they became unfit to search for gold. He also hoped to see a multitude of his own countrymen, who had been driven from the land in Ireland, find prosperity in Victoria. The government was defeated in 1865 on an amending land bill and was replaced by one under James McCulloch that, with two short interruptions, lasted seven years.

Duffy took advantage of the opportunity of being out of office to visit Ireland with his wife and eldest daughter. He needed a vacation because his health had suffered from the strain of his political

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10 Ibid., pp. 222-49.
activities. He also wished to visit with old friends. He kept in touch with Irish affairs through correspondence with Thomas O'Hagan and John Blake Dillon. He had heard of the unexpected death of Smith O'Brien and of the plan to erect a national monument to O'Connell. 11

Duffy got a warm welcome on landing in England from old parliamentary friends. His literary conversations were very rewarding. He had the pleasure of meeting Robert Browning whom he regarded as the best poet of his age. Duffy naturally wanted to get to Ireland as soon as possible. When he arrived in Dublin with his wife and daughter in June, 1865, he was plunged into affairs as if he had only been gone a week. At a dinner one evening with old friends, a man named Prendergast, who had written a book on the Cromwellian Settlement, told a story of how at Ballingarry he had found that the conflict in which Smith O'Brien was involved had taken place in a cabbage garden. This offended O'Brien's friends and Duffy promptly told Prendergast that if he wanted to discredit a generous man, he ought not do so among his most intimate friends. 12

11 O'Hagan to Duffy, March, 1864 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
Dillon brought Duffy up to date about the growth of Fenianism, which had drawn many of the ex-Confederates into its ranks. They both agreed that the conspirators were honest men but the task they had set for themselves was beyond their capabilities. Dillon questioned Duffy about returning to Irish political life, which meant joining the National Association which had been formed in December, 1864. It was an unusual combination of Dillon, the '48 man, as honorary secretary and Cardinal Cullen as its most active promoter.

This Association was formed to provide Irishmen with a constitutional alternative to Fenianism. Its program emphasized the need to disestablish the Protestant Church, to effect land reform and to achieve state-aided denominational education. Cullen had always been firmly convinced that politics was not the direct concern of bishops and priests, but he had changed his view when he saw the growth of Fenianism among a frustrated people.

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., p. 267.
Duffy was tempted by Dillon to re-enter Irish politics but he wanted to be assured that Dr. Cullen would raise no difficulties and that George Henry Moore and the popular priests of the Tenant League would join the movement. Dillon assured him that there was no difficulty as far as Cullen was concerned. But Duffy found Moore bitterly opposed to any political association with Cullen and his friends, who had done so much, he insisted, to destroy one of the greatest national movements Ireland had ever witnessed. And when Duffy consulted the Tenant League priests he found them as opposed as Moore was to any cooperation with an organization of which Cullen was a member. Their opposition was bad enough but Duffy discovered that Moore was also prejudiced against Dillon who had Duffy's complete confidence. Not unnaturally, therefore, he decided to go back to Australia.

Before he left Ireland he helped Dillon to fight and win the Tipperary constituency. As for the Fenians,

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16 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 268-70.

17 Moore to Duffy, March, 1866 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

18 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 275-78.
Duffy thought their methods were foolish, though he admired their courage and devotion. In what was left to him of his vacation Duffy saw Rome and had a private audience with the Pope. In London he discussed Australian politics with Disraeli, and in Paris he tried, without success, to see Montalembert. It was in Paris, too, that he wrote a new preface for the thirty-ninth edition of his Ballad Poetry of Ireland.¹⁹

During his two years' absence in Europe, the coalition government of Victoria had acquired, in Duffy's opinion, a dubious character, maintaining its power largely by political corruption. Duffy was not a member of parliament at this time but in the summer of 1867, when he was back in Melbourne the constituency of Dalhousie became vacant and he accepted an invitation to become a candidate. It was an immense territory and Duffy did not welcome the prospect of having to speak at all the meetings his committee had arranged for him.²⁰

As always his own countrymen supported him zealously. At a meeting in support of his opponent at

¹⁹Duffy to Dillon, March, 1867 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
²⁰Duffy to Dillon, June, 1867 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
which Duffy was called an Irish rebel and an Irish papist they rushed the platform and had to be restrained by Duffy. He reminded them that he had been in fact described with great accuracy. What was he anyway but an Irish rebel and an Irish papist! He was duly elected. 21 In the interim he had busied himself in opposing the government's constitutional, financial and educational policies. The government ultimately fell on a proposal to impose a property tax which Duffy strenuously opposed. At this point the governor called on Duffy to form a cabinet. 22

The first three men Duffy communicated with suggested that he should put a respectable nonentity at the head of the government, Duffy himself taking any other place he thought proper. They made this suggestion to avoid the rooted prejudice against having an Irish Catholic as prime minister. Duffy replied that he would see the parliament of Victoria in hell before he would consent to degrade his race and people by permitting the Emancipation Act to be repealed in his person. 23

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"I washed my hands of these feeble friends," he told Cashel Hoey, "and I had the audacity for the first time to place three Catholics." There were cries of no popery, but his policy speech brought the vast bulk of the people to his side, and changed the tone of the entire press.

