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THE DESMOND REBELLIONS,
1569-1573 AND 1579-1583

by

Claude R. Sasso

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

December

1978

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Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Arlene, and my children, Gena and Michele, for their patience and encouragement while I worked to complete this dissertation.

LIFE

The author, Claude Ronald Sasso, is the son of Henry E. Sasso and Jean F. (Puglise) Sasso. He was born on January 4, 1944, in Chicago, Illinois.

His secondary education was obtained in the public schools of the suburbs of Chicago, where he graduated from Proviso East High School in 1962.

In September, 1962, he entered Loyola University of Chicago, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Science with a major in history in June, 1966. While attending Loyola University he participated in the Reserved Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) and was designated a "Distinguished Military Graduate" in 1966, receiving a Regular Army commission in the Air Defense Artillery Branch.

Since joining the military, the author, who was recently promoted to the grade of Major, commanded two Nike-Hercules missile firing batteries, served a tour in the former Republic of Vietnam, and spent three years as a teaching member of the faculty of the Military Science Department at Loyola (1972-1975). His doctoral studies commenced in June, 1972, at Loyola and were completed with this dissertation while he served with the 32d Army Air Defense Command in the Federal Republic of Germany.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- ARQUEBUS (or HARQUEBUS) - A fifteen century small bore fire-arm that was replaced by the more accurate and better balanced musket.
- BONAGHT - The right of a lord to impose levies of food, drink, lodging or cash upon his subjects.
- BREHON - Irish judges who decided disputes by arbitration and administered a criminal law noteworthy for its lack of sanctions.
- CALIVER - A light matchlock weapon weighing only twelve pounds (compared to the twenty pound musket) capable of firing a one-ounce ball eighty yards.
- CESS - An Irish tax usually collected in oats or other victuals and designed to subsist English soldiers.
- CHURL - An Irishman and freeholder of the lowest rank, akin to a serf and carrying connections of low-bred and rude.
- COYNE - The billeting of military persons (including food and entertainment) upon private persons by Irish chiefs.
- CREAGHT - Groups of Irish families who travelled in groups, moving their cattle to mountain pastures each summer.
- CULVERIN - A large canon.
- CUSTODIAM - In Irish law, a grant by the exchequer (for three years) of lands in the possession of the crown.
- CUTTINGS AND SPENDINGS - A kind of tribute due Irish lords or tanists usually paid in cattle or cash.
- GALLOWGLASS - Scots heavy infantry who began settling in Ireland in the mid-thirteenth century and serving as mercenaries in Irish conflicts.
- GAVELKIND - A subdivision or periodic redistribution of a lord or chief's lands among eligible claimants at his death.
- GOSOP - Someone who stands up for another person as a sponsor or like a family relation.
- GLIBB - The thick mass of matted hair hanging over the eyes worn by the Irish.

HOSTING - The raising of a host or armed multitude in Ireland at the behest of the Lord Deputy.

KERNE - Irish light infantry drawn from the free peasantry. Sometimes referred to as "idle men".

LIVERY - The billeting of a soldier's horse by Irish free-men in recognition of the sway/rights of Irish chiefs.

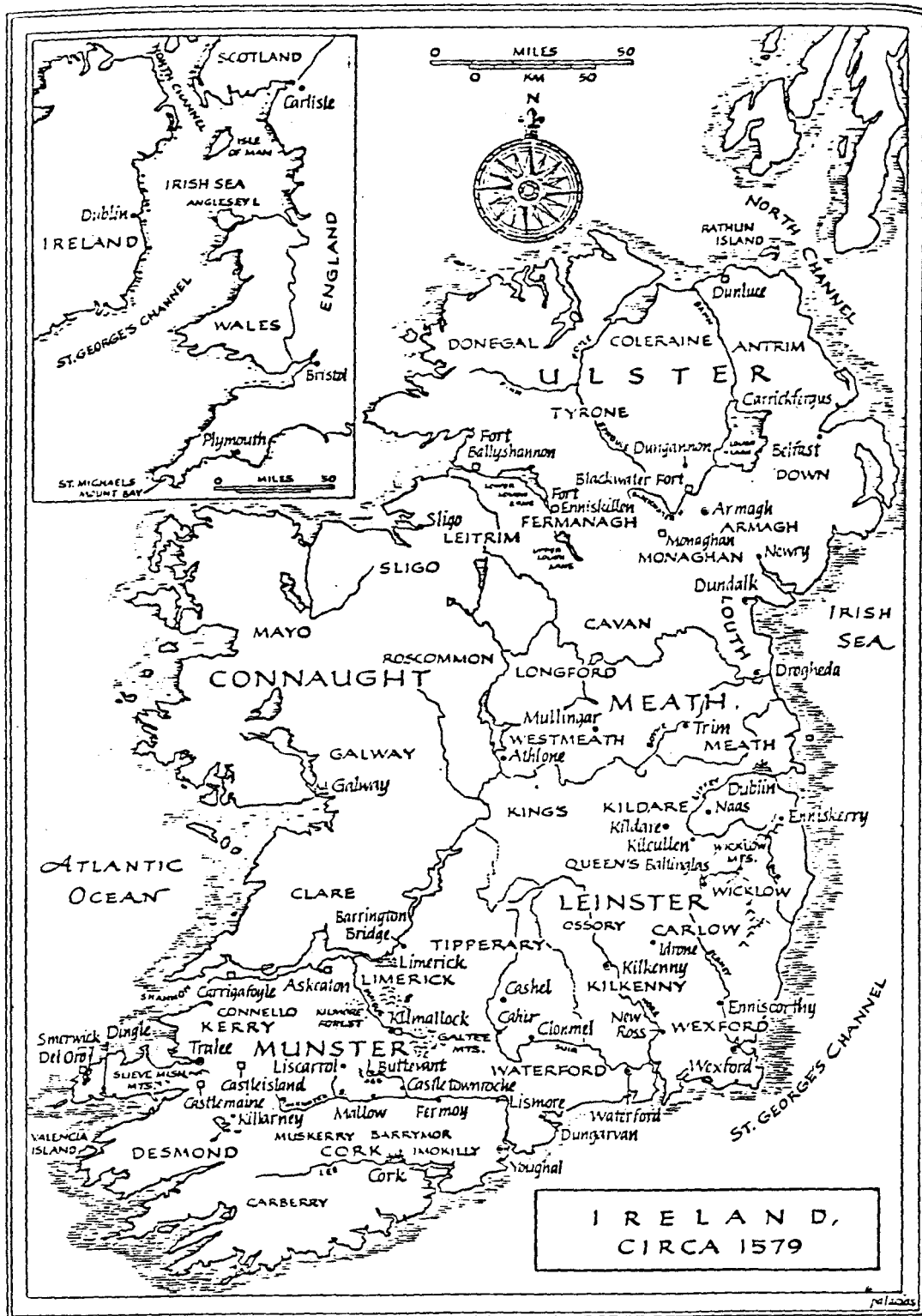
RISING OUT - Military summons requiring the freeholders and tributary families owing services to a lord to gather their military forces and place them at the lord's disposition.

SAKER - A sixteenth century canon.

TANISTRY - Irish system of succession, which unlike primogeniture, was designed to pass power to the "fittest" adult relation, but which often led to bloody contests for power.

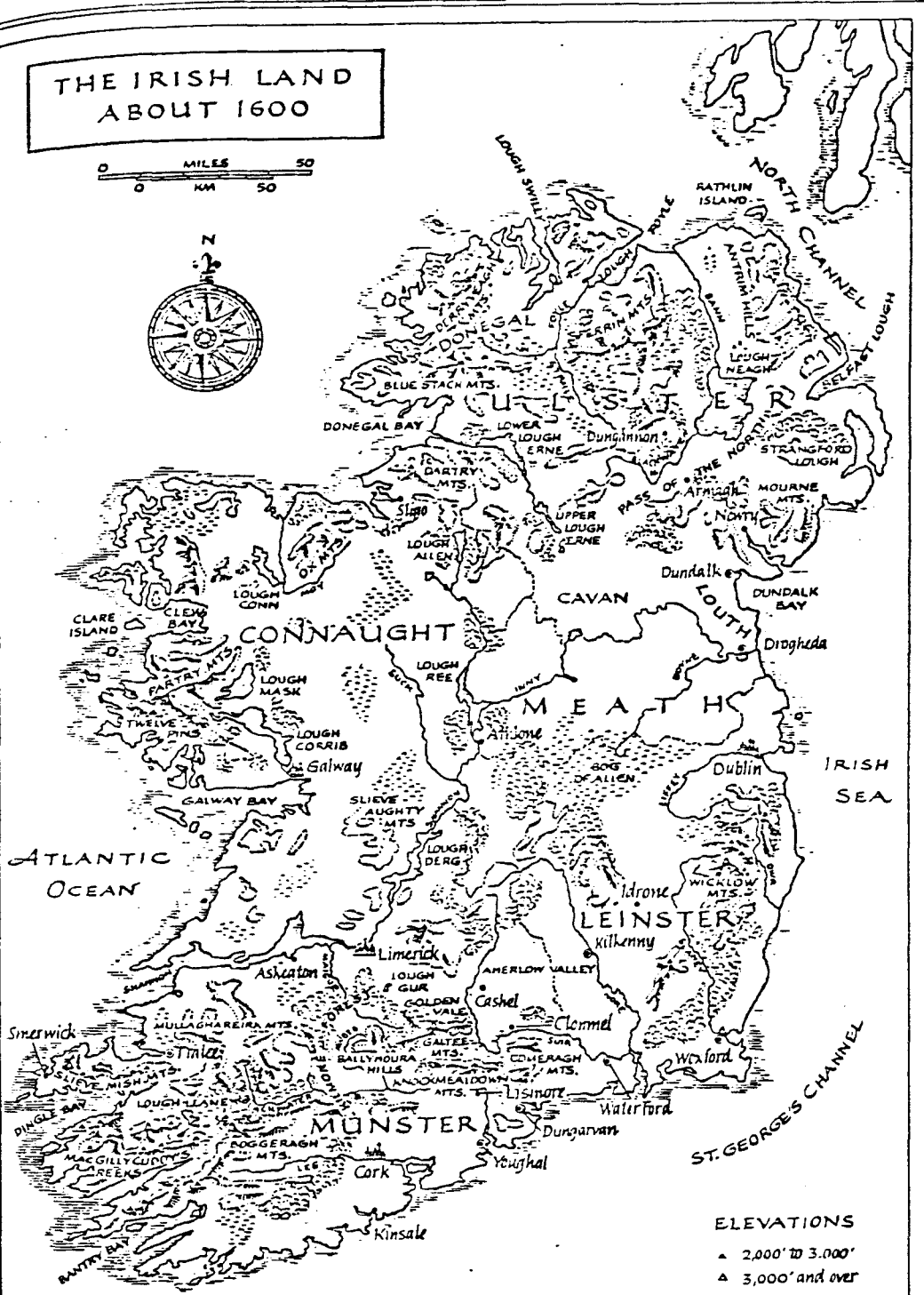
TUATH - The demesne of an Irish or Anglo-Irish lord plus the free land over which his family was due services, rent or tribute.

IRELAND CIRCA 1579

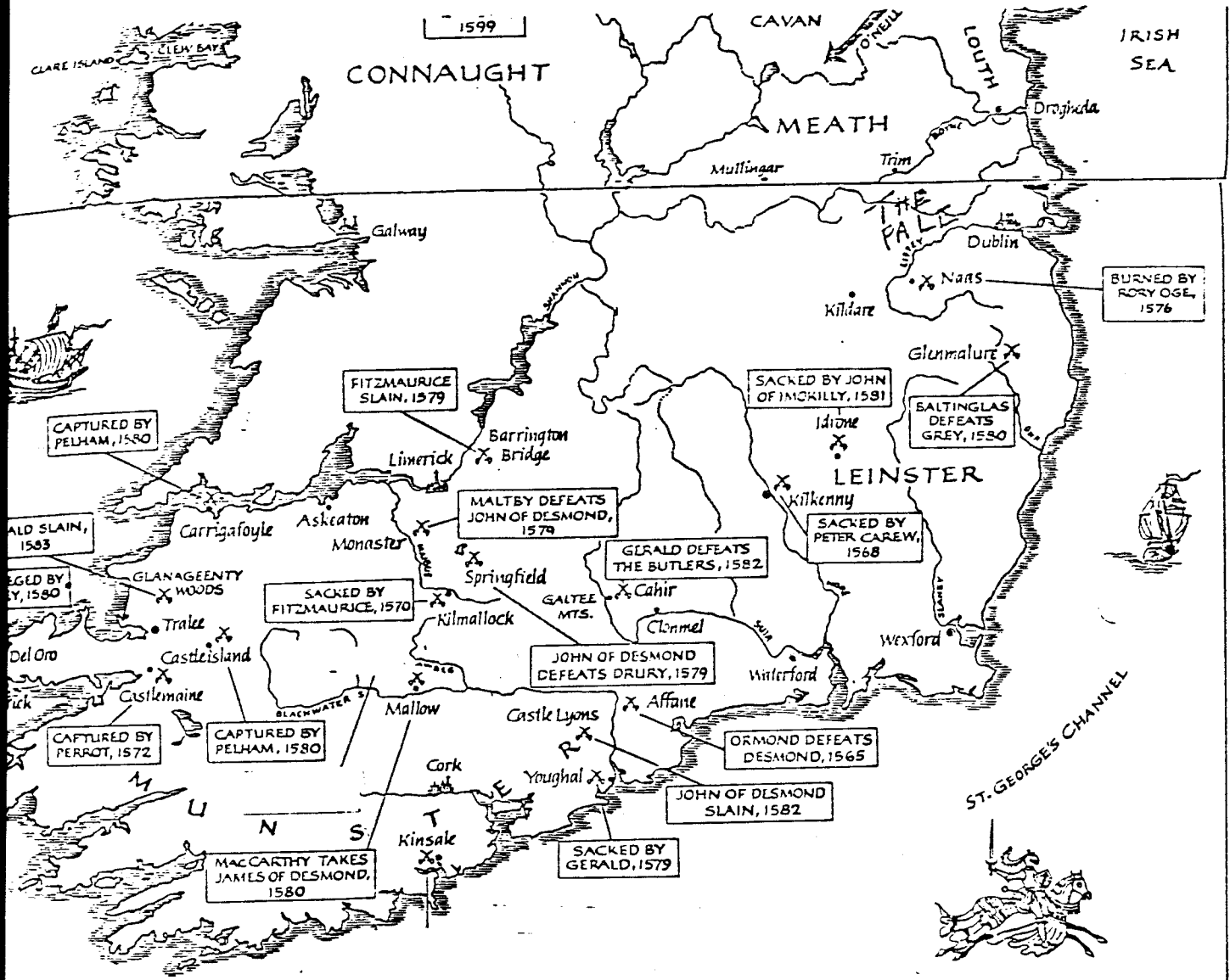


THE IRISH LAND ABOUT 1600

THE IRISH LAND ABOUT 1600



MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE DESMOND REBELLIONS



CHAPTER I

THE ELIZABETHAN IRISH SCENE

Sixteenth-century Ireland was a land abounding in oats, cattle, sheep, fish, milk, and honey according to the account of an exiled Irish bishop attempting to convince the papacy of the value of Ireland to the Catholic cause in the age of the Counter Reformation. He went on to describe the mineral wealth, which included generous supplies of gold, silver, copper, and lead as well as iron.¹ To his accurate account, it might be added that the numerous Irish harbors did considerable trading with Spanish, French, and English vessels, exporting fish, hides, wool, linen, linen yarn, timber, wax, and tallow. The Irish people themselves, estimated at about one million according to the best available evidence, were considered handsome by the English, but that is where English admiration generally ended and the vast gulf that separated the Tudor English and Irishmen began.² Although the English acknowledged the physical wealth of Ireland and

¹Rev. Patrick F. Moran, History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin Since the Reformation, 2 Vols. (Dublin, 1864), 1:93.

²R.A. Butlin, "Land and People, c. 1600," A New History of Ireland, T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and T.J. Byrne, eds., 3 Vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1976); Vol. 3, Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691, pp. 147, 164. This volume is hereafter cited as Early Modern Ireland.

were indeed primarily motivated by economic motives in their government of St. Patrick's isle, they were overwhelmed by the primitive nature of Irish society and especially its oppressive polity, inefficient agricultural system, and lack of civilization and good order as measured by the standards of Elizabethan civilization in the age of the Reformation.³ The English were more likely to look upon Ireland as a tempestuous and savage land (much like the storms on the Irish Sea) whose geography, at least from the military point of view, was dominated by mountains, peat bogs, and forests. The extent of the differences which separated these two peoples was best described by the historian, Cyril Falls, who noted that "a strong antipathy existed between the two cultures because there was scarcely a point of contact between their traditions, their ideals, their art, their jurisprudence, or their social life."⁴

The inhabitants of Ireland consisted of three major groups. The first of these were the English settlers, who

³A.L. Rowse, The Expansion of Elizabethan England (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 100-101.

⁴Cyril Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars (London: Methuen and Company Ltd. 1950), p. 17.

resided in the Pale and in several chartered towns along the southern and western coasts, namely Wexford; Waterford, Yougal, Cork, Limerick, and to a lesser extent, Galway. The second were the Anglo-Irish or "Old English", the descendants of the twelfth-century conquerors who controlled the midlands and most of the South, specifically the fertile lands of Leinster, Munster, and southern Connaught. The third, of course, were the pure Irish, who lived throughout the island, controlling northern Ireland as independently as the Anglo-Irish who held sway in the midlands and the South.⁵

By the sixteenth century the span of English control extended little beyond the Pale, covering half the counties of Louth, Meath, Dublin, and Kildare. In this respect, at least, Ireland had changed little since its conquest during the reign of Henry II, but one dramatic change had occurred as regards the "Anglo-Irish." Within two centuries after the conquest, the Anglo-Norman descendants of the conquerors had adopted the language, institutions and customs of the Celtic population and had become so intermingled that the English perceived little difference between the two groups. This amalgamation of the conquerors by the subdued Celtic population was indeed disturbing to the English, who attempted

⁵J.B. Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 463.

to reverse the tide by what one author refers to as "legislation in the favor of the ascendant people."⁶ The English tried in vain in statute after statute to forbid intermarriage between the 'Englishry' of Ireland and the "wild" Irish and in the words of the editor of the Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts, J. S. Brewer:

passed acts from time to time, disabling Irish chiefs, forbidding Irish labor, denouncing the least approach to Irish manners and customs, and levelling the whole force of indignation and disgrace against the very name of Irish.⁷

The leading families among the Anglo-Irish were the Butlers and Geraldines, who between them controlled several great earldoms, exercising almost a palatinate jurisdiction over their respective territories and the mass of their Gaelic tenants. Almost all of the southwest of Ireland was dominated by three major contending clans: the Desmond Geraldines (as distinguished from the Kildare Geraldines, who dominated the frontier of the English Pale); the Butler Earls of Ormond; and the O'Brien Earls of Thomond. Just to the north of Thomond lay Connaught, which was the dominion of the

⁶Rowse, p. 92 and Black, p. 464.

⁷Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts, Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, 1515-1574, eds. J.S. Brewer and William Bullen; 5 Vols. (London, 1867), 1 (1560): introduction, xiii. Hereafter cited as Carew MSS.

Anglo-Irish De Burghs (or Burkes), who ranged over Galway, Roscommon and the south of Sligo. Outside the fifty by twenty mile extent of the Pale, these families lived like the Irish chieftains with whom they had intermarried and had been allied with over the centuries and they ruled by Irish law almost like independent sovereigns. In their domains the English common law was without force and the King's or Queen's writ no more than a piece of parchment.⁸

Sixteenth century Irish society was basically a feudalistic environment in which the Irish chief or Anglo-Irish lord ruled over his "mere Irish" tenants supported by a plethora of rights which have been compared in their oppressive nature to those exercised by Russian nobles over their serfs.⁹ Surrounded by a court, administration and a military hierarchy, the lord ruled by virtue of his ancient rights and more importantly through his military strength, the only recognized sovereignty. His person was attended by councillors, heralds, butlers, cooks, harbingers, Irish poets and harpers. His retinue included horsemen as well as household kern (Irish light infantry) and Hebridean gallowglasses (Scots heavy infantry), about which more will be said later. The revenue, chiefly paid in cattle or in kind, and the administration

⁸A.F. Pollard, The History of England from the Accession of Edward VI to the Death of Elizabeth, 1547-1603 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915), p. 428.

⁹Carew MSS., 1, introduction: viii. In the view of at least one English historian who shows little sympathy for the value of Irish civilization and culture, sixteenth-century Irish society is compared with the pre-medieval English Heptarchy. See Rowse, p. 100.

were handled by a seneschal, chancellor, master of the rolls, treasurer (and a force of receivers and collectors), families of brehons (Irish "judges"), sheriff, escheator, coroners, chief sergeant and sergeants-at-arms.¹⁰

The Anglo-Irish lord or Irish chief possessed a demesne farmed by his own serf-like tenants, who were somewhat more free, though they owed him various services and/or rents frequently paid in beef, the chief measure of wealth, or in money. The entire demesne added to the areas over which he was lord, where military services, rent or other privileges were due him, was called the "tuath" or lordship. In effect, the tuath was a small, self-contained state where the lord's or chief's courts and word ruled supreme. Secondary chiefs of considerable wealth and strength, under great chiefs like the Earl of Desmond or the Earl of Thomond, possessed lordships of their own, but owed their allegiance as well as service or rent or both, to their overlord.¹¹ They maintained their own military forces, but were subject to the lord's calling of a "rising out", which required these freeholders as well as the tributary families of the lord's demesne to

¹⁰David B. Quinn, "Anglo-Irish Local Government 1458-1534," Irish Historical Studies, I (1938-1939): 364.

¹¹Falls, p. 26.

gather their military forces and place them at the disposal of the lord whether the issue concerned clan warfare or a struggle with the English.¹² Thus, James, eleventh Earl of Desmond, was able to boast to Emperor Charles V that he had 16,500 foot and 1,500 horse at his command.¹³ Since the lord also had authority to impose levies of food and drink as well as cash to support these forces through the system of "bonaght" (or "coyne and livery" as it became known when feudal rights were superimposed over the Irish system), he possessed a potent force for revolt against the English or for wars with his neighbors.¹⁴ In short, the Crown was forced to depend on the loyalty of the Anglo-Irish for its government of most of Ireland outside the Pale.¹⁵

The system of succession for Anglo-Irish lords and Irish chiefs was determined by the ancient Irish practice of "tanistry." Unlike the English system of primogeniture, whereby land and power were passed from the father to the eldest son, the Irish practice was to pass power, at least in

¹²"Unpublished Geraldine Documents," The Journal of the Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland, (third series, vol 1, part 2 1868-1869): 514.

¹³Quinn, p. 367. Desmond's palatinate was viewed as "an entire province of Gaeldom with the town of Cork keeping apprehensive watch upon the enemy, like Berwick upon the Scottish borders..." See Rowse, p. 99.

¹⁴David B. Quinn, The Elizabethans and the Irish (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 16.

¹⁵Black, p. 464.

theory, to the fittest adult relation in the chief's family, whether that be a brother, son, or uncle. The chosen successor or "tanist" was elected and served even before the lord's demise as a kind of "crown prince" exacting his own tribute or "cuttings" from the country. In practice, the system frequently devolved into clan rivalries between claimants, where assassination and raiding a rival's lands were all too common.¹⁶ The "struggle for lordship", as the English referred to this process, was viewed by the first of Elizabeth's viceroys in Ireland, the Earl of Sussex, as "the curse of the country." As the English governor observed, the "election to the captainship of the country" led claimants to maintain great numbers of "idle men of war" through coyne and livery and other Irish exactions which, in turn, resulted in "all the uncivil and detestable disorders of that realm and of the licentious disobedience to the Prince."¹⁷

Even tanists who went unchallenged might exert their military prowess to prove their fitness, since these first warlike encounters of young lords were almost "a ceremony" exalted alike by the scribe, poet, and harper, as they recorded bold cattle raids that frequently left widows and fatherless children in their stead. Since cattle raids were viewed almost

¹⁶Falls, p. 28.

¹⁷Carew MSS., 1: 348.

as a sport to be continued for reasons of pride, raiding with fire and sword was commonplace and did not necessarily detract from the chief's virtue or record of accomplishments in the eyes of contemporary Irish annalists. The annalists viewed the Irish world as one of epic and the hero and their writings were, in fact, primarily a record of internecine strife, in tone not unlike the Anglo-Saxon chronicle or the Icelandic saga. These destructive contests were the most serious weakness in the Irish polity.¹⁸

The Irish system of law was a kind of ancient Aryan law minus the influences of Roman law, and as such it was unable to curb the internecine strife. This law was known as Brehon Law because the judges who heard both civil and criminal cases were known as "brehons." Like the poets who ennobled Irish chiefs with their verses, these men were a part of the aristocracy of the Irish tuath. They held land by virtue of their hereditary office and exercised their judgeship over a given principality. Basing their decisions upon archaic texts and commentaries, the brehons decided civil disputes by arbitration and administered a criminal law that was most remarkable because there were almost no sanctions against the criminal aside from monetary fines.¹⁹ As Edmund

¹⁸Falls, p. 29; Rowse, p. 100; Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 16. The system of land tenure was further complicated by the Irish custom of "gavelkind," which involved a subdivision or periodic redistribution of the chief's lands among eligible claimants at his death. The extent and exact form of this practice is, however, uncertain due to a lack of historical evidence according to Falls, p. 30.

¹⁹Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 17.

Spenser, a veteran of the Irish campaigns as Secretary to Lord Deputy Arthur Grey de Wilton noted, even the punishment for murder was but a fine, of which the greater share was alleged to go to the brehon and his lord instead of the victim's relative. Since there was no machinery, aside from the lord's military might, to enforce the law and since the brehons were generally subject to their lord, the system permitted some Irish chiefs to violate the law with impunity.²⁰

The economy too supported the Irish way of life. Basically a pastoral society, Elizabethan Irish considered cattle as their greatest source of wealth and prestige. There were reportedly 120,000 milch kine in Tyrone alone in 1598 and Hugh Roe O'Donnell of Ulster was said to have forcibly garnered 30,000 cattle from his neighbors in a single morning's "work." The Irish also had great herds of brood mares, swine, goats, and in some districts, sheep. Travelling in groups of families known as a "creaght," the Irish moved their cattle to distant mountain pastures in the summer. This practice was disliked by the English because the creaght provided a natural hide-away and source of meat to Irish chiefs at war, which enabled them to feed their forces despite rapid movements about the country. It was viewed as a

²⁰Edmund Spenser, A View of the Present State of Ireland, ed. W.L. Renwick (London: Eric Partridge LTD. at the Scholastic Press, 1934), pp. 7-8.

barbarian practice as backward as the Irish system of tillage, which also disturbed the English, who deplored the inefficiency of the small Irish plow drawn by a half dozen garrans or Irish cobs (without harness), tied by their tails to the cross-bar.²¹

Finally, the military bent of the Irish must be considered. Since Celtic custom made the lands the ultimate possession of the clan or sept rather than the personal property of its leader, the real source of the Irish chief's strength were his septs. Beginning in the mid-thirteenth century, the power of the chiefs to control their septs was supplemented by the hiring of Scottish mercenaries known as "gallowglass." The gallowglass, who came over due to over-population in the Isles, were heavy infantry outfitted in shirts of mail and helmets, carrying a six-foot-long Scandinavian battle-axe, with which a two handed swipe could chop a man in half. Gallowglass families, like the Mac Sheehys and Mac Sweenys of Munster, were vigorously recruited and apportioned generous tracts of land for their use. Their recruitment, settlement, and development as professional soldiers between the thirteen and fifteenth centuries parallels and was largely responsible for

²¹Spenser, pp. 64-65; Falls, p. 32; Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 14.

the concomitant centralization of power by Anglo-Irish and Irish chieftains and the Gaelic resurgence in culture and language.²²

In the fourteenth century the great chiefs also began the development of a class of professional Irish mercenaries as well. These consisted of Irish light infantry or "kerne" and Irish cavalry. The kerne were drawn from the free peasantry only and were not thought highly of by the English as soldiers since they were lightly armed and seldom closed with an enemy unless the odds were greatly in their favor. Armed only with an Irish version of the long bow, a sword, a spear with wooden target or a handful of darts, they charged in an unorganized mass, yelling at the top of their lungs. Wearing no armor, the kerne wore the same apparel for battle as for herding cattle, with a "glibb" as the only protection for his head. The Irish cavalry, drawn from amongst the ruling classes, were unable to stand up to English horse because they had no stirrups. Riding upon light saddles known as "pillions" and holding their spears aloft above their heads, they were primarily useful in reconnaissance, foraging and pursuit of a fleeing enemy.²³

²²Rowse, p. 113, Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 15; Falls, p. 77.

²³Falls, pp. 68-70 and G.A. Hayes-McCoy, "Irish Cavalry in the Sixteenth Century" in Irish Sword, 1 (1953); 316-317. See also Sean O'Domnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth Century Ireland," Irish Historical Studies, v (1946): 29-54.

Both the Scottish and Irish soldiers of the lord were billeted on the country in accordance with the custom of "bonaght" or "coyne and livery," as it is more properly referred to during this period. In a discourse on this practice in 1579, Sir Henry Sidney, one of the more successful English viceroys of Ireland, described the practice as:

an extortion and violent taking of meat, drink, and money by the warlike retainers of such as pretend to have captaincy, rule, or charge of defense of countries as well as upon their own neighbors.²⁴

In practice this military taxation also involved the constant levying of goods and lodging for the lord and his soldiers. Although these exactions have been described as "sometimes burdensome [and] generally mischievous," they could also be used as occasions for violence and even expropriation of land from freeholders who failed to pay them.²⁵ Thus, the English saw that to deprive the Irish nobility of "cuttings and spendings" and coyne and livery, in particular, was the surest way of stripping away their power and revenue and making the "'churl as good as a gentlemen.'"²⁶

²⁴Carew MSS., 2:153.

²⁵Carew MSS., 1: introduction, xxxiv-xxxv and J.H. Adamson and H.F. Folland, The Shepherd of the Ocean (London: The Bodley Head, Ltd, 1969), p. 59.

²⁶Edmund Curtis, History of Ireland (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd, 1936), pp. 195-196.

The pacification of Ireland was a problem which English statesmen struggled with for the better part of a century before it was finally accomplished at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. With the exception of King Henry II, who came to Ireland with a powerful army at the end of the twelfth century and left behind a justiciar to represent his interests, and Richard II, who visited the island in 1394, most English kings generally ignored Ireland and did little to bring it under control. Efforts to separate the Irish and their customs from the English and Anglo-Irish settlers between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries failed to have any lasting effect because they were not supported by sufficient military force. In fact from the 1470's until 1534 the Kildare Geraldines in the person of the Earl of Kildare dominated the justiciar and the government of the Pale on behalf of the English king, supported by a force of four hundred soldiers, two hundred of whom formed his personal retinue. During the earlier part of the reign of Henry VIII, the proud, young king was persuaded on two occasions to summon the eighth Earl of Kildare to England to answer for his alleged abuses of office. On the first occasion, in 1520, the Geraldine was replaced by Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, who was designated Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. This attempt to rule Ireland with a tighter grip failed after eighteen months, when Surrey reported that a new conquest of the island required

six thousand soldiers and an annual expenditure of ten thousand pounds.²⁷ At this point the administration of Ireland was turned over to the hereditary rivals of the Geraldines, the Butlers, who were allied to Surrey's family by marriage ties. The Earl of Ormond then alternated in office with the Earl of Kildare between 1522-1529, when Henry briefly resorted to an English governor as a result of threats of foreign intervention in Ireland fostered by the Earl of Desmond.²⁸

In 1534, Henry recalled the Earl of Kildare to London and had him arrested, purportedly for failing to arrest the Earl of Desmond, at a time when he felt the threat of Irish sedition could not be tolerated in view of his own imminent excommunication and the prospect of war with foreign Catholic powers.²⁹ He was replaced by Lord Deputy, Sir William

²⁷J.C. Beckett, A Short History of Ireland (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952), pp. 17, 20, 22 and Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 2.

²⁸Carew MSS., 1: introduction, xxxviii-xxxix, xlii-xlv. The eleventh Earl of Desmond was apparently negotiating with Emperor Charles V in order to induce him to send an army of Spaniards into Ireland to support the Geraldines. See Carew MSS., 1:42 for the Emperor's letter to Desmond.

²⁹Myles V. Ronan, The Reformation in Ireland Under Elizabeth, 1558-1580 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930), p. xvii. The antipathy of the Irish towards English rule in 1534 was aptly expressed by Con O'Brien in a letter to Emperor Charles V quoted in Richard Bagwell, Ireland Under the Tudors, 3 vols. (London, 1890), 1: 192:

We have never been subject to English rule, or yielded up our ancient rights and liberties; and there is at this present, and forever will be, perpetual discord between us, and we will harass them with continual war.

Skeffington, who had governed briefly in 1529 and was now faced with an Irish rebellion led by Kildare's son, known in history as "Silken Thomas." Skeffington did not live to see the end of the rebellion and was replaced by Lord Leonard Grey, who won the unconditional surrender of "Silken Thomas" in 1534 and completed the task of breaking the power of the Kildare Geraldines by 1540. This rebellion is significant chiefly because it was the first in which the issue of religion came to the front as the Irish called upon the pope to bless their enterprise and upon foreign Catholic powers to aid them.³⁰

King Henry VIII returned to his conciliatory approach to the government of Ireland after 1540, ruling through the office of Lord Deputy. The Lord Deputy was charged with the government of all of Ireland, though his direct authority extended little beyond the Pale except when the English military presence or threat thereof was manifest. Installed by the Archbishop of Dublin in a solemn ceremony in which he was handed the sword of state as a symbol of his authority, the Lord Deputy possessed broad powers. He was able to confer knighthoods, proclaim traitors or issue pardons, though he risked the wrath of his sovereign if he displeased the King (or Queen) by expending too much money. He could raise an army and had most of the prerogatives of royalty with the exception of authority to coin money. The Lord Deputy was

³⁰Ibid., pp. xvii-xviii. See Carew MSS., 1:41 for the instructions given to Sir William Skeffington.

assisted by an Irish Council, the members of which were selected in England. They included the Lord Chancellor, the Chief Justice, the Treasurer at Wars, the Marshal of the Army and several great noblemen, such as the Anglo-Irish Earls of Ormond and Kildare.³¹ The Irish Parliament, which had its origins under Edward I in the late thirteenth century, theoretically represented and governed for all of the Island but in practice met rarely and represented only those native chiefs who possessed earldoms, great Anglo-Irish land owners, the hierarchy of the Church and dignitaries of the counties, cities and boroughs in the areas under direct English control.³² Two years after King Henry VII sent Sir Edward Poyning's to Ireland with an army to quash support for Perkin Warbeck (1492), a law was passed which provided that the Irish parliament could not meet without English approval and could not consider any bills which had not been first licensed under the Great Seal. This law, known as Poyning's Law, effectively undermined the independence of the Irish parliament, which in any case, met only three times during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). These three occasions were, namely, to legislate the ecclesiastical

³¹Falls, p. 21.

³²Black, p. 463.

settlement in 1560 and twice to attain great "rebels," namely, Shane O'Neill in 1569 and the Desmonds in 1585.³³

The Lord Deputy was, in fact, almost totally dependent upon financial support from England, since the Irish revenues were only sufficient to meet the maintenance costs for the modest four or five hundred man English garrison at Dublin. His powerful office controlled the Irish parliament and he, in turn, was controlled by the Queen and Privy Council, from whom he received regular correspondence and support, thanks to English sea power. His only civil subordinates outside Dublin were the county sheriffs and the "sovereigns" of the corporate towns, but there could be no English sheriffs until a county was shired.³⁴

No attempts were made to shire Irish lands during Henry VIII's reign. After 1540 the conciliatory and statesman-like approach of that monarch sought instead the cooperation of the Irish chiefs in a plan to convert the Irish land system into English tenures. This was accomplished to some extent by the policy of "surrender and regrant" in which Anglo-Irish lords were persuaded to "surrender" their lands and receive them back along with an English title, thus creating a feudal

³³Beckett, p. 57 and Falls, p. 21.

³⁴Black, p. 463 and Falls, pp. 21-22.

relationship with the English Crown over their lands (i.e., the tuath). This placed them in a position similar to that of the Anglo-Irish Earls of Ormond, Desmond, Kildare, and Clanricarde who, in effect, held their lands by knight-service and were subject to forfeit them if found guilty of treason. Irish chiefs like Conn O'Neill who surrendered their lands, received titles -- O'Neill became Earl of Tyrone -- and were to hold their lands in tail mail by royal patent. However, this policy failed to realize that the Irish chief actually owned only his own demesne and not the entire tuath over which he held sway. It did not, therefore, cause the Irish to give up their own system of land tenure, but rather permitted chiefs like the O'Neills to employ royal sanction against their allies and dependents in defiance of Irish law. The custom of tanistry was seldom interrupted for more than one generation, as oldest sons, despite letters patent to the contrary, awaited their turn to succeed after brothers or other relations judged more fit at the time. It did create a limited expansion of Tudor influence and a large number of baronies.³⁵

³⁵Falls, pp. 30-31; Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 3; Daniel McCarthy, The Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy Reagh, Tanist of Carberry, MacCarthy Mor, with Some Portion of "The History of the Ancient Families of the South of Ireland" (London, 1867), p. 21.

The efforts of Edward VI's government to win the submission of the Irish chiefs was more brutal and resulted in a difficult guerilla struggle with the Irish O'Connors of Offaly and O'Mores of Leix on the western border of the Pale. This wild and inaccessible country was fortified, seized and offered for settlement under twenty one year leases to Anglo-Irish gentlemen from the Pale and loyal Irish, few of whom accepted it. Although the next ruler, Queen Mary, did not resort to a policy that included extermination among its methods, her forced expropriation of Irish lands was hardly less subtle. She carried on the "plantation" or settlement of Leix and Offaly with loyal tenants and established forts at Maryborough, in central Leix, and Philipstown, the former center of O'Connor power. By creating shireground around these areas, King's and Queen's counties came into being. Nonetheless, the plantation of these areas was not very successful until the beginning years of Elizabeth's reign. By this time, religion, too, had become an area of acute division.³⁶

The English never understood the depth and tenacity of Irish adherence to the Catholic faith, first introduced into Ireland by St. Patrick between 432 and 465 A.D. Spenser, writing late in Elizabeth's reign, expressed it this way:

³⁶Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 3 and Rowse, p. 129.

...they are all papists by their profession, but in the same so blindly and brutishly uninformed, for the most part as that you would rather think them Aetheists or Infidels, but not one amongst a hundred knowth any ground of religion and article of his faith, but can perhaps say his pater noster or Ave Maria: without any knowledge or understanding what one word thereof meaneth...³⁷

Unfortunately, Spenser's charge was largely accurate in that the fate of Irish Catholicism was closely tied to the fate of the Irish polity. This was true because the hierarchy of the Irish Church, the bishops, were attached to particular families and did not rule dioceses as such until after the mid-twelfth century.³⁸ Even though dioceses were established at that time in four provinces (i.e., Armagh, Dublin, Cashel, Tuam), the old system continued to prevail since bishops remained largely under the influence of the great Anglo-Irish and Irish Chiefs. The political disharmony of the clan rivalries of the Tudor period was not a fit climate for the development of the clergy necessary to uplift Irish Catholics. The Irish clergy of the time were, in fact, held in universally low esteem, while the faith of the lowly, common Irishman was instead kept alive by the irregular missionary activity of friars from Spain, France, and England.³⁹ Jesuits and other Irish preachers and missionaries trained on the continent

³⁷Spenser, p. 109.

³⁸Beckett, p. 16.

³⁹Carew MSS., 1: introduction, xvi.

had a far greater depth of learning and holiness than the Irish clergy who had been displaced from their benefices and monasteries during the Reformation.⁴⁰

The Henrician Reformation weakened the Catholic Church in Ireland without successfully putting a Protestant establishment in its place. Irish chiefs were most willing to share in the confiscation of monastic lands and an Irish parliament approved all the Reformation statutes in 1536-1537, but the Irish retained their allegiance to the ancient faith. This was true not only because the English could not find able Protestant religious leaders to go to Ireland, learn the language, and preach among the people, but also because the Irish would not accept "new forms of service and new articles of belief which were wholly identified in language and content with the Anglicizing process."⁴¹

Although the English installed an obedient clergy and Irish bishops took oaths of fealty and allegiance to the Queen and her Lord Deputy at the beginning of Elizabeth's

⁴⁰Falls, p. 19.

⁴¹Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 11. The destruction of the monastic system deprived the Irish of certain social services and forced them to go to the Continent to be educated according to Patrick O'Farrell, Ireland's English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations, 1534-1970, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 20-21.

reign, this was more a political than a religious act and the "Reform" made but small progress.⁴² Even the Anglo-Irish of the Pale, the center of English power, were at best tolerant of the Protestant establishment rather than committed to it. From the time of the religious innovations of King Edward VI, there, in fact, existed a growing religious rift between the English and the Irish. The Marian reaction halted and reversed the slight progress made by reformers in Ireland. Even Thomas Butler, the tenth Earl of Ormond, who was schooled in England at court with Edward VI and Elizabeth I and was brought up as the first of his lineage to be a Protestant, found it politically expedient to conform during Mary's reign.⁴³

⁴²Ronan, p. xxiv. O'Farrell, p. 21, notes that "England's failure to contest the religious future in Ireland on ethical grounds, or indeed any other ground than that of coercion, amounted to an abdication of any moral claim to governing authority."

⁴³Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, pp. 4, 146 and Falls, pp. 18, 101. The fifteenth Earl of Desmond, Gerald Fitzgerald, was educated in Ireland by the Franciscans although his father, the fourteenth Earl, was twice offered the opportunity to send his son to the English court according to David Mathew, The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe (London: Sheed and Ward, 1933), p. 155. It is interesting to note that Sir Edward Bellingham, Lord Deputy in 1547, paid a visit to the fourteenth Earl of Desmond and brought him back to Dublin in an effort to force him to learn elementary English manners as regards apparel, the behavior of a noble and obedience to the Crown. Obviously, he failed. See Carew MSS., 1: introduction, xxxiii.

The English were confounded by men like the Earl of Clanricarde in Connaught, who, while remaining a dedicated Roman Catholic in name, nonetheless divorced several wives and maintained a number of concubines during Elizabeth's reign. It is not surprising that he could and did support two bishops who had taken the oath of Supremacy, nor that he would one day support rebellion against the English and their program of forced Anglicization. The Irish were proud of their culture and their way of life and the Catholic religion was an integral part of it. Despite the superstition and indifference of many of the Irish and Anglo-Irish chiefs towards Christian standards in general and Catholic beliefs in particular, the demoralization of the clergy, and the ignorance of the people of many of the tenets of their faith, the Irish remained tied to Catholicism.⁴⁴ The greater the threat of conquest, the closer the Irish were drawn to their ancient faith. In later times looking back on this period as well as on subsequent Irish history, it would be noted in truth that "In no country on earth has the priesthood been so completely identified with the sacred cause of nationality and suffering as in Ireland."⁴⁵

⁴⁴Ronan, pp. xxiv., xxvi.

⁴⁵Carew MSS., 1: introduction, xvii. O'Farrell, p. 22, notes that Protestantism may have symbolized "liberty" in England, but in Ireland it spelt "conquest and confiscation."

Religion, law, cultural pride, and differences over the basic system of land tenure represented the major divisive influences separating the English and Irish. The advantage in their struggle over the domination of Ireland lay with the English, however, since Tudor England was a well-organized political entity with superior military weapons, wealth and education, while Ireland remained a backward, divided state looking back to more ancient times. As a powerful Renaissance State, England possessed a highly organized army. Nonetheless, the army was not without major problems.⁴⁶

The expeditionary force in Ireland was not part of a paid professional army, since unlike France and Spain, the English had none. Rather it was composed primarily of unwilling conscripts, poorly trained, hostile and often unfit for foreign military service and of a corps of officers who often took corrupt advantage of the system by lining their own pockets.⁴⁷

The chief officials accompanying the expeditionary force were the Treasurer at Wars, the Master of Ordnance, and the Muster-Master. The first of these receipted for and

⁴⁶Falls, p. 33.

⁴⁷C.G. Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 288-289.

disbursed military funds, while the Master of Ordnance controlled the artillery, munitions and fortifications. The Muster-Master gathered troops, including Irish levies, and tried to minimize the corruption associated with "dead pays."⁴⁸ This latter problem came about since the captains, who commanded the bands or companies sent to Ireland, often falsely claimed dead men and deserters on their rolls in order to collect their pay. Some even refused to pay their men or sold their food, clothing, and bedding. Although these practices were well known to the Privy Council, they were difficult to halt in view of the fact that Queen Elizabeth's excessive economy frequently left her troops in arrears, sometimes for long periods, during the Desmond Rebellions. Not until 1586, did the Privy Council act to take the payment of troops out of the captain's hands and turn it over to the Treasurer at Wars and the Muster-Master.⁴⁹

The quality of English troops sent to Ireland, the supply system, and the climate also represented problems of great magnitude to the English expeditionary force in Ireland. The unwilling conscripts who did not escape before reaching Ireland were often vagabonds and rogues more at home in the taverns and alehouses of England. Upon arriving in Ireland,

⁴⁸Falls, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁹Henry J. Webb, Elizabethan Military Science (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 66.

where the miseries of service were well known, they represented an immediate morale problem to their captains. Many died within a few months because of the wet and feverish climate and the remainder soon became discouraged by the difficulties of trying to fight an elusive enemy in the bogs and woods of the wild interior of Ireland. These men were thus frequently mutinous and uncooperative, yet they remained the backbone of the English army in Ireland during the Desmond Rebellions.⁵⁰

Since the English employed a scorched-earth policy in reverse in an attempt to starve out guerillas during the Desmond wars and Irish guerillas also burned their own crops to keep them from the English troops, supplies had to come from England by sea. Most of the victuals were delivered by private contractors who had to deal with storms on the Irish sea and westerly winds which made the passage to Ireland arduous.⁵¹ The problem of spoiled victuals sent over by sea was a major one and the damp climate in Ireland itself precluded storing provisions for any length of time. English soldiers thus frequently suffered from a lack of victuals and clothing and tried to find compensation by taking brutal advantage of the native Irish population.⁵² In their defense, however,

⁵⁰Falls, pp. 40, 45-47.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 63.

⁵²Webb, p. 151.

it should be noted that English troops suffered much under the poor living conditions and wet climate, which frequently led to disease. The "Irish ague" and "flix," forms of dysentery and marsh fever, were particularly prevalent and the primitive state of the medical service did little to help and may in fact have done more harm than good. Since medical facilities were almost nonexistent, the English sent home sick troops lucky enough to get back to Dublin, while the remainder were left to cope with troubles on their own. During Shane O'Neill's rebellion (1562-1567) the English suffered a total of 3500 casualties, the majority probably resulting from disease rather than from hostile action, while the entire garrison strength never rose above 1500 men at any one time. During the Desmond Rebellions, the English suffered even heavier losses.⁵³

An English company was nonetheless, despite all the above mentioned handicaps, an effective fighting force. It contained one hundred men, though some occasionally reached a strength of two hundred. They were supported by a band of horse, nominally fifty in number, consisting of light horse or "demi-lances", carrying a light lance, pistol or sword. This cavalry force was effective in breaking up Irish foot troops of kerne, in the rare instances when the latter chose

⁵³Robert E. Morris, "The Campaign of Essex in Ireland, 1599" (unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago, 1974), chapter II, p. 45.

to fight a pitched battle. Although the English had the great advantage of artillery support, the weight of the pieces and lack of roads made it difficult to move about. Nonetheless, the artillery represented a great advantage in sieges and made Irish castles vulnerable to easy conquest, thus forcing a guerilla existence upon Irish chiefs who chose to defy English authority.⁵⁴

English companies in Ireland were composed half of harquebusiers and half of archers, some of the latter of whom might be mounted. The harquebus, a fifteenth-century invention which fired a small bore, light bullet was a very "inaccurate and clumsy weapon", that was replaced by the musket, which fired a heavier ball at greater range, and the caliver, which was a light twelve-pound weapon capable of firing a one ounce ball eighty yards. The caliver was better suited to the Irish terrain because of its weight and faster discharge rate, but was often so unreliable that it sometimes exploded on discharge.⁵⁵ In 1569, on the eve of the first Desmond Rebellion, the English Privy Council attempted to persuade the English to modernize the army by the adoption of fire arms, but the changes wrought were not dramatic.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Falls, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁵Ibid, p. 38 and Webb, pp. 96-97.

⁵⁶Cruickshank, p. 285.

Thus in addition to archers, the English continued to employ pikemen as well as Irish gallowglass and kerne. The use of Irish troops was essential because of the heavy losses of English troops to disease and desertion and the Irish had the advantage, too, of being paid cheaply. Used in place of English cavalry by unscrupulous captains, the "Irishboys" were paid a small sum with the balance lining the captain's pocket. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, their numbers were limited to five or six per royal company and these served in a separate body under the "General of the Kerne." In 1574, following the first Desmond War, the English garrison consisted of 1928 men, including 415 horses, 1288 English foot, and 225 Irish kerne. In addition, the English called upon loyal Irish and Anglo-Irish chiefs to summon their dependents to do battle against "rebels" like Shane O'Neill, James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, or the Earl of Desmond.⁵⁷

When it came time for battle, the English troops, in theory at least, formed up in a square with pikemen, halberdiers, and shot broken down in balanced groupings, based no doubt upon one of the mathematical treatises on the subject published in England. It seems likely that each captain or his stand-in (usually a lieutenant), since many controlled their companies from England, varied these infantry tactics to his background and as a result of the exigencies of guerilla

⁵⁷Falls, p. 41.

warfare in the woods, mountains and bogs of Ireland.⁵⁸ Some like Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Lord Deputy Grey de Wilton, as we shall see, became noted for their cruelty and ruthless behavior. Gilbert was compared to Tamurlane by one historian, while Grey's tactics were compared to those of General Sherman marching through Georgia during the American Civil War. Undoubtedly, the miseries of Irish warfare coupled with the pervading view of the Irish as savages and the length of Irish campaigns wore down the objections to massacres of civilians, which were not uncommon during the Desmond Wars.⁵⁹

The enemy the English met is typically described in harsh terms by Spenser as employing:

all the beastly behavior that may be to oppress all men...they steal, they are cruel and bloody, full of revenge, and delight in deadly execution; licentious swearers and blasphemers, common ravishers of women and murderers of children.⁶⁰

Spenser, however, also acknowledged their courage as well as their ability to endure cold and hunger and to fight "valiantly."⁶¹ Nonetheless, as we have noted the Irish generally were incapable of defeating the English in pitched battles and were forced to live the life of the guerilla,

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 43.

⁵⁹Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 131 and Adamson and Folland, p. 56.

⁶⁰Spenser, pp. 93-94.

⁶¹Ibid.

constantly moving through woods and water and mountains to safe refuges.

This chapter cannot be concluded without noting that the intent of the English in Ireland was the complete conquest and anglicizing of the people. Writing during the reign of James I, Attorney General John Davies defined the problem faced by the Tudor Kings best when he noted:

...Though the Prince doth bear the title of sovereign lord of an entire country, as our kings did of all Ireland, yet if there be two thirds part of that country wherein he cannot punish treasons, murders or thefts unless he send an army to do it; if he have no certain revenue, no escheats, or forfeitures out of the same, I cannot justly say that such a country is wholly conquered.⁶²

This realization led the English Lord Deputies who ruled Ireland to seek the security and welfare of the English settlers above all else and to fail to devise even one scheme for the betterment of the Irish culture. Custom led English governors instead to rule by penalties and prescription designed to eradicate "disorder," by which they meant the traditional Irish way of life, and hence to alienate their Irish and Anglo-Irish subjects. Tudor statesmen sought the centralization of power in Ireland in the face of Anglo-Irish and Irish lords whose independence, unusually large estates, and control over the common subject were viewed as intolerable

⁶²John Davies, A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was never subdued, nor brought under obedience of the crown of England, until the beginning of his majestie's happy reign (London, 1612), p. 219 quoted in Rowse, p. 102.

and opposed to all the traditions of English monarchy. Irish resistance to English rule became an affront to the proud Tudors, which was particularly galling since the English viewed the Irish as savages.⁶³ Thus, English retainers of the lower orders came to regard the Irish as:

fit subjects for plunder, to commit all sorts of atrocities under the degraded name of patriotism, to fill the whole country with discontent, immorality, and disorder, that no government, however wise, considerate, or judicious, could hope to overcome.⁶⁴

In short, the cultural, social, economic and religious differences between the two people were used by the English in part:

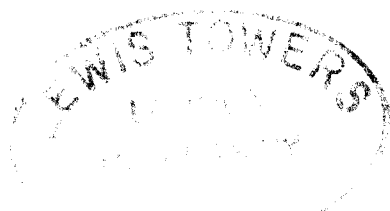
as a justification for a policy of attempted 'civilization' and anglicisation aimed at decreasing political instability and negating the use of Ireland as a strategic base for an attack on England, notably by Spain.⁶⁵

The end result was a long drawn out struggle that would result in the conquest of Ireland by the end of Elizabeth's reign, but which engendered bitterness and mistrust on both sides

⁶³Carew MSS., 1: introduction, xi, xxxi-xxxii; Curtis, p. 159; O'Farrell, p. 29. A penetrating analysis of English misconceptions concerning the Tudor government and conquest of Ireland may be found in O'Farrell, pp. 18-30.

⁶⁴Carew MSS., 1: xiii.

⁶⁵Butlin, Early Modern Ireland, p. 142.



that was to set the tone of Anglo-Irish relations for centuries.⁶⁶ The English attempt to conquer Ireland, most importantly, led to a religious crusade and a fight for a way of life that was led by the proud Anglo-Irish lords of Desmond.

⁶⁶O'Farrell, p. 29.

CHAPTER II

THE ORMOND-DESMOND FEUD

After the crushing of Silken Thomas' revolt in 1535 and his subsequent execution in 1537 along with five of his uncles, the fighting with the Geraldine League continued until 1540, but the once great power of the Kildare Geraldines in Leinster would never be the same. Leadership of the great Anglo-Irish families in the southern half of Ireland now fell to the Butlers, Earls of Ormond and Ossory, who controlled Kilkenny, Tipperary and part of Carlow counties and to the Desmond branch of the Geraldines, whose territories included Limerick, Cork, Kerry, and part of Waterford counties, spreading over half the province of Munster. Both of these great families now ruled in the manner of Irish chieftains under Irish law, but of the two, the Butlers were better able to resist the Gaelic resurgence of the fifteenth century and remain closer to their English heritage. They were motivated to some extent in this allegiance by their long standing and frequently bitter rivalry with both branches of the Geraldines, between whom their territory was situated, bordered on the east by Kildare country (through which the Butlers had to pass on their way to Dublin in order to avoid the hostile, pure Irish highland tribes of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles in the mountains and glens of Wexford and Wicklow)

and in the south by the northeast portion of the Earl of Desmond's lands. During the Wars of the Roses the Butlers were loyal to the Lancastrians, while the Desmonds took the side of the Yorkists. Later the Butlers, again demonstrating their loyalty to the English government, were instrumental in helping to put down the rebellion of Silken Thomas.¹

The Desmond Geraldines, on the other hand, were pushed closer to the Irish and hence away from the English, by the attainting and execution of Thomas, the powerful seventh Earl of Desmond, by King Edward IV in 1468, allegedly for arming and allying with the Irish enemies of the king. After his death his successors made Desmond's country almost an autonomous state. His heir, James, who became earl in his deceased father's stead, began what became a tradition for the Geraldines when he took an Irish wife in violation of the statutes of Kilkenny. His subsequent rebellion and pledge never to attend an Irish parliament or to enter an English walled town except of his own choice was characteristic of the pride of the Geraldines. In fact, the pride of the

¹James Anthony Froude, History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth, 12 vols. (New York, 1873), 8: 6-8 and Fitzgerald, pp. 211-213, 223-228.

Geraldines can be traced back to the first Earl of Desmond, Maurice Fitzthomas, who was also the first Norman-Irish magnate to openly oppose English rule in Ireland and was besides, the greatest of the Anglo-Irish settlers displaying an appreciation of Irish speech and poetry during his tenure as earl between 1329-1356.² Thus it is not surprising to see James, eleventh Earl of Desmond, setting an example for the Kildare Geraldine Silken Thomas and subsequent "rebels" among his own family in later times, when he unsuccessfully negotiated to obtain military aid from a continental power hostile to England in 1523, concluding a worthless convention with King Francis I of France, and later corresponding with Emperor Charles V for the same purpose.³ The fourteenth Earl of Desmond, whose first name was also James, was very much a part of the plans of the Geraldine League before his submission in 1540 and had corresponded with Pope Paul III for a time concerning the possibility of obtaining Spanish assistance for the planned Geraldine attempt to win Irish freedom from English domination. Even after his reconciliation with English authorities he turned down two invitations to have his son and heir,

²Curtis, pp. 110, 144-145.

³Margaret Mac Curtain, Tudor and Stuart England (Dublin: Gill and Mac Millan, Ltd., 1972), pp. 12-14.

Gerald, educated at Henry VIII's court with the future King Edward VI in England, preferring instead to preserve both the strength of his earldom and the inbred sense of Irish independence among the Desmonds by allowing his son to be educated in Ireland by the Franciscans.⁴ Although James Desmond was chosen Lord High Treasurer of Ireland in 1547 after the death of his Ormond rival and was able to considerably reduce the brigandage and clan warfare inside his palatinate-like estates before his death in 1558, he was not able to end the century-old feud with the Butlers which had led to so much bloodshed and destruction between these two great families in the past. Though the violence had been diminished, the dispute over the precise boundaries of their respective territories and the ownership of the prize wines of Yougal and Kinsale continued on and in March 1558, shortly before his illness and death in November, James Fitzgerald acceded to Queen Mary's request that he and the young Thomas, tenth Earl of Ormond, submit their disputes to the arbitration of the Irish Privy Council. Both earls

⁴Brian Fitzgerald, The Geraldines: An Experiment in Irish Government, 1169-1601 (New York: Devin-Adair Company, 1952), pp. 232-235 and Mathew, pp. 155-156.

agreed in July, 1558 to forfeit the sum of two thousand pounds if either violated the truce.⁵

On November 28, 1558, when Gerald Fitzgerald succeeded his father as the fifteenth Earl of Desmond,⁶ he was already noted as a warrior who had defeated and plundered the territory of MacCarthy Reagh of Carberry and Dermond MacTeige MacCarthy of Muskerry, probably in an effort, at least in the case of the Carberry raids, to enforce his father's authority 'as king in his own country' upon an equally

⁵Four Masters, The Annals of Ireland Translated from the Original Irish of the Four Masters, trans. Owen Connellan (Dublin, 1846), p. 447. Hereafter cited as Annals of the Four Masters; Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland, ed. H.C. Hamilton (London, 1860), vol. II, p. 143. Hereafter cited as CSP-Ireland and cited in its entirety; Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of Charles Haliday, Esq. of Dublin: Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland, 1556-1571, Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part III (London, 1897), July 1, 1558. Hereafter cited as APCI.

⁶The pedigree of the Geraldines has been the subject of much confusion and difference of opinion among historians and antiquarians alike. In some references Gerald is referred to as fourteenth Earl of Desmond. See the pedigree of the Geraldines in the appendix where Gerald is referred to as "Garret, sixteenth E. D."

proud and recalcitrant lesser feudal lord of the Desmond palatinate.⁷ In Muskerry, however, the Desmonds sought a larger objective. In July 1558, Tieve Mac Cormac Mac Carthy of Muskerry appeared before the Irish Privy Council and accused James and Gerald Desmond of spoiling and burning his lands and taking over his castles. The Earl defended his actions on the grounds that Tieve was supposedly a bastard and thus the inheritance rights to Muskerry belonged to Desmond by virtue of his marriage to Ellen, daughter of Mac Carthy More, his fourth wife. Both parties were required to put up two thousand pounds' recognizance and to maintain the Queen's peace in Muskerry without any collection of exactions or cesses (i.e., taxes) of any kind until the issue could be settled by trial of the claim of bastardy and determination of the land titles.⁸

⁷Thomas Russell, "Relations of the Fitzgeralds of Ireland," in Unpublished Geraldine Documents, ed. Samuel S. Hayman and James Graves, 4 vols. (London, 1871), 1: 19-20. Hereafter documents other than that of Russell in this work will be cited as Unpublished Geraldine Documents. A letter of James Desmond instructing one of the English captains in Munster at the end of 1551 to call in Gerald and the Earl's brother Maurice to answer for the plunder they had seized from Owen Mac Carthy and the O'Mahons indicates that Gerald may have acted against his father's will at times. See CSP-Ireland, vol. III (1551), p. 120.

⁸APCI, July 17, 1558, p. 59.

After doing homage at Waterford on November 28, 1558, Gerald sailed to England accompanied by a retinue of one hundred retainers, where he was confirmed by Queen Elizabeth on June 22, 1559 in all the lands, seigniories, jurisdictions and privileges held by the Desmonds in the past.⁹ Having paid his debts towards his English overlords, Desmond honored one towards an Irish friend and relative in the person of Tieve O'Brien, Lord of Inchiquin and son of the first Earl of Thomond.¹⁰ Despite the fact that Tieve had been proclaimed a traitor the year before by Thomas Radcliffe, third Earl of Sussex and Lord Deputy of Ireland, for opposing the recognition of Conor O'Brien as the third Earl of Thomond, Desmond now marched north with a force of five hundred kerne and sixty horse to rescue Tieve from Thomond, who was besieging the former's castle at Inchiquin at the time. When Thomond received word of Desmond's forces crossing the Shannon river, he immediately lifted the siege and sought the assistance of the Earl of Clanrickarde, whose forces along with those of Thomond were beaten by Gerlad at Spancel Hill.¹¹

⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. 1 (1558), p. 151 and vol. 1 (1559), p. 154.

¹⁰Desmond's grandmother was an O'Brien. Both the ninth and eleventh Earls of Desmond married O'Brien women. See Fitzgerald, table III, pp. 310-311.

¹¹Annals of the Four Masters, pp. 447-448.

Obviously, the new Earl of Desmond was, as his father had desired, steeped in the history and pride of the Desmonds and determined to enjoy all that he believed rightly his by virtue of his great inheritance.

Gerald Fitzgerald was an outspoken and courageous man, but he was also an intractable, hard man given to both indecisiveness and melancholy at various stages of his struggle to maintain his earldom in the feudalistic Anglo-Irish tradition of independence. He was not without political craft and conciliatory talents, but unlike his father he usually preferred not to depend on these unless his sovereignty or personal independence was severely threatened. This Earl of Desmond has also been described as a man to whom women were drawn and he had in fact won the heart of Lady Joan Fitzgerald, the once widowed Countess of Ormond, even before her second husband, Sir Francis Bryan, had died while Desmond was but a youth.¹²

Lady Joan Fitzgerald was a woman of great importance and of some controversy to both the Desmonds and the Ormonds. As the daughter and heiress-general of the eleventh Earl of Desmond, she enabled the Ormonds, by virtue of her marriage to James, the ninth Earl of Ormond, to make claims to her inheritance. Her son by this marriage, Thomas Butler, was

¹²CSP-Ireland, vol. II (1550), p. 106 and Fitzgerald, p. 255.

educated at court with Edward VI, Elizabeth I, and the future Earl of Sussex and Lord Deputy of Ireland, Thomas Radcliffe, and was the first Protestant in his family, although he conformed under Queen Mary. Succeeding to the earldom in 1546 at the age of fourteen, after the death of his father by poisoning under somewhat mysterious circumstances, 'Black Thomas' as he was known because of his dark complexion and hair, returned to Ireland in 1554. An intimate friend of his former schoolmate, Lord Deputy Sussex, he was to accompany him on all his punitive expeditions to the north and to successfully play the role of mediator for the government. After the death of James Fitzgerald, fourteenth earl of Desmond, he was appointed to the prestigious post of lord treasurer over his fiery and undoubtedly chafing rival, Gerald, fifteenth Earl of Desmond. The ancient feud between their two houses, which centered on control of Clonmel on the Suir River as well as the manors of Kilsheelan and Kilfeace in Tipperary and also the ownership of the prize wines of Yougal and Kinsale, remained relatively quiet after the government imposed the truce of July, 1558 which was to last until the summer of 1560.¹³

¹³ Bagwell, 1: 256; Falls pp. 100-101; Mathew, p. 156. Ormond's father, the ninth earl, was supposedly murdered despite his unquestionable loyalty to the English because he was becoming too powerful. See Bagwell, 1: 286.

At this point both earls gathered their armies and met at Bohermor near to Tipperary and to the ancient highway running from there to Cashel. Desmond, accompanied by his countess, who was considerably older than her husband and was, of course, also Ormond's mother, brought 4000 kerne and 750 horses with him, while Ormond was said to have brought a number of great guns with his forces. Fortunately, probably through the intercession of Lady Joan, the two hereditary rivals chose negotiation instead of war. After two weeks of talks the two armies separated and returned to their homes, but in the meantime English authorities were not quiescent.¹⁴

Sussex, who had recently and reluctantly returned to the Irish service from England and had been promoted to Lord Lieutenant as a special measure of Elizabeth's favor for her cousin, now demanded the appearance of the two earls before the Irish Privy Council to answer to charges of unlawful assembly in violation of the terms of the truce arranged in 1558, to which Gerald, though not yet earl, was also a party.¹⁵

¹⁴Russell, p. 21 and Dominic O'Daly, The Rise, Increase and Exit of the Geraldines, Earls of Desmond and Persecution After Their Fall, trans. and ed., C.P. Meehan (Dublin, 1878), p. 63.

¹⁵Sussex was related to the Howard family through his mother, while Elizabeth's relation to the Howards was through her grandmother. The Elizabethan governmental structure was dominated by close family relations. See Wallace Mac Caffrey, The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime (Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 35.

On August 1, 1560 the two earls appeared before the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council at Waterford. Although Sussex there stated that both men deserved long imprisonment and great fines, nevertheless in view of their humble submissions on this occasion, he and the Council required only that they deliver two hundred cattle to the government, guarantee recognizances of two thousand pounds each if either broke the peace again, and recognizances of one thousand pounds each if either failed to turn over the hostages required for their future good behavior or failed to accept or conform to future orders or awards made by the commissioners appointed to arbitrate their dispute. The commissioners chosen for this task were Sir George Stanley, Marshal of the Army, Sir Thomas Cusack, who had held a series of offices in Ireland including that of Lord Justice, and John Parker, Master of the Rolls. They met on August 15 at Clonmel to determine the most pressing issue between the two houses, namely the settlements to be made for spoils and damages incurred in raids on each other's country by adherents of the two earls. Their decision however, was more favorable to Desmond than to Ormond.¹⁶

This verdict was somewhat surprising in view of the prejudice Sussex felt against the Geraldines; he wrote to

¹⁶APCI, August 1, 1560, pp. 98-99 and CSP-Ireland, vol. II (1560), p. 161. John Parker was a severe critic of Sussex and his government. See Bagwell, 2: 47.

Elizabeth in September 1560, saying that they were linked with all the evil-disposed men in Ireland while the Butlers were viewed by him as being of "English blood" (in contrast to the Irish blood he attributed to Desmond) and proven good friends of the crown as well.¹⁷ Obviously, the commission had dealt with the issues impartially rather than with the relative favor in which these two noblemen were held in England and Ireland. Nonetheless, it is perhaps worth noting that in early 1559 when one of the first rumors in Elizabeth's reign of a possible French or Spanish invasion of Ireland came to the surface, it was Desmond who along with the Earl of Kildare was suspected, in this case by one of the Lord Justices of Ireland, Sir William Fitzwilliam, of possible conspiracy. These rumors were transmitted by Fitzwilliam on March 15 to the Lord Lieutenant, who was on one of his frequent visits to England at the time in order to insure his political future, and to Sir William Cecil, the Queen's most influential advisor and a serious student of Irish affairs, maps, and pedigrees. However, nothing came of these rumors and the powerful Irish chieftain Shane O'Neill of Ulster became the primary concern of the English government in 1561, and both

¹⁷Carew MSS., 1: 301.

Ormond and Desmond were required to pledge their assistance to the government shortly after Shane was proclaimed a rebel and a traitor in June 1561.¹⁸

Ormond, who had been commended by the Queen for breaking up an assembly of rebels under the O'Mores at Holy Cross Abbey, Tipperary, before any harm was done, and Kildare, of whom the present government in Ireland was no less suspicious but in whom the Queen now reposed her confidence, now became intermediaries with "the O'Neill." This was necessary because Shane had refused to deal with Sussex, whom he deeply mistrusted and with good reason since the Lord Lieutenant had hired an assassin to poison him, but had failed in this untoward method as he had in his previous military and diplomatic efforts to bring Shane to bay.¹⁹

Shortly before Shane O'Neill accepted a safe conduct from the Queen to go over to England, on terms arrived at with the Earl of Kildare, the Ormond-Desmond feud heated up again. Just before authorizing Kildare to treat with Shane, the Lord Lieutenant had called out a general hosting in a second

¹⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. II (1560), p. 159 and vol. IV (1561), p. 174; Bagwell, 2: 7-8; B.W. Beckingsale, Burghley: Tudor Statesman, 1520-1598 (New York: Mac Millan, 1967), p. 168.

¹⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. II (1560), p. 162; vol. IV (1561), p. 179 and Bagwell, 2: 28-31. Although Sussex informed Queen Elizabeth of his plot to kill Shane, her response, if there was one, is not extant.

attempt to deal with "the O'Neill" through the use of military force. All of the five earls then in Ireland, including Desmond as noted above, had pledged their assistance and all came with troops to serve. Desmond, however, coming from the furthest south and perhaps with some reluctance, arrived at Dundalk with only forty men and a full two weeks after the Lord Lieutenant had lost patience and had marched north without him. Thus, Desmond had demonstrated his loyalty, but Sussex, Fitzwilliam and others in the government who disliked him were only confirmed in their views of him.²⁰

The "rising out" of forces in Ormond's and Desmond's country was always dangerous and after the brief campaign in Ulster, Sussex found it necessary to issue an order to both earls to immediately disperse their forces in order that peace might be retained in Munster. Responding to the Lord Lieutenant's letter of September 27, 1561, the Geraldine Earl, who had complied with the order, nonetheless complained that Ormond had set an ambush for his forces returning from Ulster and had killed one of the men serving the Constable of Carlow, who was evidently travelling with Desmond. Sussex now recommended that both Ormond and Desmond be sent over to England for the settlement of their dispute and requested Cecil to obtain license for him to repair there as well.²¹

²⁰Carew MSS., 1: 372 and CSP-Ireland, vol. IV (1561), p. 180.

²¹CSP-Ireland, vol. IV (1561), p. 181.

Undoubtedly pleading some sort of excuse, Desmond had refused to meet Sussex in December and had evidently demanded and received the allegiance of two Lords, Roche and Barry, on his eastern borders. The Earl of Ormond, who was to accompany Shane O'Neill to England, remained behind because of the Queen's insistence that Desmond also should make the trip at the same time. By early February Ormond had written to Sussex in England complaining of the burning of one of his towns and of much corn by his rival, and he furthered alleged that Desmond was on bad terms with all the lesser lords of the West. As if to vindicate Ormond's charge, Desmond engaged in a confrontation with his uncle Sir Maurice Fitzgerald (who had earned the epithet of "the incendiary"), and maintained that he could not leave for England under these circumstances. With Maurice's son Thomas in England promising that his father would maintain the peace during Desmond's absence and with the Queen now sending a personal summons through Fitzwilliam to the proud and independent Geraldine, Desmond felt constrained to come to Waterford as the Butler Earl had done at the behest of Lord Justice Fitzwilliam. Desmond, who had delayed three weeks in responding to the Queen's letter, behaved anything but submissively at Waterford. Although he promised to sail for England during Easter Week, he refused to be more precise in pinning down the date and

Fitzwilliam wrote to Cecil on March 27, 1562 informing him of this as well as of the Earl's refusal to turn over two pirates to him. Although he also informed the Queen in a separate letter that very day of Desmond's expected departure, eleven days later when writing from Dublin to Cecil, he gave his opinion that there was little chance of the Geraldine coming over at all of his own accord.²²

Both Desmond and Ormond sailed for England at about the same time. Although Desmond had justified his delay in departing upon a lack of funds, he brought a large retinue with him and the almost regal pride of the Geraldines. Charged with acts of war against the Queen's subjects, of refusing to come before the Lord Lieutenant or to perform certain orders issued by officials in the government, and of harboring certain rebels and proclaimed traitors, Desmond, unlike Shane O'Neill in similar circumstances, displayed a degree of pride and obstinacy that convinced the Queen that a little imprisonment would do the unrepentent Geraldine leader good. The Queen thus placed him in the custody of the Lord Treasurer, William Paulet, Marquess of Winchester, and wrote to his countess informing her both of the Queen's decision and of the Queen's desire that the countess maintain peace in Munster during her husband's absence.²³

²²CSP-Ireland, vol. IV (1561), p. 183; vol. V (1562), pp. 185-190.

²³CSP-Ireland, vol. VI (1562), pp. 194-196.

Even before the Queen's letter was sent to the Countess of Desmond on June 6, 1562, Fitzwilliam had reported that great disorders prevailed in Munster since the departure of the Earl and that some of Desmond's followers had burned Lord Power's country. The mayors, bailiffs and commons of Yougal and Cork, and the "sovereign" and commons of Kinsale, the major coastal towns of the southeast coast, all wrote to the Queen on behalf of Desmond, to whom they looked for protection against the pirates and bandits that plagued their commerce and threatened their security. Realizing, however, that contumacy was of no avail, Desmond himself submitted on June 18, admitting his errors and appealing for the intercession of the English Privy Council and the Earl of Sussex to procure his pardon from the Queen. Ten days later he signed the articles of submission promising to assist the Bishops in furthering the Protestant religion, to refuse to harbor rebels, traitors or pirates, to remain at peace with all of the Queen's subjects in Ireland, to insure that the lesser lords of Munster remain peaceful and to attend Irish parliaments. In July the Queen pardoned Desmond

for any "murders, manslaughters, or felonies" he might have committed.²⁴

The Earl of Ormond, who was undoubtedly more subtle and politic in the presence of his childhood playmate and cousin, Queen Elizabeth,²⁵ signed his submission the same day promising to settle any future wrongs against him by English law alone. Although the Queen confirmed Ormond's claim by title and inheritance to the income from the manors of Clonmel, Kilfeakill, and Killshelan and although Sussex wrote to Cecil of his hope that the two earls might become friends before they departed the English Court, the differences between them were by no means definitely settled to the

²⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. VI (1562), pp. 190-192, 195-196, 199. Some of the lesser lords of Munster for whom Desmond was charged with responsibility included Lord Great Barry, Lord Roche, Little Barry, Barry Roe, Lord Courcy, Lord Fitzmaurice, Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, Mc Carthy More, Mc Carthy Reagh, Teig Mc Cormac Mac Carthy, O'Sullivan Beare, O'Sullivan More, Mc Dongho, O'Callaghan, etc. The inclusion of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald in this list is of some interest because of the later controversy over whether Desmond had a right to be the feudal overlord of his territory. CSP-Ireland, vol. VI (1562), p. 195, "Notes of Matters to be ordered with the Earl of Desmond."

²⁵Margaret Butler, daughter of Thomas Butler, the seventh Earl of Ormond, married Sir William Boleyn, who was Queen Elizabeth's great grandfather. Hence the Queen and Thomas Butler, tenth Earl of Ormond, who descended from a separate branch of Butlers than the seventh earl, were distant cousins. See Mac Curtain, pp. 11-12.

satisfaction of either party. In September, 1562 Cecil had written to Desmond, who was now at Southwark, requesting further amplification of his claim to the prize wines of Yougal and Kinsale, but the proud Geraldine, whether for lack of legal records or mistrust of the English, could add no more to his previous argument which undoubtedly was based on his testimony before the Irish Privy Council in 1558, when he stated that the wines had been in the possession of his family for generations. As a matter of fact, the Earls of Desmond had been granted the royal revenue from the customs and prize wines in Kinsale and Yougal as well as in Limerick, Cork and Baltimore (along with the fee farms of Limerick and Cork and the profits of the tenements and fisheries in Limerick) in 1497 by their cousin, Lord Deputy Kildare, ninth Earl of Kildare. However, in 1504 Kildare had reassigned two thirds of the prize wines to the Butlers, but Maurice, ninth Earl of Desmond, had refused to surrender these and thus in 1506, Kildare had ordered that all the prize wines be granted to the Butlers. Apparently, no formal confirmation of this grant was obtained in England and in any case, the Earls of Desmond had refused to recognize its validity. Desmond also appealed in his letter to Cecil to obtain redress for the "hurts and enormities" committed against his tenants in

his absence.²⁶

In May of the following year, Desmond returned to London to confer with Sir Henry Sidney on the dispute concerning the prize wines. Sidney, who had served in a number of offices under Sussex in Ireland including that of Lord Justice and who presently enjoyed the office of Lord President of Wales, won a promise of fidelity to the Queen and her government in Ireland from Desmond. The proud Geraldine, however, refused to permit commissioners to enter into his territory in an effort to find the necessary data for a settlement of the dispute and again stated his claim to the manors in Tipperary which the Queen had already conferred upon Ormond.²⁷

²⁶CSP-Ireland, vol. VI (1562), pp. 197-200; vol. VII (1562), p. 204; Quinn, "Anglo-Irish Government", 1:368, 373; APCI, July 1558, p. 57. A copy of Elizabeth's decision/order may be found in the work of the Irish Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 5 vols., ed. Edmund Curtis (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932-1943), vol. 5, pp. 126-127. Hereafter cited as COD. Desmond's concern was probably genuine; when Shane O'Neill was in England, he claimed that his neighbors fleeced him of 3,880 cattle and goods valued at 2000 marks. See CSP-Ireland, vol. VII (1562), p. 209.

²⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. VIII (1563), p. 217. The Queen's confirmation of Ormond's title, cited patents granted to the Butlers under Edward III and Queen Mary. See CSP-Ireland, vol. VI (1562), p. 199.

Despite this lack of progress the Queen was finally persuaded after nearly two years of detention to permit Desmond to return to Munster. In August of 1563 Desmond, who was nearly destitute in England and undoubtedly was longing for his Irish home, requested and then received the intercession of the longtime Irish official, Sir Thomas Cusack, on his behalf. Cusack, who had held public offices in Ireland since 1541 and who was largely responsible for drawing up the conciliatory terms under which Shane O'Neill was pardoned in 1563, now advocated conciliation as the surest method of bringing peace to southern Ireland. The Queen was well aware of the destructive raids being carried out by Desmond's adherents in Munster against his neighbors and was probably also somewhat sympathetic to the Countess of Desmond, who had recently invoked her friendship with Sir William Cecil to plead for that statesman's intercession on her husband's behalf. Thus, Queen Elizabeth, who had recently overruled the bankrupt militant policy of Sussex towards O'Neill in favor of Cusack's policy of conciliation, soon released the penitent Geraldine Earl, who promised to pay the Queen her feudal dues, to cease "rising outs," to maintain order in Munster, to suppress the Brehon law as well as rhymer, bards and dice players, and to pay the Crown an annual tax of four pence on every cow in his territory. The Queen went so far as to write a letter to two of her recently appointed

Commissioners of the Musters in Ireland forwarding a series of requests that Desmond had left behind with Lord Robert Dudley and Cecil for manors, castles, and various abbey lands which he sought; instructing the commissioners to present them to the Privy Council in Ireland in order to obtain favorable recommendations for all his reasonable requests.²⁸

The Earl of Ormond, who had been permitted to return to Ireland some time before his rival, had written several letters to his old friend Sussex in December 1563 upon receiving news of Desmond's imminent return. He urged that the cattle granted to him by virtue of the settlement arrived at in England be delivered by Desmond's brethren before the Earl was permitted to return and requested that Sussex write the Queen, as Ormond had already, to urge the same action upon her Majesty. He also wrote to the Lord Lieutenant complaining of the considerable bloodshed and destruction he said was being inflicted upon his lands by the raids of Desmond's adherents and particularly those of the Earl's brother, John of Desmond, whose forays had become frequent.²⁹

²⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. VIII (1563), pp. 214, 219; vol. IX (1563), p. 225, 227; Bagwell, 2: 62-63.

²⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. IX (1563), p. 227.

Reminding Sussex of the loyalty of his ancestors and informing him of the spoiling and wasting of his country, the near fatal wounding of his brother, John Butler, and his own inability to strike back because of the restrictions placed on him by English law, he protested:

My lord, you see what I get by sufferance; my brother left as dead, and mine enemies living upon the spoil of my goods. My lord, who shall render my brother his life if he die? Shall I live and suffer all this? If I may not avenge my brother on these disobedient Geraldines, as you are a just governor lend your force against them, and let not my obedience be the cause of my destruction.³⁰

Ormond went on to imply that if justice were not done in these matters he would personally carry his plea to the Queen herself as some other "private men" had done.³¹

The Geraldine Earl soon arrived in Dublin, where as a result of Ormond's appeal, he found himself delayed at the Queen's insistence that he should remain there until Cusack could confer with him and Ormond in regard to what actions were necessary to insure good order and peace between the two earls. Before leaving England, Desmond had requested cannon and skilled gunners to batter the fortresses and castle walls of the lesser lords of Munster (upon whom he had promised to impose English civility in the form of laws, customs and religion) as well as license to seize malefactors in the chartered towns. These, however, were not forthcoming and

³⁰The Earl of Ormond and Ossory to the Lord Lieutenant Sussex, December 17, 1563, quoted in Bagwell, 2: 66.

³¹Ibid. in Bagwell, 2: 67.

probably after providing assurances to Cusack that he would live up to the orders and pledges that had been required of him, Desmond was permitted to return to Munster, where his presence seems to have had a settling effect. In June he met with Cusack and Ormond at Waterford, where he apparently complied with many of the articles agreed upon by him in Ireland to the general satisfaction of all parties. However, before final arrangements could be settled upon in the century-old feud between the Butlers and Fitzgeralds, Cusack was forced to depart for the north because of more pressing business with O'Neill. Nonetheless, there was now some optimism among some of the English officials that the dispute could finally be settled and Ormond himself was encouraged to issue a proclamation announcing an end to the practice of coyne and livery in Tipperary after August 1, 1564.³² In calling all the lords and gentlemen of Tipperary together, Ormond was careful, however, to provide an alternate system of military manpower based upon a quarterly muster of able-bodied men and a set quota of horses, with a provision for a fixed tax from freeholders to support outside mercenaries in extreme emergencies. Had this reform been effected as planned it might have alleviated the harsh features of coyne and livery upon the Irish peasant; however, a "rebellion"

³²CSP-Ireland, vol. IX (1563), p. 228; vol. XI (1564), pp. 237, 241.

of the O'Mores and O'Connors, who had been engaged in periodic guerilla campaigns ever since they were forcibly driven from their lands in Leix and Offaly during the reign of Queen Mary, and the heating up of the Ormond-Desmond feud, forced Ormond to retain the old established system as a matter of exigency.³³

In August, the government called upon Ormond and his brother Sir Edmund Butler to prosecute the rebels and by November he was granted an official commission authorizing him to campaign against them with a force of two hundred kerne for a period of four months. In the meantime, some six hundred of the Desmond gallowglass had crossed the Shannon to assist Sir Donnell O'Brien, taniest and brother of the second Earl of Thomond, who was engaged in a struggle with his nephew, Conor O'Brien, Earl of Thomond. In early September Desmond was called to Limerick by Cusack and required to agree to withdraw his gallowglass and to submit his disputes with Thomond to a panel of four unbiased men. In a letter to Cusack later that month the Earl of Desmond also promised to provide hostages to the government, restore the cattle he had seized and to send his brother John to the Queen in England as he had pledged to do earlier in the year at Clonmel. By the end of November, however, Desmond and

³³Bagwell, 2: 83-84. Ormond himself received a grant of 820 acres from the confiscated territory of the O'Mores and O'Connors in 1563. See Mac Curtain, pp. 59-60.

his brother John, according to Ormond's appeals for aid to Sir William Cecil, were raiding Butler territory almost daily and had attempted to take the castle at Killfeacle, one of the disputed manors that had been awarded to Ormond in 1562.³⁴

No doubt the death of Joan Fitzgerald, Countess of Desmond and Ormond's mother, removed an important constraint which had kept both earls, along with the intercession of the English government, from more violent confrontations. Less than one month after her death the occasion for a pitched battle arose when the Earl of Desmond entered into the territory of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald of the Decies, who resided on the Blackwater River at Dromana and controlled the western half of Waterford county. The Decies was a part of the original Desmond estate and had descended through Gerald, the second son of the seventh earl of Desmond down to Maurice, who, however, claimed to hold his estates of the Crown alone.³⁵ Desmond, who naturally insisted that the Decies, which formed a critical buffer zone between the heart of Desmond's country and that of the Butler's, had always been a part of the earldom, had come "to distrain his sub-chief's cattle for default of

³⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XI (1564), pp. 243-249 and APCI, November 20, 1564, pp. 144-145.

³⁵Bagwell, 2: 84-85 and Curtis, p. 142.

service"³⁶ in accordance with the Brehon law. According to his own later testimony, Desmond also maintained he had come to seek restitution from "felonies and robberies" allegedly committed by Maurice and his brethren against other inhabitants of Desmond's country. His party consisted of eighty to one hundred horse, three to four hundred kerne, as well as several hundred camp followers of all sorts, some of whom came to seek recovery of their losses from Sir Maurice. Desmond's intentions in the Decies were clear, but what he intended to do after collecting the rents he felt he was due is less certain. Sir Maurice, who was Ormond's first cousin, had notified the Butler Earl of Desmond's coming and requested that Ormond come to Dromana and pick up his herd of cattle for safe-keeping until Desmond was gone. By agreeing to this proposition, Ormond almost certainly knew that he would incur more than just the wrath of his hereditary enemy. According to his own testimony, however, the Butler Earl said he had received word that when Desmond finished with the Decies, he intended to strike in Tipperary in any case. This was probably true since Desmond testified that Ormond had seized the goods and chattels of the Geraldine at Grenoghe, Clonmel and elsewhere and had collected the rents from his deceased wife's estate, the property of which he may have intended to

³⁶Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 1: 45.

recover. Moreover, although they did not reach the site of the battle, some of Desmond's most important sub-chiefs were on the way. The White Knight had come as far as Lismore with his forces and the Knight of Kerry, MacCarthy More, and O'Sullivan Beare reportedly reached Conna. Thus Ormond, who was an excellent soldier and who believed his mother's property and goods to be his own, gathered his brothers Edmund, James, and Edward along with one hundred horse and three or four hundred kerne and drove across the mountains towards the pass which led into the Decies, camping at Knocklofty near Clonmel until he received further word of Desmond's location.³⁷

The Geraldine Earl had spent the day collecting rents, having sent Lord John Power of Curraghmore along with one of his own captains to bring Sir Maurice to him. Desmond was preparing an encampment near Bewley, when he was informed that the Butlers had come in force and were in the area. The proud Earl was completely surprised by this development; but he was not one to run from his enemies and against the advice of Lord Power, who had just returned with Sir Maurice, Desmond headed for Lismore. In choosing this course, Desmond, who was

³⁷Earl of Desmond to Queen Elizabeth I, n.d., quoted in Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 1: 55-56; CSP-Ireland, vol. XII (1565), p. 255; Earl of Ormond to Queen Elizabeth I, n.d., quoted in Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 1: 57-59; Bagwell, 2: 85.

undoubtedly aware that he was outnumbered by the Butler faction, knew he risked contact with his enemies before he reached Lismore. The two armies met at Affane, along a tributary of the Blackwater River and a battle ensued.³⁸ After the fact, in trying to explain this breach of the Queen's commands to Elizabeth, both earls accused the other party of initiating the fighting, but even if the more politically wise and subtle Butler Earl did not strike the first blow there is little doubt that he provoked it.³⁹ In any case, the fighting went against the Geraldines and when they had almost been overrun, Desmond violently assaulted his opponent's cavalry and was thrown from his horse after suffering a pistol wound from Sir Edmund Butler's weapon which broke his thigh and resulted in his capture. Before the fighting was over the Geraldines had lost about three hundred men, Desmond later attributing the heavy casualties to vigorous Butler pursuit of those of his forces who tried to escape over-land and also to the surprise appearance of Sir Maurice's men in boats on the river attacked those who had hoped to swim to safety. He alleged that these river boats proved that there had been collusion between Ormond and Sir Maurice although they both denied this.⁴⁰

³⁸Russell, p. 22 and Bagwell, 2: 86.

³⁹The Four Masters clearly state that Ormond initiated the fighting; however Bagwell states his belief to the contrary. Annals of the Four Masters, pp. 456-457 and Bagwell, 2: 87.

⁴⁰Earl of Desmond to Queen Elizabeth I, p. 56 and Russell, p. 22.

Thomas Butler, who alleged that his rival had threatened to kill him upon a number of occasions and who certainly had reason to be concerned about Desmond's intentions after he had finished his business in the Decies, nonetheless was not very convincing in his own defense when after denying all of Desmond's charges he added, "Would I have not joined with Sir Maurice's force if I intended to attack him?"⁴¹

Ormond brought his seriously wounded prisoner to Clonmel and soon thereafter to Waterford in what Desmond later complained of as a humiliating kind of triumphal procession accompanied by trumpets and gunshots. Ormond, who was prepared to charge his rival with high treason for maintaining proclaimed traitors, wrote to Cecil on February 8, 1565 from Waterford, only one week after what proved to be the last private battle between two noblemen in the British Isles. The politic Butler Earl's request to obtain the Queen's permission to repair to England was superfluous, however, since Elizabeth, who was fast losing patience with Desmond and expected much more of Ormond, angrily summoned both earls as well as Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, MacCarthy More, and O'Sullivan Beare to come over. Ormond, who had hoped to retain custody of his prisoner and thus keep him isolated so as to protect his case against him, was soon to be disappointed. When the Lord Justice, Sir Nicholas Arnold, arrived at Waterford he

⁴¹Earl of Desmond to Queen Elizabeth I, p. 59.

demanded and received custody of Desmond, whom he not only permitted free communication with all men, but seemed to favor in other small ways, not however, without raising protests from Sir George Stanley and Sir William Fitzwilliam, both of whom put their complaints in writing to Cecil in April, 1565. After seven weeks at Waterford in which little was done to settle the affair, Ormond soon departed for England followed by Desmond, MacCarthy More, and O'Sullivan Beare, all of whom traveled in the custody of Captain Nicholas Heron.⁴²

In the "judicial" proceedings which followed upon their arrival in London, both earls laid their respective cases before the Queen and the Privy Council in a bevy of charges and countercharges.⁴³ If Desmond's previous misconduct had not been enough to prejudice the Queen's judgement, her personal feelings toward Ormond would soon suffice. The Queen personally favored Thomas Butler not only because they were cousins, had grown up together, and his family had always been loyal to the English Crown, but also because his good looks, Irish charm, and gallantry made him an appealing

⁴²Earl of Desmond to Queen Elizabeth I, p. 56; CSP-Ireland XII (1565), pp. 253-254 and vol. XIII (1565), 257, 259; Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 1: 50-53.

⁴³CSP-Ireland, XIII (1565), p. 262.

companion to Elizabeth.⁴⁴ This prejudice was not, however, immediately in evidence because the latest act in the Ormond-Desmond feud was overshadowed by the bitter dispute between Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Sussex, who had not returned to Ireland since his departure in May, 1564, and by the Queen's decision to replace Sussex with Leicester's and his own brother-in-law, Sir Henry Sidney. Leicester, who was, of course, the Queen's favorite, had triggered the quarrel when he implied that Sussex had cooperated with Irish rebels and by June 1565 the dispute had reached the boiling point and the Court was actually threatened by imminent violence as both parties and their adherents carried arms.⁴⁵ The hatred of these two factions was to some degree transferred to the Ormond-Desmond feud, since Leicester, to whom Ormond may have represented a rival for the Queen's affection and whom in any case Ormond hated, and his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Sidney, favored Desmond, while the support for Ormond included Sussex and Sir William Cecil, the Queen's secretary.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Fitzgerald, p. 256 and Elizabeth Jenkins, Elizabeth and Leicester (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1961), p. 135. Fitzgerald incorrectly gives the impression that Desmond was imprisoned for two years in the Tower following Affane. See Fitzgerald, pp. 256-257.

⁴⁵Mc Caffrey, p. 197.

⁴⁶Conyers Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth, (London: Alden Press, 1960), p. 240 and Bagwell, 2: 92.

Sussex, who had worked well with Sidney in Ireland during Queen Mary's reign, seems nonetheless to have resented the appointment of Leicester's brother-in-law to an office in which he had failed to achieve very much. In the testimony he provided, his charges that Desmond was guilty of aiding proclaimed traitors amongst the O'Briens in Thomond and harboring others were the most damning. Sidney, on the other hand, emphasized Desmond's willingness to submit his claims either to the common law courts or to the decision of the Governor and Council during the time Sidney had served in Ireland and that Desmond had even offered to come to Drogheda, "a place to him and all his country most odious for that his grandfather upon a like letter sent from the governor was there put to death as they constantly affirm."⁴⁷ He also stated his opinion that whoever started the battle at Affane should be responsible for the consequences, and although he could not approve of Desmond's entry into the Decies, he felt Ormond's presence was even less justifiable. Perhaps with a thought to calming the factions at court the Queen apparently did not take any harsh steps against Desmond, not only because Ormond was certainly also deserving of punishment,

⁴⁷The Answer of Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of Wales, to certain articles delivered to him by the Privy Council, August 8, 1565, quoted in Bagwell, 2: 92-93.

but also because Sidney, as the man most capable of dealing with the situation in Ireland and especially with the dangerous, independent-minded Shane O'Neill, favored mild terms for both earls. In September, following the humble submission of both these noblemen, Sidney had recommended that a President and Council ought to be established in Munster to impose English law upon both earls and that both be required to stand bound by great recognizances to adhere to the decision of the Governor, Chancellor, and the three Chief Justices in Ireland on the issue of the disputed lands. Of course, the Queen also solicited the advice of Sussex, but in the main it was Sidney's recommendations that were accepted, although perhaps to lessen the blow to her former Lord Lieutenant, Sidney's title, which was originally to be identical with that enjoyed by his predecessor, was reduced to that of Lord Deputy.⁴⁸

Soon after the new Lord Deputy arrived at his post in Ireland, he received a letter from the Queen explaining the results of the deliberations concerning Ormond and Desmond.

⁴⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. XIV (1565), pp. 269, 273; Bagwell, 2: 93.

Elizabeth wrote:

...as there hath been found in the examination of the controversies...such and so many difficulties and uncertainties in their sundry allegations and answers, as well for the unlawful assemblies, riots and conflicts, which were committed last year in the county of Waterford and a multitude of other disorders and misdemeanors, as for titles of lands, liberties and possessions claimed and challenged by one against the other, that we could in no way come to any certain knowledge, or determination, and in what sort to proceed to the condemnation or acquittal of any one of them without further proofs and trial to be had in that realm Ireland...⁴⁹

Both earls had pledged a recognizance of twenty thousand pounds before the Court of Chancery, agreeing also to abide by future decisions handed down before Michelmas, 1567 and subject to forfeiture in the event of misconduct. The Queen thus forwarded copies of the same to Sidney along with the orders issued to each earl, which were to be considered by the Lord Deputy, his counsellors and lawyers in determining the disputes in question justly. The Lord Deputy and Council were also given the task of settling the dispute with Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, who had also made the trip to England. Finally, Sidney was informed that both earls were free to return to Ireland, although in a separate letter Elizabeth requested that Desmond be held in Dublin until he sent home

⁴⁹Sidney State Papers, 1565-1570, ed. Tomas O. Laidhin (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1962), January 8, 1566, pp. 12-13. Hereafter cited as SSP and cited in its entirety.

for the necessary funds and paid the debts he owed to the Queen.⁵⁰

Although this letter suggests an impartial, statesman-like approach to the matters in dispute, even before Sir Henry had departed the Queen had written him a personal letter in an effort to influence him to be more favorable to the Earl of Ormond, alleging that she was moved to speak out only because there were too many men partial towards Desmond.⁵¹ In an effort to curb his authority somewhat; the Queen had also created Desmond's powerful sub-chieftain, MacCarthy More, as Earl of Clancarthy and had granted Sir Owen O'Sullivan (O'Sullivan Beare) his lands subject to the rents and services of Clancarthy rather than Desmond. Finally as a guarantee of the Geraldine's good conduct, the Queen had instructed Sidney in July and again in October, before he had departed, to send the earl's brother, Sir John, over to England as a hostage, but had evidently relented upon this point before the final settlement was made.⁵²

⁵⁰SSP, January 7 and 8, 1566. See the Carew MSS., 1: 44-48, for the "Orders taken by the Queen's most excellent majesty with the Advice of her Counsel, in the Causes of the Earls of Ormond and Desmond..." as well as the Submissions of the two earls.

⁵¹Bagwell, 2: 98.

⁵²CSP-Ireland, vol. XIII (1565), p. 263; vol. XIV (1565), p. 266; vol. XV (1565), p. 275. In December, Ormond requested that Sir John be placed in the custody of the Lord Deputy in Dublin until all the alleged malefactors in Desmond's country were turned over to the government. CSP-Ireland, vol. XV (1566), p. 283.

It has been noted previously that internecine warfare was characteristic of all of Ireland including the Pale, but was especially sharp between the Butlers and the Fitzgeralds and their adherents. In September, 1565, Sir Thomas Cusack had informed Lord Justice Arnold, who was at the time the highest ranking official in Ireland, that Piers Butler had raided the lands of the McCraghs, who were tenants of Desmond, and had stolen six hundred cattle for which offence John of Desmond was likely to seek revenge. The report of this attack was added to the evidence filed by the Geraldine Earl against his Butler rival in England. In Ireland, Sir John, redressing his and the earl's grievances in the traditional Irish manner, did in fact strike back and on the same day that Elizabeth notified Sidney of the status of the controversies between the two earls, she also noted that she had received information from the Earl of Ormond and Sir Maurice Fitzgerald of fresh depredations inflicted by John upon their lands and those of the Queen's government at Dungarvan. Sidney was thus instructed to redress these "outrages" and inform her of the punishment rendered.⁵³

The Lord Deputy was thus already under orders to take some action against the Desmonds even before the Geraldine Earl had returned to Ireland. Even worse for the proud

⁵³CSP-Ireland, vol. XIV (1565), p. 272; vol. XV (1565), p. 278; vol. XVI (1566), p. 286.

Geraldines, the Earl of Ormond did not return to Ireland in 1566 as Desmond had, but rather remained at court for the next five years, where he became a great favorite of Elizabeth, who grew more determined than ever to see that the controversy was decided in Thomas Butler's favor. Despite the recent accusations against him, the Butler earl was among the body of nobles who accompanied the Queen to Oxford in August, 1566 and was also among those who received a Master of Arts degree in recognition of "their station in life."⁵⁴ In fact, the attention Elizabeth showed to her dark-complected playmate of old, whom she affectionately referred to as "Lucas," caused some scandal and created deeper factions in the royal court where the rift between Leicester and Sussex was still evident.⁵⁵ Moreover, with Sussex and Ormond intriguing against Sir Henry at court and initiating rumors unfavorable to him in both London and Dublin, circumstances which encouraged the Queen in her displeasure with her new Lord Deputy's performance, Sidney, after only five months in Ireland, was pleading with Cecil and Leicester that he had been discredited and desired to be recalled from a service he likened to Purgatory in a

⁵⁴Patrick J. Dyra, "Higher Education in Tudor England: The Role Played by Oxford and Cambridge" (seminar paper, Loyola University of Chicago, 1973), p. 16.

⁵⁵Read, p. 240. Elizabeth also referred to Ormond as her "black husband" according to Fitzgerald, p. 256.

land he described as "miserable and accursed."⁵⁶

The Lord Deputy's first mistake, as far as his cousin and Sovereign was concerned, came in February when he selected Warham St. Leger as President of Munster; an appointment which immediately drew criticism from the Queen, who insisted upon the revocation of it. Cecil, who provided the primary comfort and praise for Sidney during these difficult days, wrote to him in March explaining that the Queen believed St. Leger would favor Desmond in the feud since his father had had a bitter quarrel with Ormond's father concerning who should enjoy the title and lands of the earldom in Ireland.⁵⁷

About the same time Cecil wrote again to Sir Henry, with whom he had been knighted in a dual ceremony in 1550 and for whom he had a high regard despite his own opposition to Leicester, that the Queen's similarly high regard for the Butler Earl

⁵⁶Letters and Memorials of State in the Reigns of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, King Charles the First, Part of King Charles the Second, and Oliver's Usurpation Arthur Collins, ed., 2 vols., (London, 1746), pp. 11, 13. Hereafter cited as Letters and Memorials of State. See also CSP-Ireland, vol. XVII (1566), p. 301 and Malcom W. Wallace, The Life of Sir Philip Sidney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), p. 74.

⁵⁷The St. Legers "considered themselves the direct representatives of Thomas, seventh Earl of Ormond, through one of the latter's daughters and heirs general, whilst Thomas, the tenth Earl of Ormond as the heir male, through a collateral descent, had the title and Irish property of the house." See "Unpublished Geraldine Documents", The Journal of the Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland I, third series (1868-1869): 529.

was undoubtedly the result of "the memory of his education with that holy young Solomon King Edward" VI.⁵⁸

In mid-April, Sidney, who was wrestling with the great disorders that he had found and reported to be prevalent throughout the Pale as well as in Kilkenny and Munster, wrote to Cecil urging the desirability of Ormond's return to better the conditions in his country and to stand up for his suits.⁵⁹ Accused by the Queen, of favoring Desmond he protested to the Queen's able secretary, Sir William Cecil, that he would not attempt to settle the dispute again until another commissioner had been sent to assist him, because, despite his every effort to be impartial, he knew his dealings "will not be thought favorably enough on my lord of Ormond's Side." He pleaded that he would rather offend the affection of his sovereign, even if he served a tyrannical one, "then offend my own conscience and stand to God's judgment."⁶⁰ He also stated his inability to determine the controversy with the present aged chancellor, Archbishop Hugh Curwen, of Dublin, and requested the appointment of a new chancellor. Despite his professed inability to deal with the legal intricacies

⁵⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. XVI (1566), p. 294.

⁵⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XVII (1566), pp. 296-297.

⁶⁰Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 89.

of the controversies between the two earls without better legal assistance, the Queen nevertheless showed him little sympathy or patience.⁶¹

When Sidney had first arrived in Ireland, a crisis was fast approaching with Shane O'Neill, who the Lord Deputy now described as the strongest and richest man in Ireland, capable of putting one thousand cavalrymen and four thousand infantrymen in the field and ruling like a king in the north, complete with agents abroad intriguing with foreign powers. The Lord Deputy had determined that only force could bring O'Neill to comply with English law and desires, partly because under Sussex's inept regime there had been two assassination attempts on the Ulster leader's life and he now refused to trust any English Lord Deputy again by coming in for talks. Consequently, Sidney had recommended a winter campaign against O'Neill and Elizabeth, whose parsimonious nature rebelled at the thought of such an expedition, at first insisted upon conciliation and when this had obviously failed, sent over Sir Francis Knollys with instructions to find the most economical way to bring Shane to justice. Knollys, who was the Queen's vice-chamberlain, was, in effect, sent to verify Sidney's conduct of his office primarily as a result of Sussex's charges of his misgovernment coupled also with the

⁶¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XVII (1566), p. 296.

complaints of Ormond against him, to which the Queen was most sensitive.⁶² The former Lord Lieutenant had even charged that Sidney had previously favored the "great rebel" and subsequently that the new Lord Deputy lacked courage and heart, to which Sir Henry made reply with heated indignation threatening to draw his sword "against an accusation concealed hitherto he knew not with what duty and uttered at last with impudency and unshamefastness."⁶³

Although Knollys completely fought for and vindicated Sidney's war plans as well as his conduct of office and although a hearing was held at the Council-Board in early July on Sussex's charges, at which Sidney was again vindicated, the Queen remained vexed by Sir Henry's refusal to settle the Ormond-Desmond controversy, despite her personal confidence in his ministerial abilities. In May, Sidney complained that the Queen's disapproving words had become public knowledge in Ireland, causing both his disgrace and discredit, and consequently requested that he be recalled.⁶⁴ The Queen's

⁶²CSP-Ireland, vol. XVI (1566), p. 289; Bagwell 2: 102, Froude 8: 404.

⁶³Lord Deputy Sidney to the English Privy Council, May 18, 1566 quoted in Froude, 8: 408.

⁶⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XVII (1566), p. 301; vol. XVIII (1566), pp. 307-308.

favoritism for Ormond had become more manifest as she had required the Lord Deputy, in a letter written on May 14, 1566, to reverse Lord Justice's Arnold's award of the captainship of Tremenaghe in Tipperary to Lord Dunboye, insisting that this belonged to Ormond. In the same missive the subject of coyne and livery arose as a major issue, since Sidney sought to abolish it throughout Ireland, while the Queen now insisted that it should first be taken from those who troubled the government most (i.e., Desmond), whereas the Lord Deputy should "temporise most with those who have converted it to our service" (i.e., Ormond).⁶⁵ In June she also chastised the Lord Deputy for indicting Ormond's brother, Sir Edmund, for taking a small amount of food in accordance with the practice of coyne without making a similar example of the Geraldines. Approximately two months later, Elizabeth argued that she was not partial to Ormond, but that coyne and livery should be tolerated when it was used for defensive purposes or to aid the government--at least, until it could be determined how loyal lords (i.e., Ormond) could be "recompensed reasonably" and still be capable both of self-defense and the ability to aid the government in military campaigns.⁶⁶

⁶⁵SSP, May 14, 1566, pp. 23-25.

⁶⁶SSP, June 16, 1566, p. 27 and August 13, 1566, pp. 36-37.