He assumed office in 1871 with high intentions, among them the establishment of new industries suitable to a southern soil and climate and drawing the labor force in part from the foundlings of the state and from the army of dangerous men in jail who through the opportunity of earning their daily bread might be capable of being reformed. The land problem which had always been of special interest to him had been ruined, be believed, by maladministration and now clamored for attention. Nothing had been done to feed the imagination of the people beyond the level of provincial mediocrity. He proposed, accordingly, to establish an art museum.

24 Duffy to Hoey, October, 1870 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

25 Duffy to Dillon, December, 1870 (Gavan Duffy Papers).

26 Duffy to O'Hagan February, 1871 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
He successfully withstood the first major Opposition attack which alleged that he had, at an inter-colony conference on tariffs, accepted propositions that were inimical to the interests of Victoria. Fellowes, the leader of the opposition, had seasoned his speech with suggestions reflecting on Duffy's Irish past. The prime minister felt compelled to blast back: "I can say without fear, without impiety, when I am called before the Judge of all men, I shall not fear to answer for my Irish career... and am content to reply that the recollection that when my native country was in mortal peril I was among those who staked life for her deliverance, is a memory I would not exchange for anything that parliaments or sovereigns can give or take away." 27

Duffy's government fell in 1872 to the united opposition's second onslaught, and ironically enough on the issue of political jobbery. The cases cited were rather petty except for two, and Duffy disposed of the first of these, by showing the backers of the appointed man included five members of the opposition. The other case was more difficult because it involved Duffy personally as well as an intimate friend of his.

Cashel Hoey. Hoey had been appointed, on Duffy's recommendation, secretary to the Agent General of Victoria in London. He had been the editor of *The Nation* for some time after Duffy's departure for Australia and later had become a member of the English bar. Duffy made the best case he could for the appointment, but he was not convincing. The government was defeated and Hoey lost his job.  

In 1873, Duffy was invited to accept a knighthood. To have refused, would his colleagues thought, have been misunderstood. Fundamentally he had no objection to receiving this particular distinction. He would have done so in Ireland if she, like the State of Victoria, had a natural parliament and government of her own. That was how his old friend, Father Doyle, saw it too. The title had been fairly won in a free country, he said, but in Ireland Sir Charles Gavan Duffy would continue to be best known simply as Duffy.  

By being out of office Duffy was able to return to Europe for the second time. He travelled alone on this occasion, and landed at Brindisi on a spring day.

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29 Fr. Doyle to Duffy, August, 1873 (*Gavan Duffy Papers*).
in 1875 with the intention of spending a long vacation doing absolutely nothing. His health was causing him concern and he had lost his voice. He went to Paris a few times, and to London to see a specialist. On his visits to Paris he also saw much of the Fenian leader John O'Leary, who had been released from prison on condition that he live abroad. Duffy found him a Fenian of a class he had never seen before: moderate in opinion, generally just to his opponents, and entirely without passion or enthusiasm except for a devoted love of Ireland. He had been a confederate in 1848 and had become anti-clerical as a result of the opposition of the priests to the Young Ireland movement.\(^{30}\)

On the occasion of his first visit to Ireland during this second European vacation, Duffy had conversations with leading priests of the former Tenant League. They were anxious that he should go to parliament but he could do little more than consult them because of his throat condition for which a London specialist recommended a stay at Aix les Bains.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{30}\)Duffy to Dillon, February, 1874(Gavan Duffy Papers).