Sir Henry, whose administration had been characterized by an honest effort at equity which made him very popular in Ireland, was upset that the Queen insisted upon their exception and wrote to Cecil:

I am extremely sorry to receive her Majesty's command to permit the Earl of Ormond to exercise coyne and livery, which have been the curse of this country...I would write more, if I did not hope to have my recall by the next east wind. Only weigh what I have said. Whatever becomes of me you will have as woeful a business here as you had in Calais if you do not look to it in time.⁶⁷

Cecil himself had advised Sidney to speak favorably of Ormond during Knollys' visit and had written to him in mid-May urging him "to be favorable towards the Earl of Ormond's cause, or her Majesty will not suffer anything to be done therein."⁶⁸ He was, nonetheless, sympathetic with the Lord Deputy's position on this issue and in early August wrote to say he argued against the policy of exception, which the Queen had recently affirmed, and had spoken plainly to Ormond, but with little immediate success. Sidney's own letter of July 11, 1566, warning the Privy Councillors that the uneven application of this prohibition was dangerous and might provoke Desmond to rebellion, was probably a factor in the sage Secretary's support. A copy of Desmond's own letter to the Lord Deputy requesting the benefit of the Queen's laws and orders, lamenting her decision, and warning that he might now be obliged to

⁶⁷Lord Deputy Sidney to Sir William Cecil, June 24, 1566, quoted in Froude, 8: 412.

⁶⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. XVII (1566), p. 301 and Bagwell, 2: 105.

distrain for his rents was enclosed.⁶⁹

The main basis for Thomas Butler's accusation of treason against Gerald Fitzgerald after the battle of Affane had been his contention that the Geraldine Earl had harbored proclaimed rebels and traitors. In the Queen's letter cited above announcing her policy on coyne and livery, she also ordered that the prisoners taken at Affane by Ormond and presently held in Butler prisons, continue to be held despite Desmond's suit for their release, since they had confessed knowledge of Desmond's aiding of rebels and traitors to their captors. She also ordered, undoubtedly as a result of a personal request from Ormond, that they not be examined unless Ormond himself were present.⁷⁰

By July the tone of the Queen's letters had improved as she promised to send the money and troops necessary to campaign against Shane. Nonetheless, Elizabeth complained to Sidney that Desmond was still protecting "sundry rebels" and demanded to know why they had not been apprehended and why the Earl and his brother John had not been committed to prison.⁷¹ In

⁶⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XVIII (1566), pp. 309, 312.

⁷⁰SSP, May 14, 1566, p. 23.

⁷¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XVIII (1566), p. 308 and SSP, July 8, 1566, pp. 33-34.

August, she warned Sir Henry not to allow Desmond to spread disorder or raid Ormond's country while the Lord Deputy campaigned in the north against Shane and she further questioned his judgment in not being able to discern who deserved to "receive favor and countenance" from the government and those who did not. The Queen ordered him to pursue all rebels and outlaws notoriously protected in Desmond's country and to explain why he had not already done so. In a separate communication she also ordered that the lease of the manor of Onagh, which had belonged to Desmond, should not be renewed to the present holder, but instead be transferred to Ormond.⁷²

By September the wisdom of Sidney's policy of refusing to adjudicate the entangled claims and counterclaims of the two earls without the aid of English lawyers and his attempt to be equitable to both sides bore fruit, when the Desmonds turned down Shane's urgent plea for the Geraldines to join him in rebellion. Instead Desmond voluntarily came to Sidney at Drogheda offering "to go against the rebel with all his power."⁷³ If Sidney had allowed Elizabeth to pressure him into some obviously prejudicial determination of the causes

⁷²SSP, August 13, 1566, p. 38 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XVIII (1566), p. 313. Shane O'Neill was proclaimed a traitor on August 3, 1566. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XVIII (1566), p. 312.

⁷³Froude 8: 414.

at stake for which both sides had been fighting for more than a century, the Geraldines might well have united their cause with that of O'Neill.⁷⁴ As it was, hoping for some equity and the right to live as Geraldine earls had always lived, Desmond had come to Drogheda where at a meeting of the Privy Council he agreed to guard a portion of the Pale which bordered O'Neill's country with a force of at least one hundred horse in conjunction with St. Leger, who had been serving in Munster as a commissioner. On September 22, Sir Henry entered O'Neill's country and conducted a series of successful raids against Shane which resulted in the recovery of considerable territory to obedience to the crown and which were followed by the successful operations of Colonel Edward Randolph, who routed Shane's invasion of Tyrconnel and brought the ambitious Celtic chief that much closer to his unfortunate end.⁷⁵

Arriving back in the Pale after one of the most successful demonstrations of English power in Ireland in years, Sidney, who had accomplished more in eight months than any Lord Deputy since Sir Edward Bellingham, (1548-1549), found that the Queen's sharp criticisms had not abated. In a letter written at the height of her quarrel with the English parliament over the succession question and before she had heard

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵APCI, September 7, 1566, p. 183.

of Sidney's accomplishments in Ulster, the Queen wrote to Sir Edward Horsey advising him to inform the Lord Deputy upon his return of her dissatisfaction with his handling of the controversy between the two earls and accusing him of being guided by Irish advisors and showing partiality to Desmond. Perhaps her words were more an expression of her favor for Ormond, who had recently offered her fresh evidence that the Geraldine Earl still harbored traitors, and her frustration at being forced to expend great amounts of money to put down O'Neill.⁷⁶ In any case, Cecil, as usual, attempted to cushion the Queen's reproof of her dedicated but increasingly frustrated public servant:

My good Lord, next to my most hearty commendations, I do with all my heart condole and take part of sorrow to see your burden of government so great, and your comfort from hence so uncertain. I feel by myself--being also wrapped in miseries, and tossed with my small vessel of wit and means in a sea swelling with storms of envy, malice, disdain, and suspicion--what discomfort they commonly have that mean to deserve best of their country. And though I confess myself unable to give you advice, and being almost desperate myself of well-doing, yet for the present I think it best for you to run still an even course in government, with indifferency in case of justice to all persons, and in case of favor, to let them which do well find their comfort by you; and in other causes, in your choice to prefer them whom you find the Prince most disposed to have favored. My Lord of Ormond, doth

⁷⁶Froude, 8: 420-421 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XIX (1566), p. 315. The evidence against Desmond was presented by Patrick Sherlock, who was subsequently appointed by Ormond to legally represent him in Ireland along with his brother Sir Edmund. See SSP, November 30, 1566, p. 43.

take this commodity by being here to declare his own griefs; I see the Queen's Majesty so much misliking of the Earl of Desmond as I surely think it needful for you to be very circumspect in ordering of the complaints exhibited against him.⁷⁷

Sidney, however, found only temporary consolation in these words, for in November he wrote to Cecil lamenting the fact that the Queen's letters to him were somehow being procured and circulated in Dublin even before he received them, undoubtedly through the efforts of Ormond.⁷⁸ As a result of the detrimental effect this was having on his office, he again pleaded for his recall, noting too that Desmond did not think it any offence to annoy the Butlers or his other neighbors in pursuit of his own causes. On the other hand, he also wrote to the Privy Council and the Queen to inform them of the loyal service of Desmond and Sir John in the Pale, both of whom served six weeks in the campaigns against the O'Reillys and other rebels. Desmond himself wrote to Sidney in January to complain of the depredations of Edward and Piers Butler upon his lands while he served in the Pale as internecine warfare continued in Munster unabated.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Sir William Cecil to Lord Deputy Sidney, October 20, 1566 quoted in Froude, 8: 421.

⁷⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. XIX (1566), p. 318 and Wallace, p. 74.

⁷⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XIX (1566), pp. 318-319 and vol. XX (1567), p. 323.

Constrained by the repeated orders of the Queen and relieved of any serious threat from Shane O'Neill, who was greatly weakened by recent defeats, Sidney set out in January on a tour of the southern counties. Arriving in Kilkenny after his passage through Queens County, the Lord Deputy seized Piers Butler, Ormond's youngest brother, on a charge of breaking into a jail and freeing a number of prisoners committed for felonies, but he was released without punishment in view of his youth and evidently without any examination of the Earl of Desmond's charge that he and Edward Butler had raided his country while he served in the Pale. During his two-weeks' stay in Tipperary, on the other hand, he personally witnessed the results of a raid Desmond himself had reportedly led on January 25, 1567 against the manor of Kilfhelau, although he reported to the Queen that the spoils were considerably less than she had been advised previously (probably by Ormond); he also noted that great spoils had been taken from Oliver Grace of Ormond. When he arrived in Clonmel he arrested and brought to trial Ormond's brother Edward, but the charge was unrelated to his alleged attack on Desmond's country and he was acquitted in any case. Nonetheless, the Lord Deputy's stern treatment of the Butlers was noteworthy in view of the pressure he was under and he boldly advised the Queen that in his opinion the greatest cause of trouble in Tipperary, aside from the internecine warfare with the Desmonds, was "the Insufficiency to govern of

them that have the Rule under the Earl of Ormond."⁸⁰ He was also particularly critical of the number of horsemen and kerne maintained by Ormond's younger brethren and concluded that had Warham St. Leger remained in office, the Geraldine Earl would not have committed the above raids!⁸¹

The proud Fitzgerald Earl met the Lord Deputy in Tipperary and accompanied him to Waterford and Yougal, where Desmond brought up his claims to some of the disputed manors in Tipperary. The manor of Kilfhelau and some others were awarded to Ormond on the somewhat superficial legal grounds that they were in his possession at the time of the Battle of Affane. When Sidney thus showed himself favorable to Ormond on this issue, Desmond began to chafe⁸² and though he accompanied the Lord Deputy westward across country to Limerick, he did so reluctantly, several times requesting but not receiving permission to take his leave of Sidney's party, which consisted of about two hundred men. Admitting his attack on Oliver Grace and undoubtedly trying to justify it as necessary retaliation for his own injuries, the Earl was neither submissive nor cooperative with the Lord Deputy,

⁸⁰Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 18-19.

⁸¹Ibid., 1: 20.

⁸²Ibid., 1: 23. The possession of these manors had evidently not been included in Elizabeth's previous determination of 1562.

periodically pointing out with characteristic Geraldine pride that he would not give up his "idle men" (i.e., military retainers), coyne and livery, or his gallowglass, undoubtedly stressing that Ormond still enjoyed these customary means for his defense and boasting that he would have five thousand men at his call by mid-summer. Moreover, although the Lord Deputy had called all the great lords in Munster to come in to him and travel with him as he toured the province, Desmond had evidently attempted to dissuade the Earl of Clancarthy and O'Sullivan Beare from coming at all, but was unsuccessful in this endeavor.⁸³

To make matters worse Desmond now tried to overawe the Deputy with his power by calling a "rising out." When Sidney arrived in Kilmallock he received this news from Sir John and Bishop Lacy and verified the fact that large numbers of men were assembling and preparing to take up arms. Calling together all the lords and gentlemen of Munster who were traveling with him as well as the leading men of the town, he publicly charged Desmond with an unauthorized assembly of men. The Earl, his bluff now called, did not deny the same but instead fell on his knees and confessed that he had intended no evil, but was only trying to comply with the Lord Deputy's order to bring in all the lords of his country to him. Sidney,

⁸³Ibid., 1: 23, 25.

who had been ill-impressed by Desmond's tyrannical hold on his lesser lords and by the devastation he observed in parts of Munster, took Desmond into custody just as he had arrested Lord Dunboye, Lord Power, and others accused of "flagrant tyrannies" and crimes. In describing the devastation he observed in parts of Munster in his report to the Queen he spoke of burned-out villages and ruined churches and noted, "Yea, the view of the bones and skulls of your dead subjects who partly by murder, partly by famine, have died in the fields is such, that hardly any Christian with dry eyes could behold."⁸⁴ In words which undoubtedly confirmed the worst prejudices of the Queen, he noted too that Her Majesty's name was no more revered in Desmond's country than it would have been in France and deprecated the evident lack of Christian practices among the people.⁸⁵

Before leaving Munster with his prisoner to continue his law-and-order tour, Sidney released the lesser lords of Desmond's country at Limerick, placing them under the leadership of the Earl's brother John, with whose professed willingness to serve the crown even against his own brother, if necessary, and with whose popularity amongst the lords of the country the Lord Deputy seemed most impressed. The Earl was carried back

⁸⁴Ibid., 1: 24 and Carew MSS., 2: 336.

⁸⁵Ibid., 1: 23, 25-26.

to Dublin castle a prisoner and Sir John was charged with keeping order in the earldom. In his report to the Queen he recommended that the Earl be sent to England for trial since his safe-keeping in Ireland was something he could not be sure of. He also once again requested the establishment of a President and a Council in both Munster and Connaught, the establishment of which he had continually recommended since before his coming to Ireland as Lord Deputy and which had been delayed by Elizabeth's refusal to accept St. Leger or spend the necessary funds. Making an eloquent appeal against the fostering of clan warfare amongst the Irish chiefs, which had formerly been accepted policy in times past, he ended by asking for speedy relief either by action or by his own recall from this "miserable and thankless Service."⁸⁶

Desmond was arrested on the twenty fifth of March and about ten days later the Lord Deputy received a letter from the Queen, certainly belated in view of the circumstances, but by no means unexpected, ordering the Earl's arrest for maintaining rebels of the O'Connors, O'Mores, and O'Byrnes and for invading the country of Ormond and Sir Maurice Fitzgerald.⁸⁷ When the Queen received Sidney's report, she

⁸⁶Ibid., 1: 26, 29-31.

⁸⁷SSP, April 3, 1567, pp. 56-57.

approved of his actions but still complained of the "slackness" he showed in arresting the Earl and in arraigning Piers Butler, whom she felt should not have received such treatment in view of the treatment accorded John of Desmond.⁸⁸

Her almost weekly missives to her Deputy were generally full of reproof especially on the subject of John of Desmond, whose freedom she maintained made it impossible for the Butlers to enjoy any justice in Munster. Despite the sympathy and encouragement offered by Cecil and despite his successful spring campaign in Tyrone following his tour of the South and Shane O'Neill's subsequent death, Sidney could not help but be frustrated by the Queen's attitude towards his accomplishments. Thoroughly discouraged at the prospect of having to reduce his forces in Ireland and cease construction of new bridges, towns, and forts that he felt were necessary and having spent three thousand pounds of his own money to meet an excessively frugal Queen's most outstanding debts in Ireland, he now requested license to return to England.⁸⁹

Desmond too was unhappy and after two months in confinement he complained with some bitterness that he had expected better treatment from Sidney. On the last day of November 1566 the Queen had notified her Deputy of her decision to

⁸⁸ SSP, June 11, 1567, pp. 67-68.

⁸⁹ Wallace, p. 77 and Carew MSS., 2: 340.

appoint a commission consisting of a handful of Irish officials including Sir William Fitzwilliam, which was to go into Munster and settle the remaining causes in the dispute between the two earls. This commission had taken extensive testimony from the Ormonds, but Desmond himself refused to provide any and evidently also forbade Sir John and any of his brethren from submitting their claims, probably as a protest against a manner of settlement he felt could not possibly do the Geraldines justice. In any case, he complained to Sidney that it would be a great injustice to determine his suits in his absence, especially since his rival enjoyed considerable advantages of royal favor and education. Although he wrote to Cecil and Lord Treasurer Winchester appealing for aid, he received only advice as the elderly Lord Treasurer, with whom he had stayed on his last visit to England, urged that he come over with a retinue of no more than six men. Winchester also wrote to Sidney, expressing his view that if the Lord Deputy desired justice in this case he must bring Desmond to Court himself, since only Sidney's newly won prestige in Ireland could hope to offset the Queen's prejudice, which was characterized by frequent diatribes against the Earl. In fact, the Queen desired that Desmond be sent to England only after he had been arraigned and condemned, but Sidney

persuaded her that this was not possible.⁹⁰

Shortly before Sir Henry departed Ireland in October, Desmond wrote to the Queen asserting his innocence and pleading his inability to defend himself due to his lack of education. He also wrote to the Privy Council expressing his disappointment at not being able to accompany the Lord Deputy to England and begging to be allowed to come over while the Deputy was in his homeland.⁹¹ To make matters worse for the Geraldines, the commission in Munster reached its decision on the last day of the month awarding the Earl of Ormond a sum of almost twenty-one thousand pounds, which Desmond was required to pay to compensate for the cattle, crops, property, and human lives that he and his brethren, including Sir John, were alleged either to have taken or destroyed in Ormond's country, and shortly thereafter the Queen ordered that John of Desmond be sent over with the Earl.⁹² This latter order

⁹⁰ Bagwell, 2: 121-122; "Report of the Commissioners Examining Controversies Between Ormond and Desmond, October 31, 1567, "Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society Transactions 3 (1855): 340-341; CSP-Ireland, vol. XXI (1567), pp. 342-345.

⁹¹ CSP-Ireland, vol. XXII (1567), pp. 346-347.

⁹² "Report of the Commissioners," pp. 342-343 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXII (1567), p. 348. More specifically the Ormond claim included 9,876 cattle, 804 mares, 2,877 "plough gerrance", 4,468 swine, 17,801 sheep and goats, 140 men and women slain, four burned-out towns, etc., amounting to a total in excess of 20,894 pounds.

presented a problem to Lord Justice Sir William Fitzwilliam and to the new Lord Chancellor, Robert Weston, upon whom jointly the reins of Irish government now rested, since Sir John of Desmond had determined not to enter any walled town and thus his capture could be delayed for years. Fitzwilliam, who had long been a partisan of Ormond, had reported that the towns and corn crops of that Earl, were still being spoiled by the Desmonds in August. In November that Lord Justice wrote Cecil expressing doubt that John could be apprehended, but in December the fugitive came in of his volition to see his brother in Dublin and was immediately seized. Sir John, who was an excellent military leader, did not resist and both he and the Earl were soon sent over to England at the Queen's expense, since neither had come to Dublin prepared for the journey.⁹³

Sidney, who had himself come over accompanied by a large number of Irish chiefs anxious to view their mysterious and powerful sovereign, described his own homecoming as less than that due a dedicated public servant returned home after crushing a dangerous rebellion in Ireland:

When I come to Court it was told me that it was no war that I had made nor worthy to be called a war, for that Shane O'Neill was but a beggar, an outlaw, and one of no force...And within a few days after I was charged for not redressing the damages done to Ormond and his followers by Sir John of Desmond.⁹⁴

⁹³CSP-Ireland, vol. XXI (1567), p. 345 and vol. XXII (1567), pp. 349, 353.

⁹⁴Carew MSS., 2: 340-341.

To add to his disgrace, Elizabeth had also brought Sir John of Desmond over as well as the Earl and a short time thereafter confined both in the Tower without consulting her Deputy.⁹⁵ This was undoubtedly done at Ormond's behest, perhaps with support from some of the Queen's other Irish advisors, but in any case Sidney later advised Cecil that even Edward Butler, a younger brother of Ormond who certainly had little love for the Geraldines, stated his opinion that John, at least, had done "little or nothing" to justify his being committed to the Tower.⁹⁶ Against Desmond, charges of harboring traitors were confirmed by the testimonies of Cormac and Cahir O'Connor, themselves prisoners in the Tower, but the Earl pleaded that Irish hospitality demanded as much and swore that he never assisted them in any rebellious intent. Against John of Desmond and the Earl as well an attempt was made to connect them with a supposed confederacy with Shane O'Neill, but this seems to have failed. Nonetheless, there was a long list of charges against Desmond and though he at first exhibited the old Geraldine pride in expressing his belief that he had the right to decide disputes between all Geraldines without the aid of English-appointed sheriffs, he soon perceived that his cause would be lost and he made his humble submission to

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 37.

the Queen on March 16, 1568, which was followed by Sir John's the very next day.⁹⁷ Acknowledging his offenses and the fact that he might be held to have forfeited the twenty thousand pounds recognizance he had agreed to in late 1566 as well as all of his possessions and even his life, he placed all of his lands, tenements, houses, castles, seignories and other possessions in the hands of the great Tudor Queen, that she might keep that which pleased her. He even deigned to request that Her Majesty place a President and Council in Munster. Although the Desmonds were released from the Tower after two years, they were to remain in honorable confinement for another four years in England. The decision to keep the powerful Earl of Desmond as well as his able brother John away from their great earldom in Munster for so long a time was to prove a fateful decision and one that directly contributed to the outbreak of the first Desmond Rebellion in Munster in 1569.⁹⁸

⁹⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIII (1568), pp. 357, 365-366, 368. The Earl of Desmond's formal submission before the Privy Council along with a new recognizance of twenty thousand pounds was made on July 14, 1568. See Carew MSS., l: 385 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXV (1568), p. 382.

⁹⁸Submission of the Earl of Desmond, July 14, 1568 quoted in Fitzgerald, p. 257. This version is slightly different than the previously cited draft in the Carew MSS.; Bagwell 2: 137. In Desmond's submission of September 1565 he also placed his life, his lands, and all his goods before the Queen that she might keep what pleased her. Ormond, on the other hand, offered only his obedience. See Carew MSS., l: 47-48.

When the Earl of Desmond arrived in England a prisoner for the third time in December 1567 he had come, through no fault of his own, without any money, the Queen observing with some scorn that he preferred to borrow from her. Indeed the Earl was forced to borrow from Her Majesty as well as from Sir William Cecil, from whom Desmond requested a loan in February to purchase furniture for his room in the Tower. The Earl of Ormond, on the other hand, had his ancient enemy where he wanted him and in late April requested that the prize wines of Yougal and Kinsale, which had been sequestered by the Lord Deputy and Council after Affane, should be awarded to him as well as the damages of almost twenty-one thousand pounds determined by the Queen's commission in Munster.⁹⁹ Just over one year later, at the end of June 1569, the Queen wrote to inform Sir Henry Sidney, whose credit had been fully restored as well as good relations with his brother-in-law Sussex before he was prevailed upon to return to his post, that the judges in

⁹⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXII (1567), p. 355; vol. XXIII (1568), p. 362; vol. XXIV (1568), p. 376; Bagwell, 2: 125.

England had decided to award the prize wines to Ormond. He was also instructed that an equivalent amount of Desmond's land, castles, and manors should be placed in the hands of the Butler leader and those of his tenants who had been spoiled by the Geraldines until satisfactory payment of the award designated by the English commissioners, which had been increased to the tremendous sum of fifty thousand pounds, was made.¹⁰⁰ Thus, before the Earl of Ormond returned to Ireland in the midst of a serious rebellion in Munster, the Queen had seen to it that all the matters in dispute with Desmond were decided in his favor and had "salted away" the leading Geraldines in an effort to impose English law and order upon southern Ireland. The impolicies of the English government during the past decade combined with the ingrained intransigence and pride of the fifteenth Earl of

¹⁰⁰SSP, June 30, 1569; Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 41; Wallace, p. 79. The Queen also asked that Ormond be exempted from all cesses and impositions on his lands and manors except those he was "willing to pay unto us according to the old accustomed rate of ploughlands." She further ordered that Ormond be permitted to buy victuals at the Queen's price (i.e., at the discount enjoyed by the government) and that Sidney confer with the Butler favorite as to his claim to recompense for the building of a government owned castle at Lieghlin on his territory during his minority. The letter is printed in full in COD, 5: 174-176.

Desmond led Elizabeth to this juncture and she stood on the precipice of rebellion with the interests of the Earl of Ormond, as always, prominent among her concerns.

CHAPTER III

THE REBELLION OF JAMES FITZMAURICE

Soon after the departure of the Earl of Desmond and his brother John from Munster, the country, as previously during forced absences in 1562 and 1565, again broke out in serious disorder. In January 1568 Eleanor, Countess of Desmond, wrote to the English Commissioners in Munster that the disorders forced her to move from place to place every few days and were such that few could trust a father, a son, or a brother. The rule of the country was in fact the subject of armed contention by the followers of James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, the Earl's cousin, and Thomas Roe Fitzgerald, Desmond's illegitimate brother.¹ The Lord Justices reported

¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIII (1568), pp. 360-361, 363-364. James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald is usually referred to simply by his patronymic of "Fitzmaurice" in accordance with the Irish custom, since he was the son of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald or Maurice Duff, better known as "the incendiary" as a result of his murder in 1535 of his cousin James, which enabled his aged father to serve briefly as the thirteenth Earl of Desmond. With both Gerald and Sir John absent, Fitzmaurice had a strong claim to the earldom as did Thomas Roe, who became an illegitimate and dispossessed son after his father James, fourteenth Earl of Desmond, had his first marriage declared annulled on questionable grounds. See "The Life and Death of James (Fitz-Morrish) De Geraldines", The Kerry Magazine, vol. III, no. 31 (July 1, 1856): 105. Hereafter cited as "Life and Death of James".

to the Queen that none of Desmond's lords were willing to come to the Commissioners at Cork unless the Countess came to them first. The Commissioners did succeed in persuading both the Countess and Hugh Lacy, the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, to repair to them and proceeded to charge them with the responsibility to rule Munster jointly. Both of them then cooperated with the Commissioners in the apprehension of James Fitzmaurice, who reportedly had the Earl's warrant to rule in his stead, and Thomas Roe, who was purportedly being encouraged by the Earl of Ormond to put forth his claims.² Despite this apparent success the Countess was incapable of effectively ruling her husband's lands and Bishop Lacy, whom Desmond considered one of his own men, had come in only with great reluctance. In March, while the Desmonds were making their submissions in London, Fitzmaurice was making his escape from Kerry without the knowledge of the Commissioners and displaying written confirmation from the Earl and Sir John to rule. The Lord Justices, who had written to inform the Queen of this development, were soon in receipt of a letter from the Countess of Desmond and Bishop Lacy requesting approval of Fitzmaurice's rule; however, this was not forthcoming since Lord Justice Weston deferred to the

²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIII (1568), pp. 363-364 and Mary F. Cusack. A History of the Kingdom of Kerry (London, 1871), p. 150.

Queen on this subject. Although Thomas Roe was released upon the responsibility of the Lords Roche and Power, the knowledge of the Earl's personal choice now subordinated him and the rude people whom the Countess alleged supported him, effectively pushing them into the background while Fitzmaurice effectively ruled in his cousin's absence. Despite the desire of the Commissioners to have him appear before them, the country people themselves, among whom Fitzmaurice was known as an experienced soldier and a respected leader, refused to allow him to come, alleging that Desmond and John were sufficient pledges of his good conduct.³

Fitzmaurice soon exerted his newly gained authority against one of Desmond's most independent-minded sub-chiefs, Thomas Fitzmaurice, Lord of Lixnaw, by invading Clanmaurice for the avowed intention of collecting unpaid rents. Supported by all the Geraldines, he confiscated two hundred head of cattle as a pledge for rents due, burned the houses and picked the corn from the fields in the traditional Irish manner of dealing with unwieldy lords. Lord Thomas protested this invasion to the Lord Justices and the Council in a letter written in early July, but despite a strict prohibition to remain outside of Clanmaurice, Fitzmaurice returned to waste

³CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIII (1568), pp. 360, 368; vol. XXIV (1568), p. 373.

the country once more. He was finally defeated while returning from this expedition by the Lord of Lixnaw and his followers, suffering three hundred casualties in what proved a temporary setback. Subsequently Fitzmaurice, whose claims against Lord Thomas were evidently supported by what the latter complained of as the "false book" of Bishop Lacy, continued to enforce the Desmond authority against all those who failed to cooperate, while ignoring for the most part the letters of government officials.⁴

Lord Deputy Sidney returned to Ireland in September only to discover that nothing had changed; both the Geraldines and Butlers, despite and perhaps partly as a result of the absence of the two powerful earls, continued to determine their own issues with the traditional violent means. In early September Edward Butler, "that blessed babe" who had spent a portion of his youth growing up in Sidney's household,⁵ invaded the country of Mac Brien Arra with a force reportedly consisting of "six hundred gunners and kerne, one hundred gallowglass, sixty horsemen, and three hundred slaves, knaves and boys"⁶

⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XXV (1568), pp. 383, 386. See Annals of the Four Masters, pp. 473-475 for a detailed description of this battle.

⁵Carew MSS., 2: 346.

⁶CSP-Ireland, vol. XXV (1568), p. 388.

and plundered and burned, along with two churches, the country of this ancient Butler rival clan. He then moved into the King's County, where he attacked Thady O'Carroll and his small party, one of the sons of Sir William O'Carroll of Ely, whose territory had long been in dispute with the Butlers. When Mac Brian Arra travelled to Dublin to seek redress for the devastation of his country and people, Edward Butler took advantage of his absence to make a second encroachment upon his country, seizing cattle and burning. Neither Sir William O'Carroll nor Edward Butler was willing to appear before the Lord Justices and the latter defended his actions by alleging that his quarrel was a private one and that the O'Carrolls in any case had spoiled and burned every town in Ormond's country during the past three years.⁷

Sidney faced additional problems in Munster since Fitzmaurice, dismayed by the return of the Lord Deputy without either of the Desmonds, had assembled all the Geraldines, claiming that the Earl and Sir John's rights were in danger and that they were either going to be executed or left in prison to rot. Noting the precedent set at the time of Earl

⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XXV (1568), p. 389; vol. XXVI (1568), pp. 390-391; Bagwell, 2: 147.

Thomas' murder, he recommended that they choose a captain. He was himself elected "Captain of Desmond" by acclamation and continued to govern in this manner despite the threats of the Lord Deputy.⁸ Although McCarthy More had accepted the title of Earl of Clancarthy he now revealed the strength of his allegiance to the Earl of Desmond by gathering his forces, obtaining arms from Spanish shipping, and devastating the country of the loyal Lord Roche.⁹

To make matters worse Edmund Butler himself roamed the country with a force of one thousand men, not to bring his younger brother to justice, but rather to harass his own enemies, namely the Baron of Dunboyne and the White Knight. The Lord Deputy complained about both of the Butler brothers to Cecil in November, noting that Edward had cited the treatment of John of Desmond as the reason why he would not come in without a pardon or protection. He asked that Ormond be sent over as soon as possible because the Butlers were evidently convinced by reports they received from England that they were answerable only to the favored Earl and that they had been exempted from Sidney's authority. Several days

⁸Carew MSS., 2: 342

⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), p. 390 and Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 39.

later Sidney wrote again, stating his opinion with some bitterness, no doubt, that Fitzmaurice and Clancarthy might have been suppressed by St. Leger, if he had been granted the necessary powers, or by Sir John. He reiterated his request for Ormond's return and asked for his own recall, but promised to go to Desmond's country as soon as possible in accord with the Queen's order that the income from the Geraldine's lands should be sequestered to pay for the Earl's expenses in England and to support the government in Ireland.¹⁰

Despite Edward Butler's assertions to the contrary he seems to have come in on his own and to have been placed for a time in what Sidney described to the Queen as "courteous ward." Thus encouraged the Lord Deputy moved into Kilkenny in December, where he executed a number of Edward's followers and gave like treatment to lawbreakers further south at Waterford.¹¹ In all Sidney imposed the death penalty on about sixty men, but was careful to employ twelve-men juries rather than martial law to avoid later criticism by the Butlers. He

¹⁰Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 37-38 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), p. 394. The Queen's letter requesting the sequestration of the revenues from Desmond's lands provided that a portion be set aside for the sustenance of his wife and Sir John's wife, the remainder to be available to the government as the "laws shall order." See SSP, October 24, 1568, p. 99.

¹¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), pp. 395, 397 and Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 40.

then returned to Dublin to prepare for the Parliament he had summoned, using his authority and influence to insure that the election process produced a majority favorable to the government.¹²

The second Irish parliament of Elizabeth's reign was convened on January 17, 1569 with the Lord Deputy in splendid attendance wearing an ermine-lined robe of crimson velvet worn previously by one of his predecessors in the office.¹³ It soon became evident that the House of Commons was split into two opposing factions holding great animosity for one another. On the one side were the supporters of the Lord Deputy or the English faction composed of Irish officials and nominees selected by Sidney, who were opposed by the more independent gentry of the Pale, the burgesses of the old corporate towns, and the common lawyers, many of whom were disturbed by the treatment they had received at the Lord Deputy's hands in recent disputes concerning contested land titles. Although the opposition faction headed by Sir Edmund Butler

¹²Bagwell, 2: 152.

¹³His predecessor in this case was Sir Anthony St. Leger, father of Warham St. Leger.

succeeded in getting the judges to disallow the elections of English members returned from unincorporated towns and those of sheriffs and mayors who in effect returned themselves, the government still enjoyed a majority and the delaying tactics employed by the opposition obstructed for a time, but did not prevent the government side from accomplishing the greater part of its legislative program.¹⁴ After the passage of a bill suspending Poyning's Law, thus allowing acts to be passed without prior approval in England under the Great Seal, the English faction pushed through a number of acts. Among the new pieces of legislation were an unpopular subsidy on land put under plough in an effort to compensate noblemen for the loss of coyne and livery and an act effectively abolishing Irish captaincies, which like coyne and livery were ostensibly being eliminated because of the severe burden they placed upon the masses of Gaelic tenants dependent upon the great Irish lords or chiefs, but more so because these independent forces stood in the way of the complete conquest and Anglicization of the Irish. They were a lord's defensive stay against his avaricious neighbors, brigands and pirates, and other enemies as well as a formidable threat against emerging English plans for colonization and the reformation of religion, and their abolition threatened all the chiefs, great and small

¹⁴Bagwell, 2: 152-154.

alike.¹⁵ Thus despite the provision that the government would allow Irish captaincies approved by their patent and the further provision watering down the penalty for violation of the act from death without benefit of clergy (as proposed by the drafter of the bill in England) to a fine of one hundred pounds for each offense by great lords and lesser fines for lesser lords, this bill was soon to become the subject of a more general dissatisfaction with English rule. Sidney's parliament also attainted Shane O'Neill and abolished the title of "the O'Neill", thus placing Tyrone in the Queen's hands and, furthermore, passed an act enabling the government to convert the remaining Irish counties into English shires under certain conditions. Long before the parliament was prorogued on the eleventh of March, Sir Edmund Butler had been publicly censured before his countrymen by Sidney and had prematurely returned to his home harboring the bitterest of feelings towards the Lord Deputy; this was perhaps the clearest sign of the growing disquiet of the Anglo-Irish, the causes of which will now be examined.¹⁶

As previously noted the extended imprisonment of the Desmonds had brought forth James Fitzmaurice, the boldest and

¹⁵Ronan, pp. 283-284.

¹⁶MacCurtain, pp. 76-77 and Bagwell, 2: 154.

ablest leader amongst the Desmonds, while the prolonged absence of the ambitious Earl of Ormond had led to the designation of his oldest brother Sir Edmund as Seneschal and Captain with authority to rule for the absentee Earl. Both stand-in leaders, as we have seen, sought to crush their respective enemies in the Irish manner, generally ignoring the injunctions of Lord Deputy Sidney. This sort of conduct was characteristic of the Desmond pride, particularly at this moment when the future of the Geraldines was surrounded with uncertainty, but unlike the usual Butler manner of aggrandizement of their position in Ireland through close cooperation with and loyalty to the English government. The cause of this apparent aberration in Butler loyalty was occasioned by the even greater desire for aggrandizement on the part of a number of adventurous and martial gentlemen from Devon, Somerset, and various other of the southwestern counties of England. The surrender of the Desmond estates and the recurring troubles the English government suffered in southern Ireland were made the occasion for the advance of private fortunes by these "gentlemen pirates," who offered to solve the governmental crisis by colonizing Munster.¹⁷

¹⁷Fitzgerald, pp. 257-258.

In effect, these adventurers were planning to stake out fraudulent claims on lands long since abandoned by their ancestors or the ancestors of those from whom they had acquired their "deeds". During the Wars of the Roses many Irish septs had reoccupied the lands from which they had been driven by the Normans, and the opportunity of Englishmen to recover these lands now seemed at hand, because the adventurers were concentrating primarily on the Desmond estates in counties Cork and Kerry, which they intended to establish by force of arms if necessary.¹⁸ Led by men like Sir Warham St. Leger, Jacques Wingfield, and Humphrey Gilbert, all men of martial experience in Ireland, they petitioned the Queen's Secretary as well as her deputy in Ireland for permission to "plant" Munster. They formally requested the Queen's permission to fish the seas of south and southwest Ireland and to enjoy "certain havens, islands and castles, and the incorporation of the town of Baltimore", which would give them control of the entire southern coast from Cork in the East to the mouth of the Shannon River in the West.¹⁹ Their intent was plain;

¹⁸Froude, 10: 494.

¹⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), pp. 397, 399 and vol. XXVII (1569), p. 401. The adventurers approached Sir William Cecil with their petition in November 1568 and Lord Deputy Sidney in February 1569. According to Froude, 10: 490, there were twenty-seven families in all including the Chichesters, Courtenays, Talbots and others.

they were offering to garrison Munster for Elizabeth and thus reconquer the Desmond palatinate from the Anglo-Irish families who had conquered it centuries before and secondly to provide greater security for the south and southwest coasts of Ireland against possible Spanish or French interference, commercial or military. All of this was to be accomplished at their own expense and the results were supposed to include built-up agricultural settlements, roads, harbors, and forts which could be converted to a fixed revenue for the Crown within three years and which would force even "the wildest and idlest" of the Irish to "obedience and civility." Those who dared to remain Irish in the face of this forced Anglicization "would through idleness offend to die."²⁰ Sir William Cecil hesitated to approve so great a scheme of piracy involving forfeitures without attainders, but perhaps frustrated by the continuing problems in Ireland he advised that they attempt the first steps in Cork, which might then be expanded if they proved successful. Thus, while these offers were still being discussed in Council, a number of the gentlemen-pirates set sail for Ireland with large numbers of skilled craftsmen,

²⁰Petition of sundry of her Majesty's good subjects, February 12, 1569, quoted in Froude, 10: 491. The gentlemen-pirates had fought in "the French wars, in the privateer fleets, or on the coast of Africa, and the lives of a few thousand savages were infinitely unimportant to them. . . . Their extinction was contemplated with as much indifference as the destruction of the Red Indians of North America by politicians of Washington, and their titles to their lands not more deserving of respect" according to Froude, 10: 493.

retainers, artificers and laborers to begin their English colonies.²¹

Sir Warham St. Leger, whose favoritism for Desmond in the feud between the two great Anglo-Irish families of the south has already been noted, was able to obtain the mortgages from Desmond for several large estates in Cork, the castle of Carrigaline, the abbey of Tracton and the whole district of Kerrycurrihy in return for large sums of money he had loaned to the nearly destitute Geraldine Earl. That impoverished nobleman had not received any money from the rents of his estates since his coming to England, despite his repeated pleas for the same. St. Leger's partner in this endeavor was the young Richard Grenville, a Cornish squire who had just returned from martial service on the plains of Hungary. Together they began the settlement of these valuable lands around Cork Harbor; St. Leger, an advisor and friend of Sidney, established his household at the castles of Kerrycurrihy and Carrigaline, while Grenville set up his household at Tracton Abbey and was soon appointed sheriff of Cork.²² Since the "barony of Kerrycurrihy" had come down to Fitzmaurice through

²¹Froude, 10: 492.

²²A.L. Rowse, Sir Richard Grenville of the Revenge (London: Butler and Tanner, Ltd., 1937), pp. 65-66 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), p. 397.

his now deceased father Maurice, Desmond's action in thus disposing of his cousin's lands, was, along with Fitzmaurice's strong feelings about Catholicism, the major impetus which spurred the son of "the incendiary" and a firebrand in his own right, to a fight.²³ The Geraldine Earl was certainly aware of Fitzmaurice's ability and disposition or he would not have supported his selection as "Captain of Desmond" in the absence of himself and Sir John. It would seem obvious that the subsequent charge of Ormond's man, Patrick Sherlock, that Desmond had encouraged Fitzmaurice to "rebel" in the hope of obtaining his own release from the Queen,²⁴ who might be persuaded to send him to help quell the uprising, was probably true. Historians have failed to recognize Desmond's shrewdness in this apparent effort to play both ends against the middle.²⁵

²³"Life and Death of James," p. 106.

²⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVIII (1569), p. 407.

²⁵Ironically, Desmond had written in November, 1568 to both the Countess and Fitzmaurice, shortly before he concluded the land transaction with St. Leger, urging them to heed the counsel of the latter, who at this time was endeavoring to be reappointed President of Munster. Afterwards he managed to remain on comparatively good terms with both St. Leger and Fitzmaurice. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), pp. 395-396 for Desmond's letters.

The most ambitious of the adventurers, however, was sir Peter Carew of Mohun Ottery in Devon, who based his vast claims to most of Carlow as well as to the greater part of Cork and Kerry and part of Waterford counties upon a manufactured pedigree claiming descent from Raymond Le Gros of Carew. Employing careful researchers and skilled lawyers this amazingly bold adventurer succeeded in ousting the Mac Murrough Kavanaghs from the barony of Idrone in Carlow, which had been the center of the Carew lands until about 1370 when the Kavanaghs came into their possession at a time when many Irish septs reoccupied the lands from which they had been driven by the Normans. This victory for Carew was accomplished by virtue of a decision made in the Privy Council in Ireland, Sidney presiding, in December 1568, which ignored Irish law, prescription, and the fact that the Crown had twice before created baronies in their name, amounting to de facto recognition of the Kavanagh claims. Since Sir Edmund Butler held the northern part of the Idrone or Dullough including his castle at Cloughgrennan, he was greatly disturbed by this decision and this helps to explain his attitude towards the Lord Deputy before and during the parliament, especially no doubt because Sidney had handled the Irish common lawyers harshly and seemed to favor the piratical schemes of these Elizabethan buccaneers and adventurers. Although the Kavanaghs, who had been weakened by their division into a number of septs, acceded peacefully to this

decision and ironically found Sir Peter Carew a moderate overlord, Sir Edmund Butler ever aware of the presence of his brother at Elizabeth's court, remained adamant, his Irish pride inflamed; and soon he joined with Fitzmaurice and McCarthy More, who were also alarmed by Carew's further extensive claims to the Desmond lands in Cork as well as those of St. Leger and Grenville. The efforts of Carew and other west-country adventurers to expropriate these lands brought every tribal chief in Munster and Connaught, both Anglo-Irish and pure Irish, despite their past differences, into a confederation to defend their lands.²⁶

About the time the Lord Deputy was receiving the formal offers of the gentlemen-pirates to "plant" Munster, the Earl of Desmond was writing to the Earl of Leicester on behalf of the merchants of Cork who had recently suffered losses at the hands of Breton pirates. In November of 1568 he had also written to Bishop Lacy requesting that he insure that the poor receive justice in his absence and thus despite his own predicament, he was cognizant of the responsibilities entailed

²⁶Curtis, pp. 190-191; MacCurtain, p. 76; Bagwell, 2: 142-143. Carew's first victory had come shortly before this when he claimed and won seven towns in Meath that were in the possession of Sir Christopher Cheevers, to whom he promptly turned around and sold back the towns, having now established a precedent for his other claims. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), p. 397.

by his earldom. He was also ardently trying to win his release as evidenced by his optimistic letter to the Countess expressing the hope that he would soon be free and requesting her to send Irish hawks and horses, which were highly valued in England as gifts; this desire was further evident by his release of the mortgages on some of his lands about Cork to St. Leger, necessary also because of his extreme financial embarrassment.²⁷ Desmond was not alone in his monetary problems, however, for in early February, Sir William Cecil, aware of the lack of funds available to the Lord Deputy even for necessities, wrote to Sidney of the great difficulties surrounding an approach to the Queen on this subject, determined as she was to make Ireland pay for its own garrison at a time when the Irish debt was growing by leaps and bounds. He complained of the responsibility he had assumed of "breaking the ice" on this subject and then having to endure the brunt of the Queen's wrath at its mention; but in evoking sympathy for what he described as "the bottomless pit of my miseries," he was also trying to console his friend once again since the real brunt of Elizabeth's parsimony fell on Sidney.²⁸ Later that month, after receiving a missive from

²⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), pp. 395-396; vol. XXVII (1569), p. 401; Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, p. 109.

²⁸Cecil to Sidney, February 2, 1569 quoted in Froude, 10: 486.

the Queen recommending an attack on the rebels in the south of Ireland as well as at least an armed demonstration against those in Ulster,²⁹ Sidney wrote Cecil an impassioned letter bitterly lamenting his thankless task, his lack of able assistants, his deteriorating health, and most of all the disgraceful penury which he was enduring and which he intimated required him almost to beg for his dinner! Explaining the ramifications of this dearth of money he noted:

How then doth my Servants, how then my Soldiers but most of all, how doth the poor Country, which hath born all without receiving anything, this ten years past [carry on]? Surely starving, ripe, abandon the Country, and leave it waste; with this I am, I thank my good Hap, hated of all here; of the Nobility, for deposing their Tyranny; of the Merchant, for that, by my Persuasion, he hath so far trusted the Soldiers, as not receiving his money is become Bankrupt...of the Gentlemen, for that he cannot get rent of his tenants, through their keeping of the Soldiers; the Husbandmen cry out of me, and will do no Work, for that they are never paid for so long bearing the Soldiers: The Soldiers have twice refused to go to the Field, for that the Horseman is not able to shoe his horse, nor the Footman to buy a pair of shoes to his feet; and when I punish one of them for any offence, done to the Husbandmen, the rest are ready to mutiny; and indeed for the most Part, Hunger enforceth them to do that which they do, and steal away my Soldiers do every Day.³⁰

Even the appointment of a president for Munster, which Sidney had advocated since before his appointment as Lord Deputy in 1565, was delayed for a considerable time because

²⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVII (1569), p. 401.

³⁰Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 43.

of the Queen's reluctance to spend the requisite sums of money required to persuade able men to risk their careers in the Irish service. When the Queen finally agreed in late 1568 to the higher scale of pay promised by Cecil to Sir John Pollard, the latter travelled to Ilfracombe, where he prepared to sail to Ireland and assume his duties in Munster, but an attack of the gout saved the reluctant Pollard from the dreaded service.³¹

Thus it seems evident that the excessive frugality of the Queen coupled with the rising costs and continuing problems of a government in Ireland which sought to eliminate the Irish religion, culture, and traditional concept of government in favor of a pattern modelled upon contemporary England, created a situation in which the radical solution of colonization, despite the legal and moral questions it stirred, held sufficient appeal for Cecil to encourage the adventurers to try it on a small scale. Sidney, undoubtedly not without serious second thoughts, sought ultimately to provide official sanction for their scheme on June 30, 1569, after the outbreak of the rebellion made some decision necessary. After all, had not the Queen herself shown her support for Sir Peter Carew in February when she ordered the Lord Deputy to give him a seat on the Irish Privy Council?³² Sidney, who

³¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVIII (1569), p. 410 and Bagwell, 2: 155.

³²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVII (1569), p. 401.

complained of a lack of able assistants with whom he might govern more effectively, certainly could not question the daring, energy or ability of St. Leger, Carew, or Gilbert, all of whom he counted as friends and chose as advisors.³³

These piratical land schemes ironically brought the Butlers and Fitzgeralds together, as the proposed infringements of Carew upon the lands of Sir Edmund and Edward Butler led to their concert with Fitzmaurice and the growing confederacy that was forming around the Desmonds in the south and spreading throughout Ireland. The messengers Sidney sent to Sir Edmund to talk him into accepting the government's authority to ban coyne and livery, to determine the title to the Idrone (so recently decided in favor of Carew) and to come into the court of the Lord Deputy, returned with reports of his proud defiance; Sir Edmund Butler refused to come to Dublin without a pardon or protection and vowed to sever the heads of those who might dare proclaim a loyal Butler "rebel".³⁴

In the south Fitzmaurice had held a secret assembly or "parliament" at Cork which was attended by all the leading rebels including McCarthy More, who now disdained his English title of Earl of Clancarthy. St. Leger had learned of this "parliament" from an Irish informant and traditional enemy of

³³Wallace, p. 83.

³⁴Bagwell, 2: 158 and Ronan, p. 291.

the Desmonds, Teige McCormac. He reported to Sidney in a letter written February 14, 1569 that a confederation had been formed by the Irish to resist their English governors and that they intended to send Thomas O'Herlihy, Bishop of Ross in Carbery and the papal Archbishop of Cashel, Maurice FitzGibbon, to Spain in an obvious attempt to seek aid in that realm. Committed to the efficacy of the colonization scheme, St. Leger urged Sidney to persuade the Queen to speed the sending over of:

those well minded gentlemen that intend to adventure their lives and livings in these parts, which done her Majesty shall not only be assured to have these Traitor's devices prevented, but will enjoy to herself good revenue and have this country thoroughly reformed...³⁵

This warning was certainly appreciated by Sidney, though he may not have agreed entirely with the proposed solution, for he had himself warned Elizabeth after he toured Munster in 1567 that the Spaniards could take that province as well as Connaught from the Crown with a mere three thousand men and twenty thousand pounds expenditure, after which he predicted the Queen would require twenty thousand men and two hundred thousand pounds expenditure to recover and defend them. He

³⁵Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 4: 61. Appointed by the pope as Archbishop of Cashel in 1561, FitzGibbon, who is also referred to as MacGibbon, wounded and forced James MacCaghwell to flee to Spain about one year after Elizabeth had appointed him as Archbishop of Cashel in October, 1567. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVI (1568), p. 394.

did not have to be appraised of the heavy trade that existed on the south and southwest coasts with the Spaniards, who reportedly imported "2000 beeves, hides, and tallow" annually and fished the waters with two hundred sail, according to an informant of Cecil, who advised him in late March that the harbors of Beare Haven, Crook Haven, Baltimore, Ogglevance River, Balinaskelligs and Valentia should be fortified.³⁶

What the English did not know, however, was that the two Irish bishops carried with them a document which had secretly circulated about Ireland and had been signed by three archbishops, eight bishops, six earls and nineteen heads of ruling families--almost the entire nobility of the island--which requested that Catholic Spain accept sovereignty over Ireland.³⁷ The question of religion was intimately bound up with that of the land and it was James Fitzmaurice, a sincerely religious man who came to be respected by his friends as well

³⁶Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 24 and John Corbine to Cecil, March 21, 1569, quoted in Ronan, p. 289.

³⁷The actual signatures on the document were not, however, necessarily that of the noble or clergymen listed therein since Sir Edmund Butler signed for the Earl of Ormond (although Sir Edmund later denied having anything to do with requesting aid from Spain), Fitzmaurice for the Earl of Desmond, and the acting heads of several dioceses signed for their bishops. It is improbable that the Earl of Ormond himself or some of the bishops appointed by Elizabeth would have signed this. See Ronan, pp. 299-300.

as his enemies for his idealism and bravery, who joined the Irish cause to the religious issue.³⁸ The role of religion was evident in the letter which Archbishop FitzGibbon wrote to King Philip II and Pope Pius V on behalf of the nobility and clergy of Ireland, wherein he cited their constancy to the Catholic faith since their conversion by St. Patrick in the fifth century and further expressed their willingness to make great sacrifices to maintain that allegiance in the face of their powerful heretical oppressors, who under Elizabeth had imprisoned their great prelates and had introduced heretical preachers and books. They regarded the sovereignty of Ireland as rightfully that of the Catholic King (from whose Royal House of Castile the Anglo-Irish nobles traced their own descent) and of the Pope, and thus Fitzmaurice was able to convince his fellow rebels not only to seek the aid of the Catholic powers, but also to offer the Irish crown to any prince of the Spanish or Burgundian line whom King Philip might designate. In this vein FitzGibbon wrote to Philip to:

³⁸Fitzmaurice was probably influenced to some extent by his former chaplain, the Jesuit David Wolf, who travelled around Ireland, with English authorities in pursuit, as early as 1561 in effort to strengthen and ensure the perseverance in the faith of the chief princes of that kingdom. He was imprisoned in 1566 in Dublin along with Dr. Richard Creagh, Archbishop of Armagh. See Read, p. 241 and Myles O'Reilly, Lives of the Irish Martyrs and Confessors (New York, 1878), pp. 33-34, 36.

re-establish in perpetuity the royal throne of that island, and to venerate the presence of one King, one faith, and one kingdom, the donation of that island having been first obtained from and confirmed by the Apostolic See.

Not without cause do all the states of that island most strongly desire this, since that kingdom in extent, in its temperate climate, in its fertility, and in its wealth, might well vie with the kingdom of England, if only it were ruled justly and piously by a religious resident Catholic Prince or royal head.³⁹

The Archbishop concluded that the tyranny of English domination coupled with the heresy they sought to impose on the Irish, led to a general desire to sever their present relationship in favor of one which involved little more than "neighborliness and Christian love."⁴⁰

Although FitzGibbon ably carried the Irish cause to the court of King Philip and later to France and to Rome, no substantial aid was forthcoming. As Philip himself explained in a letter to the Duke of Alva⁴¹ in November, 1569 after

³⁹"Statement presented to the King of Spain by the Archbishop of Cashel in the name of the Bishops and Nobility of Ireland," quoted in Ronan, p. 299. The claims of the papacy to overlordships over Ireland (and England for that matter) date back to a bull of Pope Adrian IV and a grant of these kingdoms made by him to King Henry II. See Ronan, pp. 315-316.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹The Duke was the Spanish governor of the Netherlands and was at the time handling the negotiations with the English for the restoration of the treasure seized by Elizabeth in 1569 as well as the former alliance between the two powers. See Black, p. 163.

considering their appeal in Council:

Although on religious grounds I should like openly to embrace the business [i.e., Irish rebellion] and help these good men effectually, the noise the thing would create, and the jealousy it would arouse in France, as well as the obstacle it would present to the carrying through of the present negotiations with the Queen [i.e., Elizabeth], has made me decide to entertain this Archbishop here with fair words and money to his expenses, until I see the outcome of the negotiations [to re-establish the old alliance with England].⁴²

Thus Ireland was a pawn in European diplomacy, although Philip did solicit the Duke's advice on armed intervention, which he believed would be both easy and necessary if the English negotiations failed.⁴³ Most of the Irish Church and nobility were subsequently encouraged only by the papal bull Regnans in caelis in 1570 which excommunicated the great Tudor Queen and declared her deposed, since the prospects of tangible and meaningful foreign assistance, despite FitzGibbon's initial optimistic reports, had by this time diminished markedly.⁴⁴

In view of the plans of the conspirators and the tensions in the south, both St. Leger and Grenville returned to England in an effort to hasten the Queen's support of their plans.⁴⁵

⁴²Calendar of Letters and States Papers Relating to English Affairs Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas, ed. Martin A. S. Hume, 2 vols. (London, 1894), 1: 210. Hereafter cited as CSP-Simancas.