His voice showed no improvement, so he settled down on the coast at Cannes, Mentone and Monte Carlo for the winter. It was here on the Riviera that he saw in the newspapers that John Martin had died within days of attending the funeral of his brother-in-law John Mitchel.32

Duffy received a telegram from some Meath priests shortly afterwards inviting him to stand for the parliamentary vacancy left by Martin. He replied that he had no desire to re-enter Irish politics. However, if he were nominated he would feel it his duty to go forward. He explained that he was still a repealer, holding the principles he had shared with O'Connell, Smith O'Brien, Dillon and Davis and he would do his best in concert with the Irish members to serve the Irish cause. He also made it clear that he would not join the Home Rule Association now being led by Isaac Butt. He failed to get the nomination, however, which went to Charles Stewart Parnell, a shy, cricket-playing young squire from County Wicklow.33

Duffy did not like Butt because of his rejection of the idea of independent opposition and the danger

33 Duffy to Fr. P. O'Reilly, May, 1874 (*Gavan Duffy Papers*).
that he was again making possible the practice of place-begging and subserviency to English governments. What Duffy did not know was that a change was taking place, one he would have approved, although the methods to effect it might not have been those he would have chosen. Within a short time of his election to the Meath constituency young Parnell reacted against the club atmosphere of the House of Commons and associated himself with a group of Irish obstructionists. This was the prelude to the ousting of Butt from the leadership of the Home Rule League and to a vigorously independent policy vis-à-vis English political parties.

Before this occurred, however, an unsuccessful effort to displace Butt was made from a different quarter. The Lord Mayor of Dublin, P.P. MacSwiney, tried to establish a party in opposition to Butt during the O'Connell centenary celebrations in 1875. It was a development which Duffy became fully aware of when he again went to Dublin in August of that year to attend the centenary celebrations. He had planned to spend about a month in Ireland, staying with friends and

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34 Duffy to Dillon, June, 1874 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
taking a look at places that were part of his personal history. During the celebrations at which Duffy represented the Irish in Melbourne, MacSwiney told him of his political intentions. He was supported, he said, by Dr. Cullen, who had promised a substantial portion of the necessary capital for a new daily paper. The Lord Mayor invited Duffy to remain in Ireland and take charge of the whole enterprise. The Cardinal had entirely changed his opinion about Duffy's Irish policy, he said. Duffy responded, "I have not changed my opinion about him. To ask me to direct a newspaper, whose funds are to be largely furnished by Dr. Cullen, is to ask me to make a voyage certain to end in shipwreck, and I respectfully decline." His feelings for the primate had not changed even after almost thirty years.

The night before his conversation with MacSwiney, Duffy witnessed an unpleasant demonstration of the growth of factionalism. The Lord Mayor's party had opposed all efforts to give Butt a prominent place in the centenary celebrations, while another led by

36 Ibid., p. 364.
37 Ibid., p. 365.
A.M. Sullivan insisted upon it as his right. The result was that Duffy's life-long friend, Thomas, now Lord Chancellor O'Hagan was shouted down when he got up to speak, and when Duffy rose to speak, cries of "Butt! Butt!" forced him to resume his seat. The Lord Mayor's efforts to control the clamour only made it worse. Butt, who was sitting next to Duffy, said he would put an end to the trouble if Duffy would induce MacSwiney to give him a moment's hearing. But Duffy, disgusted with both factions for destroying the celebration, refused to interfere. After a while the principal guests, including Duffy, withdrew with nothing having been accomplished.  

After that experience it must have been a relief to Duffy to return to the sunny Mediterranean on the first stage of the long journey back to Australia. At Monaco, Thomas O'Hagan came from London to spend a few days in his company. Duffy had been surprised by the arguments O'Hagan used in his centenary speech to justify O'Connell's violence toward some of his opponents. Duffy's attitude toward O'Connell had not changed with the passing of years. He told O'Hagan, 

38Duffy to Mrs. Duffy, August, 1875 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
"The O'Connell you paint is as ideal a person as King Arthur of Tennyson. He was no more the generous, single-minded, unselfish hero of your prose idyll than he was the imposter ordinarily presented in the Times—but a strange compound of both." Many of Duffy's views were formed in the 1840's from various incidents and his dislike for Cullen and O'Connell never wavered.

The final stage of Duffy's Australian career lasted four years, from 1876 to 1880. As always he experienced no difficulty in finding a constituency and returning to parliament. Within a few months there was a dissolution. Duffy was re-elected and the party to which he belonged, led by Graham Berry, became the Government of Victoria. Berry offered Duffy any office in the government he might wish to have but Duffy considered it inappropriate for a man who had been prime minister to act in a secondary position. By agreement between the principal parties he was then chosen to be the Speaker of the House. 40

39 Duffy to O'Hagan, January, 1876 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
40 Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, pp. 370-75.
Duffy now had leisure for a task he had long contemplated, that is, writing the story of Young Ireland. This work was substantially advanced when he retired in 1880 from the political scene and returned to Europe. Australia had been kind to him, but he had made ample compensation in public service. His name is recorded among the founders of the state of Victoria and his children served the Commonwealth with great distinction. His eldest son, John, was a cabinet minister in Victoria; his second eldest son, Frank, became chief justice of the High Court of Australia. Duffy's third son became clerk of the Houses of Parliament, and a fourth, Philip, a pioneer in railway engineering in Western Australia. It has been said recently, however, by an Australian historian that while Duffy himself rose to greatness in tackling great problems, and was prime minister, speaker, and a member of four governments in Victoria, his Australian career was an anti-climax in that he never fulfilled his great dreams vis-à-vis Ireland. The answer may lie in the fact that Duffy was never entirely reconciled to being an Australian. He was first and foremost an Irishman, and really never seemed able to give his whole mind to Australian problems.