⁴³Ibid, and Black, p. 476.

⁴⁴Ronan, p. 307 and Curtis, p. 194.

⁴⁵Froude, 10: 499.

On the very day Sir Richard Grenville departed, June 16, 1569, the rebels led by Fitzmaurice and McCarthy More, along with the lesser but always loyal Desmond chiefs such as the White Knight and the Seneschal of Imokilly, jointly invaded and spoiled the lands held by the two English adventurers in Kerrykurrihy, west of Cork. The abbey-castle of Tracton, where Grenville made his home, was captured and its small garrison slaughtered, except for the English soldiers therein, who were hanged the next day. The cattle in the area were driven into the hills and the Desmond rents were collected in kind once again. The "rebels," bragging that help was on the way from Spain and that the Butlers would be with them in this struggle, vowed to remain at Cork until the Lady St. Leger, the Lady Grenville, and the other English therein were turned over to them as prisoners. The mayors and corporations of Waterford, Yougal and Cork all appealed to the Lord Deputy for military aid, the latter noting that the rebels had wasted the whole country between Cork and Kinsale.⁴⁶

The Butler brothers led by Sir Edmund and accompanied by large numbers of their followers proved their solidarity with the "rebels" by destroying the eastern part of Queen's

⁴⁶CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVIII (1569), pp. 409-410. Fitzmaurice had intercepted Sidney's letters to Grenville, which required the sheriff to apprehend and detain Lords Roche and Barry and hence he skillfully used these letters to win the acquiescence of these nobles in confederate operations. See Rowse, Grenville, p. 69.

county about the same time, stripping the English soldiers of their hose and doublets, which were stuffed and trussed and used as targets for the darts of the kerne. They also devastated the Idrone in Carlow, wasting the lands of those of the Kavanaghs who would not join them, and at the end of June burned a number of towns in Waterford county.⁴⁷ Sidney's response had been to send Carew and Gilbert with three hundred horse to apprehend Sir Edmund and on July 3, they caught him at Kilkenny where they slew a considerable number of his men. In a second engagement Carew was less successful, but he soon thereafter succeeded in capturing Sir Edmund's house at Cloughrennan after a siege of several days by taking unworthy and deceitful advantage of a peaceful parley to launch another attack. This was followed by the murder of women and children alike, including a three-year-old boy who was hanged. The Butlers vowed revenge and continued their operations between Waterford and the Pale.⁴⁸ When a neighbor afterwards tried to persuade Sir Edmund to mend his ways, the Earl rebuffed him and showed him written treaties made with Fitzmaurice and the letters from Turlough Luineach O'Neill, Shane's

⁴⁷Carew MSS., 2: 343 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 412. According to one witness Sir Edmund had seized upon a rumor that both the Queen and the Earl of Ormond had been put to death as a means of motivating his followers. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVIII (1569), p. 410.

⁴⁸Carew MSS., 1: 385, 388 and Bagwell, 2: 160-161.

successor in Ulster, alleging that the latter would attack the Pale if Sidney invaded Munster, according to the testimony the neighbor later gave to English authorities.⁴⁹

By the end of June the whole of Ireland outside the pale was in rebellion and the country was rife with rumors of aid promised to the confederates by King Philip. Fitzmaurice's forces, which had been operating with a strength of fourteen hundred gallowglasses, four hundred pike in mail, four hundred musketeers, and fifteen hundred kerne had killed some English settlers near Cork and had forced others to disrobe, both men and women, before releasing them at Waterford. On July 2, the confederates captured Castletown in Kenry and shortly thereafter were buoyed by the taking of Kilmallock without a fight. The town surrendered and paid a ransom of 160 pounds⁵⁰ rather than test Fitzmaurice's threat to kill all if they resisted, and the townspeople were required to swear an oath that "they would use none other divine service but the old divine service of the Church of Rome."⁵¹ The citizens of Kilmallock also reported that many

⁴⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 415.

⁵⁰CSP-Ireland, vol. XXVIII (1569), p. 411 and vol. XXIX (1569), p. 412.

⁵¹The Suffreyn and his brethren of Kilmallock to the Lord Deputy, July 3, 1569 quoted in Froude, 10: 500.

towns throughout Munster had thrown open their gates to the confederates, and that Mass was openly said in many churches where it had been discontinued. This victory was followed by another on July 8, when Fitzmaurice met and arranged an alliance with the Earl of Thomond and John Burke, the Earl of Claricarde's son, Thomond putting aside his antipathy towards the Geraldines according to Sidney at the request of Sir Edmund Butler.⁵²

By the middle of July the Geraldines were threatening Cork once again and Fitzmaurice addressed his demands to the Mayor in the following terms, which are characteristic of the man:

I commend me unto you; and whereas the Queen's Majesty is not contented to dispose all our worldly goods, our bodies, and our lives as she list, but must also compel us to forego the Catholic faith by God unto his Church given, and by the See of Rome hitherto prescribed by all Christian men to be observed, and use another newly invented kind of religion, which for my part, rather than I would obey to my everlasting damnation, I had liefer forsake all the world if it were mine, as I wish all others who profess Christ and his true faith to do: Therefore this shall be to require you in the way of charity...to abolish out of the city that old heresy newly raised and invented, and all of them that be Huguenots...and to set up service after the due form and manner which is used in Rome and throughout all Christendom...⁵³

⁵²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 412 and Carew MSS., 2: 343.

⁵³Fitzmaurice to the Mayor and Corporation of Cork, July 12, 1569 quoted in Fitzgerald, pp. 262-263.

Despite his financial dilemma and lack of troops, the Lord Deputy was preparing an expedition for the field while still awaiting the return of the Earl of Ormond, whose presence he felt would either quickly bring his rebellious brethren to bay or make possible decisive action against them, which he preferred not to take with their eldest brother and his former "enemy" still tarrying at Elizabeth's side.⁵⁴ However, by late July it had been over eight months since he requested Ormond's return and over six months since Cecil's report of the latter's intended departure and with the rebellion growing more serious daily, Sidney departed Dublin with a force of six hundred men and proceeded south. His first task was to relieve the town of Kilkenny which, thanks to an able defense by Captain William Collyer and also to its natural defenses, including its wall and the Nore River, was able to hold out against a force of 4500 confederates, led by the three Butler brothers, Fitzmaurice and McCarthy More. As he passed through Kilkenny and Tipperary, the rebels scattered before him leaving the trail of their own burning homes and villages in their wake. The Lord Deputy took several castles,

⁵⁴According to a letter written by Guerau de Spes, the Spanish Ambassador in London to King Philip on July 22, 1569, the Queen had stayed Ormond when he was on the verge of departing. See CSP-Simanacas, 1: 180.

but bypassed others in his rush to relieve Cork, where the citizens were seriously contemplating turning over Lady St. Leger and other Englishmen and Englishwomen to the rebels, as they had demanded. Encamping at the walled town of Clonmel, he sent messengers to obtain reinforcements from Waterford and others to offer the gentlemen of Tipperary a pardon in return for their defection from the rebellion. The citizens of Waterford, however, refused to send any men on the technical grounds that their charter did not require that they answer a hosting unless the Sovereign or heir of the Sovereign were personally present and the gentlemen of Tipperary remained adamant in their loyalty to their Butler chief (Sir Edmund being his chosen representative or "Captain"). Commissioners to the Butlers themselves later reported that Edward claimed that they acted with the "Privity and direction of Ormond" himself.⁵⁵ Although historians have tended to discount or ignore this statement because of Ormond's personal loyalty to the Crown and his relationship with the Queen, his vast ambitions with regard to Irish lands and particularly those of the Geraldines, make this a very real possibility.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Carew MSS., 2: 344-346 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), pp. 414-415.

⁵⁶It would be difficult to explain why the Earl of Ormond did not return to Ireland sooner if his brothers were acting completely against his will. Ormond may not have sanctioned all their actions, but he undoubtedly approved of their opposition to land piracy. He himself harbored ambitions to reassert vast claims to territory in every province as had his father James, according to MacCurtain, p. 76.

After demonstrating his ability to energize and motivate his troops for the bloody and hard fighting that lay ahead, Sidney proceeded on to Cork wasting and spoiling the country of John Oge FitzGibbon, the White Knight, as he moved south.⁵⁷ While in Cork the Lord Deputy learned of Ormond's arrival in Ireland, the Earl having landed at Roslare in Wexford on August 14, 1569. Three weeks before his arrival, while awaiting transport to Ireland from Bristol,⁵⁸ the Earl had reported disturbing news from his brethren concerning the situation in Ireland to his friend, Sir William Cecil:

This is the order now-a-days to come by the possession of my brother's lands; and to make the better quarrel to his living my Lord Deputy proclaimed him rebel. I hope the Queen's Majesty will think of this manner of dealing with her subjects. I assure you Sir Peter's dealing for my brother's land has made all the lords and men of living, dwelling out of the English Pale, think there is a conquest meant of all their countries. I do hear that certain foolish letters, written in some fond sort by Sir Warham St. Leger or some others, be come into the hands of divers here. By God, if it be as my men tell me, those that hitherto always served the Queen faithfully are now in doubtful terms. I mean some of great calling.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Carew MSS., 2: 347. Sidney said his troops were convinced that each one of them was the equal of five of the rebels according to Bagwell, 2: 164.

⁵⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), pp. 414-415, 417.

⁵⁹Ormond to Cecil, July 24, 1569 quoted in Froude, 10: 505.

In the same missive Ormond requested letters from the Queen authorizing him to take custody of his brothers in his own house.⁶⁰ Clearly the acute and capable Butler leader had expressed his disapproval of the colonization scheme and had warned of even more drastic consequences if it were persisted in. He did, in fact, also return home armed with the Queen's favor, since all the claims still at stake between the two earls had been decided in Ormond's favor, including the final award of the prize wines as well as an award of almost fifty thousand pounds in damages to be paid by Desmond to his rival. Desmond's claim of a like amount from Ormond and his brethren had evidently been totally disregarded.⁶¹ Thus the return of "Black Thomas," Elizabeth's "Lucas," to Ireland represented at one and the same time a triumph over Desmond, an attack on the colonization scheme which had already proved its cruelty and impracticality,⁶² and a sharp

⁶⁰CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 415.

⁶¹Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 41.

⁶²The Queen ordered the restoration of the lands taken by Sir Peter Carew from Sir Edmund Butler in a letter addressed to Sidney on July 2, 1569, until their respective claims could be settled "by judgement in some of our courts of record according to the laws of that our realm." This nullified the former decrees of the Irish Privy Council which had been the basis for the confiscations. See SSP, July 2, 1569, p. 114.

setback for the confederates. The Earl of Ormond would soon detach his brothers from the confederates since he came to believe that his lands and ambitions could best be preserved through his continued allegiance to the Queen and her government. As a second generation Protestant, religion presented no hindrance to his loyalty.

Ormond's triumphs, however, did not go unchallenged nor were they easily won. Upon arriving in Ireland, the Earl requested a military escort to get him safely through rebel-held territory to Kilkenny, but Sidney refused to spare any of his men. The Lord Deputy had pushed northwest from Cork after first capturing Carrigaline Castle to the south of the city, moving into the Mallow district and methodically seizing castles and burning rebel-held country as he marched, and by this means also winning submission of a number of the rebel chiefs. After taking the castle of Buttevant he changed his plan to head west into Kerry and the heart of Desmond country and instead continued northwards towards Kilmallock, the walls of which Fitzmaurice had scaled (probably with help from inside the town) in taking the town in early September, sacking and burning the homes of those who opposed the confederates. Upon arriving in Kilmallock the Deputy soon received word from Ormond that he could not come to him without sufficient protection, so Sidney sent two Lords, Power and Decies, to convoy him from Kilkenny to Limerick, where the two men met

in mid-September.⁶³ After making his own way to Kilkenny Ormond in the meantime had met with his three brothers in early September at about the same time that Lord Chancellor Weston and Lord Treasurer William Fitzwilliam had written to both Cecil and Sidney of their great concern that Sir Edmund Butler would strike the vulnerable southern flank of the Pale with a force of seventeen hundred men, while at the same time the troops loyal to the government were stationed in the north to guard against a possible strike by O'Neill. Careful to obtain a commission from the Deputy before meeting with his brothers, the acute Ormond had persuaded Sir Edmund to write Cecil requesting a general pardon from the Queen for himself and his brethren and all their men, to include the restitution of their property, and he also persuaded Edmund and Edward to accompany him to Limerick, Piers remaining behind evidently due to illness.⁶⁴ This course of action obviously relieved the threat to the Pale, Sir Edmund, however, evidently thought better of submitting himself to

⁶³CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 417 and Carew MSS., 2: 347-348.

⁶⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), pp. 419-420.

sidney without any guarantees of his safety or the surety of his cause, and as a result, the Earl arrived at Limerick with Edward alone in hand.⁶⁵

At Limerick, Ormond, who came armed with letters expressing the Queen's great favor for him along with her confidence in his loyalty, succeeded in persuading Sidney to allow him to keep Edward in his custody; he promised to answer the Deputy's call to come to Dublin with his other brothers, maintaining that Edward would be better able to convince both Sir Edmund and Piers to come in as well.⁶⁶ The Earl then left Sidney and went to Waterford, from where he dispatched his lieutenant, Patrick Sherlock, to England with a letter to Cecil complaining of Sidney's harsh treatment of Edward and of his unwillingness, allegedly because of jealousy, to employ the Earl against the rebels.⁶⁷ The Lord Deputy remained at Limerick long enough to receive pledges of loyalty and faithful service from the "principal personages" of Kerry and Connello, including William Burke of Clanwilliam, Rorie MacSheehy, captain of Desmond's gallowglasses, and Thomas Roe, Desmond's illegitimate brother. Leaving Sir Humphrey Gilbert behind with a promotion to colonel and charged with the

⁶⁵Carew MSS., 2: 348.

⁶⁶Ibid. The Queen had ordered Sidney to permit Ormond to have custody of Sir Edmund when he was captured, in a letter dated August 7, 1569. See SSP, p. 119.

⁶⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 421.

government of Munster, Sidney marched north to Galway and Roscommon in Connaught, where he achieved similar results against the rebels and from thence he returned to Dublin.⁶⁸

Sir Humphrey Gilbert had been a friend of the Queen's since about 1555 or 1556 when he first entered into her service while she was still a princess, and he had been a primary part of a scheme for colonizing Ulster in 1567, which however was never undertaken. Still high in the affection of his sovereign, Gilbert then served as a captain with the army in Ireland and was in fact a first-class soldier.⁶⁹ On September 23, the newly promoted colonel departed Limerick for Kilmallock with his mounted troops, accompanied by Captain John Ward and his company, where they had reason to believe the rebels under Fitzmaurice and More were about to make a surprise night attack on the town in order to burn down what remained standing after their previous efforts. The next day, with Gilbert and Ward behind the town's walls, the rebels approached to within a half mile of the town when Gilbert sallied forth to reconnoitre their forces, which Ward said contained two thousand foot and sixty horse.

⁶⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), pp. 421-422 and Carew MSS., 2: 348.

⁶⁹William Gilbert Gosling, The Life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert: England's First Empire Builder (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970), pp. 30-31, 42-43.

The Colonel unwontedly became involved in a squirmish in which he showed great courage in charging the enemy's gallow-glasses, his horse being wounded by both a harquebus shot and an axe blow, while he deflected a spear with his target. He subsequently defended a river ford over which his men were crossing, singlehandedly holding off twenty horsemen, slaying one, wounding six and unhorsing two in the process of successfully retreating, with the loss of only one of his own men. After thus discouraging the rebels at Kilmallock, Gilbert succeeded in making the dangerous and difficult trip to Cork and returning with a company of reinforcements without losing a single man.⁷⁰ He thereafter acquired a reputation among the Irish, many of whom viewed this seemingly fearless man on a black curtalled horse as an "enchanter that no men could hurt, riding on a Devil."⁷¹

Shortly thereafter Gilbert took the offensive capturing Garrystown Castle in a mere three hours and afterwards commanding Captain Ward to put its forty defenders to death or suffer death himself. Bringing the campaign into Kenry and Connello, the merciless Colonel was almost unopposed in capturing over twenty five castles or fortresses, the rebels viewing "him more like a devil than a man" as he slaughtered

⁷⁰Captain John Ward to Sir William Cecil, September 26, 1569 quoted in Gosling, pp. 44-45.

⁷¹Thomas Churchyard, Generall Rehersall of Warres (London, 1579), p. Rlr.

men, women and children alike.⁷² He always offered the Queen's pardon to any castle or fort he besieged, but if the besieged refused his summons, he afterwards slaughtered all of them, even if they later ceased fighting, severing heads from bodies to be placed in neat rows on either side of a pathway leading to his own tent each night, so that the Irish who came in to make their humble submission were duly impressed by his barbarity and spread the word.⁷³ Refusing to make peace or even discuss terms with any of the rebels because he did not want them "to think that the Queen's Majesty had more need of their service than they had of her mercy", he executed those who fed or accompanied the rebels as well as all malefactors, while on the other hand he showed "all courtesy and friendship" towards those who offered humble submission on bended knee and pledged their allegiance to the Queen, also agreeing to be bound by recognizances for great sums equal to the value of their lands and goods or in any case, more than they could afford to pay. He claimed the absolute power of the Queen as justification for ignoring the charters of the corporate towns in Ormond's country and advocated fear as opposed to love as

⁷²Captain John Ward to Sir William Cecil, October 18, 1569 quoted in Gosling, p. 45.

⁷³Churchyard, p. Q3v.

the surest means through which England could retain her position over the subject Irish.⁷⁴ His ruthless terror tactics resulted in the submission of almost all of the Geraldines as well as McCarthy More and MacDonough McCarthy, who knelt before Gilbert on December 4, 1569. Although Fitzmaurice remained in hiding in the glen of Aherlow, south-east of Kilmallock, with his band of diminishing adherents, Munster had been virtually quieted within six weeks. Sidney, who had Gilbert knighted for his service, expressed his view in a letter to Cecil in January, 1570, when he reported Sir Humprey's greatest accomplishment was that by his valor and that of his soldiers he had made "the name of an Englishman more terrible now to them [the Irish] than the sight of a hundred was before."⁷⁵ Gilbert had not, however, put an end to the rebellion, for shortly after he had departed Munster and had returned to England on a leave of absence, granted due to problems he was having with his eyes, Fitzmaurice breathed new life into the struggle by spoiling Kilmallock

⁷⁴Captain John Ward to Sir William Cecil, December 6, 1569 quoted in Gosling, pp. 46-47.

⁷⁵Sir Henry Sidney to Sir William Cecil, January 1, 1570 quoted in Gosling, p. 48.

once more with a freshly gathered force of considerable size.⁷⁶

While Gilbert was campaigning in Munster he had complained in a letter to Sidney in December, 1569 of Ormond's slackness in operations against the rebels. Several months before, however, in late October, the haughty and acute Butler Earl had delivered two of his rebellious brothers to Dublin as promised, namely Sir Edmund and Piers. He had not been able to bring in Edward, however, who after his earlier meeting at Limerick with the Lord Deputy, was evidently convinced that he would receive no justice from Sidney. Edmund and Piers appeared before the Lord Deputy and Council proclaiming that their actions were motivated by fear of a "new conquest" intended by the Queen, which rumors they alleged seemed proved by the intended establishment of presidencies in the provinces. Ormond himself, who saw little reason to hope for mercy from Sir Henry for his brothers, wrote to Cecil claiming that Sidney was bent on disgracing and discrediting him and his brethren and requested that the Queen's powerful Secretary obtain permission for his brothers

⁷⁶CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), p. 426.

to come over to England to present their case in person to her Majesty.⁷⁷ In the meantime, Sidney, who was under orders from the Queen not to take any further judicial action against the Butlers at this time, confined them to Dublin Castle while Ormond continued to work for their release behind the Lord Deputy's back, as evidenced by the fact that Gilbert soon reported that a rumor was circulating in Munster that Sidney was to be recalled and replaced by the Earl of Ormond.⁷⁸

⁷⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), pp. 422-424. Ormond's family enemy, Sir Peter Carew, was also hard-pressed at this time, writing to Cecil for favor, alleging that he had not attacked Sir Edmund's possessions until he was appointed to apprehend him. Shortly thereafter he returned to England to clear his name and while there was offered the seat in parliament he had held in 1558, but he turned down this offer made by the Queen. In mid-1570 Elizabeth had written to Sidney urging him to support Carew's representatives in maintaining the Barony of Idrone and although he returned to Ireland in 1574 to reassert his old claims, he died soon thereafter on November 27, 1575. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 422 and SSP, June 30, 1570, p. 134.

⁷⁸Carew MSS., 2: 349 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 423. In the letter written by Sidney to Sir Francis Walsingham in 1583, cited in Carew above, the Lord Deputy maintained that Ormond returned to England allegedly to lobby for the pardon of his brothers, but really to discredit him. However, there is no indication elsewhere that Ormond returned to England in late 1569 and the evidence in fact suggests he remained in Ireland until 1572. It should be noted, however, that the Queen had given the Earl warrant to return to England whenever he felt the need to do so.

In any event for reasons which are not fully understood, Sidney released Piers Butler to Ormond, from whom he seems to have escaped⁷⁹ and shortly thereafter Sir Edmund made good his escape to the great dismay of the frustrated and overworked Lord Deputy. That high official continued to insist upon his recall and to express his grief both at the continuing absence of the Queen's favor and at his loss of support from all classes in the present turmoil, suffering and bloody guerrilla wars of the day, which his own support of the plantation schemes in no small way helped to promote.⁸⁰

The year 1570 was hardly a triumphant one for James Fitzmaurice and those of the confederation that remained loyal to him, despite the spoiling of Kilmallock in February. In Connaught, the Earl of Thomond had come out in open rebellion, driving the recently installed President of the province, Sir Edward Fitton, out of his territory and into the fortress of Galway. Although the Earl of Clanricarde also joined the confederates, the prospect of a major conflagration in the West was relatively short-lived because Ormond had met with the Lord Deputy at Leighlin in early February and had reached an understanding with the now pragmatic Sidney, which might better be termed an alliance of convenience for both men. In return for unwritten but obviously satisfactory assurances as

⁷⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 422. Recalling this period in the letter to Walsingham in 1583, Sidney says he "enlarged" Piers although his reports to the Privy Council in 1569 correctly indicates he escaped. See Carew MSS., 2: 350.

⁸⁰CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 422.

to the intended treatment of his brothers, Ormond shortly thereafter again procured the submission of Sir Edmund and piers without conditions on February 28, 1570.⁸¹ He also agreed to accept a commission to, in effect, rescue the hard-pressed Fitton in Connaught by opposing his cousin the Earl of Thomond. After receiving the commission and instructions from Sidney which allowed him wide latitude in prosecuting the rebels, he mustered some of the forces of his own considerable palatinate along with three hundred kerne supplied by the Lord Deputy and marched into Thomond's country. There his very presence and the knowledge that he was backed by the government-supplied artillery were evidently sufficient to persuade his cousin to surrender all his prisoners and castles, the latter consisting of 123 fortresses both large and small, on the condition that Ormond would agree to allow him to sail for England and present his case directly to the Queen and afterwards to serve against Fitzmaurice. Sidney approved these terms if Thomond would start for England before May 27, but even after the Earl of Thomond went back on his word, boarded a French ship and sailed to France to seek foreign assistance, the Lord Deputy wrote to the Privy Council

⁸¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), pp. 426-427 and Carew MSS., 1: 401. Of their meeting at Leighlin Ormond wrote Cecil on March 5, 1570: "My Lord Deputy and I brake our minds at Leighlin last together before some of our trusty friends, and after promising never to call quarrels past to rehearsal, we vowed the renewal of our old friendship. So, for my part, I will bring no matter past to rehearsal." Quoted in Bagwell, 2: 171.

of his appreciation of Ormond's pacification of Thomond without receipt of any pay from the government.⁸²

Sir Henry had also been buoyed to some extent by the receipt of a letter from the Queen in May in which she acknowledged royal approval of the imprisonment of Sir Edmund and Piers Butler, but she forbade Sir Henry to condemn the two brothers to death without first obtaining her personal approval in the event they refused to turn over their lands and goods to her as punishment for their part in the rebellion. Despite this latter concession to the sensibilities of her cousin and favorite, the Queen demonstrated that she was not completely governed by her partisanship for Ormond. After a delay of seven months she finally acknowledged Sidney's request to limit the special privileges granted to Ormond upon his return to Ireland, including such privileges as freedom from all impositions and cesses upon his lands in the Pale and authority

⁸²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), pp. 430-431 and Bagwell, 2: 172. Thomond continued playing both sides of the fence after arriving in France, negotiating with Henry III for aid while assuring the English ambassador, Sir Henry Norris, of his ultimate fidelity to the Queen and representing himself as a victim of Fitton's harsh policies. Despite the gift of two hundred pistoles from Catherine De Medici and the initial enthusiasm of the French king, Thomond lost heart after a month in Paris and went to England to make his humble submission. Portrayed by Norris as a weak man used by the confederates rather than guiding them, the Queen permitted him to return to Ireland where he eventually received a pardon and was bound by a recognizance of ten thousand pounds to remain on good behavior. See Bagwell, 2: 173.

to purchase victuals "at her Majesties' price."⁸³ Sidney's argument opposing the fifty-thousand-pound judgment made against Desmond had cited the fact that all the cattle and household goods in Munster were not worth that much; that even if the Geraldine's land were held in pledge for forty years the sum would remain unpaid; and that there would be little hope of recovering the previous judgment of twenty thousand pounds against Desmond, not to mention also the question of how the country would survive. His most telling contention, however, had been that his own campaign in Munster had resulted in the defection of half of Fitzmaurice's forces, who would not for even a moment serve the government if their "ancient enemy" came into possession of "their Inheritance".⁸⁴ In a rare mood designed to offer hope and encouragement to her Deputy, the Queen also acknowledged the problem he faced from his inability to pay his troops for so long, and she promised that the money would be forthcoming as soon as possible.⁸⁵

Shortly after his letter was written, Sidney convened Parliament in Dublin and passed an act attainting Fitzmaurice,

⁸³SSP, May 17, 1570, pp. 125, 131.

⁸⁴Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 41-42.

⁸⁵SSP, May 17, 1570, p. 132. Lord Treasurer Fitzwilliam informed the Privy Council that Elizabeth's outstanding debts in Ireland had risen to over seventy thousand pounds by April, 1571. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXII (1571), p. 444.

Clancarthy and Ormond's brothers along with some of the lesser Butlers and Geraldines. The Queen, however, stayed the execution of the attainders and continued to encourage Sidney to use his discretion in showing the Butlers mercy where possible.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, Ormond's house was wounded by this action and the more so since his youngest brother Edward was still at large and reportedly operating with Fitzmaurice in July.⁸⁷ The Earl, who contended that Sir Edmund had been bewitched and "was not his own man", and that he too succumbed to this same evil spirit by way of a drink given to him "by some unhappy hand," now sought to repay the Queen's mercy by his own loyal service while continuing to seek pardons for his brothers.⁸⁸

Not much was heard from Fitzmaurice and his meagre forces for the remainder of the year 1570 following the attack on Kilmallock, but their desperation may be judged from the letter the Irish chiefs sent to Archbishop FitzGibbon in May 1570, in which they suggest querying King Philip on his

⁸⁶ Bagwell, 2: 175 and SSP, August 19, 1570, p. 136. The parliament also rejected a bill "to limit interests which had been acquired by lessees in entailed property", which was intended to restore to Ormond and his family those lands which were "improvidently alienated" according to Bagwell, 2: 176.

⁸⁷ CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), p. 433.

⁸⁸ Earl of Ormond to Mr. Henage, July 4, 1570 quoted in Bagwell, 2: 175. To his credit Ormond wrote to Cecil at the same time that Irish subjects were loyal and yielded much if they were cherished. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), p. 433.

attitude towards putting his half-brother, Don John of Austria, forward as a candidate for the Irish crown. They noted:

Because we have not a king and are divided among ourselves the English attack and rob us daily, and we suffer grievously as a result.⁸⁹

The able Geraldine Archbishop tried still another tack with King Philip on July 26 by pointing out his awareness of the Spanish negotiations with England. Then the Archbishop tried to awaken a sense of moral commitment in the King to the Irish cause by reminding him that some of his high ranking ministers, both civil and ecclesiastical, had been promising him aid for the past fifteen months "in the name of your Majesty" and that as a result FitzGibbon had repeatedly encouraged the Irish chiefs to maintain their rebellion despite the many offers of pardon to them by the English. Then he came to the heart of his proposal to the Catholic King:

In the same way as the Queen of England has favored and favors the rebels heretics in France, your Majesty can, in an underhand manner, send some assistance to our chieftains, in arms and men under pretence of their going to Holland, who, contrary to your will, or for some other cause, should go to Ireland.⁹⁰

⁸⁹The Irish Chiefs to the Archbishop of Cashel, May 4, 1570 quoted in Falls, pp. 138-141.

⁹⁰Archbishop of Cashel to King Philip, July 26, 1570 quoted in Spicilegium Ossoriense: Being a Collection of Original Letters and Papers Illustrative of the History of the Irish Church From the Reformation to the Year 1800, ed. Patrick F. Moran (Dublin, 1874), pp. 62-63. Hereafter cited as Spicilegium Ossoriense.

This scheme failed to impress Philip and no aid was sent in 1570, although neither FitzGibbon nor Fitzmaurice had as yet abandoned their hopes. In fact the hesitancy of the Spanish to move beyond encouraging words led the dedicated Captain of Desmond to seek aid from Catholic France as well and in December 1570 a Guisan captain known only as Monsieur de la Roche arrived with several French ships and seized Desmond's castle at Dingle in Kerry, conferred with Fitzmaurice on the subject of French aid in return for French sovereignty over Ireland, and went back to Brittany with one of Fitzmaurice's sons as a vouchsafe of the ardent Geraldine leader's vow to serve the French King.⁹¹ Although Ormond journeyed into Kerry to determine the truth of rumors concerning a French landing, he accomplished little aside from the reduction of Dunloe Castle, from which the Geraldine defenders put forth only scant resistance.⁹²

⁹¹Answers to Interrogatories Ministered to Redmond Stackbold, the Dean of Cashel's Son, October 16, 1571 quoted in Ronan, pp. 383-386 and CSP-Simancas, 1: 292. De la Roche represented the Guisan faction in France, who were both powerful and ardently Catholic. See Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Elizabeth, 3 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), 1: 116.

⁹²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), p. 435.

The problems and the near disaster of the presidency of Sir Edward Fitton in Connaught had not deterred Sidney from his long-held belief in the need for a President in Munster as well. On June 25, 1570, the Lord Deputy informed the privy Council that the Earl of Desmond's lands and other matters in Munster will be:

out of all order till a President be placed there. And surely if any had come, when it was first appointed or if one had been placed there when Mr. Gilbert had departed, I dare boldly say yet beside the quietness of the country, and the increase of these and such other revenues to her Majesty's use, there might have been saved, that hath spent £2000 besides the loss of many men's lives that hath grown and is like to grow ere it be brought to quietness again.⁹³

Approximately two months later the Queen informed Sidney that Sir John Perrott had been selected to be President of Munster.⁹⁴ This appointment had been pending at least since March when Ormond urged Cecil to appoint his old friend even against his will, but Perrott did not, it seems, immediately appear amenable to such a difficult and dangerous task except on his own terms. These were formally requested in November and Perrott's amazingly hard bargain, undoubtedly thanks to Cecil's influence, resulted in the Queen's agreement to pay him a year's salary (set at £133.6s.8d.) in advance as well as a like period of wages to his men in advance and a promise that he would receive regular supplies of military stores from England. He

⁹³Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 4: 68-69.

⁹⁴SSP, August 19, 1570, p. 137.

even got permission to deduct his own expenses before revenues were passed on to the Crown and an authorization from the Queen to take over thirty-four servants and tenants to attend him.⁹⁵ As for his office, the presidency was to be supported by a council (consisting initially of the Queen's archbishops and bishops in Munster as well as the Earl of Ormond, Clancarthy and Thomond), and carried with it the authority to prosecute all rebels, to levy men at will who were required to serve, to declare martial law, and to use torture "upon vehement suspicion and presumption of any great offence in any party committed against the Queen's majesty."⁹⁶ It was no great surprise that his instructions specified that the palatinate jurisdiction of the Earl of Ormond in Tipperary was to be respected wherever possible, while that of Desmond in Kerry was now disallowed. Sir John Perrott, reputed to be an illegitimate son of Henry VIII, was an experienced soldier from an ancient Pembrokehire family in Wales and had had a long association with the Earl of Ormond, with whom he had been a "sworn Brother" since Edward VI's coronation in 1548, when both were elevated to be Knights of the Bath. He

⁹⁵CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), pp. 427, 435-436 and Froude, 10: 540.

⁹⁶Instructions for the President and Council of Munster, 1570, quoted in Irish Historical Documents, 1172-1922, eds. Edmund Curtis and R. B. McDowell (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd. 1943).

came to Ireland prepared for the arduous duties before him.⁹⁷

Sir John Perrott landed at Waterford on February 27, 1571 and several days thereafter James Fitzmaurice, supported by a body of Mac Sheehy and Mac Sheeny gallowglass, struck Kilmallock before sunrise. His forces reportedly spent several days carrying away the considerable wealth of the town to their hideaway in the Aherlow and left behind a burned-out abode fit only for the numerous wolves that roved the Irish country at this time. According to Sir William Fitzwilliam, who wrote a letter to Sir William Cecil, now Lord Burghley, shortly after this event, Edward Butler seized five hundred cattle from the confederate booty of the city after pursuing the raiding party in what proved to be a first tentative step in his return to the Ormond fold and loyalty to the government. Ormond himself reported by letter to Sidney that he had searched the Aherlow woods on foot hoping to meet Fitzmaurice in his haven, but found nothing. He said that he suspected treachery since only two of the citizens of Kilmallock had lost their lives when the town was burned and since the rebels were winning sympathy by informing the people

⁹⁷The History of that Most Eminent Statesman, Sir John Perrott, Knight of the Bath and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, ed. Richard Rawlinson (London, 1727), p. 66. Hereafter cited as History of Perrott.

that Perrott was coming to conquer their lands.⁹⁸

On March 25, Sir Henry Sidney left for England having successfully repressed most of the rebellion in four provinces of Ireland through a policy of "severity" and selective terror and having won the submission of almost all of the major rebels, including the Earl of Clancarthy, who submitted a month before his departure.⁹⁹ However, before his departure, the indefatigable Lord Deputy, who knew Ireland as well as any Englishmen of his day and who had reserved the north as his own special province, signed the treaty of peace that had been arranged by his commissioners in late January with Turlough Luineach O'Neill, the most powerful leader in the north. Turlough, who kept some three to five thousand men under his command, many of whom were newly arrived Scots, had been enticed by the confederacy, and feared by the government, which would have been severely strained had he rebelled. However, his accidental wounding by one of his jesters during supper one evening in late 1569 had slowed his activity and the government had kept more than a watchful eye on him.

Nonetheless, Sidney left his successor with a number of major problems, including a reported one thousand rebels operating in Connaught, eight hundred more rebels besieging

⁹⁸Annals of the Four Masters, p. 478 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXI (1571), p. 438.

⁹⁹Clancarthy, who was also known as McCarthy More and Donal, Earl of Clancare, was submitting for the second time, since he had submitted earlier to Sir Humphrey Gilbert.

yougal and a worn out and unpaid military force of 2,090 men, most of whom were suffering like the rest of the country from want of victuals. These troops had been placed in garrison to keep them from further preying upon the English subjects of the Pale, who had already been ruined by the lodging and feeding of the army for so long without pay.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Sidney's successor, Sir William Fitzwilliam, who had been serving as his treasurer and who now ruled in his stead holding the office of Lord Justice, was faced with a plethora of problems, not the least of which concerned the information he dispatched in a letter to the Privy Council and the Queen shortly after assuming office, that a Spanish invasion was still anticipated and that he had dispatched ships along the Irish coast to intercept any aid that might be sent. This concern remained considerable and in fact increased until by the spring of 1572 rumors of foreign aid from Spain, France, Portugal or some combination of these Catholic powers were rife, but the English intelligence system and network of spies on land and sea, from Europe to the Irish coast, kept close watch on the situation reporting all movements in and out of the country and interrogating numerous travellers. As has been noted previously no aid was forthcoming and additional

¹⁰⁰ CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 422; vol. XXXI (1571), pp. 440-441, 443 and vol. XXXII (1571), p. 445.

reasons for this will be examined later.

At this point it is sufficient to note that the question of foreign aid was one of great concern to Elizabeth's loyal, overworked and sometimes almost desperate governmental establishment in the troubled waters of Ireland.¹⁰¹ It should be noted, however, that in view of the military advantage enjoyed by the English, who could call upon a nucleus of armed and disciplined troops and who had artillery support (the rebels had no artillery and sometimes resorted to throwing stones in lieu thereof), it was unlikely that Fitzmaurice could win without foreign intervention on his behalf, despite the fact that the Queen did not send sufficient money to pay either the officers or the men in her service. Sir Edward Fitton protested that his soldiers in Connaught had not been paid since September 1569, and Fitzwilliam himself complained that he was fast becoming impoverished after thirteen years of service in Ireland;¹⁰² but if the English system of resupply

¹⁰¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXII (1571), p. 442 and 1571-1573, *passim*.

¹⁰²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXII (1571), p. 448 and vol. XXXIII (1571), p. 454. Fitzwilliam was to have been only a temporary successor in this difficult post, but the home government's candidate, Arthur Lord Grey, demanded a sum two thousand pounds greater than the Queen was willing to pay and became so ill at the prospect that he might be compelled to serve in any case, that the appointment was cancelled. Sidney, who had departed before receiving the Queen's letter requesting he remain at his post for a time longer, absolutely refused to return to an army with empty magazines, clothed in rags, plagued with deserters and unable to pay its victualers. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIII (1571), pp. 454-455 and Bagwell, 2: 207.

was painfully slow and inadequate, forcing Elizabeth's public servants to expend their own fortunes or perish, the Irish guerillas suffered the more and could only live off the much desolated countryside of Munster in fervent hope of aid from abroad. The Catholic crusade in Ireland which they had dreamt of since the beginning was still ephemeral.

With the landing of Sir John Perrott on the shores of Munster, the English now had a determined, hardened and efficient soldier to resume the campaigning where Gilbert had left off, and the ultimate outcome was almost predictable in view of the character of the man and the hopelessness of the Irish situation. Thus, after landing at Waterford, Sir John proceeded north to Dublin to take his oath of office as President of Munster. He soon left for Cork, from where he set out with a force of two English companies consisting of five hundred men and two hundred kerne and gallowglass for Kilmallock, now a burned-out town after Fitzmaurice's devastation. Outside of the town the newly installed Lord President severed the heads off the bodies of fifty rebels whom he had pursued and captured in the nearby bogs, and had these heads put on display in Kilmallock. That town then was left in the hands of one of Perrott's English captains in an effort to encourage its inhabitants to return to and rebuild it. The new Lord President now set out with Ormond's help to strike at the Mac Sweeny gallowglass, who at the moment provided the

chief forces for Fitzmaurice.¹⁰³ The determined rebel leader, who was reportedly in great strength, darted from one wooded area to another with his swift kerne as an equally determined Lord President pursued him with heavily armed English troops through bogs and forests by way of forced marches. Although Perrott was unable to catch up with Fitzmaurice, he did succeed in capturing a number of castles held by his followers in the spring of 1571 in a campaign which cut a roughly circular swath through Munster, reaching as far as Limerick and finishing up in Cork, where it had begun.¹⁰⁴

After arranging a meeting in Cork in May, 1571, which was designed to get additional support from the Earls of Ormond, Clancarthy and Thomond along with others who could now foresee the need to line up behind the superior power, including the Lords Barry, Roche, and Courcy as well as McCarthy Reagh and Sir Cormac Mac Tieghe, the Lord President invaded the White Knight's country and drove him into hiding.¹⁰⁵ Perrott

¹⁰³ History of Perrott, pp. 50-52 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXII (1571), p. 449.

¹⁰⁴ CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXII (1571), pp. 444, 448-449 and Falls, p. 110.

¹⁰⁵ John Oge FitzGibbon, who held the title White Knight, died in 1569 and was succeeded by his second son Edmund, who defended his now attainted father's land against Perrott as a supporter of the rebels.

then moved into the chief rebel stronghold in the Aherlow woods, where despite arduous forced marches through forest and swamp, he was unable to accomplish much and turned his sights instead, after resting his men in Cork, towards the major rebel stronghold of Castlemaine in Kerry, a small but well constructed fortress situated on arches in the water of the river Mang. Failing to take this fortress after a frustrating five-week siege, which did not succeed for want of powder, Perrott wrote to Lord Justice Fitzwilliam lamenting the fact that he could not really trust any of the Munster lords save Ormond. To make matters worse, while Perrott remained frustrated before Castlemaine, Fitzmaurice surprised one of the English sea captains, whose ships at Cork Harbor were supposed to resupply the Lord President, and stoned both the captain and thirty of his men to death (for lack of more modern artillery) as they took cover in a ruined church.¹⁰⁶

Although the Earl of Ormond had written to Sidney upon the Lord Deputy's departure from Ireland, just prior to the siege on Castlemaine which began on June 21, 1571, asking him

¹⁰⁶CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIII (1571), p. 453 and vol. XXXIV (1571), pp. 457-458; History of Perrott, p. 55; Bagwell, 2: 188-189.

to intercede to obtain mercy for his brothers, he nevertheless also showed his distrust of the former Lord Deputy by writing a letter to Lord Burghley evidencing his inability to take the field before the burning of Kilmallock. His intent was to provide his friend Lord Burghley with a solid defense of himself in the event that Sidney tried to blame that tragedy on Ormond's slackness or lack of foresight.¹⁰⁷ Ormond was obviously cooperating to the satisfaction of his friend Perrott, and his brother Edward took still another step closer to returning to the government fold in July when he seized two Catholic friars being held by Meiler Magrath, the newly appointed Protestant Bishop of Cashel. The friars, one of whom had just returned from Rome with bulls and letters from there, had been the subject of a threatening letter from Fitzmaurice, who had written to the new bishop:

As I am informed that you have taken prisoner the poor friars for preaching the word of God to the poor people whoso are blinded with ignorance those many years for lack of good preachers that would show them their duty. Wherefore I do require you to enlarge at full liberty

¹⁰⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXII (1571), p. 450 and vol. XXXI, (1570), p. 431.

the said friars... if you do it not, do not only take heed of your own proper body, but also of your goods, your adherents... [for] I will with the permission of God see them brought all to ruin and destruction...¹⁰⁸

Obviously before Fitzmaurice could act on his threat, Edward had moved in and in a display of his own power had taken and freed the friars, asking Bishop Magrath to send a secret missive to Fitzwilliam and the Council to grant him protection, after which he would pursue Fitzmaurice with his own forces on condition that he was rewarded by a pardon. Although Fitzwilliam agreed with Magrath that Edward's rebellious act deserved ten deaths, they thought it expedient to accept his offer and the Lord Justice so advised the Queen.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Ormond's youngest brother, who had viewed his designation as a "traitor" by the government in 1569 as an excuse to steal his lands from him, had slaughtered Carew's "intruding colonist" at Inniscorthy, and had vowed unending war "against those that banished Ireland and meant a conquest", was removed from the opposition and later cooperated with the government.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Fitzmaurice to Meiler Magrath, July 19, 1571 and Meiler Magrath to Chancellor Weston, July 25, 1571 quoted in Ronan, pp. 353-354.

¹⁰⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIII (1571), pp. 452-453.

¹¹⁰Sir Edward Butler to the Earl of Ormond, August 24, 1569 quoted in Froude, 10: 503.

In early August the sovereign (or mayor) of Kinsale and the mayor of Cork both wrote to the English Privy Council pleading for the return of both the Earl of Desmond and Sir John, whom they believed had governed well and whose presence they were confident would end Fitzmaurice's rebellion.¹¹¹ By the end of August Perrott himself had been partially converted to this view when it became obvious that the Privy Council was not going to provide him with the promised two hundred kerne and were said to have murmured at even the thought of one hundred, without which he felt he could not track down the elusive and constantly moving rebels. Although he opposed the return of the Earl of Desmond at this time, he did suggest that Sir John of Desmond, whom he had heard was a "decent gentleman", be brought back as a counterbalance to James Fitzmaurice for the allegiance of the Desmond clan. In several letters written to Lord Justice Fitzwilliam on the subject, Perrott acknowledged that Sir John would need to be kept in hand, since he was rash and void of governing ability.

The Lord Justice, who was destined to be promoted to the office of Lord Deputy in December and who was a long time

¹¹¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIII (1571), p. 454. On September 4, the city of Yougal also requested the release of Desmond and Sir John. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIII (1571), p. 457.

friend and partisan of Ormond, opposed the scheme, however, and wrote Lord Burghley on November 25, "God keep both Sir John of Desmond and base money out of Ireland yet are they both at the seaside to come over, if brutes be true."¹¹²

Perrott had kept Fitzmaurice and his fifteen hundred followers, five hundred of whom were Scots who had evidently landed in Ireland only recently, on the run and in this and other ways demonstrated his political and military astuteness. Upon encountering a band of rebels on the edge of the woods in Limerick county on one occasion, for example, he challenged them to come into the open fields to do battle with him. When they refused he prepared to charge their positions with a force of eleven hundred men. First, however, he arranged his battle formation in such a manner that the Irish Lords who were allied with him were stationed within the body of the formation so as, he explained, not to expose them to the "uttermost danger." In this way he was able to discourage the possibility of their breaking and running and the success he achieved here led the confederates to avoid pitched battles with the English. He pursued the rebels so diligently that it was said that he once failed to notice the loss of a shoe

¹¹²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIV (1571), pp. 457-458 and Bagwell, 2: 208. Perrott threatened to hire a hundred kerne of his own living if necessary. On the subject of John of Desmond, his views exactly coincided with those of Sidney, from whom they were probably derived.

for some time in snow country during the winter months. He was hopeful too, that his own pursuit would be aided by that of the Munster lords, and, to effect this, he entered into a formal agreement with the Earl of Clancarthy, O'Sullivan Beare, and others on September 26, 1571, to insure that they would pursue Fitzmaurice avidly. He required Clancarthy for example, to maintain two hundred fighting men for the next six months, to provide the Lord President with monthly operations reports, and to be bound by a sizeable recognizance. Perrott's successes, however, had not ended the rebellion nor resulted in the capture of its leader nor did either prospect seem even vaguely imminent under the present conditions.¹¹³

By November 1571 the fiery Lord President was at the end of his patience and he actually challenged Fitzmaurice to settle the struggle with a duel consisting of twenty four men on each side. At the same time he also requested that the Earl of Ormond loan him a good horse and send his brother Edward and all his forces to assist him. In the meantime, Fitzmaurice changed the challenge to one between himself and Perrott alone, selected swords for the weapons, and insisted that both men wear "Irish Trouffes," which are Irish trousers.

¹¹³History of Perrott, pp. 56-59 and Carew MSS., 1: 413.

The old town of Amely six miles outside Kilmallock, was chosen as the battle site and the news of the Lord President's acceptance of all of Fitzmaurice's terms for the duel brought in all of the nobility from the province to see the fray on the appointed day. James Fitzmaurice, however, probably fearing treachery because of the presence of the Earl of Ormond and a great number of his men, failed to make an appearance. Instead he was said to have sent his harper, known only as "O'Hernan," who explained this absence in Fitzmaurice's own words, "if I should kill Sir John Perrott the Queen of England can send another president into this province; but if he should kill me there is none other to succeed me or to command as I do."¹¹⁴

After Fitzmaurice's failure to appear at their duel, Perrott was more determined than ever to "hunt the fox out of his hole."¹¹⁵ In early December he captured one of Fitzmaurice's close associates, who claimed that the Earl of Desmond had written two letters to Fitzmaurice to encourage him to continue the rebellion and that his wife, the Countess, had written to the Scottish MacShees, who then proceeded to join the rebels.¹¹⁶ The Lord President also wrote to his

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 62-63. The sources disagree as to whether Sir John Perrott challenged James Fitzmaurice or whether the reverse was the case. Bagwell, Falls, and Fitzgerald hold to the former while older sources like Rawlinson and the Book of Hothe, Lambeth, 623, folio 132 hold to the latter. See also CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIV (1571), p. 460 and XXXV (1572), p. 466.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIV (1571), p. 461.

"sworn brother" Ormond, first acknowledging his love and honor for him as a man, and then, noting that he would be "most sorry" if the Butler forces were not gathered in all-out pursuits of the rebels in order to drive them out of Munster or "have their heads". He felt the Earl was perfectly capable of this task and suggested that his forces ought to be divided into four parts. In effect, he had threatened the good reputation of Ormond with the Queen unless he received full cooperation.¹¹⁷ Ormond, who was constantly in correspondence with Lord Burghley, was, as always when thus called upon, willing to assist the English cause. He had written Burghley on December 3, informing him that Fitzmaurice was now eagerly seeking aid at the French court, having sent a Dennis O'Dussane there with letters to the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Comte de Candalle. He enclosed the recent testimony of the Dean of Cashel's son, who claimed the French had promised 10,000 men (plus royal artillery support) to the Irish cause in December 1570 during the visit of Monsieur de la Roche with Fitzmaurice and furthermore, that the latter was to be compensated for his loyalty to the French king by the award of the earldom of Ormond and Ossory. Aside from these

¹¹⁷ History of Perrott, pp. 64-65, 67.

intelligence efforts, he seems to have left the active pursuit of the rebels to his brother Edward, who claimed to have struck Fitzmaurice's forces in the glen of Aherlow with a force of five hundred Butler kerne and gallowglass in February of 1572, accomplishing little, however, aside from driving off his commandeered cattle and killing a few kerne.¹¹⁸

By June 1572, the Lord President had made Castlemaine in Kerry his main objective once again. This notorious Geraldine stronghold was important not only because of its considerable strength, but also because its proximity to Dingle Bay made it the most probable landing site for a foreign army. Perrott, along with a contingent supplied by the West Munster lords at his behest, besieged the castle for a full three months before finally winning its submission, its staunch defenders having finally surrendered because their provisions had been exhausted. During the course of the siege Fitzmaurice had sought assistance in the province of Connaught, where the sons of the Earl of Clanricard were in rebellion. Fitzmaurice thus joined forces with John and Ulick Burke and their MacSweeny and MacDonald gallowglass. Together their combined forces numbering some two thousand foot and sixty horse traveled across half of Connaught as far east as Mullingar, which was burned and plundered, and then they returned by way of

¹¹⁸CSP-Ireland, XXXIV (1571), p. 461; vol. XXXV (1572), p. 466; Answers [of] Redmond Stackbold, p. 385.

Athlone, where they attacked the government storehouse and left the town burning. This indeed caused great discomfiture to Sir Edward Fitton, who could do little to defend the town, since the 350 men he had been promised by the Lord Deputy had not been sent as yet. The Burkes and their Scots reportedly also burned Ballymore and Kilkenny along with smaller towns before the Captain of Desmond persuaded them to cross the Shannon River with him into Munster in August with the intention of relieving Castlemaine. Fitzmaurice's main objective in aiding the Burkes was now near achievement as he crossed into Munster with a force that included over one thousand Scottish mercenaries and a band of gallowglass; many of the Scots, however, now turned back rather than venture too far south or perhaps because they would not serve for a period longer than their contracts required. In any case, Perrott, who had already taken Castlemaine, now attacked Fitzmaurice and his remaining force of six hundred foot and twenty horse southeast of Limerick, and although casualties were light, forced them to seek refuge in their usual stronghold, the glen of Aherlow.¹¹⁹

The persistent Lord President now planned an operation to pursue the elusive Fitzmaurice into the extremely difficult

¹¹⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVII (1572), pp. 477, 482-483 and Gerald A. Hayes-McCoy, Scots Mercenary Forces in Ireland (1563-1603), (Dublin: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., 1937), pp. 112-113. See also Falls, p. 111.

bogs and woods of the Aherlow, but the English troops, who had not been paid for some time, mutinied and forced a return to Kilmallock, the base from which they were operating, the town having again been rebuilt.¹²⁰ A frustrated Perrott had to content himself with holding assizes in Cork, which resulted in numerous hangings; he was, however, able to report to Fitzwilliam that the apparently repentant Kilmallock garrison slew thirty of Fitzmaurice's men in a surprise raid, explaining:

I am ashamed to write of so few, but considering their cowardliness and the continual watch which they [the rebels] used to keep, it is accounted as much here to have the lives of so few, as 1000 in some other country. If I might have but one trusty gentlemen of the Irishy I would not doubt I should in short time bring the country to good quiet.¹²¹

That one gentlemen could not be the Earl of Ormond, for despite Fitzwilliam's protest that he was sorely needed, the Earl was called back to England in early 1572 and finally

¹²⁰CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVIII (1572), p. 487.