And even while in Australia he labored to ensure that there Irishmen would avail as fully as possible their opportunities. In Australia, Irishmen attained successful careers and Duffy was the living proof of that.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Because of bronchitis Duffy, on retirement, went to live in Nice on the French Riviera. There, in comfortable surroundings, he was able to finish the Young Ireland book and to begin some others that had long been floating in his mind. His wife, Susan, died in September, 1878. They had been married for over thirty years, and she had borne him eleven children of whom six survived. A couple of years later, in 1880, he married a niece of hers, Louise Hall. There was a great difference in their ages; he was sixty-four and she in her twenties. But he loved her and she returned his love. She died in 1889 after bearing four children, who were reared by the daughters of Duffy's second marriage.

Young Ireland, Duffy's most important work, first appeared in 1880. The story was continued in Four Years of Irish History and in the League of North and South which were published within the next six years. These books, it is generally conceded, have left historians deeply in Duffy's debt although they are no
doubt partial in the chapters that deal with the major conflicts in Duffy's Irish career. Taken together the praise and the criticism indicate that there is room for a reappraisal of the historical position of men like O'Connell, Davis and Mitchel. O'Connell in particular remains undoubtedly and unfairly under a cloud and for this Duffy must bear partial responsibility. In his books O'Connell always appears as half patriot, half charlatan, a man of amazing abilities, but untruthful, rapacious, and very rarely acting through motives that were purely single-minded and disinterested.

In 1882, Duffy also published *A Bird's Eye View of Irish History*, a chapter taken from *Young Ireland*, and some years later his life of Thomas Davis and his Conversations with Carlyle. His last major work was the two volume autobiography *My Life in Two Hemispheres*. In addition to these works, Duffy prepared a short life of Davis (1895) and wrote a number of articles and lectures on constitutional, agrarian, and literary subjects. The most important of these at the time was "A Fair Constitution for Ireland" which was published in the *Contemporary Review*.

Duffy had made Parnell's acquaintance in the spring of 1880 and had been questioned by him as to his political intentions. Duffy had replied that he wanted
as always to work for Ireland but not in Parliament and that he desired to keep himself free of parties.¹ During the following five stormy years, he watched Parnell's career mainly from a distance but his annual visits to London and Dublin gave him opportunities of conversing with him. Parnell had a high regard for Duffy. Publicly and privately he alluded gratefully to his role in the creation of independent opposition in 1852 which was the forerunner of his own parliamentary party.²

When the Phoenix Park murders occurred in 1882, Parnell was so horrified that he announced his intention of resigning and suggested to his immediate entourage that Duffy should be asked to take his place. One wonders what Duffy would have done if this request had been made to him. He seems to have had a rooted objection at this time to returning to Parliament, which would have meant spending the winters in London. He had refused invitations to stand for the Monaghan constituency in 1885 and 1892. The question of becoming the leader of the party, however, never materialized in

¹Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, p. 315.
1882. Parnell changed his mind and three years later because of utter dissatisfaction with the Liberals, from whom the Irish had traditionally expected most, he helped to overthrow them and set up the Tories under Lord Salisbury. The question of what return the Tories were to make from this gift of the gods focussed attention on Lord Carnarvon, the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland in the new administration.³

Duffy had met Carnarvon when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies and he now found him deeply interested in a scheme for a Central Irish Parliament with four provincial assemblies. Following some correspondence, Duffy went to Dublin to see Carnarvon and was immediately invited to an official dinner at the Castle and to conversations in the viceroyal lodge. While the latter took place immediately he excused himself from going to the Castle because of a promise he had made long before never to enter it until it was occupied by a national government.⁴ Carnarvon, who was finding his colleagues unresponsive, was not prepared to pledge himself to home rule; and he doubted

³Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, pp. 174-75.
⁴Duffy to Carnarvon, September, 1885 (Gavan Duffy Papers).
whether he could get agreement on an alternative Duffy had suggested. This consisted of a promise to establish a select committee of enquiry whose report might form the basis of future legislation. Another general election was coming up and Duffy told Lord Carnarvon that he had advised Parnell not to support Tory candidates unless Ireland were assured of a quid pro quo. 5