¹²¹Perrott to Cecil, November 2, 1572 quoted in Bagwell, 2: 224. See also Froude, 10: 543.

departed in August, leaving his brothers to assist the Lord President of Munster.¹²² Sir Edmund and Edward Butler did just that, picking up the slack in Perrott's absence at Cork, by pursuing the rebels in Aherlow. In a surprise raid the Butler gallowglass struck Fitzmaurice near Tipperary in November, killing over one hundred of his men and scattering the remainder of his Scots in what proved to be the last significant battle of the campaign.¹²³ By December of 1572 four years of rebellion in southern Ireland were finally

¹²²CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVI (1572), p. 471 and vol. XXXVII (1572), p. 480. Before his departure Ormond and Kildare conducted an operation against the rebel Rory Oge O'More, for which purpose Fitzwilliam had delayed his departure. The Butler Earl was doubtless anxious to return to England since he and his brothers had performed "good service" against the rebels and he was not without enemies in England. Ormond had written to Lord Burghley as early as January that he was prepared to answer his accusers, and even his close friend Fitzwilliam had been constrained to inform the home government without his knowledge that he had been accused of conspiring with the rebels, a charge that was doubtless untrue and not generally believed. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXV (1572), p. 464 and vol. XXXVII (1572), p. 481.

¹²³CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVIII (1572), p. 489.

drawing to a close, but the English were not celebrating this fact. The pessimistic and sometimes almost despondent Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam¹²⁴ was still sufficiently concerned about the state of Ireland that he persisted in his requests that the Queen send the Earl of Ormond back to Ireland to help him deal with Fitzmaurice and other rebels in Munster.

In Connaught the departure of Lord President Fitton several weeks after the burning of Athlone as well as the news of the more recent St. Bartolomew's massacre of great numbers of Huguenots in France had resulted in the emergence of numerous friars from hiding. Coming primarily from Ulster, they travelled about the country openly, preaching a Catholic crusade and making, as Fitzwilliam noted, passionate pledges "to subvert the English government and set up their own wickedness."¹²⁵ The Lord Deputy also informed the Queen that

¹²⁴Fitzwilliam had adamantly opposed the reduction of his military strength in the summer of 1572 in an attempted economy move which weakened his already small garrisons in Ulster and had also opposed the ill-timed and ill-conceived attempt of Sir Thomas Smith, the son of the Queen's principal secretary, to plant the Ards. In August the Queen had refused her Deputy's urgent request for eight hundred more men as unnecessary, partly on the grounds that Smith was supposed to bring a like number of men with him to Ulster. The young adventurer arrived in Ulster with only a hundred soldiers and his ambitious enterprise soon collapsed in the face of native opposition, but it was November before the Queen even granted Fitzwilliam authority to increase the size of his garrisons. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVII (1572), pp. 479, 483 and vol. XXXVIII (1572), p. 488.

¹²⁵Fitzwilliam to Elizabeth, December 7, 1572 quoted in Froude, 10: 549 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVIII (1572), p. 490.

the highland tribes of Wicklow led by Rory Oge O'More and Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne were so emboldened that they now plundered the English of the Pale and those who supported them by daylight as well as by torchlight accompanied by bag pipe music and that "they meant to make it impossible for any Englishman to live in the island and thrust the spade at their root."¹²⁶

As for the Lord President of Munster, he still urged that Sir John of Desmond be permitted to return, and in fact the groundwork for such a move was being laid as the Earls of Ormond and Desmond met, "made friends" and dined together, planning for the possibility of Desmond's return to Ireland, which had been the subject of considerable discussion in England since early 1572. Desmond, whose great pride was certainly wounded by his being forced to almost beg for his living from the Queen and whose requests along with Sir John's for freedom to return to Ireland had repeatedly been ignored until recently, had spent the past two years in Southwark in the house of Warham St. Leger along with his Countess Eleanor, who had come over to join her husband in 1570. Here St. Leger, who was, of course, a bitter enemy of Ormond, allowed them considerable liberty, but along with their servants, who

¹²⁶Ibid.

numbered about thirteen, they represented a severe financial and political burden upon St. Leger, and since this adventurer still harbored ambitions with regards to land schemes in Munster, he probably lobbied to some extent for their return to Ireland. In any case about the time of the massacre of the Protestants in France, Desmond foolishly attempted to arrange for his escape by hiring a small vessel from the famous sea-captain Martin Frobisher, who, however, merely played the Geraldine leader's dangerous game, while reporting all to Elizabeth's ministers.

Desmond's attempted flight was thus frustrated before it began, but instead of despatching the wayward earl back to the Tower or even to Tower Hill, it was instead decided to send him back to Ireland under strict pledges that he must bring about the changes in the Irish political, religious and cultural milieu which the English were unable to accomplish by force and were unwilling to endeavor any further by means of the presidency system due to the Queen's dislike of the prohibitive cost thereof.¹²⁷ In January the Earls of Ormond and Desmond met again, undoubtedly under the Queen's auspices, and amicably discussed their differences, agreeing to refer their remaining controversies to the Lord Deputy and Council

¹²⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIII (1571), p. 452; vol. XXXVIII (1572), pp. 487, 489; Bagwell, 2: 235-237; Froude, 10: 552.

of Ireland. The Earl of Desmond also agreed to a number of articles drafted by Lord Burghley, requiring that Irish noble to assist the President and Council of Munster in suppressing Fitzmaurice, to maintain the Queen's peace in Munster, to leave certain occupied castles in the hands of the Queen at her pleasure and finally, not to exercise his claim to palatinate jurisdiction in Kerry until it was proved before the Lord Deputy and Council within twelve months after his return to Ireland. More importantly, Desmond was constrained to promise that:

He shall procure that the laws established in that realm by act of Parliament, for maintenance of true religion and suppressing of all jurisdictions claimed by any foreign potentate, be duly observed, and shall maintain all the bishops, ministers, and preachers in the church of Ireland.¹²⁸

On the twenty-first of the month, Queen Elizabeth notified Fitzwilliam that she had granted approval for the Earl and Sir John to return to Ireland under escort.¹²⁹

By this time, Fitzmaurice's forces had been depleted by the constant harassment of Sir John Perrott and the Butlers,

¹²⁸Carew MSS., 1: 430-433. Desmond was also required to apprehend those who had fled overseas and to enter into a recognizance to pay the Queen for debts incurred while in England as well as rents past due on ecclesiastical properties he had in Ireland. According to Froude, 10: 552, who cites this same passage, the Earl was also required to "suppress the Papal authority, [and] remove from their sees the prelates in communion with Rome."

¹²⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIX (1573), p. 493.

had lost their Scottish mercenaries, and had received no tangible foreign assistance despite all of their leader's efforts. It was under these circumstances then, that the self-proclaimed Captain of Desmond laid aside his intense hatred of the English and his love for the Catholic religion for the time being and made humble submission before the Lord President of Munster in the church at Kilmallock on February 23, 1573. In effect, James Fitzmaurice had submitted himself to the Queen's mercy, after hearing of its availability, had offered his son as a hostage, and had deigned even to lie prostrate before the Lord President in the ruined church of Kilmallock, while the latter's sword point rested on his heart as a symbol "that he had received his Life at the Queen's hands."¹³⁰ Fitzmaurice also took a solemn oath to be a true subject of the Queen and in return was granted his freedom. Several weeks later Perrott informed the Privy Council by letter of his actions, explaining that he "had secret intelligence that unless [Fitzmaurice] had some hope of mercy from the Queen he would fly to Spain."¹³¹

¹³⁰History of Perrott, p. 73. Fitzmaurice had indicated his desire to submit over two months prior to coming to the Lord Deputy, when he knelt in the mud before the English captain George Bouchier. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVIII (1572), p. 490.

¹³¹Perrott to the Privy Council, March 3, 1573 quoted in Ronan, p. 423.

During the long years of rebellion Sir John Perrott had come to respect his old enemy. Despite the tally sheet submitted in April of 1573 to the Privy Council, in which the Lord President claimed to have hanged or killed eight hundred rebels while losing only eighteen Englishmen, the rebellion had been more fiercely contested than these figures might indicate.¹³² Since the casualties among the Anglo-Irish and Irish who fought with the English were not given, this report does not provide a complete picture. Although the Irish could not match the English munitions and discipline in pitched battles or even the Butler's forces similarly equipped with government stores, their raids were ably led and executed and the difficulty and cost of pursuing them was duly noted. Sir John Perrott himself was taken in by stratagems employed by Fitzmaurice. On one occasion, for example, the Lord President nearly lost his life because in his eagerness to capture the Captain of Desmond, he had accepted the word of one of Fitzmaurice's men and had followed him into a dawn ambush in which his token force of thirty men was assailed by Fitzmaurice and five hundred waiting rebels. The Lord President was able to escape only because, while fighting fiercely to survive the initial onslaught, one of the English captains appeared on a hill crest with a few men and Fitzmaurice,

¹³²CSP-Ireland, vol. XL (1573), p. 500. Froude, 10: 548-549, estimates that the Butlers accounted for the death of another four hundred rebels. Ormond himself had executed 164 malefactors by September 1571 according to the CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIV (1571), p. 459.

thinking that it might be he who had fallen victim to a trap instead of Perrott, quickly withdrew his forces. On another occasion, Fitzmaurice took advantage of a white flag to escape from a difficult situation, while he employed one of his men to discuss the terms of his submission with the Lord President.¹³³ Thus it is not surprising that Sir John Perrott would write to Lord Burghley in April, after Fitzmaurice had made his humble submission, had taken a solemn oath, had given up one of his sons as a hostage, and had offered to serve against other rebels still at large in Ireland, of his hope that a new Fitzmaurice might become a second Saint Paul. It is in this light, coupled with the concern that Fitzmaurice might seek foreign assistance in person if his submission were refused, that the Lord President also recommended to the Queen that Fitzmaurice be pardoned.¹³⁴

If the English did not appreciate the Irish political, religious, and cultural heritage and attempted instead to govern Ireland by means of expedients often determined by Queen Elizabeth's extreme parsimony and her desire to expend

¹³³History of Perrott, pp. 68-72.

¹³⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XL (1573), p. 500 and Perrott to the Privy Council, March 3, 1573. The request for a pardon for Fitzmaurice is included in the recommendations submitted by Perrott to the Queen on Ireland. See History of Perrott, p. 97, article XXVIII.

her money elsewhere, unhappily, they appreciated the Irish people even less. Even high-minded public servants and humanitarians such as Sir Henry Sidney failed to attribute to the Irish all of the same human characteristics enjoyed by the English and, in fact, the prevailing view was that the Celtic people were "irreclaimable savages."¹³⁵ About 1567, two years before Fitzmaurice's rebellion, Francis Cosby, an English official in Ireland who served in Leix and Offaly, was said to have invited a large gathering of the O'Mores to a dinner at Mullaghmast and to have massacred between 40 and 180 men of this clan, depending on what source is consulted, but the incident seems to have been hushed up. In May 1572, Francis Agard, an English officer serving as seneschal of Wicklow, burned sixteen villages in southwestern Wicklow on the edge of the Pale, killing many "churls, women, and children," allegedly in retribution for the killing of a single Englishman.¹³⁶ Thus, it is not surprising that Gilbert and Perrott, to a lesser extent, chose terror over more humane methods in crushing the southern confederates in the untamed wild woods

¹³⁵Wallace, p. 84.

¹³⁶Bagwell, 2: 130 and CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXVI (1572), p. 473. The date of the massacre at Mullaghmast is disputed. According to the Four Masters the tragic slaughter took place in 1577 and included the chiefs of a number of clans beside the O'Mores. See Annals of the Four Masters, p. 494.

and waters of Ireland, within which the English found it impossible to corner the elusive Irish kerne and gallowglass. Nor is it surprising that the Queen resorted to the plantation system in an age of enterprising corporations in view of her desire to have the Irish government pay for itself; but it is surprising that men like Sidney and Burghley could not see the consequences of dispossessing proud Irish lords of their lands and ejecting the Irish inhabitants, who frequently faced starvation as a result. By January of 1572, with the failure of young Sir Thomas Smith's scheme in the Ards and the rumor of a new plantation for Ulster, Captain William Pers, who commanded the garrison at Knockfergus, warned Lord Burghley:

that the nature of the Irish is such that they would rather have their country lay altogether waste than that any man but themselves should inhabit it.¹³⁷

Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam agreed, but the Queen did not seem to have appreciated the situation, for Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, received a grant of almost all of Antrim, and failed in 1574 as miserably as Smith had previously in the face of stubborn Irish opposition, and despite the fact that he had far greater support. Obviously the Queen had been convinced

¹³⁷Captain Pers to Cecil, January 3, 1572 quoted in Froude, 10: 548.

that what had failed in Munster and once before in Ulster on a smaller scale, might yet succeed and succeed also in reducing her Irish costs and solving her Irish headaches. Of course, she later characteristically heaped the blame on her advisors; however, she and her advisors should have known better.¹³⁸ On October 28, 1572 Fitzwilliam had written Lord Burghley a letter filled with passion, frustration and pessimism, but one which shows how little even her highest and most senior Irish officials understood the Irish people or their Sovereign's unwillingness to expend funds where they were desperately needed, if the government's policies of compulsion and conquest were to be carried forward:

I pass over the ordinary burnings, killings, and spoilings; I cannot help them; I may shake the scabbard, but I have not a sword to draw. Every Irish rascal is now grown so insolent, the names of England and Englishmen so hateful, that before God in agony of soul I doubt the event. There lyeth some secret mystery in this universal rebellious disposition. God bless her Majesty. I can but die at my post. I only hope I may die at the loss of Ireland, rather than live in England to bemoan it. As her Majesty will spend no more money here, we must hazard our lives as we are, even with these falsehearted Pale men.¹³⁹

¹³⁸According to Carew MSS., 1: 46, Essex's plan was brought forward by Burghley, Sussex, and Leicester, without whose support the Queen charged she would not have approved the venture.

¹³⁹Fitzwilliam to Lord Burghley, quoted in Froude, 10: 550.

Although the release of the Earl of Desmond indicated that the pleas of Irish officials were heard, it also indicated that the English felt constrained by a lack of resources to attempt conciliation once again. The conciliation however was to be on English terms and it still spelled conquest to many of the Irish nobility like Fitzmaurice, who were ready to sacrifice all in the cause of political and religious freedom.

CHAPTER IV

DESMOND'S COMBINATION

Before the Earl of Desmond departed England, he and Sir John were granted an interview with the Queen in which his plain speech and avowed good intentions pleased her as much as Sir John's wit.¹ When the two arrived in Dublin on March 25, 1573 accompanied by their escort, Sir Edward Fitton, who was returning to Ireland not as Lord President of Connaught, but as the new Vice-Treasurer, they found that they were not free to return to Munster. Although the Queen had agreed to the release of the Desmonds and in the case of the Earl, despite the opposition of both Fitzwilliam and Lord President Perrott, she had also agreed, unbeknownst to the two Desmonds, to detain them in Dublin until they met the requirements set forth by Perrott for the good government of Munster, the articles of which the fiery Lord President had prepared the preceding May. Since the Earl still owed Ormond thousands of pounds in damages that had been awarded by previous commissions set up to settle their differences,

¹Bagwell, 2:238.

Ormond had written to the Queen the previous March requesting that both Desmonds be delayed in Dublin until he was paid. Since the Queen's former "guests" also owed her a considerable sum for loans granted to support their poor living in England, she had proved most amenable to this request.²

Desmond had been granted full possession of all his lands in England by the Privy Council and he had expected also to be restored to his earldom in a position analogous to that of the Earl of Ormond or Kildare; hence, when he was placed in the custody of the Mayor of Dublin and presented with a new set of articles to swear to, he naturally felt that there had been a breach of faith. It was not so much the fact that he had been detained in Dublin, because he had experienced this before, nor that he was being required to dispense with the kerne and gallowglass that formed the normal bodyguard for Irish chiefs, nor that he was required to forsake the Brehon law in favor of English justice administered by judges under the writ of the Lord Deputy (since the English had placed like demands on him before and he knew it was unlikely that they would be strictly enforced, given the size of the English establishment in Ireland and the attachment of the

²CSP-Ireland, vol. XL (1573), p. 500; vol. XXXV (1572), p. 467; vol. XXXVI (1572), p. 473.

Irish to their own way of doing things), but what undoubtedly galled him most is that while Ormond yet enjoyed the liberties of Tipperary and the traditional coyne and livery, he was being asked to surrender the liberties of Kerry and place himself in a position decidedly inferior to his ancient rivals by forbearing coyne and livery as well as other Irish exactions.³ After two months detainment, Fitzwilliam was able to report that Desmond still flatly refused to concede these last mentioned articles; however, since Sir John of Desmond had agreed to the new articles recently sent over by the Queen, he was permitted to go home, having promised to renounce Irish ways adverse to English rule. Sir John's concession was pragmatic since he knew his brother could overrule him in any case and because he undoubtedly felt an intense need to see to the Desmond interests in Munster after so long an absence.⁴

Lord President Perrott, having informed the Queen both of his desire to come home to safeguard his own interests in

³CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIX (1573), p. 493; vol. XL (1573), p. 504; Froude, 10:552.

⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XL (1573), p. 505. According to Bagwell, 2:249, there was probably also "some vain hope that Sir John would remit enough money to pay the debts incurred in England" since this subject was brought up in official correspondence nearly as frequently as the state of Munster.

Wales and also of the adverse effect upon the few remaining rebels of the news that the Earl of Desmond had been permitted to leave England, continued to advocate that nobleman's detention in Dublin. After the submission of Fitzmaurice and up until his own arrival in Dublin in late April, the Lord President was busily engaged in hanging "malefactors" at Limerick, Cashel, and Clonmel, although in the latter town he was able to deal only with those crimes committed outside of Tipperary and Ormond's palatinate jurisdiction.⁵ Nonetheless the Lord President was charged by some of Ormond's officers with having violated Ormond's liberties in Tipperary and before departing for Dublin, Perrott felt constrained to indicate in his correspondence to Lord Burghley how he had in fact spared that Earl's jurisdiction. Somewhat later, the Lord President wrote to explain why he had imprisoned the sheriff of Tipperary, which was among the most disordered parts of Munster. About the time that Sir John was permitted to return to Munster, Fitzwilliam and the Council wrote to inform Burghley that the articles preferred against the Lord President by Ormond's steward were dropped by the Earl's own counsel on the grounds that they were "fryvolous." Although Perrott complained to Burghley in his own missive only of

⁵CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXIX (1573), p. 497; vol. XL (1573), p. 500; Bagwell, 2:248.

Ormond's brethren, whom he declared a hindrance to the country, it is probable that "Black" Thomas himself preferred his old but hard-bitten friend and Lord President back in Wales for the unhindered operation of his palatinate, now that the fires of rebellion had been quenched.⁶

Soon after arriving in Dublin Perrott was convinced of the rectitude of his previous advice concerning the Geraldine Earl, whom he described to Burghley as being void of reason and incapable of bringing order to Munster. His pride restored to some extent by his presence on Irish soil, his patience frayed by his lengthy detainment after so many years of waiting in England, and probably aware that Perrott sought a return to England, Desmond boasted there would be no more presidents in Munster after Michaelmas--a remark not destined to raise him in the esteem of the Lord President. Perrott had in fact worked tirelessly to bring order to Munster and in order to finish that job, he now returned to Cork where he held assizes, executing sixty persons. About the same time Fitzwilliam, responding to the Queen's urging that he further Sir Peter Carew's suits in the Idrone, wrote Elizabeth of his opposition to Carew's exercising his title to lands currently held by Irish landlords on

⁶CSP-Ireland, vol. XL (1573), pp. 500, 503, 505-506.

the grounds that such an action was unsafe given the current tensions in Ireland. He enclosed a letter from Perrott who suggested that Sir Peter instead be compensated with lands in England. Carew was, in fact, barred from pressing his claims in Munster, and Perrott thus was able to inform the Queen in June with considerable pride about his ordinances (i.e., Perrott's) banishing the glibbes (or long hair) worn by Irish men and the great rolls (or tall ornamental head coverings) worn by Irish women. By July he was boasting of quiet and of the growing revenues being produced in Munster, where now "the plough doth laugh the unbridled rogue to scorn." To round out his plans for the apparently subdued province, Perrott recommended that Desmond be sent back to England and informed Lord Burghley that he intended to bring Fitzmaurice to England with him.⁷

The diligent Lord President was to be frustrated, however, on both counts. The captive Geraldine had written both to Lord Burghley and to the Privy Council in order to obtain his release as well as to the Earl of Leicester, in whom he seems to have placed a special trust, implying that the

⁷CSP-Ireland, vol. XLI (1573), pp. 510, 514, 516-517. Perrott's ordinance pertaining to glibbs and "great rolls" also prohibited the wearing of Irish clothing for both men and women but applied only to citizens of the cities and corporate towns. President Fitton had required the Irish to cut their glibbs in Connaught as well in 1570. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXX (1570), p. 425 and Carew MSS., 1:411.

latter's intercession in England had made possible his release five months ago. The "quiet" in Munster was soon broken by reports that Desmond's officers were wasting lands and garrisoning castles with his wards, beginning with a castle known as the Glin in Kerry. Although Perrott threatened to make an example of them his health required him to depart for England without backing up his threats to take action against them and even more importantly, without James Fitzmaurice. The irrepressible Irish leader shortly thereafter broke his protection from Sheriff Richard Burke and sent his former Jesuit chaplain, David Wolf (who had been imprisoned in a dungeon in Dublin Castle from 1566 until sometime in 1572, when he escaped), to Spain with his eldest son to again explore the possibilities of obtaining aid for the Irish.⁸ Justice Nicholas Walsh, the only English official of any consequence remaining in Munster, wrote to Fitzwilliam on September 25, to inform him that the former Captain of Desmond had sent his son overseas and a day later wrote to Burghley expressing his fear that rebellion might break out again if a President or Vice-President were not sent into Munster.⁹

⁸CSP-Ireland, vol. XLI (1573), p. 518; Bagwell, 2: 251; Carew MSS., 1: 436-437 and Ronan, p. 469.

⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XLII (1573), p. 522.

The conditions which the Earl of Desmond had been constrained to accept in England as the price of his freedom had been witnessed by, among others, Edmund Tremayne, the Clerk of the Council and a man who was used on a number of occasions by the Queen and Lord Burghley to determine the situation in Ireland. It had been Tremayne's recommendation that upon Desmond's return to Ireland, he and other Irish noblemen should be summoned to a general council where the Queen might offer to withdraw the military garrisons from their country in a gesture of trust, which he predicted would engender greater loyalty on their part and restore peace in the provinces.¹⁰ As we have seen, however, the home government was not prepared to adopt any single policy, whether of conciliation or severity, and instead seemed to be temporizing, making alternate gestures in both directions. Thus, the English Government had recently rejected the scheme of Sir Humphrey Gilbert to return to Munster and establish a

¹⁰CSP-Ireland, vol. XL (1573), p. 508.

colony through conquest¹¹ and in addition had barred Sir Peter Carew from again asserting his claims, in accordance with the advice of her Irish officials, but it had ignored Fitzwilliam's opposition in approving Sir Thomas Smith's plans in Ulster and had subsequently approved a more extensive takeover-plan by the Queen's soldier-cousin, the Earl of Essex. Although Desmond had been "released," the longer he was detained in Dublin the more speculation undoubtedly grew in Munster that English officials were considering sending him back to England, from where he might never return.¹² In June, Lord Burghley had sent Tremayne to

¹¹In 1572 or 1573, the date being uncertain, Gilbert petitioned the President of Munster "to have a grant of all such land(s) and islands to be inhabited by my company as shall be won by them from the wild Irish and such like rebels there. . .", in return for which he offered to pay the Queen 2d. per acre of lands so won. He also requested many other privileges including exclusive rights to mine all minerals and metals discovered as well as exclusive trade rights to certain commodities that were being supplied by the Spanish. See Carew MSS., 1: 422-423.

¹²According to the anonymous holograph "Memoirs of the Geraldine Earls of Desmond" (manuscript, University College Cork, n.d.), p. 54, Desmond was secretly advised by a friend that the government was plotting to get him and his two brothers to agree to certain articles, after which they would all be sent to England with little chance of ever returning.

determine, among other things, what he intended to do with the Geraldine Earl and what plans had been devised for the Desmonds to satisfy their creditors in England. Their plans must have been somewhat nebulous for in early October when the Earl, his endurance worn thin, conceded all the new demands asked of him, an uncertain Fitzwilliam, using the excuse that the absent Perrott had to be consulted, denied Desmond his freedom and instead appealed to the English Privy Council for instructions concerning what action he should take.¹³

In the meantime the situation in Munster grew worse as Justice Walsh reported that Fitzmaurice had met with the Earl of Clanricarde's formerly rebellious sons in October and had begun gathering men in Thomond by early November. He also noted that the former Captain of Desmond had taken possession of the powerful castle of Carrigafoyle with its fine harbor at the mouth of the broad Shannon river supposedly by virtue of his marriage to the widow of O'Connor Kerry; this harbor obviously being one of the many fine landing areas

¹³Desiderata Curiosa Hibernica, 2 vols., ed. by David Hay (London, 1772), 1: 13 (hereafter cited as Desiderata) and CSP-Ireland, vol. XLII (1573), p. 523.

that the Spanish might employ if they chose to send aid.¹⁴ Thus, the stage was apparently set when the Earl of Desmond, taking advantage of his honorable confinement, escaped while on an approved hunting trip and returned home in triumph.¹⁵ Met at Knockdalton by Rory Oge O'More and Piers Grace, Desmond was accompanied through Kildare into Leix, where he was received by four hundred of the O'Mores. Discarding his English dress at Lough Gur, the half crippled Earl soon rallied the Geraldines, and returned to his proud old Irish ways. At Limerick, he was greeted by Fitzmaurice and his men and everywhere he went the common people, who still held him in awe and were willing to follow his law above all others, provided him with an enthusiastic reception.¹⁶

¹⁴CSP-Ireland, vol. XLII (1573), pp. 524, 527. Fitzmaurice allegedly "put away" his first wife because of her love for Edward Butler according to the CSP-Ireland, vol. XLII (1573), p. 524. This is unlikely, however, since most antiquarians doubt that Fitzmaurice had a previous marriage before wedding Katherine Burke, who was not the widow of O'Connor Kerry and by whom he had two daughters and two sons. He undoubtedly took possession of Carrigafoyle with the Earl of Desmond's permission, since his own land in Kerrycurrihy had been leased to St. Leger and his tenants. See "Unpublished Geraldine Documents", p. 524 and "The Confession of Thomas Bracke", June 1, 1572 quoted in Ronan, p. 504.

¹⁵Cusack, p. 156. Desmond's escape occurred between October 28 and November 20, but more likely near the latter date on which Fitzwilliam had written to Desmond giving him just twenty days to come in under protection or face the consequences. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XLII (1573), p. 529.

¹⁶CSP-Ireland, vol. XLII (1573), p. 529 and vol. XLIII (1573), p. 533.

Although given a deadline of twenty days during which time he could come in under protection, Desmond refused, informing the Council that:

eight months were long enough to determine his causes; that he had neither favor nor liberty shown him, and that his country had been barely fleeced in his absence.¹⁷

On December 13, he also wrote to the Queen and Lord Burghley explaining his travails in Dublin at the hands of the Lord Deputy despite his agreement to all articles and his need to return to his country since his wife was in "miserable poverty" and his lands were being robbed as well as his tenants.¹⁸ In the meantime the Earl announced that he would not permit any English sheriffs, thus reasserting his palatinate jurisdiction, and undoubtedly he accepted the advice of James Fitzmaurice and John FitzEdmund Fitzgerald, the Seneschal of Imokilly, who had together done so much to preserve the Desmond lands from Thomas Roe Fitzgerald and others in his absence. He also continued the process of consolidating his palatinate which had begun before his escape, taking the castles of Kenry and that of Ballymartyr. Castlemartyr was taken by the Seneschal of Imokilly, and Castlemaine, the key fortress which had been the object of

¹⁷"Unpublished Geraldine Documents", p. 523.

¹⁸Ibid.

perrott's long siege, was taken without a struggle, supposedly by a band of wandering kerne, but it was soon turned over to Desmond. Neither were the proud Earl's old foes nor those who had co-operated with the government against Fitzmaurice forgotten, since Sir Thomas of Desmond and Sir Theobald Butler were spoiled and the Earl of Clancarthy, though he had victualled Castlemaine after its capture, was also dealt a defeat. Finally, as if to show the complete ineffectuality of hard and unreasonable conditions imposed as the price of freedom, the determined Earl restored Hugh Lacy, the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, as well as the old religion.¹⁹

Although Desmond was quick to inform Justice Walsh that he had not authorized the takeover of Castlemaine, he had, in fact, apprehended the kerne who had done so and placed his wards in the castle. Moreover, the fact that he and Fitzmaurice were travelling about the country with a huge force, meeting with other lords or receiving their messengers, and reportedly sending letters and messengers to Spain, made his declarations of loyalty at least questionable.²⁰ The always pessimistic Fitzwilliam, who never ceased requesting his recall from his essentially thankless and difficult office,

¹⁹CSP-Ireland, vol. XLIII (1573), pp. 530, 534.

²⁰CSP-Ireland, vol. XLIII (1573), pp. 533-535 and Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1574-1585 (London, 1867), vol. XLIV (1574), p. 1. Hereafter cited as CSPE-Ireland and cited in entirety.

posted Burghley as early as November 22, of his fear of a "great conspiracy," which reports of Desmond's alleged union with or encouragement of O'Neill, Clanricarde's sons, the O'Mores and O'Connors, and other rebellious elements, did little to allay. By late January 1574, with parts of Leinster and Ulster in rebellion as well, the Privy Council had informed the Lord Deputy that three hundred experienced soldiers were being dispatched from the Low Countries and that Ormond and Perrott would be sent as soon as convenient.²¹ As for the Queen, she scolded her Deputy for his "mild" treatment of the Geraldine Earl, but nevertheless had herself sent over warrants authorizing Desmond's liberty in December, though the Earl had not come in as requested under the protection offered by the Lord Deputy and Council. Desmond did, however, agree to meet at Clonmel to discuss a settlement on the last day of January with his kinsman Edward Fitzgerald, her Majesty's Lieutenant of the Pensioners, whom the Queen intended to be a private negotiator, rather than her official representative, to see what could be done.²²

Fitzgerald was nonetheless carefully briefed in Dublin and came to Clonmel with seven articles which Desmond was required to formally accept. Thus, in effect, he came as an

²¹CSP-Ireland, vol. XLII, (1573), p. 529; CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLIV (1574), pp. 1-2, 4; Carew MSS., 1:452.

²²CSP-Ireland, vol. XLIII (1573), p. 534; Carew MSS., 1:454; CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLIV (1574), p. 4.

official representative, a violation of her desires for which Elizabeth later rebuked her Deputy. In any case, the Earl willingly agreed among other things not to impugn the Queen's laws or "good" government, to remain loyal, and to apprehend rebels and traitors, but balked at the thought of surrendering his castles in Kenry along with Castlemaine to Captain George Bouchier or that of Ballymartyr to Justice Walsh. He protested that he would not pledge his securities in this manner to either the Lord Deputy or Lord President Perrott, since he was convinced both had grudges against him and sought the overthrow of his house.²³ He also insisted on his claim to the liberties of Kerry. Upon being offered the opportunity to retract his statements about Fitzwilliam and Perrott, he did so, but Fitzgerald mentioned them in his report anyway and Desmond stood on the advice of his counselors, requesting a general pardon for himself and his brethren prior to turning over the castles requested of him as pledges of his future loyalty. His advisors at the time included Sir John, Fitzmaurice, the Seneschal of Imokilly and the Countess, among others, and they, like the Earl, undoubtedly suspected

²³Carew MSS., 1: 424-425, 428, 463. Desmond had previously agreed to surrender these same castles in Dublin. Although he now refused to do so to those he mistrusted, he did offer to turn them over to Fitzgerald, who however had no authority to hold them, so he refused.

that the government intended an invasion of their country. In fact, on the same day that the conference was held the Queen had written to her Deputy of the necessity of reducing Desmond and suggested that the lords and gentlemen of Munster be authorized coyne and livery and encouraged to war against the Earl until Perrott could be sent with the promised three hundred soldiers. However, this suggestion was most impractical in view of Desmond's influence and strength in Munster and the relative weakness of the government and thus Fitzwilliam temporized.²⁴

In fact, some of the Queen's Irish advisors themselves were beginning to realize the potential explosiveness of the Irish situation and of the government's current unpreparedness to deal with it. In an anonymous position paper on the problem dated March 21, 1574 it was pointed out that the specter of a "general combination" was on the horizon in Ireland and that the Queen's troop strength there was not sufficient to handle simultaneous wars in Munster, Leix, Offaly, and Ulster which might result following an invasion of Munster.²⁵ A Burghley memorandum of a few days before

²⁴Ibid., 1: 426-428, 454.

²⁵Ibid., 1: 455. The Queen's most important Irish advisors at this time included Lord Burghley (who seems to have dealt with Irish problems on almost a daily basis and whose incredible volume of correspondence reflects his dominance), the Earls of Leicester and Sussex, and Sir Francis Walsingham, who was made jointly responsible for the office of Secretary of State with Sir Thomas Smith in late December, 1573.

indicated that the Queen intended to send Ormond and Perrott back to Ireland. It was no doubt intended that Perrott could handle Munster, Fitzwilliam with Ormond's help could pacify Leinster and Connaught, and Ulster would be left to Essex. This scheme of action was set back, however, since the Earl of Essex's plan to expel the Scots from Ulster soon failed, when despite the Queen's request, the Lord Deputy was unable to persuade any of the gentlemen of the Pale, with the exception of Lord Slane, to march north to aid the newly appointed "Governor of Ulster." Perrott's ill-health proved sufficient justification to win his being excused from further Irish service and the much-favored Ormond was not to return to his homeland before mid-summer.²⁶ Perhaps more importantly, the government's small underpaid and underfed garrison was also approximately forty one percent below the strength assumed by the English Privy Councillors, who later rebuked Fitzwilliam for not having forwarded the muster books on a quarterly basis as had previously been the practice.²⁷

These circumstances were fortunate for the Earl of Desmond, who would certainly have been content to live under the English if he were permitted to rule his country in the Irish manner, but who nevertheless was willing to fight to

²⁶ Ibid., 1: 456; CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLV (1574), pp. 11-12; vol. XLVI (1574), p. 23; Bagwell, 2: 268-269.

²⁷ Ibid., 1: 467.

preserve his freedom and his earldom. To evidence his good intentions he had issued a proclamation to put away his gallowglass and had written Lord Burghley in March of his intention to remain loyal. Nonetheless he continued to spoil Clancarthy and others who opposed his course and to rely on Fitzmaurice, who was now recognized as chief by the Ryans of Owney in the wild country bordering the Shannon, as one of his primary advisors.²⁸ In April, while Desmond wrote to Essex (who had evidently befriended the Irish nobleman while Desmond was a captive in England) asking his intercession with the English Council, Fitzmaurice at the same time was reported to have spoiled the country about Waterford and to have demanded a cess of nine hundred axes and thirty horsemen for four days, making obvious preparations for siege warfare. The Earl himself was engaged in establishing food caches in his country on the west side of the island.²⁹

In the meantime the unhappy Lord Deputy had written to the Queen in late March asking her to excuse his mildness in dealing with Desmond and noting that he no longer trusted the Earl of Clanricarde in whose country a large number of Scots, apparently brought in to serve in Munster, were residing. Elizabeth, however, had lost patience with her Deputy, not

²⁸ CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLIV (1574), p. 9; vol. XLV (1574), p. 11; Bagwell 2:276.

²⁹ CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLV (1574), pp. 17, 20.

only because of his feuding with and his inability to get along with Vice-Treasurer Fitton, but especially because of the worsening situation in Ireland which she now attributed in part to Fitzwilliam's unnecessarily long detainment of Desmond in Dublin and in part to his hesitancy to make the Lord Deputy's presence and her power felt outside of Dublin.³⁰ In a private letter on the last day of the month the Privy Councillors warned him that his reputation was threatened since it appeared he was appeasing rebellion and disorder despite increases in the size of the forces available to him; the Councillors, however, at this point were still unaware of the actual size of the garrison at hand. They ordered the Lord Deputy to come to terms with O'Neill in Ulster before attempting anything against Desmond and to use Essex's force to guard the Pale if necessary. The Queen, however, made it clear that she preferred to come to terms with the Geraldine Earl without war, offering pardon to himself and his lieutenants if they chose to comply with the government's demands, but proceeding against them with force if Desmond remained adamant.³¹

³⁰CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLV (1574), pp. 12, 15 and Carew MSS., 1:466. In February Lord Burghley had prepared a memorandum in which he considered Fitzwilliam's own much-sought-after recall and the relieving of Fitton, but no action was taken. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLIV (1574) p. 10.

³¹Carew MSS., 1:456, 463, 466.

On the Continent over thirty English and Irish Catholics of note were active, including Archbishop FitzGibbon, who was intriguing in Brittany at this time.³² Among the most interesting of these was Father David Wolf, a Jesuit, who had served as the Apostolic Commissary in Ireland from 1561 until his arrest in 1566. He prepared an extensive document in Lisbon for Philip of Spain, which was designed to persuade that monarch to intervene on behalf of the Irish.³³ In this extraordinary document Wolf alleged that the man he represented, James Fitzmaurice, had submitted himself to the English at Kilmallock in 1573 only because he had:

heard that a treaty had been made with the said Elizabeth by the Catholic King, from whom James expected daily help in men as had been many times promised by his Majesty.³⁴

Wolf went on to provide a full description of Ireland through which he had, of course, travelled extensively, stressing geographical and logistical information of interest to the soldier planning a campaign as well as data about the Catholicity of the Irish people and their great need for a king to live amongst them. He said that Fitzmaurice had assured him that he could have "cleared all the heretic English out

³² Bagwell, 2: 278.

³³ Ronan, pp. 469-470.

³⁴ "Father Wolf's Description of Ireland", March 24, 1574, quoted in Ronan, p. 475.

of the realm of Ireland" with two thousand Spanish auxiliaries, but that he would not personally advise Philip to send less than twelve thousand men:

I mean 8000 soldiers and 4000 craftsmen, such as tillers of the soil, masons, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, and other persons to make armor, and also citizens and merchants to settle in the cities and episcopal Sees to displace the Englishmen there now, which, indeed, are most beautiful places and lack only inhabitants. Without such people, soldiers cannot keep going, nor live in the country, still less conquer the realm.³⁵

Although Philip sent an envoy of his own to examine the situation in Munster and belatedly assigned Wolf a substantial subsidy for the Irish insurgents, he could take no decisive action without France, with whom there was little prospect of reaching an understanding. Besides the French had concluded a defensive league with England in 1572, which was maintained despite the strain of the St. Bartholemew's Day massacre, and Philip himself had entered into a two-year commercial treaty in April 1573 with England, which was followed by the

³⁵"Father Wolf's Description of Ireland", p. 488. Wolf was aware of the magnitude of his request and tried to induce Philip with the prospect that a number of Irish soldiers equivalent to the numbers of Spaniards he might send to Ireland could possibly serve his Catholic Majesty in Flanders or elsewhere. In a surprising and not particularly astute comment for a man in his position he added:

Would to God that 12,000 of them might be taken out of the realm every year, that they with their barbarous habits might be totally eradicated and extirpated from the realm, for, indeed, it will be no easy matter to chasten them and keep them from their larcenies and other evil practices.

Ibid., p. 489.

Treaty of Bristol in August 1574 between the same powers; all of which militated against any direct action despite the proverb cited by Father Wolf:

He that England would win.
Let him with Ireland begin.³⁶

On April 25, 1574 Fitzwilliam, who had advocated the presence of men of war off both the east and west coasts of Munster, cited in his correspondence to the Privy Council new rumors of a Spanish invasion and word that Desmond had sent to France for munitions and powder. Although these rumors continued in May and June, they reached a crescendo in mid-July when a bevy of merchants' and travellers returning from the Continent testified to the presence of a Catholic fleet in the Bay of Biscay that they had been led to believe was designed for Ireland. Fitzwilliam was sufficiently concerned to request that the Privy Council make good its promise to send over the 2500 men which had been gathered in the west of England for such a prospect under the Earl of Bedford and the President of Wales. The fleet in question was sent from Spain in late July to Flanders, not Ireland, for the purpose of recovering Zealand and hence the Queen ordered the warships that had been prepared in England disarmed and the reserve troops Fitzwilliam requested were not sent. Nonetheless, the situation in Ireland had reached a crucial

³⁶Ronan, pp. 498-499, 501 and Black, pp. 163-164.

point.³⁷

In June, Essex, who had succeeded in forcibly winning the submission of Sir Brian MacPhelim, who was the Chief in Ards, with the aid of the Low Country veterans sent to him by the Deputy, returned the favor by offering his services in Dublin at Fitzwilliam's request. He dispatched several carefully prepared letters to the emboldened Earl of Desmond, who had recently approved the seizure and imprisonment of Captain George Bouchier, the commander of the Kilmallock garrison whose presence in the heart of his country offended the Geraldine pride.³⁸ Ignoring Desmond's arguments and underlining the fact that the Queen had generously offered him a pardon, Essex astutely stated the government's leading

³⁷ CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLV (1574), p. 20; vol. XLVI (1574), pp. 25-26; vol. XLVII (1574), pp. 33-34; Great Britain, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs Preserved Principally at Rome in the Vatican Archives and Library, 2 vols., ed. J.M. Rigg (London, 1916), 1: 80, 82. Hereafter cited as CSP-Rome.

³⁸ CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVI (1574), pp. 22-23, 27-28. Captain Bouchier, who was noted for his relentless pursuit of the Irish and his assumption of the dress of kerne when serving as an infantryman, had razed Fitzmaurice's camp and slain eighty of his men in January, 1572. English residents in Munster were outraged by his arrest, and one of them wrote to Burghley that lenience bred rebellion; another suggested that the Irish be starved to death by seizing their herds of cattle, since no greater sacrifice to God could be made. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXV (1572), pp. 463-464; Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, 6 vols., ed. John Hooker (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 6: 370 (hereafter cited as Holinshed's Chronicles); Ronan, p. 462.

question:

What should move you, then, to seek war, when in peace with honor from the English point of view, that is, you may enjoy all that is your right?³⁹

He warned Desmond that the Queen's favor might not be offered when he needed it most, and earnestly requested the release of his cousin Captain Bouchier, and then ended on an effective note:

So wishing you follow good counselors and not flatter yourself with the opinion of your force, which to contend with her Majesty is nothing, I end and commit your lordship to God.⁴⁰

Evidently Desmond was impressed for he soon agreed to a parley with the English Earl at Kilmacthomas in Waterford County, a rather remote location selected by the Geraldine leader. On July 1, Essex accompanied the Earl of Kildare, Desmond's loyal cousin, conferred with the fugitive Earl, and presented him with a protection for himself and all his men which was to expire in twenty days. Desmond, in turn, agreed to come to Dublin for a parley with the Lord Deputy and Council and promised to release Captain Bouchier. Since the Queen had not appointed Essex as a member of the Irish Council, he could not participate in the conference, but it is doubtful that the results would have been different in any case. Desmond was willing to reason with the government, but

³⁹Essex to Desmond, June 5, 1574, quoted in Bagwell, 2:279.

⁴⁰Ibid.

since he believed he had the means to resist if necessary, he said that he would live up to the promises that had been extorted from him. He absolutely refused, however, to return to England or to provide additional pledges beyond those already made, since his son and his youngest brother, James were still being detained in England.⁴¹ He appealed to the Council:

If neither my son, being my only son, nor my brother, whom I love, nor the possession of my inheritance, as before is granted, can suffice, then to the justice of God and the Queen I appeal upon you all.⁴²

That the Earl's responses were not found satisfactory is not surprising in view of the pressures resting on the shoulders of the Lord Deputy. Writing to Fitzwilliam before it was known that Essex was to meet with Desmond, the Queen suggested that it would have been more appropriate to declare the Geraldine a "traitor" long before this and sarcastically informed her Deputy that fewer troops than he possessed "have sufficed for others that have supplied your place to have prosecuted like rebels of greater strength and force..."⁴³ Since Fitzwilliam had complained of a lack of martial counselors Elizabeth sent her letter by the hand of Sir William Drury, who was designated to fill this void. The Privy

⁴¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVI (1574), p. 30 and Bagwell, 2:280-281.

⁴²Articles propounded to the Earl of Desmond, and his answers, July 8, 1574, quoted in Bagwell, 2:281.

⁴³Carew MSS., 1:472-473.

Council assured the Deputy about the same time that they had 2500 troops ready in the event of a foreign invasion and suggested that Fitzwilliam should endeavor to draw away Desmond's adherents while winking at their past deeds in an effort to weaken the Earl. In Dublin, the Earl of Ormond, who had only recently returned to Ireland, wrote Lord Burghley to join in the condemnation of his rival, noting that Sir John and Fitzmaurice had made offers to serve the Queen which Ormond desired to accept; offers which, however, were probably conceived either to deceive the government or to keep open the lines of communication in the event foreign aid was not forthcoming and the planned resistance fell through. In any case, Fitzwilliam, who now pledged to make amends to the Queen for her wounded honor by placing his own life on the line against Desmond, despite his slender resources, requested permission to bribe Sir John away from his brother with "liberal considerations." The Queen subsequently provided her Deputy authority to offer Sir John and Fitzmaurice some of Desmond's lands.⁴⁴

In the meantime the small Geraldine party had departed Dublin accompanied by the Earls of Essex, Kildare and Ormond

⁴⁴Ibid., 1: 473-474, 480 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), pp. 31-32, 35.

in accordance with a promised safe-conduct to and from the city.⁴⁵ On the ride south to Munster there was plenty of time to warn Desmond of the perils he faced, but the Geraldine leader seems to have been genuinely convinced that Sir William Fitzwilliam's unreasonable demands were based on his personal prejudice against him, and indeed most of his brethren and neighbors agreed. On July 18, Desmond's followers and friends gathered and examined the articles required of him by the Lord Deputy and Council. Some twenty gentlemen, including Clanricarde's sons, Thomond's brother, and Sir John of Desmond advised the Earl neither to yield more hostages nor give in to the unreasonable demands of the Lord Deputy, whom they now pledged to resist:

We renounce God, if we do spare life, lands and goods ---to maintain and defend this our advice against the said lord deputy or any other that will covet the said earl's inheritance.⁴⁶

This well known document, afterwards referred to as Desmond's "Combination", was not signed by either Fitzmaurice or the Seneschal of Imokilly, his close companion, although Fitzmaurice had accompanied the Earl both to the meeting

⁴⁵CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), p. 31.

⁴⁶Desiderata, pp. 4-5.

with Essex and to Dublin.⁴⁷ Considering that this document was prepared when the rumors of impending foreign assistance enjoyed their greatest play, it is not impossible, but seems unlikely, that the former Captain of Desmond would desert his hereditary lord to whom there is no proof he was ever disloyal either before or after this time.

In late July with the government preparing for a campaign in Munster, Desmond appealed to Sir Edward Fitton to intercede with the Deputy in an effort to delay the invasion of his country until the Earl's most recent personal appeal to the Queen had received an answer.⁴⁸ He also met with Ormond for still another parley, but to no avail, for the Geraldine chief was now a proclaimed traitor with a reward of one thousand pounds and a pension to any man who brought him in alive and five hundred pounds for his head. The Lord Deputy with the able assistance of the Earl of Ormond and a number of English captains now marched south and in mid-August began the siege of Derrinlaur castle on the

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), p. 35. On the same day that the "Combination" was entered into Desmond addressed a missive to the Privy Council protesting that the Lord Deputy intended to declare war against him despite his consent to the articles delivered to him. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), p. 34.

suir river, which had been seized by one of Desmond's lieutenants in the Spring from Sir Theobald Butler. The castle, which was located in a strategic position between Clonmel and Waterford, soon fell and its garrison was beheaded in the first and only action of this shortlived rebellion. The impact of this loss coupled both with the lack of necessary munitions and supplies and with the numbers who now either deserted their chief or advised him to come to terms in view of the still vivid memories of the devastation visited upon Munster in the late rebellion when foreign assistance was also wanting, brought a suddenly humble Gerald Desmond to submit at Clonmel and again at Cork for the benefit of Munster nobility.⁴⁹ The Earl dispersed his forces, delivered Castlemaine and Castlemartyr, and swore an oath of allegiance to the Queen; somewhat ironically all other causes against him were dropped, the Earl being permitted to remain in Munster and rule his palatinate much as before in the fashion of a feudal lord. This generous and conciliatory settlement came not so much from the Lord Deputy, but from Elizabeth herself, who was concerned about providing support for Essex in Ulster and

⁴⁹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), pp. 36-37; Annals of the Four Masters, p. 490; "Memoirs of the Geraldine Earls of Desmond", p. 55. Desmond's running battles with the Earl of Clancarthy were another factor in his submission, since it weakened his forces and his influence in Munster. See Cusack, p. 157.

who had provided the general guidelines upon which Fitzwilliam made the settlement. Writing to her Lord Deputy on August 20, the Queen stated that she did not intend to deprive Desmond of coyne and livery and thus disarm him unless his neighbors were also required to forsake it and gave her opinion that the Earl's actions were the product of "willful inconsiderateness" rather than traitorous design. She thus directed Sir William to concede the Geraldine leader "our mercy and grace" so far as possible, and he subsequently noted in a letter to the Queen several weeks later that her letters would be kept from the Earl's knowledge. Fitzwilliam viewed this as a perfect conclusion particularly because he now anticipated his relief from his post and, indeed, Sir Henry Sidney was again slowly being persuaded to take the reins.⁵⁰

The proud Earl had been overwhelmed by superior force, but nonetheless showed some surprising flare and subtlety in his effusions of loyalty, writing to Elizabeth that he now prayed for a single drop of her grace to assuage the flame of his tormented mind. Nonetheless, perhaps trying to preserve his lands for the future in the event of an

⁵⁰ CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), pp. 37-38 and Carew MSS., 1: 479-480.

unsuccessful rebellion, he placed his lands in trust during the remainder of his own life and that of his Countess, providing for his daughters as well as his only son. This action was taken two days before the Earl's letter to the Queen. After years of guerrilla war and violent upheaval a relative quiet now settled over Munster which was to last for five years.⁵¹

⁵¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), p. 37; Carew MSS., 1: 481; Bagwell, 2: 284.

CHAPTER V

FOREIGN INTRIGUE

According to the "Description of Ireland" that the Jesuit Father David Wolf drew up for Philip II in 1574, sir John Perrott, when he was preparing to board a ship at Cork for his return to England the year before, spoke of James Fitzmaurice to the lords who had accompanied him to the harbor in the following terms:

never have I seen a gentleman or soldier nobler, more valorous, more experienced or successful in the ways of war...yet I find in him two defects unworthy of such a man...one that he is a Papist, and the other in that he is not a true subject of her Majesty.¹

Whether or not Wolf fabricated the above words for the benefit of his Catholic Majesty or not, they do have the ring of truth in that Perrott respected and at one time had high hopes for his former foe, and Fitzmaurice was both an ardent Catholic and an avowed enemy of England. Despite the inherently divisive nature of the Irish political structure with its clan base, James Fitzmaurice stood out as the most respected "rebel" leader on the island, and his future was of great interest to Englishmen and Irishmen alike.

¹"Father Wolf's Description of Ireland," p. 474.

With the Earl of Desmond reconciled to English authorities, Fitzmaurice's dream of a Catholic Ireland free of English misgovernment was further than ever from achievement. Having broken his promise to remain loyal to English authorities, by actively encouraging and cooperating in the expulsion of the English from Munster when the Earl had returned in 1573, his chances of receiving a royal pardon had narrowed somewhat, but were yet capable of achievement. Although the Earl had not settled Fitzmaurice on his claimed inheritance, namely the barony of Kerrycurrihy, which was occupied by St. Leger's tenants, Desmond had provided three castles in Kerry for Fitzmaurice "until he should bestow a better living on him" and had agreed to be bound by a ten thousand pound recognizance to pass additional lands onto his able cousin; these to be determined at a later date by three indifferent persons, headed by Chief Justice James Dowdall.² Fitzmaurice's claims to Kerrycurrihy had not been disallowed and he still considered himself "lord of Kerrycurrihy", but the matter was evidently put aside until the mortgage St. Leger held was fully paid up. Although the former Captain of Desmond complained when a fourth castle previously promised to him was turned over to the English as part of the securities

²"The Confession of Thomas Bracke," p. 504 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLV (1574), p. 19.

Desmond was required to pledge for future good behavior, and although one contemporary English account alleges that the decision in regard to all of these castles was reversed altogether by the Earl at the insistence of Eleanor, daughter of Edmund Butler and now Countess of Desmond, who wanted the Earl's patrimony preserved intact for their small son James Fitzgarrett, this apparent lack of gratitude was not the reason Fitzmaurice chose to leave Ireland.³ According to the testimony of Thomas Bracke, one of the men who had served with the great rebel leader and whom the English had taken prisoner in February 1575 just before departure of the much respected Geraldine lord, Fitzmaurice went abroad to seek the intercession of the French or Spanish king in an effort to pressure the English into restoring all of Desmond's lands to the Earl, thus allowing him a freer reign to exercise his palatinate jurisdiction. Bracke further pointed out in support of his contentions that Fitzmaurice had left in the company of three other staunch Desmond family supporters: namely, with the son of the White Knight, who claimed that Irish title despite his deceased father's attainder and the forfeiture of his extensive lands; also with the son of the

³Ibid. and Russell, p. 524. Russell's contention concerning the Countess of Desmond is supported to some extent by her evident dislike of Fitzmaurice. In November of 1569 she had written to the Earl, who was then a prisoner in the Tower, that Fitzmaurice had rebelled to bring Desmond into further displeasure and thus usurp his inheritance in the manner of Fitzmaurice's father, Maurice the Incendiary, who was responsible for the murder of the twelfth Earl of Desmond. On the other hand, it is unlikely that Desmond would take such an action against his influential cousin without promising him ample compensation. See CSP-Ireland, vol. XXIX (1569), p. 423.

Knight of the Valley, whose inheritance was likewise in the hands of the English; and with the Seneschal of Imokilly, who was closely allied to and dependent upon Sir John of Desmond.⁴ Bracke also assured his captors that all of the above dependent lords of the great Earl of Desmond would hardly go on such a journey without Desmond's permission and maintained that Sir John had met with his cousin before his departure and that the Earl or a representative of his did likewise.⁵ There is, therefore, little doubt of Desmond's foreknowledge and at least tacit approval, although his goals were undoubtedly far less ambitious than those of Fitzmaurice. In a letter to the Earl of Ormond, Fitzmaurice gave out as his reasons for going abroad as first, his desire to win friends who might make a pardon from the Queen possible for him and second, his

⁴Ibid., pp. 503-504. Bracke also notes the existence of a natural enmity between Edmund Fitzgibbon, the son of the White Knight, and Fitzmaurice, which he believed could not be overcome unless Desmond took a hand in the matter. Desmond's lands and privileges, which had previously been diminished by the awards to Ormond and the elevation of McCarthy More to Earl, were greatly diminished by the loss of the lands of the White Knight and the Knight of the Valley as well as the temporary occupation of his strongest castles.

⁵Ibid.

poor health. Ormond, in turn, informed the Queen, who responded by asking her much favored cousin to keep an eye upon Desmond, whom she believed could not be ignorant of their counsels or designs.⁶ After having intimated to English authorities through Ormond that he feared for his safety in Ireland and was seeking a pardon, the most dedicated of the Geraldines had set out to obtain foreign assistance from a Catholic power and with the hope that he would not be watched too closely by English agents from whom he hoped to conceal his true intent. Accompanied by his wife and children and the above mentioned principal lords of Desmond, Fitzmaurice set sail for France on board the La Arganys in March 1575.⁷ Before explaining in detail Fitzmaurice's efforts abroad a further word about previous efforts to obtain foreign assistance is in order. Ever since February of 1569, when Fitzmaurice and the Catholic chiefs sent Maurice FitzGibbon, the titular papal Archbishop of Cashel, to Spain, the hope of the confederates was that Spain's Philip II would come to

⁶CSPE-Ireland, vol. L (1575), p. 56 and Carew MSS., 2: 8. Elizabeth's letter, dated April 22, 1575, also contained a passage which indicated her closeness to Ormond, scolding him for failing to write her about some evidently private matter between them when he should have known that no "person living should be made privy, but ourself alone," to everything he wrote her. See Carew MSS., 2: 8.

⁷Don Philip O'Sullivan Bear, Ireland Under Elizabeth, trans. Matthew J. Byrne (Dublin: Sealy, Byers and Walker, 1903), p. 19.

their assistance. In Spain, however, the efforts of FitzGibbon had been finally upstaged by those of the self-styled "Duke of Ireland," Thomas Stukeley, an English "Catholic" adventurer and mercenary soldier, who had a remarkable capacity for aggrandizement, opportunism and deceit. Coming from an old English family in North Devon, Stukeley had served for a time in the service of the Duke of Suffolk and then had drifted into piracy, subsequently spending some time as a prisoner in the Tower. He also married the daughter and heiress of a prominent alderman, said to be the wealthiest gentleman in London at the time, and after defrauding her, was successful in obtaining the Queen's license to found a colony in Florida. Instead he used his ship in piratical operations off the Irish coast, and although this incensed the Queen, he managed to talk his way out of serious trouble by virtue of his friendship with Shane O'Neill and the trust placed in him by Cecil, Leicester and Pembroke. The then Lord Deputy Sidney allowed Stukeley to purchase the lands and office of a minor official in Ireland and subsequently placed him in the post of seneschal of Wexford, despite Elizabeth's known dislike for the man. The Queen refused to allow this adventurer to keep his office and demanded that he be sent back to England to answer for his piracies in the Admiralty Court. Frustrated by his inability to secure favor in Ireland, Stukeley secretly offered to help the Spanish win Ireland, and in the midst of Fitzmaurice's rebellion in April 1570, he defected to Spain, where he

initially succeeded in deceiving FitzGibbon and also in persuading the Irish prelate to introduce him to the king.⁸ The smooth talking adventurer, whom FitzGibbon soon came to regard as an "apostate bucaneer," a former despoiler of churches and monasteries, and an English adventurer with no sanction to represent the Irish chiefs, nonetheless won the patronage of the Spanish Duke and exiled Duchess of Feria (an Englishwoman), who were very influential at the Spanish Court. Although he gained more favor than had the unfortunate Geraldine Archbishop and although he was knighted by Philip in January 1571, his credit at that King's Court eventually diminished and he departed for other adventures in Europe, continuing, nevertheless, his lobbying efforts to be appointed the commander of an invasionary force for Ireland or England over the next seven years.⁹ Philip II does seem to have

⁸Specilegium Ossoriense, pp. 66-68; CSP-Rome, 1: 376, CSP-Ireland, vol. XXXII (1571), p. 446. FitzGibbon was not completely taken in by Stukeley, but rather hoped to use him to forward his own plans to win aid from Spain at a critical time in the rebellion, after two years of barren lobbying. See Stukeley's letter to King Philip, dated July 26, 1570, in Spicilegium Ossoriense, pp. 62-64.

⁹CSP-Rome, 1: 378-379, 385 and Spicilegium Ossoriense, p. 68. King Philip was said to have been taken in by Stukeley's charm and regal manner to the extent that he adopted the buccaneer's son and offered him posts in Milan or Flanders as well as a pension in early 1571, all of which the astute adventurer refused at this time, protesting his desire to make up for his past affiliation with the English heretics by leading a military expedition to free Catholics in Ireland; this to be a stepping stone to freeing England as well from the grip of the "heretic" Queen. See CSP-Rome, 1: 384-385.

intended to fit out an expedition of some sort until he heard about the failure of the rebellion of the Northern Earls in England; during the next decade he only toyed with the idea of supporting the numerous English and Irish refugees in Spain in any serious venture that would be a threat to the Queen of England, who was herself actively supporting the Protestant cause in Flanders. By mid-1572, with English and Irish refugees still active in Madrid, Rome, and Paris, Philip conveniently conceded the papal claims of jurisdiction in England and Ireland, suggesting that expeditions be sent in the name of the pope in order to preserve his relations with England. As for FitzGibbon, his further efforts in France and Rome were also failures basically because Ireland, although Catholic, was subordinate to the concern for the recovery of England to the Catholic camp and because essentially Ireland served first and foremost as "merely a pawn in the great game of European diplomacy."¹⁰

Upon arriving at a French village on the coast of Brittany, Fitzmaurice and his associates, who had brought one

¹⁰Black, p. 477; Fitzgerald, p. 267; "A Memorial for the King of Spain, June-July, 1572" quoted in Ronan, pp. 396-397. In January, 1572 the papal nuncio in Spain wrote to Pope Pius V explaining that Philip had rejected the idea of backing Stukeley for an invasion at that time because his plans were too encompassing and provocative without a rebellion of all the principal lords of Ireland. See J. H. Pollen, "The Irish Expedition of 1579," The Month 101 (1903),: 74.

thousand pounds worth of plate with them, outfitted themselves in French attire and moved on to Nantes and then Paris. Accompanied by the man known only as Monsieur de la Roche, the Guisan captain with whom he had conspired to procure French troops in late 1570, when the latter was in Ireland, and to whom he had entrusted one of his sons, the Geraldines received cordial welcomes from the Governor of Brittany and the Bishop of Nantes and were introduced at Court.¹¹ Although Fitzmaurice received financial and moral backing from Henry III, who wrote a letter to Elizabeth in July of 1575 requesting that her subject, "Dominus Jacobus Desmonde," be permitted to receive her grace and pardon and that letters patent restoring him to his lands be despatched to the Lord Deputy and the Earl of Desmond, little else was achieved and he soon returned to his family now settled at St. Malo.¹² Nonetheless, the English ambassador in France and his spies were concerned that Captain de la Roche had remained in Paris in an apparent effort to interest both the Queen Mother, Catherine de' Medici, who represented the real power behind the French crown, and the king in some sort of an Irish expedition involving a

¹¹Lady Fitzmaurice to John O'Duyn, April 28, 1575 quoted in Ronan, p. 505 and Fitzgerald, p. 275.

¹²King of France to Queen Elizabeth, July, 1575 quoted in Ronan, appendix G, pp. 661-662. The French King also reminded the Queen that under similar circumstances she had interceded with him on behalf of one of his exiled Huguenot subjects. Ibid., p. 662.

dozen French ships and twelve thousand men as a kind of retribution for Elizabeth's aid for the Prince of Conde, the French Huguenot leader. About the same time a ship prepared at St. Malo did in fact depart for Ireland, returning there with the Seneschal of Imokilly and two of Fitzmaurice's men, where, like two letters written by the great rebel's wife a few months before, they were immediately intercepted by English authorities. Indeed, there is reason to believe that they were sent back to Ireland as part of Fitzmaurice's strategy to allay English suspicions of his overseas activities, since they evidently carried with them copies of the letters Henry III had sent to Queen Elizabeth and to the French ambassador in London on behalf of Fitzmaurice's "desired" pardon and these men were, of course, interrogated by English authorities.¹³ In this regard, Fitzmaurice had also written two letters to an English minister, probably Sir Francis Walsingham, requesting a pardon and the restoration of his lands in one of the letters and a guaranteed protection for himself of twenty-one years in the other. The response to these letters, despatched on August 8, 1576, acceded to the pardon "at the French King's request and on your own submission," but denied his request for such a lengthy protection on the

¹³CSP-Rome, 2: 211 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. LII (1575), p. 75.

grounds that it was "unwanted", unheard of, and could not be granted with honor.¹⁴ Although Fitzmaurice thus continued to imply that his reason for being abroad involved his fear of punishment by the English and his supposed denial of his lands by the Earl of Desmond, English authorities were little deceived. In early 1576, Sir Henry Sidney, who had recently assumed the role of Lord Deputy again and had almost completed a grand circuit of the island, not unlike his law-and-order tour of 1566, penned a report on the Irish-Catholic leader based upon intelligence received from English agents in France which accurately reflected the situation:

James Fitzmaurice liveth in St. Malo, and keepeth a great Port, himself and Family well apparalled, and full of Money; he hath not much Relief from the French King, as I can perceive, yet oft visited by Men of good Countenance. This much I know of certain Report, by special of mine own from thence. The man, subtle, malicious, and hardy, a Papist in Extremitie and well esteemed, and of good credit amongst the People. If he come, and be not wholly dealt withal at first (as without an English Commander I know he shall not) all the loose people of this Province will flock unto him: Yea the Lords, though they would do their best, shall not be able to keep them from him. So if he come, and in Show and Appearance like a Man of Wars (as I know he will) and that I be in the North...he may take and do what he will with Kinsale, Cork, Yougal, Kilmallock, and haply this city (Limerick) too, before I shall be able to come to the Rescue thereof.¹⁵

¹⁴[Sir Francis Walsingham] to James Fitzmaurice quoted in "The Life and Death of James," pp. 107-108.

¹⁵Letters and Memorials of State, 1: 95.

Thus, this most capable and experienced English soldier-administrator recognized the difficulty of his own position and the true character of his Irish-Catholic opponent and, in fact, made this estimation as a part of a polemic urging the speedy reappointment of new Lord Presidents for Munster and Connaught, strongly recommending Sir William Drury for the former post.¹⁶

In January of 1576 Fitzmaurice wrote a letter to the General of the Jesuits, which is particularly illustrative of his character and of his religious motivation. He cited the many benefits that Ireland had derived from the Society of Jesus in the past, especially due to the work of Father Wolf, and defined his own objective in all his endeavors as the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls made possible by the Blood of Christ. He requested that his household, which consisted of twenty eight persons at St. Malo, might be comforted by the assignment of a confessor from the Society, who after a time and with the permission of the General, might then be sent into Ireland as a missionary, where he was badly needed among the uneducated and ignorant people.¹⁷ The masses of Ireland had, in fact, in matters of religion been reduced in many cases almost to paganism by the removal, exile or imprisonment of the Catholic hierarchy

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 94-95.

¹⁷Ibernia Ignatiana, ed. Edmund P. Hogan (Dublin, 1880), pp. 21-22.

in a Church already in disarray during these early years of the reign of Elizabeth. While it was probably somewhat of an exaggeration to say as did Edmund Tanner, in his request for the papal appointment to the Bishopric of Cork in 1571, that there were no more than one hundred Irishmen in the whole kingdom who had "been infected with heresy" (i.e., converted to Protestantism), despite the outward conformity of many due to fear; nonetheless, his contention that many Catholics could not even repeat the Lord's Prayer, let alone understand their faith, appears correct.¹⁸ Sir Henry Sidney professed to be shocked with the state of religion in Munster after his grand tour in 1566, but ten years later, writing to the Queen of his most recent journey, he was appalled, assuring Elizabeth "that upon the face of the earth, where Christ is professed, there is not a church in so miserable a case."¹⁹ He saw the misery as threefold in that there were neither sufficient standing temples, nor good ministers to serve in them, nor

¹⁸CSP-Rome, 1: 468. Edmund Tanner, who was a native of the diocese of Dublin had been an exile in Europe since early in the reign of Elizabeth; he was consecrated Bishop of Cork and Cloyne in February, 1575 and soon returned to Ireland, where he was harassed and twice imprisoned by English officials before his death in June, 1579, of natural causes. While in Ireland he served as Papal Commissary, administering the sacraments throughout the island despite great personal danger to himself. See Ronan, p. 542-547.

¹⁹Sidney to Elizabeth I, April 28, 1575 quoted in Ronan, p. 533.

adequate livings available for the few competent ministers to be found there. In fact, the churches were in a state of ruin as a result of the wars and even in the best ordered and most populous bishopric, namely that of Meath, almost half of the parish churches were impropriated to the Queen's possession and leased out in fee farm, while none of them were said to have a parson or vicar resident in them. Instead, less than half the parishes in Meath had curates and these men were presumably Catholic, or more likely an admixture of Catholicism and pagan ignorance.²⁰ Despite the evident decline in the state of the Church, the Irish had clung to their Catholic faith as even the new Lord President of Munster, the hard-nosed soldier Sir William Drury, was somewhat distraught to admit of the supposedly "reformed city" of Waterford in a letter prepared for Secretary Walsingham in April 1577, at a time when Fitzmaurice was expected to land there by harvest time:

There are a great number of students in this city in Louvain, at the charge of their friends and fathers... and the proud and undutiful inhabitors of this town are so cankered in Popery, undutiful to her Majesty...that they fear not God nor man, and hath their altars, painted images and candlesticks, in derision of the Gospel, every day in their Synagogues, so detestable that they may be called the unruly neuters rather than subjects. Masses infinite they have in their several churches every morning, without any fear. I have spied them, for I chanced to

²⁰Ibid., pp. 532-533.

arrive last Sunday at 5 in the clock in the morning, and saw them resort out of the churches by heaps.²¹

To the English administrators and government the persistence of Irish Catholicism was at best an affront to the Queen and her government, and at worst akin to treason so that, as Sir Henry Sidney found out, no religion was preferable to Roman Catholicism. This meant that the Reformation had been, in effect, set aside until the Irish could be made to conform with English concepts of law and order, which were viewed as more pressing concerns.²² To James Fitzmaurice, however, the attempt to deprive the Irish of Catholicism was both a major impetus and a just cause for the overthrow of English misgovernment in Ireland, as well as his calling card in diplomatic channels on the Continent.

Thus, while Fitzmaurice labored in France to interest the Most Christian King in his plans for Ireland, his associates were busy in Madrid and Rome. In late June of 1575 Father Patrick O'Hely, who had previously worked as a messenger between Ireland and Spain for Archbishop FitzGibbon and who was an Irish Franciscan, met with Don Juan de Zuniga, the

²¹Drury to Walsingham, April 14, 1577, quoted in Ronan, p. 549.

²²State Papers Concerning the Irish Church in the Time of Queen Elizabeth, ed. Maziere W. Brady (London, 1868), pp. 20-21. Hereafter cited as State Papers Concerning the Irish Church.

Spanish Ambassador to Rome. Having just arrived from Spain, O'Hely came armed with a letter of introduction from King Philip, which, however, that monarch later informed Zuniga was not intended as authority to negotiate matters of great import. O'Hely's persistent purpose was to win the necessary men, money and munitions in order to support an invasion of Ireland led by Fitzmaurice, despite the fact that the Franciscan priest's efforts, along with those of Father Wolf and others, had not to date achieved much more than nominal or token support. However, when pointing out that Irish Catholics would warmly support any candidate for the Irish throne supported by the pope, O'Hely suggested Don John of Austria, who was Philip's half-brother. This priest's bold introduction of himself to Zuniga had its effect, though an answer was characteristically slow in coming from the cautious Spanish monarch, who informed his ambassador at Rome two months later that he was willing to provide the funds necessary to support a force of two thousand men for a period of six months, provided that the expedition should act in the pope's name alone. All the details, including the amount of money required of Philip, were to be worked out in secret between his ambassador and the pope. After confidential discussions with Pope Gregory XIII and his Secretary of State, Ptolemy Galli, the Cardinal of Como, Zuniga reported that they were of the opinion that the force should consist of five thousand

men, require an estimated 100,000 crowns, depart from the papal harbor of Civita Vecchia and should land at a location on the Irish or English coast that would be more precisely determined at a meeting to be held in Rome among the interested parties. He also noted that the Pope had approved of the selection of Don John or any other prince suitable to Philip and that the former would have the papal blessing to marry Mary, Queen of Scots, who was considered the legitimate heir to the throne in view of Elizabeth's dethronement by the bull of his predecessor. In effect, the only critical questions yet to be decided concerned whether the invasion was to land in England or Ireland, the timing of the attack, and the choice of a commander for the expedition, which the papacy conceded would have to be suitable to Philip.²³

Thus, the separate and distinct plans of two groups of Catholic exiles, the English and the Irish, had seemingly been confounded. The English project seems to have originated in Rome in 1575 as a result of a number of prominent English

²³Ronan, pp. 506-508 and CSP-Rome, 2: 231, 235, 284. Although Don John was first proposed as King of Ireland by Irish negotiators, the papacy only slowly came to favor the proposal. In January, 1574 the Pope expanded the proposal, recommending that the young prince, who was an extremely able military leader, should be crowned as King of England as well, following his marriage to the imprisoned Scottish Queen. See *Ibid.*, pp. 487-488.

exiles there, including Doctor Owen Lewis and Doctor Maurice Clenoge, into whose company Thomas Stukeley was welcomed as a co-conspirator. For the purposes of the above mentioned meeting the Pope also summoned two other influential English refugees to Rome from Flanders, namely Sir Francis Englefield and Doctor William Allen. A third, Doctor Nicholas Sanders, who was a priest and a leader of the English Catholic refugee community in Spain, where he had been ably lobbying for the English cause, received his invitation from the pen of one of Stukeley's agents. His departure, however, was vetoed by King Philip who thought that his presence in Rome would certainly warn Elizabeth about the dangers she faced, since he was known as a particularly energetic and forceful opponent of the Protestant Queen.²⁴ In fact, Doctor Sanders, who had been prominent in ecclesiastical circles during Mary's reign and had attended the Council of Trent, was the author of De Visibile Monarchia Ecclesiae (1571), in which he justified the papal bull which excommunicated Queen Elizabeth and the Rising of the North against a Queen he viewed as a "heretic." A former professor of theology at the University of Louvain and a regular correspondent of Gregory XIII, Sanders was probably the most able of the refugee leaders.²⁵ His absence

²⁴CSP-Rome, 2: 246 and Ronan, pp. 509, 521.

²⁵J. H. Pollen, "Nicholas Sanders," English Historical Review, 6 (1891): 37.

from Rome, however, was compensated for by the other skilled English representatives, but the Irish were not so fortunate. The Irish cause, which was less ambitious than that of the English, and which at this point, at least, aimed for far less human and material support, suffered the absence of their prime mover, the key person in a potentially successful Irish rebellion, James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald.

That Fitzmaurice had been invited to the Rome conference there is no doubt and the vexation of the Cardinal of Como at his absence was expressed in a letter to Nicholas Ormanetto, Bishop of Padua and Papal Nuncio in Spain, who was a key figure in the negotiations with Philip. Writing to the Cardinal Secretary of State on January 18, 1576, Ormanetto noted:

I am surprised that [Fitz] Maurice should have changed his mind as to going to Rome, and determined to return to Ireland, as we are informed here by a letter from Father David [Wolf], who, by what I understand, has already arrived there, and will report to us.²⁶

Had Father Wolf himself been the victim of false or misleading information at precisely the time when the question of aid for

²⁶ CSP-Rome, 2: 246. The Papal Nuncio was also of the opinion that all the forces destined for Ireland should not be placed in the hands of Fitzmaurice alone because Ormanetto had been "advised that this would not be to the advantage of the enterprise, as there are gentlemen there of greater capacity who would take it amiss." He speculated that Father Wolf might be among those who favored Fitzmaurice for sole leadership, but this is improbable as will be shown. Ormanetto favored the appointment of an Italian Commander-in-Chief.

the Irish was closer to fruition than at any previous time? The evidence indicates quite the contrary, for Fitzmaurice was delayed in France precisely because of the repeated instructions of his former chaplain, as is evident from the letter he sent to "His most assured and most esteemed gosop and friend Father David Wolf at Rome" on March 7, 1576:

And I beseech you loving gosop to speak to the Pope and tell him that I am ready to perform his Holiness will and pleasure, and if he do further the matter himself, that I will spend much, body, life, and goods to overcome his enemies. And this you shall declare to the Pope; and I stay here in St. Malos, according [to] your request in former letters; and I look daily for your news, for it grieves me not to hear from you, gentle gosop, send my [sic] in all haste the circumstance and end of your business.²⁷

Not only was Fitzmaurice kept in France during the Rome conference, but on his part he did not seem to have any great expectations such as might be hoped for from such a meeting following the recent progress in the negotiations. Instead, he ends his letter on a rather sanguine note:

and if all things fail, you shall obtain of his Holiness a commission in Ireland, in hope that God should send us time, and this according to your own desire, as to say, against her [Elizabeth], when time doth require, and this [sic] I commend your guiding to the omnipotent God...²⁸

If Wolf did indeed take advantage of Fitzmaurice's implicit trust in him as seems probable, there can be little doubt that this dedicated Irish Jesuit missionary did so in what he

²⁷Fitzmaurice to Wolf, quoted in Ronan, pp. 516-517.

²⁸Ibid.

perceived were the best interests of his cause. In 1574 when he prepared his "Description of Ireland" for Philip II, Father Wolf commended Thomas Stukeley to his Most Catholic Majesty as well as James Fitzmaurice, stating his conviction that it was:

necessary to have these two gentlemen to conciliate the others of the kingdom to come to terms of peace and concord [among themselves] and true obedience to his Catholic Majesty, and if necessary to make raids against the disobedient and the rebels, for they know well the routes and roads and the fortified places of the whole kingdom, and know well the intentions and inclinations of every one, together with their forces, potentialities and possibilities.²⁹

In other words, Wolf was either unaware of Archbishop FitzGibbon's denunciatory portrait of the bold adventurer or he was far more pragmatic and open to Stukeley's considerable savoir faire in martial affairs as well as diplomacy. He had pointed out that these two leaders together had the intimate knowledge of Ireland necessary to achieve success and in making this declaration, he was clearly alluding to Stukeley's familiarity with Ulster and Leinster as well as Fitzmaurice's knowledge of Munster and Connaught. In his view, then, neither man was sufficient for success in himself and he correctly informed Philip that while all the lords of Ireland "respect, love, and with reverential fear stand in awe of James," as was manifested in the recent war, sending or allowing their

²⁹"Description of Ireland," p. 488.

soldiers to join his forces despite their own apparent adhesion to the English administration; nonetheless, he could not heal the rifts between the various noble houses or clans in Ireland without the aid of another great leader.³⁰ Clearly in 1574 in the eyes of the Jesuit Father, that man was Thomas Stukeley, who after his departure from Spain had added to his martial accomplishments by distinguishing himself with Don John at the naval battle of Lepanto against the Turks. The adventurer then plied his crafts in Rome, where he deigned to walk the streets barefooted in a vain attempt to win absolution from the excommunication merited by his long record of anti-Christian marauding. Nonetheless, Stukeley won much sympathy for his schemes for Ireland and successfully suggested to the Holy Father through one of his servants, the advisability of placing the proposed Irish expedition under the banner of the Holy See. Returning to Spain in 1572 with a papal indorsement of his plans aimed at the ever cautious Spanish monarch, the victorious associate of Don John was restored in favor and reportedly was furnished with a splendid pension of one thousand ducats per week, as he continued his earnest intrigues to be placed at the head of an invasionary

³⁰Ibid.

force for Ireland.³¹

In 1575 the amazing self-styled Duke of Ireland was in Rome again, where he now set his sail in the prevailing wind, casting his lot with his fellow Englishmen's plans to invade their homeland for the sake of their religion. Stukeley's steadfast goal, however, remained to win the title, honors, and wealth he thought should be his in Ireland and hence, although there is no direct evidence to support this hypothesis, it is nonetheless quite possible that Stukeley and Wolf reached some sort of mutual accommodation about the time the decision was made to have that important conference in Rome, the result of which was the staying of Fitzmaurice in France. In any attempt to establish Stukeley as a co-equal link in any future descent on Ireland, it would undoubtedly be more convenient to allow Stukeley or his agents to employ their persuasive skills without the probable opposition of Fitzmaurice, who would naturally be resentful of sharing leadership with an Englishman, particularly one with Stukeley's background. In any case, what is clear in all of this is that for reasons that cannot be known with certainty, David Wolf deceived Fitzmaurice and the Roman hierarchy alike and the momentum for an invasion passed to the English conspirators and their plans as the Irish schemes for the time being were

³¹Ronan, p. 395; "Examination of Walter French, Merchant of Galway," March 30, 1572, quoted in Ronan, pp. 404-405; CSP-Rome, 1: 380.

given second place.³²

Although the English project remained the dominant one during the year 1576, the Irish plan was kept alive by the various Irish refugees and by the papacy, whose Nuncio in Spain, Bishop Nicholas Ormanetto, presented the results of the Rome conference to Philip II in March of that year. At this time Ormanetto also pointed out that before action was taken in regard to Ireland, the papacy would have to issue a separate bull depriving Elizabeth of that realm as well, since the bull of Pius V in 1570 referred only to England itself.³³ Philip was enthusiastic enough about the English enterprise to provide half of the agreed financial support of 100,000 crowns that he had promised to the Holy See; however, as in previous years he sought the pacification of Flanders as a prerequisite to any offensive action. Despite the appointment of Don John as Governor-General of Flanders with a Spanish army of ten thousand troops supporting him in a location only a few hours sailing distance from the shores of England, nothing was done. When Don John was forced to evacuate the Spanish troops from Flanders as a result of

³²Ronan refers to the mystery surrounding the absence of Fitzmaurice from the Rome conference as "one of the most unsolvable problems in the Irish history", concluding only that "there was something on foot to the detriment of Fitzmaurice." Ibid., pp. 518, 521.

³³CSP-Rome, 2: 257.

public protest shortly thereafter, even Philip saw this as a perfect opportunity to strike England by sea; however, the danger of such a seaward withdrawal was clearly perceived by the English and hence the 'Perpetual Edict' signed at Brussels on February 17, 1577 not surprisingly, specifically required an immediate withdrawal to Italy by land. With this act the hopes for action on the English project in the near future diminished considerably.³⁴

Before the end of 1576, the papacy had begun to express greater interest in Ireland. In September, Bishop Ormanetto in Spain was instructed to promote Stukeley's projects and the following month the Irish Franciscan, Patrick O'Hely, whose ardor had been recently rewarded by his elevation to be Bishop of Mayo, succeeded in persuading the papacy to give him letters addressed to King Philip and Don John in an effort to promote the "Irish business" at the court of Madrid. The unique opportunity offered to His Catholic Majesty by the current discord in Ireland was presented as one which offered him the chance to advance both the faith and his material possessions, since a successful operation would place Ireland in the hands of Philip or whomever he might approve.³⁵

³⁴Ronan, pp. 518-520 and Black, p. 341.

³⁵CSP-Rome, 2: 283 and "A Bygone Bishop of Mayo," The Dublin Review, 173 (1923): 61. Rebellions in Connaught, Leinster and Munster, where Desmond had defied Lord President Drury for a time, were the opportunities of which the Irish negotiators spoke. See Annals of the Four Masters, pp. 493-494.

In the meantime in France, Fitzmaurice had continued his efforts, thus worrying the English, whose spies reported all of his activities, including his visit to the French Court in September of 1576, where he met with the King and the Queen Mother, afterwards returning to St. Malo with the handsome sum of five thousand crowns to sustain his activities on the Continent.³⁶ After almost two years of friendly but basically non-productive bargaining in France, which may well have included the offer of the crown of Ireland to Henry III, Fitzmaurice went to Rome in early 1577, apparently stopping off in Spain to confer with his associates there and to check on the status of their negotiations.³⁷ In the Holy City, the devout Irish Catholic leader was received with honor and warmth by Pope Gregory XIII, who had dedicated his pontificate to strengthening the forces of the Counter-Reformation by direct action, if necessary, and, as we have seen, to the separation of the present English Queen from her throne. The Geraldine leader visited the holy places during the weeks he was in Rome and seems to have genuinely impressed the Pope with his zeal and determination to restore Catholicism in his homeland.³⁸

³⁶Great Britain, His Majesty's Stationery Office, Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1575-1577, 23 vols., ed. Allen James Crosby (London, 1880), 11: 371. Hereafter cited as CSP-Foreign.

³⁷Bagwell, 3: 6.

³⁸CSP-Rome, 2: 293.

Thus on February 25, 1577 Gregory XIII issued a brief to the "Hierarchy, Princes, Earls, Barons, Clergy, and People of the Kingdom of Ireland" on behalf of a "prominent nobleman, James Fitzmaurice, chief of Kerrycurrihy..." in which the pontiff urges his intended audience:

to seize on the opportunity now offered and strenuously to support the holy and brave efforts of this undaunted leader against that woman [Elizabeth] who, already fulminated against and abased by anathema, has been cut off thereby from the Church...³⁹

The key paragraph and the one which it was hoped would enable the dedicated Geraldine to raise a large Catholic army followed:

we hereby grant to each one who, confessing his sins or intending to confess them with contrite heart, shall join Fitzmaurice's army for the defense and preservation of the Catholic faith, or shall aid them by counsel, countenance, contribution, arms, or in any other way whatsoever, a plenary indulgence and remission of all sins, similar to that granted by the Apostolic see to those going to war against the Turks for the recovery of the Holy Land.⁴⁰

Fitzmaurice was a competent enough military strategist to realize that the Irish were not successful in the last war precisely because they were not able to hold their own fortresses from the English by withstanding the tunneling and bombardment employed against them, nor did they possess the canon or know-how to take fortified towns or castles held by English garrisons unless they received aid from within the walls.

³⁹ "Gregory XIII to the Hierarchy, Princes, Earls, Barons, Clergy, Chiefs and People of the Kingdom of Ireland," quoted in Ronan, pp. 560-561.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Hence what he and his fellow negotiators had sought was to obtain both the necessary munitions of war and a nucleus of European trained and experienced officers and men who could teach the Irish the tactics that would enable them to defeat their enemies. A sufficient supply of money to pay the gallowglass, such as the Sheehys and the McSwineys, was also a necessity if the Irish intended success.⁴¹ The papal brief was a first step as a hoped-for rallying point that might persuade the contentious Irish lords to see beyond their parochial clan views in a fight for religion and country. Before coming to Rome, the Geraldine leader had apparently won a promise of support from his old friend Captain de la Roche, for English intelligence reports were full of warnings of French ships and men being prepared for Ireland from February through July of 1577.⁴² While in the Holy City, Fitzmaurice had also won a promise from the papacy to send a follow-on force of six thousand troops by October 1578, which the Pope hoped to pry out of King Philip. The Irish leader himself set out from Rome by way of Genoa's harbor, sailing

⁴¹Ronan, p. 502 and CSP-Rome, 2: 545-546.

⁴²CSPE-Ireland, vol. LVIII (1577), pp. 112-113; Carew MSS., 2: 83; CSP-Foreign, 11: 594. One report that came into the hands of Lord President Drury in Munster, who had his own personal spy in France, stated that Fitzmaurice could count upon twelve hundred French soldiers under de la Roche and six tall ships. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. LVIII (1577), p. 113.

for Spain and Portugal, where he hoped to recruit volunteers and obtain the necessary succor he needed before setting out for Ireland. He carried with him a generous sum of money from the papal treasury and a letter of commendation addressed to the Apostolic Collector and Commissary in Lisbon, from whom he hoped to obtain a ship in which to return to his native island.⁴³

Arriving in Spain in mid-1577, Fitzmaurice was provided with quarters at Villaverde some three miles distant from the court at Madrid, where Bishop O'Hely and Doctor Sanders were working to overcome Philip's inhibitions. Fitzmaurice was not given an audience because the Spanish King was concerned about the repercussions word of his presence might have on Elizabeth's support of the Prince of Orange, who had reportedly gathered a large force. He was, however, provided with token support in the form of a personal letter from Philip to his ambassador in Portugal, requesting that he provide assistance to the Geraldine leader in arranging passage to Ireland. Nonetheless, with Sanders and O'Hely at Court, with Don John now voicing his support for the Irish project as the most expeditious means of relieving the harassment made possible by English support of the Prince of Orange in Flanders, and with other Irish refugees still active in the Catholic strongholds of Europe, there was still hope of sufficient aid to

⁴³CSP-Rome, 2: 293, 295, 298, 300-301.

achieve the success they all desired.⁴⁴

The much travelled Irish Catholic leader arrived in Lisbon on July 5, 1577 and sought the assistance of John Caligari, the Spanish Ambassador, who tried on two occasions to arrange an audience with the Portuguese King for Fitzmaurice, but was twice refused to the "great astonishment" of everyone, according to the testimony of Caligari himself. Frustrated by this turn of events and impatient of further delay at a time when several rebellions in Ireland promised a fertile ground for his own descent upon that island, Fitzmaurice was forced to hire his own ship, a Breton vessel of eighty tons manned by French sailors. Through the assistance of Robert Fontana, the Apostolic Collector in Lisbon, he was also able to acquire, partly through purchase, a limited supply of culverins, sakers, arquebuses and powder and to hire approximately one hundred soldiers, but the portion of the arms which were contributed by King Sebastian were described by the collector as consisting primarily of "trifles."⁴⁵ Already

⁴⁴CSP-Rome, 2: 310, 317, 329. Other Irish exiles who actively supported Fitzmaurice at this time included William Walsh, Bishop of Meath, Maurice Mac Brien, Bishop of Emly, Donough O'Gallagher, Bishop of Killala, Cornelius O'Ryan, Bishop of Killaloe and Archbishop FitzGibbon. In December, 1576, Bishop Walsh wrote the Cardinal of Como recommending he support the efforts of Fitzmaurice and Stukeley. See *Ibid.*, 2: 289.

⁴⁵CSP-Rome, 2: 331, 335, 337, 343 and Great Britain, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566-1579, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1871), vol. XXV (1577), pp. 521-522.

delayed longer than he desired in the search for arms, Fitzmaurice nonetheless accepted still further delay upon receiving letters from Philip Sega, Bishop of Ripa, and the new Papal Nuncio in Madrid, who asked him to stay his journey long enough for the Nuncio to obtain a subsidy from Philip II. The able Sega, who had recently been transferred from Flanders, where he had been stationed by the papacy in an effort to utilize his diplomatic talents to promote the "English business," was not, however, immediately successful in persuading Philip to open up the Spanish treasury. At the end of October, Fitzmaurice decided he could wait no longer and wrote Sega, asking that the Nuncio continue to seek aid from Philip for Ireland, which was to be sent him no later than the following February. He also despatched a missive to the Cardinal of Como in which he summed up his unhappy situation with considerable pathos, stating that despite the failure to obtain the Spanish subsidy (the papal subsidy being for the most part expended) he was:

resolved to tarry no longer; and unarmed, without a fleet, and without men, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and supported by Apostolic authority, I go to Ireland, relying upon your prayers, for the sake of which I doubt not the most merciful Lord will be propitious to me and give me the victory over the foes of holy Mother Church.⁴⁶

⁴⁶CSP-Rome, 2: 347.

Noting too that the Spanish King had promised as much to the Bishop of Mayo, he implored the papal Secretary of State to send aid to him in Ireland upon his arrival there, concluding sadly and without any illusions:

I have looked for aid and having failed to find it, my friends, who have been eagerly expecting me, will be lukewarm and dispirited, while my foes will be all the more ready to face me, when they see me coming back unarmed and unaided.⁴⁷

The threatened invasion by Fitzmaurice was taken seriously in Ireland by Lord Deputy Sidney, who in May, 1577, requested that a standing army of two thousand men, a mass of powder and munitions, a sum of money amounting to twenty thousand pounds, and three ships for patrolling the western coast, should be made available to him and he reminded the Queen that Calais, "the jewel of England," had been lost because of unpreparedness. In June the Privy Council responded favorably, informing Sir Henry that the troops requested would be on call in southwestern England, the ships had already been commissioned, five hundred extra calivers were being sent, and an additional five thousand pounds would be available to be tapped, but only in the event of actual invasion. They cautioned him as well not to press the Irish on the matter of the newly extended cess recently instituted by the Lord Deputy at the suggestion of Lord Burghley, which was the source of general dissatisfaction in Ireland and particularly in the Pale. In July the Queen wrote to Sir Amyas Paulet, her ambassador in Paris, noting that she had knowledge of letters written by Fitzmaurice to

⁴⁷Ibid.

his wife which spoke of promised aid for his intended invasion. The rumors that the troop support for that invasion might come from France, however, were deflated considerably by mid-August when Leicester reported to Walsingham that the French King had promised not to aid the Geraldine leader or permit Captain de la Roche to return to France if he assisted Fitzmaurice against the royal will, in return for which, however, he sought a promise that Elizabeth would not aid either the Huguenot leaders in France or John Casimir, the son of the Elector Palatine and commander of the German armies which had been allied with them. The Queen seems to have agreed to this bargain, although she subsequently violated it at the behest of Walsingham by furnishing aid to Casimir.⁴⁸

English intelligence had also achieved successes in regard to Thomas Stukeley's continuing intrigues, about which Bishop Sega noted with dismay in May of 1577, that the Queen of England knew everything. By that time Stukeley had completed the delivery of a papal brief to Don John in the Low Countries and had returned to Rome, not long after Fitzmaurice's departure from there. Probably at Don John's

⁴⁸CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXIII (1577), p. 115: Carew MSS., 2: 84; CSP-Foreign, 12: 16, 73; Leicester to Walsingham, August 10, 15, 1577, quoted in Froude, 11: 105.

suggestion, the papacy was contemplating sending Stukeley as the commander of a follow-on force to reinforce Fitzmaurice in Ireland, but only if the descent upon England were not possible as a result of "lawful impediments." As the Cardinal of Como described the proposed utilization of Stukeley, he was to be the Catholic "Orange," that is, he would be in a position to harass the flank of "that wicked woman" in the same manner the Prince of Orange harassed the Catholic powers in Flanders. As the summer months of 1577 passed by and it became increasingly obvious to the papacy that, despite their injunctions to Bishop Sega to dissolve King Philip's irresolution, neither his Catholic Majesty nor King Sebastian of Portugal were prepared to provide any significant aid to "poor Fitzmaurice." Both the Pope and his Secretary of State felt the absolute necessity of keeping their promise to send follow-on aid to the dedicated Irish-Catholic leader when he arrived in his native land, since "to disappoint him would be a great sin against God and a stain on our honor."⁴⁹ Thus, in October, approximately one month before Fitzmaurice departed Lisbon, the Cardinal of Como wrote Nuncio Sega that the Pope had decided to send Stukeley to Ireland and that the latter had already gone to Naples to

⁴⁹CSP-Rome, 2: 298, 305, 322.

prepare a ship. The effort by these ecclesiastics to get King Philip to make at least an equally bountiful contribution to the Irish plans continued unabated, but though he still showed interest in the plan to invade England, he remained almost indifferent to the Irish project despite the moderate level of their requests.⁵⁰ Doctor Sanders, who distrusted Stukeley and was working instead to "interest" Philip II in Fitzmaurice's expedition, wrote in frustration to Doctor Allen that "the King of Spain is as fearful of war as a child of fire."⁵¹

According to the Papal Secretary of State, Fitzmaurice aptly described his own departure for Ireland in one poorly equipped vessel from Lisbon on November 19, 1577, as "sine armis, sine classe, et sine hominibus."⁵² Leaving David Wolf, who had served as his primary advisor and interpreter, behind in Lisbon and sending the Bishop of Killaloe to Madrid to follow-up on the efforts being made to procure aid to reinforce him within the next few months. Fitzmaurice put out to

⁵⁰Ibid., 2: 335, 344.

⁵¹"Some Letters and Papers of Nicholas Sander, 1562-1580," Publications of the Catholic Record Society, 26 (1926): 13-14. Hereafter cited as "Papers of Nicholas Sander."

⁵²CSP-Rome, 2: 369.

sea accompanied by the Bishop of Mayo and with several other vessels, all evidently under Captain Thomas Strubec of Le Croisic's command. At first their luck seemed to change as they encountered, attacked, and captured an English ship, whose crew was handed over to the Spanish Inquisition at the suggestion of Bishop O'Hely, and whose ship was brought along. They were soon compelled however, by violent storms at sea to put into the harbor of Bayona on the northwestern coast of Spain, in Galicia, to repair the damages incurred by their ship. Setting sail once more they again encountered violent storms and were forced to seek shelter in Monuiero harbor, not far from Corunna. After a further delay of twenty days due to bad weather, desertions, and the refusal of Captain Strubec to go on, Fitzmaurice initiated legal proceedings which resulted in the imprisonment of the Captain and his crew. While Fitzmaurice attended mass on January 5, 1578, the ship's Captain and crew escaped, returned to the harbor and set sail in their ship with all of the remaining provisions, money and arms of the Irish party still aboard. The Geraldine leader and his ecclesiastical comrade in arms had no choice but to follow them back to France by land, where Fitzmaurice retired to St. Malo to seek the assistance of his friends there, and Bishop O'Hely went on to Paris, where he sought a

royal warrant for the restitution of their property.⁵³

Nearly three months after the above setback, Bishop O'Hely addressed an impassioned plea to the Cardinal of Como for papal assistance. Feeling frustrated at this point of obtaining any help from King Henry III, the Bishop narrated the graphic details of their latest misfortunes and prefaced his requests with a reminder that he had advised against presenting his comrade with "the Church's Standard without soldiers," or a "Commission with nothing to back it up."⁵⁴ He argued that Fitzmaurice's mission should not be turned back even now except at a cost of dishonor and diminution of the dignity of the Holy See and the probable slaughter of many Catholics in Ireland, some of whom were already in open rebellion. He boldly asked for both spiritual and material assistance: the

⁵³ Ibid, 2: 395 and CSP-Foreign, 12: 602-603.

⁵⁴ Bishop of Mayo to the Cardinal of Como, March 31, 1578 quoted in Ronan, p. 568. There is a touch of bitterness in Bishop O'Hely's jab concerning his advice being overruled in favor of another's despite having represented Fitzmaurice in Rome on a previous occasion. The man who represented the Geraldine leader in arranging this expedition was undoubtedly David Wolf, in which case further credence is given to the hypothesis that Wolf had made some sort of bargain with Stukeley, which he probably believed necessary to bring about the defeat of the English in Ireland. In one of a number of lapses and errors found in his text, Ronan states in a footnote that "this seems to confirm the deal between Stucley [sic] and Fr. Wolf," but this is his first and only reference to a "deal" between these two men and hence most readers would be baffled.

former, in the form of an Apostolic brief to be addressed to "all sovereigns, princes, and magnates of the Christian world, no matter what their nation," which in effect would offer a plenary indulgence and the remission of all sins to anyone who aided Fitzmaurice in future operations; the latter consisted of a request for a grant of a sum of money sufficient for the purchase of another ship, which would need to be completely equipped and armed as well.⁵⁵ He also pointed out something that should have been known to the papacy but probably was not, namely, that without Fitzmaurice's presence, Stukeley would accomplish nothing in Ireland, "even if he had a thousand soldiers for every hundred he really had at his command." The Bishop then concluded his forthright epistle with a rather eloquent note of explanation:

Necessity urges me, the importance of the issue impels me, common charity forces me, zeal for religion and the common weal inspires me----in a word, I am stirred for by care for the salvation and safety of my brethren, and by the unique opportunity that now offers itself for effecting a great achievement, so that in this holy and most pressing cause I have to write in language much stronger than I should think of using in normal circumstances, thus exposing myself to the risk of being interpreted as doubting the likelihood of receiving help from His Holiness, or even as mistrusting his prompt liberality.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 569.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 570.

While Fitzmaurice and the Bishop of Mayo attempted to recoup their stolen property and find a means to outfit their expedition again, Thomas Stukeley was sailing towards Cadiz with six hundred papal troops, arms for three thousand men and what was supposed to be a six-month supply of victuals aboard a ship the adventurer had evidently selected and hired himself, known as the Saint John. In reality the troops were mostly rogues enlisted from the bands of highwaymen in the Appenines, one thousand of whom were rumored to have accepted pardons and earned spiritual indulgences through the contemplation of blessed crucifixes Pope Gregory had presented to Stukeley.⁵⁷ Six hundred of these men were evidently chosen as the infantrymen which Cardinal Galli, the Papal Secretary of State, described to the Nuncio, Segra, in Spain as "choice soldiers" in a letter written in early January, 1578, when the expedition was in its final stages of preparation prior to sailing from Civita Vecchia, in the papal territory north of Rome. It was these same troops who mutinied before the ship left its moorings, successfully demanding two installments on their pay in advance.⁵⁸ Judging from the motley collection of

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CSP-Rome, 2: 344, 361 and Falls, p. 125. On June 13, 1575, Stukeley, who was high in the papal favor at the time, was issued a brief entitled "Grace and Indulgences attached by Pope Gregory XIII to the Crucifixes blest by him at the instance of Sir Thomas Estocley [sic]." One portion of this brief provides special indulgences "for taking part in any warfare against the foes of our holy faith." See Ronan, p. 514.

58

Ibid., 2: 361, 375. The troops were raised in the Papal States with the assistance of Giordano Orsini, Duke of Bracciano and "chief of bandits" according to Mathew, pp. 144-145.

artillery that was gathered for the expedition, the arms were probably of questionable quality as well. The ship itself, despite Stukeley's initial description of it as "very good," was in truth miserably unfit and overcrowded, carrying only enough victuals to last to Marseilles. Thus, despite an expenditure of forty thousand crowns by the papacy, the inclusion of the Bishop of Killala and other Irish refugees in Rome at the request of Stukeley, and the selection of several able captains, Stukeley's expedition held out no great promise as it set sail in late January.⁵⁹ This, of course, was not the view of the papacy as expressed by the Cardinal of Como who instructed Bishop Segar to exhort Philip II to make an equally generous contribution to the Irish enterprise in order not to be "false to himself in an emergency of such importance, and which affords sure hope of immense gain at little cost."⁶⁰

The talented military adventurer's motives were in fact questionable from the very beginning if the testimony of the Irish, who were ordered to accompany him against their will,

⁵⁹Ibid., 2: 369-370 and Mathew, p. 147.

⁶⁰Ibid., 2: 369.

and a number of the captains who sailed with him, can be relied upon. The expedition stopped at four ports of call before reaching Cadiz in early April, including that of Alicante, off the coast of which the great English intriguer was alleged to have boarded an English ship for a parley, after which the two vessels continued their journey together as far as the straits of Gibraltar. Despite the presentation of his newly acquired papal titles as "Marquess of Leinster and General of our Most Holy Father Gregory XIII, Pontifico Maximo," the Saint John was not permitted to refit in any of its Spanish ports of call and even water was said to have been "sold very dear" and acquired only with great difficulty. In fact, Stukeley had written the Cardinal of Como from Porto Palamos only two weeks after departing the papal territory that his ship was poorly equipped, constructed of weak timbers and so badly caulked that it required a complete refitting, perhaps at Lisbon, "as otherwise she runs a risk of going all to pieces in the sea."⁶¹ Moreover, he had made no secret of the intended target of his enterprise in all the Spanish ports where they stopped, even providing two of his English servants with passports with which to depart for England while in Cadiz. Here, it should be noted, he also learned that the King of Portugal was seeking ships and men for his intended expedition against the heathen Moors in Africa and was advised by a

⁶¹Ibid., 2: 381, 414, 444.

messenger sent from Monsignor Fontana, the Apostolic Collector in Portugal, to avoid Portuguese ports.⁶²

Despite the warning Stukeley sailed straight for Lisbon, where just outside the harbor he was met in a small boat by a distraught Monsignor Fontana, who urged him to continue his mission. Insisting that this was impossible in an unseaworthy ship, the glib "Marquess" soon landed and not long thereafter offered his services to King Sebastian, subject to approval of King Philip, from whom he perhaps hoped to regain favor. On April 26, he wrote to assure the Pope that he would take good care of his Holiness' soldiers and would certainly take them to Ireland after "this enterprise of Barbary." In letters to the Cardinal of Como and the Nuncio, Sega, on the same day he argued that the delay would be advantageous in the long run since King Sebastian would outfit them in a manner far superior to their present state, following the defeat of the Moors. Rather than abandon the Irish project altogether, he assured them he would "rather die a thousand deaths, were it possible."⁶³

Bishop Sega had warned the Cardinal of Como to be wary in dealing with Stukeley as early as May, 1577 and had informed

⁶²Ibid., 2: 407, 444, 481.

⁶³Ibid., 2: 411-413, 416-417.

the Papal Secretary of State in January that the adventurer was not held in high esteem by either civil or ecclesiastical personages at the Spanish Court. It was perhaps partly because of this apparent latent distrust of Stukeley, that the Nuncio had himself volunteered to go to Ireland with his expedition, but was turned down by the papacy.⁶⁴ Thus, when the dedicated Segá learned of Stukeley's intended diversion, he sent a messenger to dissuade all the parties concerned from this course of action. When it became clear that this tack was of no avail, the able Nuncio refused to approve the intended diversion despite his knowledge of instructions to himself and the Apostolic Collector in Portugal by the Cardinal Secretary, who was reluctantly permitting the African venture on the grounds that the delay was acceptable if in the end the two papal generals, Stukeley and Fitzmaurice, acted in concert. Thus, the papacy's approval was based on the condition that Fitzmaurice had not yet proceeded to Ireland. Bishop Segá, who was both more perceptive and suspicious than the Cardinal of Como, went a step further and threatened to denounce the adventurer to King Philip. This motivated the "Marquess" to pay a visit to Monsignor Fontana, at which time he protested that he had told King Sebastian he would not go, but the King had rejected all his reasonable arguments.⁶⁵ The scheming Marquess also wrote to Como in an effort to convince him that

⁶⁴Ibid., 2: 305-306, 362, 418.