The election came without any prior agreement being made and Parnell supported the Tories only haphazardly in view of an indication in Gladstone's speeches that a home rule solution might be expected from him. Gladstone was in fact returned to power and introduced his first home rule bill which Duffy declared would be received with enthusiasm by the Irish people. The colonial system it offered was "one of the most courageous and disinterested experiments in human history." 6 Perhaps it was too courageous for parliament, which eventually rejected the bill. Within five years the seemingly invincible Irish party crumbled as a result of Parnell's love affair with Kitty O'Shea and Ireland was torn apart. A year later, Parnell, the

5 *Ibid.*, October, 1885 (*Gavan Duffy Papers*).
6 *Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine*, pp. 175-76.
uncrowned king, was dead. In the same year The Nation, which for a long time had been a mere shadow of its original self, ceased to have a separate existence.

The national upheaval that followed the O'Shea divorce proceedings grievously affected Duffy as it did all Irishmen, but he appears to have kept his feelings largely to himself and in public proposed a burial of all national feuds, ancient and modern. His sympathies, however, were with the anti-Parnellite side, if only because for years he had considered Parnell too much of an autocrat. But he never ceased to deplore the disunion that followed Parnell's death. And when, after many years of frustration, a unity conference was proposed, Duffy was suggested as a possible mediator. But he made it known that he was willing to act provided that the conflicting sections invited him to do so and assured him in advance that they would accept as final his decision, whatever form it took. John Redmond and Tim Healy gave their consent but John Dillon refused so that the idea was still-born.7

Duffy's mind found respite from the ugliness of the Parnell split in the consideration of Ireland's educational and cultural needs. This, in effect, was

what had brought him into public life. Now, in the early 1890's he began to formulate again the thesis of the forties, the thesis of Young Ireland, his own thesis, "educate that you may be free." In 1892, he gave the inaugural lecture to the Irish Literary Society of which he became the first president.

In 1893, the year of the foundation of the Gaelic League, he spoke to the Society about books for the Irish people. No organized attempt was being made to raise the mind of the country to higher and more generous ideals of life and duty. Liberty would do much for the Irish people but he cautioned them that it would do little for them if they did not know their own ancestors. In any event the Irish people needed to be educated more intensively as well as nationally. Duffy's attitude to the Irish language was that of the Young Irelanders generally. In the first year The Nation printed at least two articles on the Irish language. They were written by Davis who earnestly wished for a wider extension of the use of Gaelic. Davis had learned some Irish himself and was open to pressure from enthusiasts like the scholar John O'Donovan. But the Young Irelanders, whether enthusiasts or not, in general knew very little Gaelic. Duffy admitted to his daughter that the only word of Irish he
knew was "gearran" which meant horse. 8

In July, 1894, when he was almost seventy-nine years of age, Duffy came to dinner in the House of Commons and the members who entertained him found him brisk and bright after an operation for cataracts. But within a few years he appeared to be failing in health and he abandoned his annual visit to Ireland. He was almost blind and had to rely on his daughters to read to him and to write his letters. For as long as he was able Duffy went for a walk every morning. Nice was always a popular place for holidays and many famous Irish people, including John Dillon, the son of his old colleague, and Douglas Hyde, visited Duffy.

Duffy was a man of deep faith, a solid rather than a pious Catholic. He attended mass every Sunday and three or four times a year he went to confession and communion. Although the family must have expected that their father had not long to live, his death came quite unexpectedly on the ninth of February, 1903. There was nothing but a fainting spell to warn them. He passed away quietly four hours later, survived by seven sons and four daughters. Originally, he was

8Speech given before the Irish Literary Society in 1893(Gavan Duffy Papers).
buried at Nice but his desire was to rest in Ireland. So, at the request of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, he was subsequently brought home to be honored publicly. On the eighth of March his coffin was followed to Glasnevin cemetery by many people from all over Ireland and laid in a grave near to that of John Blake Dillon.

He had outlived his generation but he had made it live, too, in his writings, and in the example of public service to the people of Ireland and Australia. The very range of his activities on two continents singled him out from many of his contemporaries, while his achievements as the father of The Nation, as an educationist, and particularly his policy of independent opposition made him at least the equal of Thomas Davis, whose genius, demonstrated over a much shorter period, has caused him to be regarded as the outstanding figure in the Young Ireland movement. However, it is certain, from all we know of Duffy, that such comparisons would be odious to him. So perhaps we should leave Duffy and Davis and Dillon where they began, as the founding triumvirate of a movement whose ideological repercussions extend to our own days.
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Sept 12, 1974

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