⁶⁵Ibid., 2: 428, 445-447, 463.

the Portuguese monarch had, in fact, "providentially saved the Irish expedition from disaster" since he had warned them of Elizabeth's fleets lurking in anticipation of the Saint John and, generally, endeavored also to underscore his supposed intention to continue the papal mission upon completion of the African crusade. In this regard, he pointed out that in concert with the Bishop of Killaloe and Father Wolf, he had allegedly summoned Fitzmaurice to Lisbon and he now urged the pope to write to Sebastian in an effort to insure his pledge of assistance.⁶⁶ Thus, having endeavored to keep his options open, the clever adventurer, accompanied somewhat reluctantly by the papal troops, set sail for Africa with the King of Portugal on June 26, 1578 in what was destined to be his last adventure. The Portuguese-led expedition was crushed by a superior force of Moors at the battle of Alcazar in August, and King Sebastian, Thomas Stukeley and most of the Italians who accompanied him all met their deaths in that struggle.

Stukeley's scheming and unworthiness to lead the papal expedition became more apparent after his departure, when

⁶⁶Ibid., 2: 443. Stukeley was evidently still lobbying for the military command of the intended expedition for England and had the audacity to request that a "Commission for England" be sent to him via Doctor Allen. Since Fitzmaurice did not react to the alleged rumors despatched by the adventurer from Lisbon, it is quite possible it miscarried or was never sent at all.

reports of his true designs were sent to the Papal Secretary of State by Monsignor Fontana and Bishop Sega. From Portugal, the former reported that the Bishop of Killala and the other Irish priests who had been compelled to accompany the adventurer from Italy believed that he had beguiled the pope and was ill-chosen for this project since in their eyes he had neither friends nor funds in Ireland, where his artificial title of Marquess would certainly offend everyone. Sega reported the deathbed testimony of Captain William Cleiborne, the shipmaster of the Saint John, who informed the Nuncio that his former superior was so jealous and enraged at the papal decision to divide the twenty thousand crowns that Sega had induced Philip to contribute in late March, 1578, that he had vowed to sell the Pontiff's arms and employ his soldiers for his own gain. Cleiborne added that he thought Stukeley had never intended to go to Ireland in any case. As for the English, they knew of Stukeley's intended diversion at least by early June, 1578, when an English merchant and former acquaintance of Sir Thomas, recounted a dinner conversation he had had with the adventurer in late April. According to William Pillen, the travelling merchant, "the counterfeit English Duke" as the English diplomats sometimes described him, informed him that there was nothing to be gained in Ireland save poverty and lice and boldly argued that he was not really a traitor to the Queen.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2: 472, 484 and Read, p. 240.

The papal reaction to the plight of Fitzmaurice had initially been negative. Writing at a time when Stukeley was suggesting that his expedition be permitted to join King Sebastian, the Cardinal of Como had informed Nuncio Segá that the pope felt abused and not a little disgusted at expenditures without result and at the obvious lack of interest displayed by Philip of Spain. He even suggested that the Irishman might have conjured up the treachery of Captain Le Strubec as an excuse to return to a more comfortable life at St. Malo with his wife and family and the Cardinal further asked that Segá keep the Irish leader's location a secret from the King. Bishop Segá's response stated that Philip would not act until he had heard that one of the papal expeditions had reached Ireland and that there was now little need for communication in cipher, given the publicity of the invasion preparations to date. By early June the Papal Secretary somewhat belatedly responded to Bishop O'Hely's letter of two months before. He promised to have the Apostolic Nuncio do what he could to assist in the recovery of Fitzmaurice's stolen property, which despite a letter from the French King to the Seneschal of Nantes in April, had not yet been recovered. He also inquired if there were any truth in the rumor that Fitzmaurice had already departed for Ireland with two thousand troops, but evidently was disabused of this notion shortly thereafter when the Geraldine visited the Nuncio in Paris and informed him of his true situation. The Irish Catholic leader also gave

the Nuncio a letter for the Cardinal Secretary in which he advocated the sending of two or three Jesuits to both Ireland and Scotland to enliven the Catholics there prior to his own descent. Como responded favorably, despatching a thousand crowns to France for the now impoverished, but still hopeful, Irish Catholic leader, along with instructions for him to decide on some joint action with Stukeley. Undoubtedly aware of Stukeley's diversion to Africa by the time he finally succeeded in recovering his expedition's property and departing from France, the Geraldine sailed to Madrid, rather than Lisbon, arriving at a villa not far from the Spanish court on August 26, 1578.⁶⁸

The conferences held in Madrid included not only Fitzmaurice and Nuncio Sega, but also Doctor Nicholas Sanders, who had evidently acquired considerable respect for the Geraldine leader since their first meeting in May 1577 and had concluded that Philip's hesitancy to act with regard to England made Ireland, in view of the papal plans for that country, the most viable theatre for his own dedicated activity against the Queen of England. It was the English Catholic refugee leader Sanders himself, who suggested that an apostolic nuncio with full powers ought to be appointed for the "army", since this action would in effect raise the Irish cause to the level of

⁶⁸Ibid., 2: 424-425, 449, 452, 456-457.

a holy war and would attract Irish, English and Scottish nobles loyal to the faith who might otherwise be unwilling to fight under Fitzmaurice. This recommendation had already been incorporated in a document which Sega had forwarded to the Cardinal of Como on the day of Fitzmaurice's arrival in Madrid; it also called for at least two priests from Ireland, England and Scotland, respectively, to serve as advisors to the nuncio of the army on the respective problems of their countrymen as well as to preach and assist the cause in other ways. The plan further suggested that Portugal be called upon to make good the papal losses in Africa; that his holiness loan James Fitzmaurice "some thousands" of crowns, and that the pope also write a letter of exhortation to the Earl of Desmond, appealing to him to support the papal cause with all his strength. Adequate funding was obviously vital if a standing army were to be supported in Ireland. The Cardinal Secretary was less than enthusiastic about the prospect of providing more money for the "clumsy dance" of the Geraldine and of Stukeley (before his death) and felt that the time was not right to make demands for restitution on the Portuguese. He urged, however, that Fitzmaurice be despatched to Ireland, utilizing the twenty thousand crowns provided by Philip in March along with the arms and ammunition preserved at Lisbon when Stukeley had departed for Africa.⁶⁹

⁶⁹Ibid., 2: 496-498, 512.

Faced with this papal stance, the Madrid conferees moved ahead as best they could; Segá succeeded in procuring an additional modest grant of four thousand crowns from Philip, but he failed to win any of the military and diplomatic aid calculated as necessary in a document drawn up by Fitzmaurice. The list, which included six ships of varying tonnage, six hundred armed infantrymen paid in advance for six months, arms for three thousand soldiers, twenty-one artillery pieces, license to capture English ships and sell the spoils in Spain, and various other aids, also specified a need for a legate or apostolic nuncio and twenty learned priests. When Doctor Sanders found that his recommendation that the nuncio for the army be selected from amongst Italian Jesuits (to avoid the potential national jealousies that might arise if an Irish, English or Scottish clergymen were chosen) met with papal coldness, he determined to accompany the Irish-Catholic leader himself.⁷⁰ Although Bishop Segá won Philip's assent to this course of action in November, 1578, his Catholic Majesty had conceded little else; nonetheless, the addition of the energetic English refugee leader, scholar, and priest to the expedition as papal legate was a valuable one. Bishop Segá expressed it best in his correspondence with the Papal Secretary, noting that he had "more hope in the prudence, judgement and

⁷⁰Ibid., 2: 545-546. The complete petition listing all of Fitzmaurice's desires in regard to external support is shown at Annex B.

much religion of this man [Nicholas Sanders] than...in an entire army."⁷¹ Since only twelve of the twenty thousand crowns provided by Philip the previous March remained by November, the able Nuncio also secured an additional loan of six thousand crowns through the expedient of borrowing two valuable images from the English refugee Duchess of Feria upon which the necessary crowns were raised. Personally committed to the cause if not to its dedicated leaders, Sega also provided a suit of armor for Fitzmaurice, a set of Mass ornaments for Docter Sanders, and a mule and some "other trifles" by dipping into his own first fruits. By mid-December he was able to report to Rome that Fitzmaurice had gone to Biscay to pick up his wife, whose presence was thought valuable in dealing with her cousins in Ireland, while at the same time Docter Sanders had gone to Lisbon, where with the papal commissary's aid he was quietly making the final arrangements to obtain another ship for the expedition. He also informed him that the expedition would be reunited in a Galician port from where they would depart for Ireland. The Cardinal of Como's response on behalf of the pope was two-edged. On the one hand, he noted that the papacy conceded the authority to Irish bishops to preach and absolve, even in cases normally reserved to the Holy See, as Sanders had requested in August,

⁷¹Ibid., 2: 532.

and on the other hand, he indicated that future financial support from papal sources was out of the question unless substantial successes were achieved.⁷²

During the first five months of 1579 both Fitzmaurice and Sanders bent every effort towards launching their crusade. In Lisbon Doctor Sanders and Captain John Fleming, both of whom had been preceded by letters to the Papal Commissary (Captain San Joseppi), the Papal Nuncio (Monsignor Alexander Frumento) and the King of Portugal, worked diligently to arrange for the necessary troops, weapons and shipping. As Bishop Segá had reported to the papacy, their efforts met with some success. In fact, approximately two hundred Spanish and Italian troops were recruited and a ship chartered, thanks in part to the cooperation of the King of Portugal, who had made a generous contribution to help meet their expenses. By mid-February the preparations were complete and the soldiers were under embarkation orders when the operation suddenly came to an unexpected, screeching halt as a result of the arrest of one of the expeditionary soldiers for some minor offense. When he claimed exemption from Portuguese law

⁷²Ibid., 2: 542, 544-545. Fitzmaurice was forced to trade away 6000 calivers and a good supply of provisions and entrenching tools (that would have been of great advantage in Ireland) as well as pay 800 crowns to obtain the St. Francis according to Bagwell, 3: 11. See also CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVI (1579), p. 168.

because of his status as a papal soldier, the king, who was willing enough to support the Irish cause if his relations with Elizabeth were not jeopardized, was motivated to take a public stand against the expedition and ordered it disbanded. This setback, not the last in a long series, was to cost Fitzmaurice the loss of some much needed manpower and resulted in the holding of the chartered Catalan vessel arranged by Doctor Sanders until after the expedition finally had departed for Ireland several months later.⁷³

About the same time that these events were occurring in Portugal, Fitzmaurice was busy gathering troops and shipping in Bilbao. He succeeded in purchasing the fully equipped and armed St. Francis of Portogalete for sea transport for the force of fifty veterans he had gathered, but refused the offer of the local Spanish governor to provide an additional three hundred unarmed, raw recruits, probably on pragmatic grounds involving both time and money. He was joined sometime in March by Doctor Sanders at Ribadeo and their party soon moved on to Corunna, from where they wrote Bishop Segá in April to see if his influence could assist in the recovery of their loss. In frustration they also wrote to the Nuncio in Lisbon

⁷³Ronan, pp. 604-605 and "Irish Expedition of 1579,"
101: 81.

in late May:

As our only object is to secure the administration of Christ's Sacraments to a Catholic people in a Catholic rite, and as to have a care of these things is religion pure and undefiled, let those who hinder this holy work ask themselves to what religion they will be considered to belong by Him who judges not by word but by work.⁷⁴

Bishop Segá also wrote to the Nuncio in Lisbon, instructing him to beg the Portuguese king for a fully armed and provisioned ship for the Irish-Catholic leader. In a subsequent letter to Fitzmaurice, he promised to send a ship after them if any further delay arose and to take good care of Fitzmaurice's sons, who had been left in his charge.⁷⁵

Having corresponded with the Earl of Desmond and other important men in Ireland as well as with his former allies, Fitzmaurice was well aware that many of them desired his return. In December, 1577, he had written to Doctor Sanders to inform him that Desmond had "very affectionately invited" his return and in October, 1578 the Bishop of Killaloe had informed papal sources in Lisbon that he had spoken with Irishmen recently come over from Munster, who claimed that

⁷⁴CSP-Foreign, 13: 515 and Ronan, pp. 608-609.

⁷⁵CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVI (1579), p. 168. After considerable pressure from Rome and Madrid, the Portuguese King released the ship originally chartered by Doctor Sanders, but it was wrecked by a violent storm at sea and did not sail that year. See Ronan, p. 608.

Sir John and the Earl were eager for the return of their cousin.⁷⁶ Yet no one was more anxious than Fitzmaurice himself to end the prolonged frustration of three-and-one-half years of intrigue and diplomacy amongst the cautious, conservative Catholic powers on the Continent. Thus on June 17, 1579, Fitzmaurice, accompanied by his wife, his personal chaplain (an Irish clergyman named Lawrence More) and Doctor Sanders, finally sailed from Ferrol in Galicia for Kerry. He had only four ships, three of which were Spanish shallops he had recently chartered. Although he was relying upon promises of strong reinforcements, he was departing with a landing force of no more than one hundred soldiers and perhaps as few as fifty, which included some of the surviving Italians who had returned from Africa along with some Cantabrians, Portuguese, French, English and Irish. The most notable of these was Captain Alessandro Bertone of Faenza, who was specially selected by Bishop Sega. Fitzmaurice was also accompanied by Donough O'Gallagher, Bishop of Killala, four Irish priests and four Franciscans, including Father Mathew de Oviedo, who was destined to spend the next twenty years of his life attempting to obtain Spanish aid for the Irish cause. Despite his network of Irish friends on the Continent, many of whom remained behind to see that further aid was provided,

⁷⁶Fitzmaurice to Sanders, December 3, 1577 quoted in Ronan, p. 599 and CSP-Rome, 2: 521.

and his friendship with the influential French Captain de la Roche, Fitzmaurice's most potent weapons were his own charismatic influence among the Irish people and the inclusion of a man of the caliber of Doctor Sanders as papal legate.⁷⁷ His hopes for success naturally revolved around his intention to arouse the noblemen and people of Ireland to a religious and morally justifiable "war for the Catholic religion and against a tyrant who refuses to hear Christ speaking by his Vicar."⁷⁸ The papal banner they carried depicting Christ on the cross and the papal blessing that accompanied it best symbolized their cause.

Back in Ireland, Sir William Drury, now Lord Justice, had been forced to hire a ship of his own to search for the Geraldine invasion in March, since the Queen's ships there were under repair. Sir Henry Sidney had ended his rule as Deputy in Ireland primarily because the Queen felt he spent too much money, and although Drury ruled with an iron hand, he too was soon complaining of the deleterious effect of the Queen's parsimony on the spirit of rebellion in Ireland. Although as President of Munster he had considered the Earl of Desmond as the greatest obstacle to English rule, he had recently been impressed by the loyalty of the proud Earl,

⁷⁷"Papers of Nicholas Sanders," p. 19.

⁷⁸Carew MSS., 2: 409.

who was still vigorous despite old wounds which left him so crippled that he had to be assisted in mounting his horse. The Earl had pacified the English with his cooperation; he had blamed Fitzmaurice for giving him bad counsel upon his return to Munster in 1573, and even in 1577 after gathering a force of one thousand men around him to protest Drury's government of Munster and the arrest of Sir John, he had agreed to be reconciled to Drury when Sidney required it of him. He had also preserved a freight of gold at Kerry for the Queen, no doubt through the influence of his wife, the Countess, whose desire to protect her son's inheritance had convinced her of the virtue of cooperation with English authorities. Thus, it is not totally surprising to record that Desmond informed Drury as early as April, 1578 that his cousin intended to bring Connaught and Ulster into his intended rebellion upon his return. The Earl's attitude towards his notorious cousin seems to have wavered back and forth depending on how hard he was being pressed by English authorities. In any case, the Lord Justice appreciated his cooperation at a time when foreign invasion seemed imminent and the old but still dangerous Turlough Luineach O'Neill had armed thousands of men in Ulster and had threatened to create a stir.⁷⁹

⁷⁹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XV (1579), pp. 132, 140; vol. LXVI (1579), p. 163; Bagwell, 2: 336-337; Mathew, p. 166. Mathew feels that Desmond's correspondence with Fitzmaurice was primarily motivated by his desire to retain control of the former's allies in Ireland. This is partially true, but it should be remembered the Earl was a man pulled apart by his natural inclination and pride in freedom and the Irish way of life and his hard-learned lessons concerning resistance against English authorities.

On the voyage the expedition captured a French pirate ship on its way to Waterford with Spanish wines, oil and raisins. According to the testimony of one of its crew members, Fitzmaurice's small fleet thus was made more formidable since it was being convoyed by Captain de la Roche and several of his ships. The French vessel was spoiled and released, but a British vessel captured soon thereafter was not so fortunate, since its English captain and crew were thrown overboard. Its valuable cargo of iron, however, served as the pay for the services of the three Spanish shallops which accompanied Fitzmaurice.⁸⁰ The expedition also captured an English fishing vessel in Dursey Sound and summoned Sir Owen O'Sullivan to their anchor, but he failed to come and the determined flotilla sailed into Dingle Bay, landing at Dingle on the 18th of July. The news of Fitzmaurice's long expected arrival spread with great rapidity throughout the island as the passengers disembarked with all the pomp and ceremony characteristic of a holy cause. Two friars bearing ensigns and a bishop with a crozier-staff and a mitre on his head came first, followed by Doctor Sanders and the holy banner and finally, the Catholic Geraldine leader himself, and his soldiers. Some of the citizens of Dingle were taken prisoner

⁸⁰CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVII (1579), p. 175; Ronan, p. 611.

and the town was burned after some of its Desmond tenants had been relieved of their cattle. Fitzmaurice then moved about four miles to the other side of the peninsula to Smerwick, where he began construction on a fort, which they called the Fort del Ore (or Dun-an-Oir as the Irish called it), using some of the citizens of Dingle to good advantage in this regard. The invasion was now a reality which threatened to engulf all of Ireland in a veritable conflagration if it were not dealt with swiftly by the English.⁸¹

⁸¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVII (1579), pp. 172-175.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND DESMOND REBELLION

The English intelligence system, which was the best in Europe at this time, had kept the authorities in Ireland well informed of the movements of the Catholic Geraldine leader whom the English referred to as the "archtraitor." Moreover, at the time when the English hold on Ireland seemed seriously threatened by both Stukeley and Fitzmaurice, the Queen had written to the Irish lords (in June 1578) to dissuade them from possible adherence to either man, promising to send over more troops should they be required. With the passing of Stukeley's threat, however, the Queen's government retrenched and canceled the former Lord Deputy's request for a greater supply of munitions and Lord Justice Drury was, of course, expected to hold the line on spending. In fact, the Queen promulgated strict orders for his government in a letter dated March 31, 1579, which were designed to maintain the real as opposed to "paper" strength of the military bands and reduce military pay, which she admitted had been driven up out of hand by the rife corruption and negligence of many of her officers and captains. As far as the Earl of Desmond was concerned, the Privy Council took cautious halfway postions,

granting his petition for certain abbey lands of the Queen's in Kerry in recognition of his new-found loyalty, but denying his request for Castlemaine until Fitzmaurice's threat to this entranceway to Kerry was at an end. Thus when Fitzmaurice landed, a pared-down English establishment, in receipt of the news of his ominous arrival via a letter from the Earl of Desmond, attempted to gather the forces immediately available and was soon sending out urgent pleas to England for more munitions and men.¹

James Fitzmaurice, who had been corresponding with some of his old allies while on the Continent and who had been long expected by many Irishmen, now addressed earnest pleas to the Earls of Desmond and Kildare, to other Geraldine leaders, and to his former allies among the Scots clan leaders, in which he explained the purpose of his coming and requested their assistance. His messengers also delivered his exhortations to Anglo-Irish and Irish leaders in Leinster, Connaught, and Ulster along with a Latin proclamation "concerning the Justice of the War which the Right Honorable Lord James Geraldine wageth in Ireland for the Faith."² In a letter addressed to the "Right

¹The Walsingham Letter Book or Register of Ireland, May 1578 to December 1579, ed. James Hogan and N. McNeill O'Farrell (Dublin: Stationery Office for Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1959), pp. 8-11, 32-33, 39-50. Hereafter cited as Walsingham Letter Book.

²Fitzgerald, p. 279 and Hayes-McCoy, p. 127.

Honorable Prelates, Princes, Lords, Estates, Citizens and people of Ireland" Fitzmaurice, who represented himself as the Captain General selected by the pope, argued that the pope's intervention had saved Ireland from other foreign intervention, which was inevitable in light of Elizabeth's offenses against the Catholic powers and her own Catholic subjects. He said that this hostility towards the "pretended Queen" would make fighting her easier and since it was, besides, their Christian duty to fight under the circumstances, he respectfully suggested a meeting of the lords, princes, and leaders of Ireland with himself as soon as possible. He ended with an exhortation and a tactful warning:

This one thing I will say, which I wish to be imparted in all our hearts, if all that are indeed of good mind would openly and speedily pass our faith by resorting to his holiness' banner and by commanding all your people and countries to keep none other but the Catholic faith...you should not only deliver your country from heresy and tyranny, but also do that most godly and noble act without danger at all, because there is no foreign power that would or darest go about to assault so universal a consent of this country, being also backed and maintained by other foreign powers, as you see we are, and God willing shall be, but now if one of you stand still and look what the other does, and thereby the ancient nobility do slack to come or send us (which God forbid), they surely that come first, and are in the next place of honor to the said nobility must of necessity occupy the chief place in his holiness' army, as the safeguard thereof requireth, not meaning thereby to prejudice any nobleman in his own dominion or lands which he otherwise rightfully possesseth unless he be found to fight against the Cross of Christ, and his holiness' banner, for both which as well as I all other Christians ought to spend their blood, and for my part intend, at least by God's grace, whom I beseech to

give you (all my lords) in this world, courage and stoutness for the defense of his faith, and in the world to come life everlasting.³

In a personal letter to the Earl of Desmond, Fitzmaurice was more direct:

After due and hearty commendation in most humble manner premised. For so much as James Fitzmaurice, being authorized thereto by his Holiness, warfareth under Christ's ensign for restoring of the Catholic faith in Ireland. God forbid the day should ever come wherein it might be said that the Earl of Desmond has forsaken his kinsman, the lieutenant of his spiritual father, the banner of his merciful Saviour, the defence of his ancient faith, the delivery of his dear country, the safeguard of his noble house and posterity.⁴

The always determined Geraldine leader went on to warn his "dear cousin" that if the Earl were determined to stand up as a soldier of the Antichrist, this would surely mean an "end of our noble house and blood in your days. . ." He concluded his threatening, yet respectful, argument to his superior in these words:

I cannot tell what worldly thing would grieve me more than to hear not only that your honor would not assist Christ's banner, but also that any other nobleman should prevent you in this glorious attempt.⁵

³"The Irish Correspondence of James Fitzmaurice of Desmond," ed. John O'Donovan, Royal Society of Antiquaries, 2nd series, ii (1859), pp. 367-368. Hereafter cited as Correspondence of Fitzmaurice.

⁴James Fitzmaurice to the Earl of Desmond, July 18, 1579, quoted in Froude, 11: 229.

⁵Ibid., p. 231.

To one of the chief leaders of the gallowglass in Munster, Austin Kittagh MacDonnel, he penned a slightly different plea, in which he skillfully intermingled the ideas of fighting "with one accord for the sake of the faith of Christ" and for the defense of a country with that of the ready pay that would fall to the Scots for services rendered now and in the past. He also implied that he could pay them handsomely. He took a similar tone with Randal MacColla MacDonald, requesting that the Scots leader hurry south with all his mercenaries. Gold and silver were again offered in a fight for religion and country.⁶

The response to these attempts to arouse a national rebellion in Ireland were, as Fitzmaurice anticipated, often guarded. The Earl of Desmond, who was none too happy about the return of his determined cousin or the prospects for a continuance of the relatively serene existence which he had enjoyed over the past four years, was caught in a struggle between his instinctive sympathy for the Irish cause, namely, freedom of religion and freedom from English rule, and his fear of alienating English authorities, from whom he had little hope of winning a second pardon.

⁶Correspondence of Fitzmaurice, p. 364. It is probable that much of this correspondence was written by Doctor Sanders. See Bagwell, 3: 18. The argument that God's divine retribution was signalled in the inability of Henry VIII's children to "have lawful issue of their own bodies" seems to be an example of the noted polemist's reasoning.

Desmond's own intelligence sources undoubtedly appraised him of the nominal strength of his cousin's invasionary forces and yet he also knew of Fitzmaurice's great influence amongst the Irish and further he could not be sure of what support would be forthcoming for him from the Continent. Thus although he sent Fitzmaurice's letter to the Lord Justice and immediately offered to place his men at Drury's disposal, in actuality he never did so. On the other hand, the Earl's brothers, John and James along with some of the Munster gentry, joined Fitzmaurice without the vacillation that characterized the head of the Geraldine household. Sir John of Desmond may have felt that he had nothing to lose since the birth of the Earl's son and the countess' insistence had resulted in the earldom being willed to the child.⁷ There appears to have been more sympathetic minds and hearts than there were Irish leaders prepared to risk all on an uncertain struggle with mighty England at a time when the degree of foreign support for the undertaking remained nominal.

Despite the bevy of activity following his long-awaited landing and the joy of being on Irish soil again, Fitzmaurice remained a realist fully aware that the kind of support he wanted from Irish leaders would only be forthcoming if he

⁷Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 4: 28-29; Fitzgerald, p. 279; Froude, 11: 231.

received substantial foreign assistance. Thus on July 25, he framed a letter, undoubtedly in concert with Doctor Sanders, to the influential Cardinal of Como. He noted that they had hired certain captains (probably Scottish gallowglass leaders like Austin MacDonnel), on their third day at Dingle, but that these officers had hesitated to accept due to the small numbers of men with the Geraldine leader. Several days later, they were visited by "certain noblemen with nearly 300 horse and foot" (probably Sir John and Sir James of Desmond and their associates), who came to the fort to express their friendship and sympathy due to the small amount of powder, cannon, money, and arms the invaders possessed. Having thus expressed their plight, he begged:

Let no ship sail for Ireland from Biscaya or Galicia without bringing us something hopeful, whether it be powder or lead or larger cannon or harquebusses or fresh arms or money or soldiers. We despise nothing.⁸

Stressing the need for "despatch" particularly in view of the Spanish penchant for hesitation and delay, he added a postscript:

I have kept my plighted faith to go to Ireland, which I would have done before, God knows if I could . . . In all our tribulation our hope is Jesus and Mary.⁹

⁸"Papers of Nicholas Sander," pp. 24-25.

⁹Ibid.

The following day, the Franciscan friar, Matthew de Oviedo, sailed away from the Irish coast with this letter in hand, arriving in Madrid in late August. His mission was to obtain the assistance of Bishop Segá in getting 20,000 scudi, 300 Spanish soldiers, and the release of the Catalonian ship delayed at Noya along with munitions and arms to support the Irish Catholic movement through the winter of 1579 - 1580.¹⁰

The English had not taken Fitzmaurice's landing lightly. Since there were only 1211 royal troops in Ireland at this time, intelligence reports reaching Sir Francis Walsingham indicating that Fitzmaurice had no more than 300 men in early August were a welcome relief. The order to embark 600 men from Barnstable was cancelled and the preparations for acquiring more reinforcements in England were temporarily halted. In Ireland, however, the Lord Justice and Council were duly alarmed by the mood of rebellion adrift amongst the Irish. Drury commissioned Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who had won his reputation against the rebels in Munster during the first Desmond rebellion, and "all Vice-Admirals, Captains of the Queen's or other ships," to take Fitzmaurice's "navy." In England, Sir John Perrott was named Admiral of the Queen's ships and despatched to patrol the seas off the west coast of Ireland. Fitzmaurice's navy was captured, however, by an English privateer under the command

¹⁰Ibid., p. 26.

of Captain Thomas Courtenay, with the exception of several ships which had already set sail for Spain with Friar Oviedo aboard and the galleys of the O'Flaherties, whose pirate flotilla had only recently joined Fitzmaurice. According to his own testimony, Gilbert's three ships served a valuable purpose nonetheless, since the artillery on one of them was said to have stayed "rebels" from assailing Kinsale. Subsequently, Sir Humphrey sailed to Yougal, where he captured two French ships of war, which he claimed were assisting the rebels.¹¹

Before the end of July, the citizens of Dublin had mustered 800 men and Drury had sent Sir Henry Davells, one of the most trusted of the English magistrates in Munster and a personal friend of both the Earls of Desmond and Ormond, to reconnoiter the fort being built at Smerwick. After seeing the fort and the relatively small number of men garrisoning it, Davells tried to persuade Desmond to take it, but the Earl, who probably could have done so easily, refused on the grounds that his troops were not good enough. Davells then tried to persuade Desmond to give him a company of gallowglass and 60 musketeers to attack the fort from the landward side, while Captain Courtenay supported him from the seaward side.. Desmond, who was obviously unwilling to attack his own brethren, refused again on grounds similar to his previous refusal and a

¹¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVII (1579), p. 177 and vol. LXVIII (1579), p. 178; Falls, p. 127; Gosling, p. 163.

frustrated Davells retired to Tralee to spend the night before returning to Drury with news of Desmond's lack of cooperation as regards the traitor Fitzmaurice. Davells and Arthur Carter, the Provost Marshal of Munster, were murdered in their beds that night along with eighteen others in their company that "were English or liked of English government" by a raiding party led by Sir John and Sir James of Desmond. Sir John personally slew Davells, whom contemporary English sources claimed had been like a father to him since securing his release from prison in Dublin. Sir John's motivation in this cold-blooded murder, again according to contemporary English accounts, was to win Fitzmaurice's trust by dipping his hands in blood and killing the hated English "churls," but the Geraldine's leading soldier abhorred this sort of murder.¹² It is more probable that Sir John sought a rallying point both for the Irish and Anglo-Irish, who stood cautiously waiting and watching, and also particularly for rallying his brother the Earl of Desmond, who would be forced to make a choice after the commission of a deed from which there was no turning back. Fitzmaurice needed John and his followers if he were to be

¹²Holinshed's Chronicles, 6: 408-410 and Walsingham Letter Book, pp. 112-113. According to the testimony of Friar James O'Haie, whom the English captured and interrogated in August 1580, John told Fitzmaurice when he first visited him at Smerwick that the Earl of Desmond was "sore afraid of James, lest he might take any harm." See Carew MSS., 2: 390.

successful; nevertheless, this may have been the start of a personal disaffection between the two men. Although Doctor Sanders had allegedly approved of the murders and had given John remission for all his sins, Fitzmaurice soon had another serious disagreement with John when one of the latter's men raped a woman that had been following their camp as it moved from Kerry to Limerick. Fitzmaurice wanted to put this man to death, but John intervened to prevent this.¹³

The cold-blooded murder of a man like Davells, who was respected and liked by both the English and Irish alike, not only placed the unsteady Earl of Desmond in a most difficult position, but also made it clear to the English that the Desmonds would have to be dealt with along with Fitzmaurice and his foreign contingent. Lord Justice Drury, who by this time had reached Limerick accompanied by the Earl of Kildare and a force of 400 infantry and 200 horsemen, was still hearing of Desmond's loyalty, but felt certain that most of the

¹³Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 4: 29. Contemporary English sources indicated that Sanders approved of the murders; however, Sanders' biographer noted that this would not be in keeping with his "character and virtue" and that in any case there is no proof that he did. Thomas McNevin Veech, Dr. Nicholas Sander and the English Reformation, 1530-1581 (Louvain, 1935), pp. 268-269.

forces loyal to the Earl would defect to the rebels.¹⁴ Concerned with what he believed were growing signs that the rebellion might spread to Connaught and Ulster, he penned a letter to the Privy Council on August 3, requesting speedy relief in the form of men, money and munitions, with substantial aid sent directly by way of Cork. He also requested that the Earl of Ormond be sent home to aid in stifling the rebellion. On August 9, the Lord Chancellor and Council of Ireland ordered that all men in the Pale between the ages of 16 and 60 be mustered in order to meet the two-fold threat presented by John of Desmond, on the one hand, and Turlough Luineach O'Neill, who had gathered a force of 2000 foot and 500 horse in Ulster, on the other hand. They also ordered that "all leaders of blind folk, harpers, bards, rhymers and all loose and idle people" be executed by martial law since these people were

¹⁴It is interesting to note that the pope's secretary claimed to have a letter from the Earl of Kildare pledging his support to the rebellion. According to the testimony of Christopher Barnewell of Dundalk, who was examined by English authorities on August 12, 1583, Cardinal Comensis reportedly said:

Do you think that we would have trusted to James Fitzmaurice, or to Stukeley, or to all these lords [of Ulster, Munster and Connaught who had agreed to rebel] unless we had received the letter from the Earl of Kildare?

Kildare did not rebel. See O'Reilly, p. 102. For Barnewell's complete testimony see State Papers Concerning the Irish Church., pp. 65-67.

considered instigators of rebellion and the English had previously enacted a statute against them.¹⁵

Although Fitzmaurice was expecting more aid to be sent from the pope and hopefully from Spain, he certainly realized that his success depended upon his fomenting rebellion throughout Ireland. Thus, after assuring his continental troops that more help would arrive at any time now, he set out through the Limerick woods towards Clare. His intention seems to have been to rouse Connaught and possibly Ulster, where two of his messengers were already talking with Turlough O'Neill. He travelled with a small force consisting of perhaps eight Irish horse and eighteen kerne. While passing through the lands of a sept of the Burkes, his men took fresh horses from a plow belonging to that great family. Theobald Burke, his brother William, and a company of their gallowglass overtook Fitzmaurice in the woods south of Castleconnel and demanded the return of the horses. Fitzmaurice explained his cause and why he had taken the horses and asked his brothers-in-law to join him.¹⁶ Although Theobald had signed the Combination

¹⁵CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVIII (1579), p. 179 and Walsingham Letter Book, pp. 112-115.

¹⁶Fitzmaurice was married to Katherine Burke, whose brothers Theobald and William were also children of Sir William Burke. According to Ronan, Fitzmaurice was on his way to see the Clanricarde Burkes in Connaught, who under the leadership of John Burke soon joined the rebels. See Ronan, pp. 632-634.

in 1574, he now refused to take any part with this cause. According to the testimony of the Lord Justice, this refusal was grounded on the fact that Drury had had the foresight to meet with Theobald and promise him a reward a few days earlier for services performed against the rebels. Thus Theobald, whose loyalties were pledged to England, coldly turned down Fitzmaurice's offer and in the battle which ensued, the pope's Captain General was mortally wounded when a ball penetrated the yellow doublet he was wearing. Nevertheless, Irish historians reported that he personally slew Theobald and one of his brothers as his small company forced the retreat of the larger Burke contingent and their allies. James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald died a short time thereafter on August 18, 1579 in the hands of an Irish priest known only as Doctor Allen, who had heard his confession. Before expiring, Fitzmaurice requested that his head be cut off in the hope that his death would not be discovered and thereby jeopardize his cause. Although this was done, the English found his body as a result of a "diligent" search ordered by the Lord Justice, cut it into quarters so that a portion could be sent to Limerick, Waterford, Cork and Kilmallock. In this last mentioned town, English soldiers hung a portion of his dismembered body upon a gibbet and fired upon it. The untimely death of the most dedicated and able of the leaders of the Catholic Irish cause

was a severe blow to the movement he had begun.¹⁷

At the time of Fitzmaurice's death, the specter of a "general combination" of rebellious elements in Ireland justly concerned the English. The Lord Justice informed the Privy Council that he expected "over long detracted war, or else shortly to discover more enemies than yet are public."¹⁸ Reports were received that neither the rebels in the Pale under Owney McFelim Roo or those under Turlough O'Neill in Ulster would seek conciliation as long as there was hope that Fitzmaurice was still alive. In fact, on September 10, Sir Nicholas Malby, who had recruited a force of 600 English and

¹⁷Holinshed Chronicles, 6: 411-412; CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXIX (1579), p. 184; Walsingham Letter Book, pp. 135-137, 139, 173; Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 4: 30-31. Doctor Allen's first name seems to be unknown; however, he should not be confused with the William Allen, who later became a Cardinal and who was incidentally also a friend of Sanders. The Doctor Allen referred to herein died at the Battle of Monasternenagh in October, 1579.

¹⁸Walsingham Letter Book, p. 137. Secretary Edward Waterhouse had described the rebellion in a letter written to Walsingham just prior to Fitzmaurice's death as "the most perilous that hath ever begun in Ireland". However, Froude's contention that the English were initially so panicked that they sent a messenger to the Lord Justice authorizing him to make peace on any terms, including permitting the free exercise of the Catholic religion if it were insisted on, seems most unlikely. In this case, the usually accurate Spanish intelligence sources on which Froude was drawing seem unreliable. See Froude, 11: 233.

Irish soldiers in Connaught to fight the rebels and who had been assisting Drury in Munster, conceded in a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham that Fitzmaurice's efforts had won O'Neill and Ulster along with much of Munster and Leinster.¹⁹ Moreover, the possibility of Spanish intervention remained of concern to the English for some time to come. The Queen herself was not overly concerned despite the efforts of Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, to persuade her to take "immediate vigorous action", but she did send a limited number of reinforcements under the able command of Sir William Pelham, a Lieutenant of her Majesty's Ordnance especially chosen to provide needed military expertise to Drury's regime and tasked with providing security for the Pale in the absence of the Lord Justice, who was at this time in the South trying to deal with the rebellion first hand. Furthermore, in September she commissioned Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond, a distant cousin and longstanding favorite of the Queen's (as well as the hereditary rival of the Earl of Desmond) as the Queen's general in Munster to prosecute the war. Although the intended reinforcements for Ireland had been drastically cut upon the news of the "archtraitor's" death, the companies arriving with Pelham along with the 300 soldiers Admiral John Perrott's

¹⁹CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVII (1579), p. 178 and vol. LXIX (1579), p. 185.

five warships left in Ireland alleviated to some extent the immediate dangers of the English situation from both internal and external sources.²⁰

Acutely aware of the dangers they faced, Lord Justice Drury and the English government were not above some temporizing to retain the loyalty of doubtful Anglo-Norman and Irish lords. This was the policy dictated by the Queen and Privy Council to be followed towards the old, but dangerous, Turlough O'Neill, while the Lord Justice dealt with the rebels in Munster. That is, Turlough was to be assured that the articles of the peace he had arrived at with the late Earl of Essex would continue to be honored and was to be given no "occasion whereby he may be irritated and induced to annoy the Pale" with his forces.²¹ In like manner, the Lord Justice was to assure the lords of Munster and Connaught of the good will towards them, while obtaining their active support if possible or at least neutralizing those that might be leaning towards the rebels. The key to the loyalty of the Munster lords was, of course, the powerful Earl of Desmond. Drury was initially encouraged by Desmond's continuing loyalty, but it soon became obvious that the Earl would do nothing of consequence to hinder the rebel efforts to stir the country.

²⁰Walsingham Letter Book, pp. 129, 154-155 and Conyers Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (London: Alden Press, 1960), p. 243.

²¹Walsingham Letter Book, pp. 141-143.

Desmond did go to Fort del Ore at Smerwick, which Fitzmaurice and his party had fortified, and along with an English sea captain who was watching the coast, entered the fort and tore down its fortifications. This however, was accomplished primarily to dissuade the Lord Justice and his forces from entering the liberty of Kerry, which Desmond had long claimed as his own and which Drury later described as "the very life and sinews of this treason." The proud Geraldine Earl then returned to his home at Askeaton, where he was visited by the Baron of Upper Ossory, Barnaby Fitzpatrick, who had been sent by Drury. This visit enraged Desmond, who complained of the destruction of his lands by the English forces, and who gave out that he was assured of the support of Connaught and Ulster and intended to make Cork and Limerick "as naked as his hand." The Lord Justice, however, was tactful and understanding, reminding Desmond of his good record the past few years and noting in a letter to the Earl that it would not:

be overthrown with the report of one sudden passion, and that we are not ignorant of what fiery metal you are made, and how soon you will be sorry for your distemperature.²²

²²Ibid., pp. 146, 148, 166-167.

Thus, although the English were aware of the fact that Desmond's forces, gathered ostensibly to combat the rebels, were defecting daily to the other side with his tacit approval, when the Lord Justice summoned the Earl to Kilmallock, the head of the Geraldines came and was taken into custody for apparent complicity with the rebels. His unusually humble and submissive attitude, however, quickly earned him his release. He even accompanied the Lord Justice on an expedition in search of the rebels in the vast Kylemore forest in which the Geraldines had fought for centuries, but they were unable to find even a trace of his brothers and their followers. Having thus stayed his association with the rebels and having secured promises from Drury that neither his lands nor tenants would be spoiled, Desmond returned to his castle at Askeaton. However, the Lord Justice informed the Privy Council of his conviction that Desmond himself needed "sharp correction" and that he would be satisfied if only he restrained his followers from joining and aiding the rebels. At this point the English suffered two setbacks. Two English companies were ambushed and defeated by Sir John of Desmond after the Irish kerne, who made up the bulk of the English forces in this case, had fled at the first charge of the rebels. Shortly thereafter, Sir William Drury, who had been ill for

a long time, repaired to Waterford where he died soon afterwards.²³

At Askeaton, the Earl of Desmond was joined by Doctor Sanders, who in an effort to carry out Fitzmaurice's goal of involving all of Ireland in the conflict, had written to the Clanricarde sons, the Burke leaders in Mayo, and the chieftains of the MacDonald and Mac Sweeney gallowglass. Holding out spiritual, temporal and patriotic rewards to Ulick Burke, the son of the Earl of Clanricarde, Sanders wrote:

When our aid is come, which daily we look for, when the Scottish and English nobility are in arms, and when strangers begin to invade England itself, it shall be small thanks to be of our company.²⁴

By way of final enticement, the English Doctor and priest hinted that his Holiness' camp was the fittest place to decide the controversy over his father's inheritance, which Ulick disputed with his baseborn brother John. Sanders also attempted to persuade Desmond that it was God's providence that he should lead the Catholic cause now that Fitzmaurice was dead. This he earnestly argued would show the French and

²³Holinshed Chronicles, 6: 413-414; CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXIX (1579), p. 185; Walsingham Letter Book, pp. 183-184. In recounting the battle of Springfield to the Privy Council, Drury noted that it was said that Doctor Sanders "made an oration to John and James before they fought" and afterwards observed the Irish victory from an overlooking hill with a number of other Catholic friars. See Walsingham Letter Book, p. 173.

²⁴Carew MSS., 2: 159 and Hayes-McCoy, p. 128.

Spanish princes that the cause had not died with Fitzmaurice. Despite the dedicated Doctor's assurances that aid from Spain would be forthcoming, Desmond wavered, remaining at Askeaton in spite of the persistent requests of Sir Nicholas Malby, now heading the English forces in Munster, to join him in putting down the rebels.²⁵

The English were fearful that the Munster rebels under Sir John of Desmond, who by this time had swelled to 2000 men, might join forces with John Burke and a force of Scots recently landed in Connaught and that the old, blustering, but powerful Turlough Luineach O'Neill would also be brought into the rebellion. However, despite the "shocking" lack of munitions and powder about which Lord Justice Drury had complained and the insufficient number of reinforcements about which the man appointed to succeed him temporarily, the able Sir William Pelham, lamented, Malby won an important success at Monasternenagh in Limerick county on October 3, 1579. John of Desmond and a force estimated by English authorities as almost twice Malby's 700 men, fought a courageous battle, coming forward to exchange volleys with the English in such

²⁵CSPE-Ireland, preface, p. lix; vol. LXIX (1579), p. 190; Froude, ll: 235. John and Ulick Burke were the formerly rebellious sons of the Earl of Clanricarde, whom the English had made a prisoner to keep his clan from joining the rebels.

good order, that Sir Nicholas, who personally commanded a force of 100 cavalry, was wont to compare these soldiers to the best he had seen in any nation of Christendom. Nonetheless, the English troops who enjoyed a cavalry advantage and probably had a firepower advantage as well, broke the spirit of the courageous gallowglass and kerne and forced them to flee the field with losses estimated at 60 killed and 200 wounded by one English source. Irish sources put the losses much lower. In any case, with this defeat the chances of bringing Connaught into the rebellion diminished considerably as Ulick Burke, who had held Sanders' letter for a month to determine which way the tide was flowing, now turned it over to Malby to evince his loyalty.²⁶

Sir Nicholas Malby, who had alleged in his official report to Secretary Francis Walsingham that Desmond had made 600 of his gallowglass and 600 of his "brethren" available to the rebels at Monasternenagh, now proceeded to Askeaton by way of Rathkeale, burning villages while he marched through Desmond's country. During the night at Rathkeale, the rebels

²⁶CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVII (1579), p. 182; vol. LXIX (1579), pp. 184 and 187; Walsingham Letter Book, pp. 201-204; "Papers of Nicholas Sander," pp. 26, 28, and 30. Monasternenagh is a Cistercian abbey on the river Maigue, two miles east of Croom. In a letter to the Privy Council, Malby stated he had only 580 men to the rebels 1030 and that the rebels suffered 140 to 160 slain. The Irish sources quoted by Wainwright along with those of Doctor Sanders in the "Papers of Nicholas Sander," pp. 28 and 30, indicate that Sir Nicholas Malby underestimated English strength and overestimated rebel casualties.

attempted to breach the camp perimeter the English had set up, but finding it too well fortified and guarded, they withdrew doing little harm to the wary troops under Malby. When Desmond, now strongly suspected of aiding his brothers, refused to come to the English camp at Rathkeale, Malby continued to march towards Askeaton with fire and sword. Upon arriving at Desmond's riverside castle and discovering that the Earl still refused to come to him and was apparently protecting both his rebellious brothers and the detested Doctor Sanders, he burned both the town and the abbey. Since he had no artillery with which to besiege the castle, he wrecked his vengeance on the surrounding country, even crushing the stone tombs of the Fitzgeralds. About this time, Lord Deputy Drury died at Waterford and Malby withdrew to his own province of Connaught. The rebels under Sir James of Desmond were emboldened to attempt to starve out the English garrison he left behind at Adare, but were repulsed, the siege being shortlived.²⁷ Before the end of October, the new Lord Justice, Sir William Pelham, had set up camp in Munster and had summoned Desmond to him, promising that Malby

²⁷CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXIX (1579), p. 190; Russell, pp. 32-33; Falls, pp. 128-129. In a letter to Ormond dated 10 October, Desmond recounted his service against the rebels, taking credit for the handing over of Bishop Patrick O'Hely and his party, who were subsequently tortured to death by Drury. He alleged that most of his men defected to the rebel side only after the Lord Deputy had placed him in custody from 7-9 September and noted that he now sought speedy revenge for Malby's deeds from the Queen and Privy Council. See "Papers of Nicholas Sander," pp. 32-35.

would also be present so that the Geraldine Earl's complaints against him might be dealt with. Fearing English arrest, a distraught Desmond promised to send his wife in his stead since he claimed to be engaged in operations against the rebels. At this juncture he even appealed to his absentee landlord neighbor and rival magnate, the Earl of Ormond, who informed him of the English terms; namely, that he surrender himself, Doctor Sanders, and either Askeaton or Carrigafoyle castle and proceed to fight against his rebellious brothers. Desmond was willing to turn over any castle except Askeaton and promised to serve against Sanders and the other rebels, but only if the English restored his castles, especially Castlemaine, and made good his losses. Pelham writing on 30 October from his camp at Croom, now softened his terms slightly, permitting Desmond either to give himself up or one of the requested castles, or turn over Sanders and the Spaniards that had come with him before 2 November, 1579 or else be declared a traitor. Despite the fact that the Countess had surrendered his young son to the English as a hostage earlier that month and the new Lord Justice was threatening the worst, the proud Geraldine Earl only protested that Carrigafoyle was not his to give away and that he would be willing to give up another castle of Ormond's choosing, pleading that his past good service and "reasonable requests" be

accepted as sufficient and that his servant be allowed to bring his complaints before the Queen and Council. In effect, the Earl insisted upon the possession of his old palatinate and the freedom to remain detached from overt assistance of the English forces, protesting his intention to remain a "true hearted...subject to her Majesty as anyone that seeketh to undo me."²⁸ The devastation of his lands by Sir Nicholas Malby had made him intransigent and deeply desirous of "Irish" revenge and the now fast moving pace of English demands had backed him into a corner allaying any lingering doubts he may have harbored. Although half crippled, he now rallied his Catholic kerne about him and picked up the papal banner which Fitzmaurice had brought with him. Desmond's committment to rebellion was not a foregone conclusion as Doctor Sanders' correspondence would lead one to believe and it is not without significance to note that the proclamation against him was signed, by among others, the Earl of Ormond and seven other

²⁸Carew MSS., 2: 158, 160-162. Desmond maintained he had been released by Lord Justice Drury on September 9, only on condition that he send his son to Limerick as a hostage. Malby indicates that after the Countess had in fact brought their son into Limerick, Drury had him moved to his camp since he was concerned that Desmond's followers might kidnap the boy and send him to Spain as a pledge for Doctor Sanders' promises. See "Papers of Nicholas Sander," p. 33 and Walsingham Letter Book, p. 195.

Butlers, who stood to gain most from his undoing.²⁹

Following the proclamation against Desmond, Sir William Pelham withdrew to Connaught with Malby, leaving Ormond in charge of the war in Munster as the Queen's general, supported by a force of 900 infantry, 250 horsemen and 200 kerne. Unable to attack Askeaton without sufficient artillery and suffering from a lack of victuals, the Butler general went to Waterford to prepare for a campaign in Desmond's country. Here he wrote to Secretary of State Walsingham, complaining bitterly of his lack of supplies and the deplorable state of some of the English troops, several hundred of whom were evidently already too sickly to make good soldiers. He spoke in no uncertain terms noting "My allowance is such as I am ashamed to write of...I long to be in serivce among the traitors, who hope for foreign power."³⁰ Ormond, however, knew the Queen's moods well and probably realized that only reports such as this would eventually persuade Elizabeth to spend more money, men and supplies on Ireland.

The Desmond war cry of "papa-a-boo" soon rang out throughout Munster as Desmond surprised the English by riding across country and striking the English town of Yougal on the southeast coast eleven days after he had been proclaimed a

²⁹Carew MSS., 162-164 and "Papers of Nicholas Sander," p. 41.

³⁰Ormond to Walsingham, November 7, 1579, quoted in Bagwell, 3: 32 and Carew MSS., 2: 164.

traitor. After persuading the mayor of this unfortunate town to turn over their ferryboat and two casks of wine and with help from some of the townsmen inside the walls, the rebels scaled the walls, raped and pillaged the inhabitants and finally, burned the town. According to Ormond, Desmond was accompanied by his brother John and the Seneschal of Imokilly, all of whom thrust their daggers through "her Majesty's arms" at the local courthouse.³¹ The five days in the town had left the rebels with considerable plunder, which according to Irish sources, was used to enrich "many a poor, indigent person."³² Desmond then moved west to Cork, where he threatened that city, but never attacked and withdrew into the Great Wood. As Warham St. Leger the new provost marshal of Munster, noted in his correspondence to Lord Burghley, the guerilla forces of the Desmonds were operating from the wooded and almost inaccessible areas throughout Munster to burn the "corn" (grains of cereal plants, especially oats) and destroy the castles of their enemies so that the English could not use them. He therefore recommended that the English

³¹Ormond to Burghley, December 27, 1579, quoted in Bagwell, 3: 34.

³²Four Masters, Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616, ed. John O'Donovan (Dublin, 1854), 5: 1723. Hereafter cited as Annals of the Four Masters (O'Donovan) to distinguish it from Connellan's version.

employ laborers to cut and burn the woods, while a force of 4000 English troops and the forces of the Earl of Ormond surrounded the area and waited for the rebels to be flushed out. Neither his suggestion nor the earlier suggestion of Sir Henry Wallop, treasurer at wars in Ireland, to Secretary Walsingham that Desmond's young son be executed as "an example" of the retribution meted out for disloyalty were, fortunately, acted upon by the English government.³³

The Earl of Ormond, whom Elizabeth sometimes affectionately referred to as "Lucas", went on the offensive in Connello, in Limerick, burning villages and confiscating cattle in an uncontested sweep from Newcastle south to Slieve Logher, a mountainous district near Castleisland in Kerry. In striking here Ormond was intent upon eliminating the Desmond's main supply and rest areas. His force of 950 men, which included 150 horsemen, had no cannon with which to batter down the walls of Desmond's castle at Askeaton, but moving into Cork County, they burned John of Desmond's castle at Lisfinnen and his lands in Coshbride, afterwards returning to Tipperary to rest the army. Despite a short supply of rations, the able Butler general soon pushed his partly mounted, but well-armed force across southern Ireland, burning Imokilly, and proceeding to Cork, where he secured pledges of loyalty from

³³CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXX (1579), pp. 195-196 and vol. LXIX (1579), p. 192. Lord Burghley and Secretary Walsingham were in constant correspondence with all the leading English officials in Ireland.

many of the most important lords in Munster. He then proceeded to Yougal intending to make an example of the men who had helped Desmond's forces over the walls of that town, but found the place nearly deserted with the walls down. He did find the mayor, however, and had him hanged on his own doorstep for his failure to defend the town against the Geraldines.³⁴

The parsimonious Elizabeth was unhappy with the proclamation declaring Desmond a traitor because she knew the cost entailed by an Irish campaign. Lord Justice Pelham, who was somewhat shaken by her criticism, argued that without the declaration none of the Munster lords would cooperate with the government, but he was soon asking to be relieved. Ormond too was upset by the Queen's economy and wrote to Walsingham:

I hear the Queen mislikes that her service has gone no faster forward, but she suffered all things needful to be supplied, to want. I would to God I could feed soldiers with the air, and throw down castles with my breath, and furnish naked men with a wish...³⁵

³⁴CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXX (1579), p. 201 and Falls, p. 130.

³⁵Ormond to Walsingham, January 4, 1580 quoted in Bagwell, 3: 37. Ormond's campaign had lasted twenty days, though he had only food and drink enough for five days. He described his troops as "sickly, unapparelled, unmonied and in want of victuals." See CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXX (1579), p. 201.

Both were assured by Lord Burghley, however, that the Queen was becoming persuaded of the unfortunate effects of false economy and had agreed to supply the necessary victuals for 2000 men for three months.³⁶

Although the Geraldines did not confront Ormond, they were by no means quiescent. Sir James, the Earl's younger brother, who had been granted Kerry by Doctor Sanders in the Holy Father's name, harassed the English garrison at Adare under Sir William Stanley and George Carew. Sir John, for his part, reportedly burned twenty-six towns in Sir William Burke's country in revenge for the murder of Fitzmaurice.³⁷ As for Doctor Sanders, his voice and pen remained active as rumors of foreign aid, as during previous Irish rebellions, circulated freely. These did not overly concern the English who watched the situation closely; however, Lord Burghley was dismayed by false reports of rebel successes received from Paris, which he attributed to the hated English priest, along with the rumors circulating in Ireland of a great fleet being prepared in Spain and Italy. Thus Burghley shrewdly initiated a counter rumor that Sanders was dead, which evidently succeeded

³⁶Burghley to Ormond, January 26, 1579 quoted in Bagwell, 3: 38. Burghley told Ormond, "I must say Butleraboo, [The Butler war cry] against all that cry... Papeaboo [The Geraldine war cry]." He wished him luck in vanquishing "those cankered Desmonds." Ibid.

³⁷Bagwell, 3: 36 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXX (1579), p. 205.

in its purpose since a French ship and a Spanish ship, both of which had landed at Dingle with limited supplies of money, munitions and stores on January 28, 1580, had informed Sanders that reports of his death had delayed preparations for further reinforcements. The dedicated papal legate was incensed that the promises he had received on the Continent were not better honored for the sake of suffering Christians in Ireland, particularly after the wide publicity he personally had given to these promises. After remonstrating with those connected with the Irish cause, Sanders bade them on their way. One ship departing after a stay of only six hours carried Captain Alessandro Bertone of Faenza (a soldier especially selected by Bishop Segar) and letters of Desmond to Bishop Segar, through whose offices those provisions that had been sent had been won from King Philip.³⁸

About three weeks after the departure of the relief vessels, Doctor Sanders penned an appeal to the "Catholic Nobility and Gentry of Ireland" in an effort to stir those who were still waiting and watching to rebellion. In it he argued that Henry VIII had severed the unity of Christ's Church and consequently his house was doomed to be cut off and ended. He cited as evidence the failure of Elizabeth to have any

³⁸Veech, pp. 275-276 and "Papers of Nicholas Sander," pp. 45-46.

"lawful heir of her own body" and the death of Sir William Drury, who had opposed the pope's army. Although he admitted the sad condition that the rebel side had been brought to, lacking as they were in men, money and armor, he argued that strange though it might seem this was God's way of making a "wonderful end" from "small beginnings."³⁹

The prospects for the rebels continued to worsen, however, when Lord Justice Pelham, who had been detained at Waterford due to a lack of supplies, set out in mid-February 1580, employing 300 churls, or Irish peasants, to bear his supplies since he could not feed his pack animals. Amid rumors of a Spanish invasion and the wreck of a papal ship carrying 400 soldiers at Corunna, the Lord Justice joined forces with the Earl of Ormond at Clonmel and moved west towards Limerick and Kerry in an effort literally to strip the country bare and make it useless to the rebels or any foreign troops that might arrive. The English soldiers, suffering from the long winter marches and the scarcity of provisions, burned the fields and houses and killed everyone they found. The Four Masters noted that Pelham's men killed without discrimination "blind and feeble men, women, boys and girls, sick persons, idiots, and old people" while confiscating their cattle and movable wealth.⁴⁰

³⁹Original Letters Illustrative of English History, ed. Henry Ellis, 2nd series (London, 1827), 3: 94-97.

⁴⁰Annals of the Four Masters (O'Donovan), 5: 1731.

The joint English force crossed the mountains and entered Kerry, pushing on to Tralee, which Desmond's men had burned along with all the land in between as far as Castleisland so as to deprive the English of sustenance and comfort. The English army marched on to Dingle only to find the English supply ships they were seeking had already left for the Shannon River. Many soldiers and horses died from a combination of disease, want, or the harshness of the weather and terrain. The Lord Justice, however, soon linked up with the English squadron commanded by Sir William Winter and by employing their cannons, demolished the walls of Carrigafoyle castle on the second day of firing and took the place, the walls of which were eighty-six feet high and surrounded by a moat. The hardy defenders, including sixteen Spaniards who had come to Ireland with Fitzmaurice, were all killed immediately or hanged. When Pelham subsequently approached the castles at Askeaton and Ballilloghen, he found them abandoned and partly destroyed by defenders who dreaded similar consequences from the feared and unfamiliar roar of English artillery in the otherwise quiet Irish glens. The rebel strongholds had all fallen and the Geraldines and their allies were forced to remain dispersed in the forests and glens, although they were free to travel the country without harassment from those of their Irish neighbors who had not entered the war. While the English and Ormond destroyed the Geraldine homeland, Sir John of Desmond and the Seneschal of Imokilly burned Nenagh

and twelve of Ormond's towns.⁴¹

By mid-April the Lord Justice was operating from his headquarters at Limerick with garrisons established at Askeaton, Kilmallock, Adare, and Cashel in an effort to keep the struggle confined to Kerry. Still suffering from inadequate provisions and a desire to be relieved, Pelham wrote Burghley that he could end the war in a short time if his troops were only paid their arrears. Despite the successes in Kerry by Pelham and Ormond and the similar routing of the rebels to the north in Connaught by Malby, the serious destruction of the country led to numerous predictions of impending famine and did not halt rebel activity. Ormond himself was forced to return to his own country to defend it against Piers Grace and others, but was prominent in his attendance at the assembly of the lords of Munster that the Lord Justice convened at Limerick on May 10, 1580. Although most of the great lords were there, none of the nobility from the western part of Munster attended and Pelham wrote the Queen informing her that the Earl of Clancarthy had sent 400 gallowglass to reinforce Desmond.⁴²

⁴¹Carew MSS., 2: 236-238, 243 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXII (1580), p. 213. During the English sweep through Kerry, Fitzmaurice's widow and daughter were found and undoubtedly executed. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXII (1580), p. 214.

⁴²Carew MSS., 2: 246, 249; CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXII (1580), pp. 214, 219; vol. LXXIII (1580), p. 223. Piers Grace was a noted rebel and longtime foe of the Earl of Ormond.

While the Lord Justice was holding his assembly to pressure the Munster lords to line up behind the government, the Pope issued a brief which granted temporal jurisdiction of Limerick to the Earl of Desmond and offered a plenary indulgence to all those who, after receiving the sacraments of confession and communion, joined the struggle against Elizabeth by aiding the pope's general, Sir John of Desmond.⁴³ Several weeks after these events and about the same time that St. Leger, provost marshal of Munster, was writing to Lord Burghley to inform him that Sir John of Desmond, accompanied by 300 men, had passed unhindered through the territory of Cormac Mac Teige and the Viscount Barry on the southeastern side of Munster, Pelham and Ormond joined forces for a second sweep through Kerry. Thus in June amidst more reports of ships prepared to bring help to Ireland from Spain, the Lord Justice and the Queen's General in Munster journeyed over the mountain of Slieve Logher into Desmond's country to resume their devastation of his palatinate in an effort to drive the Geraldine Earl into the mountains and ultimately to corner him.

⁴³"Pope Gregory the Thirteenth to all and Singular the Archbishops, Bishops, Prelates, as also to all Princes, Lords, Barons, Clergy, Nobility and people of the kingdom of Ireland, May 13, 1580" quoted in the anonymous holograph "Memoirs of the Geraldine Earls of Desmond," (manuscript, University College Cork, n.d.), pp. 69-71. Hereafter cited as "Memoirs of the Geraldine Earls of Desmond." The grant may also be seen in Phillip O'Sullivan's Compendium Historiae Ibernicæ (Lisbon, 1621), pp. 100-101.

At Castleisland, the Lord Justice surprised Desmond at his great castle there and although the Earl and Doctor Sanders escaped into the bogs shortly before the English party arrived, they left behind 2000 cattle which were taken. Pelham then proceeded to the almost deserted, burned-out town of Dingle, where Admiral Sir William Winter and the English were keeping watch and together they planned for its defense against possible reinforcements from the continent. Ormond burned his way through the beautiful country around Killarney and down the southern shore of Dingle Bay and across to Valentia Island. The smoke from the great fires he ignited was visible on the north side of the bay by Pelham's force.⁴⁴ Both forces had captured thousands of sheep and cattle and when Ormond returned from his southward sweep through O'Sullivan More's country, he was accompanied by most of the great lords of this region (including McCarthy More) and another great herd of cattle. Joining forces again with Pelham the armies proceeded west across southern Munster to Cork accompanied by their noble captives. Here the Lord Justice convened a meeting of all the lords and chiefs of Munster to insure their future cooperation. The lords were rebuked by Ormond and required

⁴⁴CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXIII (1580), pp. 225-226, 229. Chief Secretary Edward Fenton noted almost wistfully that it was a shame to destroy the beautiful country through which they were passing. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXIV (1580) p. 232.

to support a force of 1200 gallowglass, the captains of whom were chosen. Some of the lords, including Lord Barrymore, who had reportedly provided his hospitality to John and James Desmond when they had passed through his country, and the Earl of Clancarthy (McCarthy More), who had sworn an oath administered by Doctor Sanders to support Desmond, were imprisoned. Pelham then returned to Limerick, forcing the uncertain Irish lords to accompany him.⁴⁵

By July the Earl of Desmond seems to have been shaken by all the devastation and killing on both sides to the extent that he wrote to Sir William Winter expressing his desire to have an opportunity to justify his actions in England. In August he sent his wife, the Countess, to Pelham to explore the possibility of a peace with the Lord Justice. The explanation of how the proud Geraldine Earl was brought to this humble state is best told by Sir William Pelham himself in describing his manner of prosecuting the rebels to the Queen:

⁴⁵CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXIII (1580), p. 233; vol. LXXIV (1580), p. 236; Carew MSS., 2: 265, 303. Ormond accused Lord Barrymore, who was also known as the Lord of Upper Ossory and who was his longtime enemy, of being an "arrant Papist, who a long time kept in his house Dr. Tanner," the late Bishop whom the English had twice imprisoned before his death in June, 1579. Sir Nicholas White, M.R. to the Privy Council, July 22, 1580 quoted in Bagwell: 2: 50.

I give the rebels no breath to relieve themselves, but by one of your garrisons or the other they be continually hunted. I keep them from their harvest, and have taken great preys of cattle from them, by which it seemeth the poor people that lived only upon labor, and fed by their milch cows, are so distressed, as they follow their goods and offer themselves with their wives and children rather to be slain by the army than to suffer the famine that now in extremity beginnith to pinch them. And the calamity of these things have made a division between the Earl and John of Desmond...⁴⁶

While Desmond had contacted Admiral Winter, Sir John had written to Warham St. Leger at Cork requesting a conference, perhaps in despair at the recent capture of his brother James, who was now in that provost marshal's custody.⁴⁷ James Desmond, the Earl's youngest brother, had entered Muskerry from Kerry and had gathered considerable spoils in an effort to punish Sir Cormac Mac Tieve Mac Carthy for defecting from the Geraldine

⁴⁶Carew MSS., 2: 293.

⁴⁷Ibid., 2: 295. Pelham suspected that John's desire for a conference might be an attempt to deal for his brother's life and warned St. Leger of this possibility. If John were, in fact, intent upon surrender, he was to be promised pardon of life only if he agreed to deliver the Earl, Doctor Sanders, and the Seneschal of Imokilly as well. St. Leger was authorized to guarantee him his lands and goods as well if the offer of his life were not a sufficient inducement for betraying the Geraldine house in this manner. The demand that rebel leaders seeking pardon "come in with bloody hands as executioners of some better persons than themselves" was the standard policy set by the Lord Justice. See Pelham to the Privy Council, July 30, 1580 quoted in Froude, 11: 247.

confederacy. Sir Cormac, however, who had confessed his negligence in not pursuing the rebels at the recent assembly of Munster lords and who was the Irish Sheriff of Cork, had overtaken James and made a prisoner of the seriously wounded rebel leader in early August, while putting 130 of his followers to the sword. Desmond, too, must have had great difficulty in absorbing this last blow, but seems to have put notions of surrendering himself and going to England aside once it was known that Pelham was to be replaced by a new Lord Deputy, Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, whose father was known for his ruthless suppression of the Prayer Book Rebellion. As for John of Desmond, despite a close call in which he and Doctor Sanders were nearly captured by the Kilmallock garrison, his doubts about continuing the struggle, if indeed they existed at all, were dispelled by the rebellion in the Pale of James Eustace, third Viscount Baltinglas. Uniting with Piers Grace, he and the papal legate rode to a meeting on the Wicklow border with the new rebel leader, determined to renew the struggle with new allies even if Desmond were not.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Ibid., 2: 294, 302-303; Russell, p. 34; CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXIV (1580), pp. 241-242. The nature of the division between Sir John and the Earl of Desmond is not precisely known. Fitzgerald, p. 284, claims that John was on the verge of betraying the Earl when the news of Baltinglas' rebellion came and Bagwell, 3: 57 says that John's departure deprived the Munster rebels of their best leader and forced them to consider making terms with the enemy. However, the testimony of James O'Hea, a friar of Yougal, captured by the English in a skirmish near Kilmallock with the Geraldines, indicated that Desmond had been expecting word of Baltinglas' promised rebellion and had previously agreed to dispatch John with a company of kerne and another of gallowglass to support him. Hence the division perceived by contemporary English sources may not have been as serious as reported. See Carew MSS., 2: 310.

Baltinglas, like Fitzmaurice before him, was motivated primarily by the religious issue, and had in fact just returned from Rome. He had sounded out his neighbors in an effort to gain allies and succeeded in persuading the guerilla fighter, Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, to bring in the O'Byrnes. One of his letters had fallen into Ormond's hands and when the latter attempted to dissuade him, Baltinglas wrote:

Questionless it is a great want of knowledge, and more of grace, to think and believe that a woman uncapax of all holy orders, should be the supreme governor of Christ's Church; a thing that Christ did not grant his own mother. If the Queen's pleasure be as you allege, to minister justice, it were time to begin; for in this twenty years past of her reign we have seen more damnable doctrine, more oppressing of poor subjects, under pretence of justice, within this land than ever we read or heard...⁴⁹

Lord Grey, who had not always been in Elizabeth's favor but who was close to Lord Burghley, arrived in Dublin on August 12, 1580 with specific instructions from his sovereign to quash the rebellion quickly, but at the same time to remove the "false impression" that the English sought to "root out" the Irish and supplant them with their own settlers.⁵⁰ Since Pelham was still in Munster, Grey could not formally be invested with the sword of office until he returned on September 7, but he wasted no time in employing the authority granted in his patent to invest Glenmalure, twenty-five miles to the south

⁴⁹Carew MSS., 2: 289. Ormond subsequently forwarded the letter to Walsingham to be shown to the Queen according to Bagwell, 3: 52.

⁵⁰Desiderata, 1: 24-28.

in the glens of Wicklow, where Lord Baltinglas and his ally, Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, were held up. Ignoring the advice of Sir Francis Cosby, the sage old Captain of the Irish kerne who were hired to fight in the Queen's service, Grey sent a detachment into the bottom of a heavily wooded, boggy, stonefilled glen to flush out the rebels on August 25, while he and his cavalry waited on the high ground ready to pounce on their victims. This rash act led to a devastating ambush of the infantry detachment sent therein, when they attempted to move from the bottom of the glen to the less difficult terrain near the top. Although only thirty Englishmen were slain according to the eyewitness testimony of Sir William Stanley, who commanded a portion of the English troops there, it was only the charge of the cavalry under Lord Grey himself that prevented a more complete disaster from occurring. Although this victory proved to be of great encouragement to the rebels in the Pale as well as in Connaught and Munster, it proved to be an ephemeral triumph.⁵¹

Thus schooled in the ways of Irish warfare and with the able Sir William Pelham now returned to England because of illness, the new Lord Deputy turned towards Munster, where eight Spanish ships had reportedly landed at Smerwick in early September. Lord Grey was aware of the fact that the Earl

⁵¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXV (1580), pp. 243, 247 and Falls, pp. 136-137. Sir Francis Cosby was among those killed. This English captain of the kerne was noted for the previously mentioned banquet he had given about a decade earlier at which he allegedly murdered a great number of the O'Mores and O'Connors. See McManus, p. 377.

of Desmond, Brian O'Rourke, the leading rebel in Connaught, and Lord Baltinglas had recently sent messengers to Turlough O'Neill in Ulster in an effort to draw him and his considerable force of Scots into the struggle, but that English peer was confident that old Turlough could be appeased with a cask or two of wine and he was confident too, in leaving the fighting in the Pale in the hands of the Earl of Kildare. Grey, writing to the Queen that he believed the report of a Spanish landing was nothing more than another rumor, nonetheless set out for Munster on October 6 from Dublin with a force of 800 fresh soldiers who had recently arrived from England. In the meantime, three days earlier in Cork, where 500 more reinforcements from England had landed in September, James Desmond had been hanged, drawn and quartered and his head displayed on a spike on the gates of the city.⁵²

Although Sir William Winter and the English fleet had been watching the southwest coast since April, the admiral, who had been wanting to refit since July, but had been restrained by orders, left for England on September 5, without authority. By that time the foreign assistance upon which Fitzmaurice had depended and Sanders had preached about and promised was only a week away. Some seven Spanish and papal

⁵²CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXV (1580), p. 243 and vol. LXXVII (1580), p. 257.

vessels containing a landing party of about 800 men, "very ragged and a great part boys," sailed from Spain, but since two ships were lost in a storm at sea, when the little fleet sailed into Dingle harbor on the 12th it had only 650 soldiers remaining. The soldiers soon set to work fortifying the Fort del Ore at Smerwick, which had been employed by James Fitzmaurice at his landing fourteen months earlier.⁵³ The soldiers that were landed had been raised by the Papacy and had brought with them arms enough for 2000 or more men and a treasury of 8000 scudi for the rebels.⁵⁴

The Italian-Spanish force sent by the pope was led by a red-bearded Italian colonel named Sebastian de San Joseph, a soldier in his fifties who had been selected by Bishop Sega and was "said to be a Major-domo of the Pope." The second in command was Captain Alessandro Bertone of Faenza, who had come to Ireland with Fitzmaurice after having

⁵³Bingham to Walsingham, 18 October 1580, quoted in Alfred O'Rahilly, The Massacre at Smerwick (Dublin, 1938), p. 2. Sir Richard Bingham was the deputy commander of the English fleet under Admiral Winter.

⁵⁴"Papers of Nicholas Sander," p. 47. The landing party included the Spanish Franciscan Matthew Oviedo and Cornelius O'Ryan, the titular Bishop of Killaloe, both of whom had accompanied Fitzmaurice. The arms they carried may have been enough for as many as 5000 men according to Russell, p. 36.

accompanied Stukeley on his ill-fated expedition to Africa, and had returned to Spain to obtain reinforcements after the death of that Irish-Catholic leader. These and the other leaders of this papal force were undecided on exactly what course of action they should follow. Reportedly, they detached 300 men from their force to support the Earl of Desmond in an unsuccessful attempt to seize two of Lord Fitzmaurice of Kerry's castles. Then the disease and near famine brought on in Munster by the severe devastation which had been wrought by both sides in this conflict, seems to have taken its toll among the papal troops and persuaded them to return to the Fort del Ore, where they had provisions enough to last six months. They were joined by John of Desmond, Doctor Sanders, and Lord Baltinglas and on October 3 despatched two of their ships back to Spain with an urgent request for eight thousand men and sufficient weapons of war and munitions as well as a six month supply of food to continue the war.⁵⁵ The ships also carried a number of soldiers who were either sick or malcontent with the country. Again displaying uncertainty, a portion of the papal force seems to have abandoned the fort to find refuge in the caves of the rebel strongholds upon receipt of the news that the Earl of Ormond was approaching with a force of English and Irish troops. However, they

⁵⁵CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXVII (1580), pp. 261-262 and Froude, 11: 254.

returned the next morning and when Ormond arrived on October 12, he found to his frustration that he could do little without the necessary cannon to besiege the fortress. He therefore withdrew towards Kilkenny after a brief skirmish with the fort's defenders, probably to gather sufficient cattle for Lord Grey's force to conduct the siege.⁵⁶

After arranging for provisions to follow him, Lord Deputy Grey detached most of Ormond's men and marched to Dingle where he met Admiral Winter, who had just returned from England. They immediately proceeded to the Fort del Ore, where Winter brought eight guns ashore and Grey mounted his culverins by cover of darkness on November 7, 1580. On the 8th and 9th of November the English, whose force consisted of about 800 men, cannonaded the fort from both sea and landward approaches, advancing their trenches closer to the besieged Italians and Spaniards each night. On the 10th, Admiral Winter personally laid and fired the gun which

⁵⁶Carew MSS., 2: 316 and Russell, p. 36. The gathering of provisions was particularly difficult since after the departure of Pelham from Munster, Sir George Bouchier, backed by a force of about 650 men and supported by Lord Fitzmaurice, burned the country from Castle Island to Dingle on both sides of Slieve Mish. Sir John of Desmond had retaliated by besieging Maryborough and burning some of Ormond's villages. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXVI (1580), p. 254 and Bagwell, 3: 65.

eliminated the fort's most effective cannon, which was situated in a timber penthouse. Although the English had previously silenced two other guns in the fort, there was no military necessity for the fort to surrender. However, the obvious inaccuracy of the defenders' cannon, which resulted in only one English casualty, and the apparent failure of the Desmonds to bring a relief party to their rescue, undoubtedly encouraged the foreign defenders to attempt to parley their way out of their predicament.⁵⁷

Nonetheless, according to Grey's account of Queen Elizabeth, he spoke first to the camp commander, who was an Italian; then to a Spanish captain along with the camp commander; and finally about sunset to Sebastian de San Joseph, the colonel who commanded the fort. These discussions took place on the 9th and although Grey clearly had the upper hand, it is certain he realized that the Desmonds were pledged to raise a force to relieve the fort and hence threatened his rear. Grey maintained that the only terms he offered San Joseph were unconditional surrender and that after taking hostages from the colonel on the evening of the 9th (the colonel having embraced his knees and cried for mercy), he allowed them to spend the night in the fort. The surrender

⁵⁷CSPE-Ireland, preface, pp. LXIX-LXXIV. Grey's entire report to Queen Elizabeth is printed here.

took place on the morning of the 10th and it was followed by the slaughter of the entire 600 man garrison, whom Grey evidently felt justified in executing as rebels, since he considered that they deserved no better treatment than the Irish. Grey acknowledged that he had spared ten or twelve of their "chief gentlemen" and that in the "fury" of the slaughter some of the provisions of the fort had been destroyed. He failed to mention, however, that three men, including an Irishman named Oliver Plunkett, a servant of Doctor Sanders, and a priest were held for questioning and that two days after the massacre they suffered the horror of their arms and legs being crushed by a hammer and subsequently, died as a result of the torture that was inflicted upon them. Lord Grey gathered all the intelligence he could about possible additional foreign assistance, recovering numerous letters, bulls, and commissions from the pope promising the arrival of great forces. He then departed Kerry leaving Colonel John Zouch to watch the coast with a force of 400 infantry and 50 horsemen.⁵⁸

⁵⁸CSPE-Ireland, preface, pp. LXVIII-LXXIV and vol. LXXVIII (1580), pp. 267-268. When Carrigafoyle Castle was captured in 1580, the English slaughtered 50 Irish, 15 Spaniards, and 1 Italian. The Spanish ambassador to London, Bernardino de Mendoza, shrewdly pointed out to Queen Elizabeth that the Spaniards present at Carrigafoyle could no more be assumed to be sent by the King of Spain than the English regiments serving in the Netherlands. In light of the deadly diplomatic games being waged by the Spanish and English thrones and the intensity of their religious differences, the outcome at Smerwick was not surprising. See O'Rahilly, p. 28.

This bloody episode was not unusual when measured against the English standards of warfare in Ireland except in terms of the number of people slaughtered and their foreign extraction. It is nonetheless a horror story diminished in no way by the knowledge that Sir Walter Raleigh was one of the young officers who supervised the killing, and one that has created considerable controversy over the centuries. Since the foreign troops surrendered without making much of a fight, the Irish people and their tradition branded Grey as a man who broke his word as a soldier and the phrase "Greia fides" came into common usage in Europe's Catholic community to express the treachery of the pledge made in bad faith (in Grey's case supposedly a promise to spare the lives of the foreign troops if they surrendered).⁵⁹ The poet Edmund Spencer, who was serving as Grey's secretary at the time, denied the charges levelled at Grey, but not without exposing contradictions between his account of the surrender negotiations and that of the Lord Deputy himself. The renowned

⁵⁹Russell, p. 37, describes the Irish view best when, referring to Colonel San Joseph, he notes:

The Governor, unwilling to hold out the siege, with a remarkable cowardliness, sounds out the intentions of the soldiers, and threatening the said Captains, in the end brought them to condescend to yield the Fort, notwithstanding the persuasions of Hercules Pisano, a man for his resolution and courage truly worthy to bear that name.

English historian Richard Bagwell, writing in 1890, suggested that Oliver Plunkett, who acted as the translator for the camp commander and for Colonel San Joseph, may have been responsible for the confusion (since he supposedly opposed surrender negotiations on any terms) that resulted in the strong Irish tradition concerning Grey's lack of faith. Alfred O'Rahilly, a contemporary Irish historian, however, presented a new thesis in his 1938 study entitled The Massacre at Smerwick. After quoting from, comparing, and contrasting 35 accounts of the massacre, O'Rahilly arrived at the startling conclusion that Colonel San Joseph was above all else a coward who "sold out" his men in return for Grey's terms, which amounted to unconditional surrender for all but a few officers and men selected by San Joseph. In other words, San Joseph agreed to persuade his officers and men to put down their arms and surrender in return for a guarantee of safety for himself and fourteen other men. Although the author admits his thesis is based on "circumstantial evidence" he nonetheless makes a good case for his view. He notes, for example, that Oliver Plunkett was relieved of his assignment as translator and later selected for torture and theorized that this was done specifically because Plunkett had misrepresented San Joseph to Grey in an effort to scuttle the colonel's attempted "sell out". He examines the fifteen men who were saved and later offered to the King of

Spain and the Pope for a total ransom of £3000. He states that the lucky survivors included five officers, two clerics, and eight enlisted men. The officers included San Joseph and the Italian camp commander, but did not include a valiant captain like Hercules Pisano. In addition, of the eight enlisted men, only one was as high as a sergeant and six were privates. Thus, it is natural to ask why these low ranking soldiers would be spared for a small profit when there were bigger fish in the lake from which to choose? O'Rahilly then concluded that Grey indeed honored his word, but that his word was comparable to a code among thieves and that his unholy bargain with San Joseph was justified by the English Lord Deputy on the ground that the capture of Smerwick "saved Ireland from Empire".⁶⁰ The Queen of England seemed to agree, for although Elizabeth publicly indicated her disapproval, privately she wrote Lord Grey of her profound gratitude, regretting only that some of the officers had been spared when their execution might also have served as a "terror, to such as might hereafter be drawn to be executioners of so wicked an enterprise..."⁶¹ Obviously no definitive judgement

⁶⁰O'Rahilly, passim; Bagwell, 3: 74; Veech, p. 287. Ironically, Lord Grey and Doctor Sanders both characterize Colonel San Joseph as a "vile" and cowardly man.

⁶¹Queen Elizabeth to Lord Grey, December 12, 1580, quoted in Froude, 11: 260.

can be reached on this question, but O'Rahilly does raise some valid unanswered questions in presenting his thesis.

The fall of Smerwick represents yet another turning point in the desperate struggle taking place in Ireland. Although John of Desmond entered Kerry unhindered and came to the Fort del Ore with 600 men, he was too late and the Earl of Desmond had evidently done nothing to help the papal force. No ransoms were ever paid for the hostages taken at Smerwick and no further aid was forthcoming from either Pope Gregory XIII or Philip II despite the personal pleas of Desmond and Baltinglas. In fact, the main result of the whole horrible episode was to convince the English that Irish independence must be ended as soon as practical.⁶²

After the fall of Smerwick, both the Lord Deputy and the Earl of Ormond returned to Dublin. Munster was left in the hands of the garrisons of Colonel Zouch in Kerry, Captain Bouchier at Kilmallock, Captain William Morgan at Yougal, and Warham St. Leger, Chief Commissioner at Cork. Prior to the arrival of Lord Grey in Dublin, the leading English officials there had determined to bring down the Earl of Kildare, whom the Lord Deputy had left as general to defend the Pale in his absence. The charges, which mainly indict

⁶²O'Rahilly, p. 13 and Sir Charles Petrie, "Ireland in Spanish and French Strategy, 1558-1815," The Irish Sword, VI, no. 24 (summer, 1964): 157.

the Earl of conspiracy in the Baltinglas rebellion and failure to sincerely prosecute the war in the Pale, were prepared by William Gerard, Lord Chancellor, in collaboration with other officials. Grey was soon persuaded of the validity of the main thrust of their arguments, namely that the powerful Earl had not pressed the war with ardor. The Earl was soon arrested and sent over to England along with his son and Christopher Nugent, the Baron of Delvin, as a number of the Old English families of the Pale now came under suspicion in connection with the Baltinglas rebellion.⁶³

In Connaught, where John and William Burke, sons of the Earl of Clanricarde, were in open rebellion, there were daily raids as most of the castles between the Shannon River and Galway Bay were destroyed and communications with Munster were hindered. Although joined by Ulick Burke, another brother, the importance of their rising was diminished by the fall of Smerwick and the always efficient operations of the governor, Malby, which according to his own testimony, resulted in the deaths of seven hundred of Clanricarde's followers, including two hundred of his "kinsmen and best men of war."⁶⁴ Munster lay wasted along with all of Leinster, where Feagh

⁶³Carew MSS., 2: 316-319 and Bagwell, 3: 80-81, 84.

⁶⁴CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXVII (1580), p. 263 and Malby to Walsingham, April 11, 1581, quoted in Froude, 11: 264.

MacHugh O'Byrne still operated. Only the cities and towns of Munster were excepted from the destruction, but they suffered from the famine and accompanying disease and stood in fear of rebel operations. Ulster still threatened to rebel upon slight provocation and Turlough O'Neill refused to surrender the rebel William Nugent to the Lord Deputy, when the latter journeyed up the Blackwater; but since the Lord Deputy left his power untouched, the O'Neill remained at peace despite the great forces of Scots and gallowlasses at his disposal.⁶⁵

Under these disturbing conditions the leading English officials in Ireland, who had in some cases always been somewhat jealous or resentful of the power of a Kildare or Ormond, now came to the conclusion that these nativeborn noblemen would not employ the extreme severity necessary to bring the Irish rebels to bay. The Earl of Ormond, whose influence with Elizabeth was well known, and whose charge as Lord General of Munster left him with great authority, also became an object of official English criticism because, like Kildare, it was thought that his Irish sympathies got in the way of his duty. Geoffrey Fenton, Chief Secretary in Dublin, wrote to the Earl of Leicester in December, 1580 recommending the revocation of the commissions of both Kildare and Ormond on

⁶⁵Falls, p. 147.

the grounds that they were, together, costing the government six thousand pounds per annum.⁶⁶ Vice Treasurer Henry Wallop concurred, informing Sir Francis Walsingham that Ormond was too involved with Irish families and lawsuits to keep his mind on service to the Queen and, further, that he was using the war as a convenient excuse for not paying the three thousand pounds he owed the Queen in back rents. He also accused the Butler Earl of imprisoning his neighbor and rival magnate, the Baron of Upper Ossory, not for his alleged association with the rebels, but rather because he coveted the latter's lands.⁶⁷ Ormond's old family enemy, Warham St. Leger, contributed to the stream of criticism, noting that the English system of establishing strategically placed garrisons was far superior to Ormond's vain chasing of the rebels through woods and waters. Writing to Lord Burghley, St. Leger described the Lord General as an "arrogant and intractable" man as contemptuous of the Queen's government as Desmond himself and concluded:

he is the most hatefulst person in the province that liveth; and of the captains and soldiers so disliked as, were it not for their duties sake, they would rather be hanged than follow him.⁶⁸

⁶⁶CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXIX (1580), p. 273.

⁶⁷Wallop to Walsingham, January 14, 1581, quoted in Bagwell, 3: 85. See also CSPE-Ireland, vol. LXXX (1581), p. 280.

⁶⁸"Unpublished Geraldine Documents," p. 515.

Some of the most damaging criticism of Ormond came from another of the Queen's favorites, Captain Walter Raleigh, better known as Sir Walter Raleigh in English history. Raleigh believed that Lord David Barry, an Anglo-Irish nobleman whose lands bordered those of the great Geraldine rebel leader, the Seneschal of Imokilly, was disloyal to the Crown. Raleigh, who coveted Barry's great estate, which was situated both on the Great Island in Cork Harbor and upon the adjacent mainland, travelled to Dublin and persuaded the Lord Deputy and council to entrust the custody of these lands to himself. Upon his return to the south in late February, 1581, Captain Raleigh made a courageous escape with his small party from a larger ambush force set up by the Seneschal of Imokilly on the road between Yougal and Cork. Upon trying to take charge of Barry's Castle, however, the dashing young Captain was forestalled by the Earl of Ormond, who got the orders changed and delivered the castle instead to Barry's mother. Since Barry's mother's loyalty was not in doubt, Ormond's policy was an attempt to prevent unnecessary confiscation, which would only prolong and deepen the Irish hatreds for their English conquerors. Ormond's policy backfired, however, when Barry came out in open rebellion, burning his own lands and crops.⁶⁹

⁶⁹Adamson and Folland, pp. 67-68 and John Pope Hennessy, Sir Walter Raleigh in Ireland (London, 1883), pp. 18-21.

Raleigh wrote Walsingham the details of the whole episode, accusing Ormond of wanting the estate for himself or else opposing Irish land going to any Englishman. Noting that Ormond's own country was under assault from all sides and that the newest traitors were "his own cousins-german," he pointed out that the Geraldines would rather "die a thousand deaths, enter into a million of mischiefs, and seek succour of all nations, rather than...ever be subdued by a Butler..."⁷⁰ He gave his opinion that only an English President for Munster, as severe as his half-brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert had been, could make short work of this rebellion. Perhaps his most damning comment was that there were now a thousand more rebels than there had been when Ormond received his commission two years before.⁷¹

By late March even the Queen had become convinced that Ormond's prosecution of the war was not economically efficient, for Secretary Fenton wrote Walsingham on April 2, that the Lord Deputy and Council thought it advisable not to comply with the Queen's order to remove Ormond as Lord General just yet, for fear of "what dangerous harms might be provoked [by] a man so irregular and haughty, being on sudden called to

⁷⁰Raleigh to Walsingham, February 25, 1581, quoted in Edward Edwards, Sir Walter Raleigh, 2 vols., (London, 1868) 2: 12.

⁷¹Ibid.

disgrace in the face of his country".⁷² When the Earl of Ormond was relieved of his command in June of 1581, perhaps through the influence of his former rival, the Earl of Leicester, he accepted dismissal quietly, though he complained that Lord Sussex, the former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and now a member of the Privy Council, had forgotten his friends and blamed Colonel Zouch for the loss of 300 of the 450 men entrusted to him to disease.⁷³ He also complained that some of the English captains serving under him disobeyed him, for Elizabeth instructed the Lord Deputy in late October to look into this charge as well as Ormond's apparent "neglect of the service," cautioning Lord Grey to:

proceed, without passion or respect of persons whatsoever and inform us, according to the bare and naked truth of things, as you shall find, and no otherwise, as you will answer the contrary before God and us, at your uttermost and extremest peril.⁷⁴

To Secretary Walsingham's charge that he was responsible for the death of only three rebels, Ormond wrote to his old friend Lord Burghley that he would prove three thousand was

⁷²Fenton to Walsingham, April 2, 1581, quoted in State Papers Concerning the Irish Church, p. 45.

⁷³Bagwell, 3: 87.

⁷⁴Historical Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honorable The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G. (London, 1883), part I, 9: 438-439. Hereafter cited as Salisbury Calendar.

nearer the truth.⁷⁵

The Lord Deputy and those around him now intended to fall back on a policy of severe repression (i.e., total subjugation of the Irish to include Anglicization), Grey always referring to the stern charge Elizabeth gave him to be harsh in matters of religion as the justification for uncompromising courses of action. Having risked their lives and lost their fortunes in Ireland fighting a war against a people whom the Lord Deputy described as "addicted to treachery and breach of fidelity", English officials and captains were prepared to exterminate the Irish kerne if necessary to bring order to Ireland.⁷⁶ However, the Queen had other ideas, her purposes in agreeing to Ormond's relief being grounded primarily on economics. Thus, Elizabeth ordered a general pardon be tried from which only Desmond, his brother John, and Baltinglas (who had by this time fled to Ulster) were excepted. This announcement greatly distressed Grey, who argued that such a turn of events would only encourage the chiefs to believe the Queen was "weary of war."⁷⁷ Writing to Her Majesty, after he had

⁷⁵Bagwell, 3: 88. For the specific charges drawn up against the Earl of Ormond's government of Munster see Carew MSS., 2: 325-327.

⁷⁶Salisbury Calendar, part I, 9: 421.

⁷⁷Grey to Walsingham, April 24, 1581 quoted in Froude, 11: 266.

charged Ormond with accomplishing nothing substantial, Grey ironically found himself defending the results achieved by the war versus its cost. Lamenting the evident irresolution in England, he noted:

If the taking of cows, killing of kerne and churls had been worth advertising, I would have had every day to have troubled your Highness... If we make peace now, it will be a peace where your Highness' laws are answered by none but a handful of the English Pale.⁷⁸

Grey reluctantly carried out the Queen's amnesty policy, but to the list of those excepted from possible pardon, he added David Barry, Baltinglas' brothers, Lord Delvin's brothers and others, thus undermining the possible effectiveness of the amnesty plan. None of the chief rebel leaders availed themselves of this opportunity, because the English bent towards extermination of the Irish captains and their kerne and the gradual but increasing unifying effects of a common religion amongst the Irish, especially after Smerwick, were too keenly felt. Perhaps the depth of their commitment and the religious freedom they now enjoyed (though they had had little time to practice it) is best testified to by the fact that Doctor Sanders, despite his having brought little to Ireland except "bloodshed, famine, and confiscation;" was

⁷⁸Grey to Queen Elizabeth, April 26, 1581 quoted in Froude, 11: 266.

never surrendered by the suffering Irish.⁷⁹ This is particularly striking since Sanders was heartily despised by Lord Burghley and other English leaders because his English birth and connection with the papacy made him a traitor of the worst kind in their eyes. The papal legate had been forced to remain in hiding in the huge Kylemore forest, where after two years of successfully evading English soldiers, he succumbed to dysentery sometime before the end of 1581. As St. Leger pointed out to Lord Burghley, the sons of the Munster Barries, Roches, Fitzgeralds, Mac Teigues and O'Sullivans preferred to live as "Robin Hoods" loyal to Desmond rather than live in peace on their estates under English rule, deprived of self-government and their religion.⁸⁰

As a matter of fact the Geraldine Earl was becoming stronger and bolder. His response to the proclamation of pardon was a fierce attack on the lands of his old enemy, Fitzgerald of Decies, whom Desmond considered a disloyal sub-chief because of his submission to Grey. The formerly untouched country of the Lord of Decies now suffered the Geraldine revenge as thirty-six villages were burned or

⁷⁹ Bagwell, 3: 89-91. When Sanders died, Cornelius O'Ryan, the papal Bishop of Killaloe, was said to be at his side. See Mathew, p. 182.

⁸⁰ St. Leger to Burghley, 1581, quoted in Froude, 11: 266.

destroyed and seven thousand cattle were confiscated.⁸¹ On 10 June 1581, however, the crippled Geraldine Earl almost met his end when Colonel John Zouch, on his way from Dingle to Castlemaine, happened upon the Earl's camp. Charging down amongst the Geraldines; who were taken completely unaware, the English soldiers effectively split the rebel force of four hundred in two, some escaping into the bogs, though about forty were slain. The proud Earl and his Countess were amongst those who escaped to fight on.⁸²

The Earl's brother, Sir John, was not so fortunate in an encounter he had with the vigorous Colonel Zouch in January, 1582. On his way from Cork to Castle Lyons in an effort to capture rebel leader David Barry, Zouch happened upon the man who had been appointed Fitzmaurice's successor by the pope, accompanied by the notorious rebel Patrick Condon and two other companions. As it was, Sir John and his party were riding to a meeting with Barry which was intended to heal the latter's quarrel with the powerful Seneschal of Imokilly, upon whose support the Geraldines had always depended heavily. Their ponies rode into what was probably a hastily laid ambush by Colonel Zouch, which resulted in John's death, the capture of his cousin James Fitzjohn, and the flight of the other two men in their party. The

⁸¹Froude, 11: 266.

⁸²"Unpublished Geraldine Documents," pp. 525-526.

acknowledged leader of the Catholic cause had been run through by a lance wielded by Thomas Fleming, a former servant of Sir John. His head was soon being displayed on a pole in Dublin while his severed body hung in chains above the gates of Cork for several years. Zouch considered Sir John the only man of sufficient ability to handle the fiery Irish chieftains, and though the Seneschal of Imokilly remained a considerable force to be dealt with, John's death was a severe blow to the Irish-Catholic cause.⁸³

Instead of slowing the pace of the war, John's death only increased it as the government forces in Munster dwindled at the same time the rebel strength increased and concern about possible foreign intervention heightened. Encouraged by John's death, the Queen had ordered the English garrison reduced by seven hundred men so that the English forces, which had been cut only three months before, were now paired down to 743 horses and 1,571 foot soldiers by March, 1582.⁸⁴ It was at this time also that Lord Burghley became critical of Grey's profuseness in "bestowing Her Majesty's rights"

⁸³Bagwell, 3: 94; Russell, p. 37; Unpublished Geraldine Documents, 2: 75. Sir John was also believed to have been shot with a pistol in the throat. His cousin was captured, rather than run away from a man he considered a valiant leader, after John had fallen from his horse. See "Memoirs of the Geraldine Earls of Desmond," pp. 111-112.

⁸⁴CSPE-Ireland, vol. XC (1582), p. 353 and Bagwell, 3: 95.

and asked the Treasurer of War, Henry Wallop, to restrain the Lord Deputy in the disposing of rebel lands and goods, insuring that grants were permitted only to offices, such as Lord Justice, Treasurer of Marshal and not to persons. In April, Sir Nicholas Malby returned from England with instructions from the Queen to reduce soldiers' pay and to grant a pardon for all offences committed against the state to those who sought it. Elizabeth also ordered a survey and valuation of rebel lands and later that month wrote to her Deputy, requiring him to explain why custodiams of escheated lands were granted against her orders. She also instructed him to punish extortions or insolence on the part of English soldiers who mistreated the Irish. By May, Lord Grey was requesting his recall to answer what he termed to be false charges against himself, while at the same time, the morale of English officials in Ireland had sunk to a low ebb.⁸⁵ Malby reported that if the cuts in soldiers' wages ordered by the Queen were effected, that the Lord Deputy and Council had predicted that "neither shall the soldier be able to live without cess of the country, nor the country be kept from spoil."⁸⁶ The

⁸⁵CSPE-Ireland, vol. XC (1582), p. 356; vol. XCI (1582), pp. 358, 362, 364; Carew MSS., 2: 327. Since both the Earl of Ormond and Captain Raleigh were at court at this time, there was probably no dearth of talk against the Lord Deputy. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCII (1582), p. 364. As will be seen, Burghley's statesman-like policy of awarding confiscated lands to offices and not persons was not followed. For a discussion of this point see Hennessey, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁶Carew MSS., 2: 327.

situation in Munster had deteriorated considerably and Secretary Fenton wrote Burghley that the English must either renovate the army or give Desmond a full pardon.⁸⁷

The situation in Munster was, in fact, bleak. In early March David Barry accompanied by a large body of McSwiney gallowglass raided Carberry, where he was able to draw out and slay the garrison at Bantry Abbey in West Cork and completely surprise and destroy a company of soldiers under James Fenton, the brother of Secretary Fenton and the Constable of Bearhaven, who had come to provision the abbey. Fenton himself escaped but the incident made it evident the remaining English forces in Munster under Colonel Zouch, which consisted of only 140 foot soldiers and no cavalry, were insufficient to deal with the rebels. Noting the defection to Desmond of many Irish chiefs formerly sworn to help the government, Zouch left Munster for Dublin in an effort to get more troops. In April the Baron of Lixnaw, probably encouraged by the presence of Spanish vessels off the coast of Kerry, the pope's sending over a new Bishop of Cork and Cloyne and persuaded no doubt by the Earl of Desmond, declared his support for the Irish-Catholic cause by destroying a portion of Captain Acham's company and by holding the remainder under siege at Ardfert Abbey. At about the same time, St. Leger wrote to Sir John Perrott, the former President of

⁸⁷ CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCI (1582), p. 363.

Munster, that the systematic devastation of the country had resulted in the death of 30,000 native Irish from starvation and disease, excluding those that were hanged or killed, in a period of less than six months, so that the province was nearly depopulated and in great danger.⁸⁸

Despite the seriousness of the situation the English were not without successes of their own. In April the government had intercepted letters of the pope (probably to Desmond) and of the Geraldine Earl to the O'Donnells of Tyrconnell. Colonel Zouch returned to the south and struck back at David Barry, slaying nearly one hundred of his men in a wood near the Blackwater River, taking a great prey, and forcing him to sue for protection. In late May Zouch also succeeded in relieving Ardfert Abbey and taking revenge on the Baron of Lixnaw by hanging his pledges. He then sought Desmond himself in the fastness of the Aherlow woods, where he had a successful skirmish with the Geraldines, forcing the Countess of Desmond to seek refuge in the mountains. These operations had such an effect that in June, the Earl's lady travelled to Dublin and turned herself in to Lord Grey.⁸⁹ Colonel Zouch had taken it upon himself to offer Desmond life and liberty, but the Earl's insistence on the restoration of his lands and

⁸⁸CSPE-Ireland, vol. XC (1582), p. 354; vol. XCI (1582), p. 362; vol. XCII (1582), pp. 364, 366.

⁸⁹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCII (1582), pp. 364, 373 and vol. XCIII (1582), pp. 376-377.

goods, without which he would have neither dignity nor the practice of his religion, were considered "haughty terms" by the Lord Deputy, when he heard of them. Instead Lord Grey wrote to the Queen for instructions on what to do with the Countess and Secretary Walsingham responded on behalf of the Queen, that the Countess must be made to return to her husband, since she should not be afforded mercy until Desmond himself was persuaded to surrender.⁹⁰

Thus the war in Munster remained vicious and Lord Grey, who had continued to plead for his relief, was granted his wish in July. Although the Queen had written to her hard-nosed Deputy in May that she was in fact well disposed towards him and still remembered him well because of his important victory at Smerwick, Lord Burghley had informed the Treasurer at War Wallop in July that the sooner Grey returned to England, the sooner he might answer for his actions. Since outright relief under these circumstances would only serve to encourage the rebels, the Lord Deputy was recalled under "guise of a conference," but was in fact not to return to Ireland. The sword of state was left in the hands of Sir Henry Wallop and Adam Loftus, Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Dublin. Although Lord Grey had succeeded in forcing Viscount Baltinglas to flee to Spain and had stopped an apparent rebellion led by

⁹⁰CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIII (1582), pp. 377, 380 and Bagwell, 3: 96.

William Nugent in the Pale before it had begun, his utter devastation of the five counties in Munster had failed to bring the Geraldines, who were struggling for both their lands and their religion, to bay.⁹¹ However, the famine and devastation were such that the war could not continue indefinitely without foreign assistance.

Although no foreign assistance was at hand, the Geraldines and their allies fought on in hopes of receiving some. Throughout June and the first two weeks of July, the Geraldines revelled in the destruction of the Earl of Ormond's liberty of Tipperary, following a major victory at Knockgraffon, near Cahir, in which Desmond, with the timely assistance of the forces of the Seneschal of Imokilly, defeated the Butler brothers and their followers, although greatly outnumbered. Buoyed by this triumph over the family of his hereditary enemy though Ormond himself was, of course, in England and also by the departure of Colonel Zouch from Munster (which Wallop termed imprudent), the crippled Earl travelled through Munster unhindered at a time when, as Secretary Fenton noted in his correspondence to Burghley, most of the captains of Munster were on leave in England (Raleigh, Bouchier, Morgan, and Zouch, among them) and their companies were in disorder. The effective strength of English forces in Munster had been reduced to four hundred since many lay dying or ill in the

⁹¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIV (1582), pp. 383, 385 and Bagwell, 3: 97.

cities, while Desmond and his allies reportedly had two thousand foot and two hundred horses behind them. In September, the Fitzgerald Earl along with the Baron of Lixnaw had beset Ardfert once again, killing Captain Smith and thirty or forty of his soldiers, while the Seneschal of Imokilly and Patrick Condon struck four towns near Cork and took great spoils from Ormond's own house at Carrick. St. Leger, who reported the Seneschal's plundering to Burghley, also informed him that Desmond had sent the Bishop of Killaloe and Patrick Fitzmaurice to Spain and in late October informed the same correspondent that the Geraldine Earl had assuredly been promised foreign aid. The Geraldines gathered the "corn" of those still loyal to the English unhindered and hid it away in the woods in preparation for the winter. Thus the Seneschal made John Fitz Edmund of Cloyne suffer for his loyalty to the English while Desmond did the same to the O'Keefes upon the Blackwater.⁹²

With rebel strength and despoliation at an all time high in Munster and no sign of substantial relief from either rebel depredations or the famine, the Lord Justices informed

⁹² CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIII (1582), pp. 378-379; vol. XCIV (1582), p. 389; vol. XCV (1582), p. 399; vol. XCVI (1582), pp. 403-404, 406-407. The fanaticism of the Earl of Desmond by this time can be seen in the capture and execution of four Geraldines who had applied for pardons. Though sentenced to hanging by his council of war, the Earl had them cut to pieces by his followers instead. See Froude, 11: 271.

Walsingham in early October that it might be better to make a dishonorable peace. Writing a month later they pointed out their urgent need for money and provisions and suggested as remedies to their larger dilemma, vigorously prosecuting the rebels in Munster, weeding out the bands of Irish kerne from the government's troops, since they were not considered effective or reliable, ending the divisive Governor's cess of whose burden even loyal subjects complained, and increasing the soldiers' pay. It is obvious, however, that these remedies were more those of Sir Henry Wallop, for several days later Archbishop Loftus wrote to Lord Burghley urging that it was time to halt the famine, bind up the wounds of this broken state, pardon the Earl of Desmond and withdraw English soldiers so that the Queen's loyal subjects did not all perish from the severe famine, which now affected Dublin as well. Although the Privy Council seems to have approved the Lord Justices' appeal for restraint of the cess and an increase in soldiers' pay, the Queen could not be brought to assent to the latter despite the best efforts of Walsingham and Ormond. St. Leger wrote of his confidence that he could negotiate with Desmond and in December the Queen authorized him to offer the rebellious Earl life and freedom as well as mercy for himself and his son if he submitted peacefully, but this was not enough to dissuade the Geraldine from this cause. Lord Burghley had for months been scrutinizing the entire financial operation in Ireland and he was undoubtedly among those who supported a new commission for the Earl of Ormond in Munster,

backed by ample forces and supplies, as the only viable solution to England's dilemma.⁹³

As early as late July, 1582, Wallop had reported a rumor that Ormond was to be made governor of Ireland and would then proceed to discredit him, but advised Walsingham of his view that the Butler was "too great for Ireland already."⁹⁴ In fact, the Queen's loyal companion and favorite was not to be governor, but was to be given charge of the Munster war once again, in large part due to the plans laid by one of his old enemies, Sir Walter Raleigh. The young Raleigh's criticism of Ormond before the latter's relief had been a factor in that young captain's winning favor at court, but now that he too had been elevated to the Queen's special favor, he undoubtedly realized the lofty position of Ormond in Elizabeth's royal mind.⁹⁵ Raleigh reasoned that

⁹³CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCVI (1582), p. 402; vol. XCVII (1582), pp. 408-412. A proclamation remitting the Lord Justices' cess was announced in mid-November.

⁹⁴Wallop to Walsingham, July 29, 1582, quoted in Froude, 11: 274 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIV (1582), p. 389.

⁹⁵Hennessey, p. 95. Raleigh had attached himself to the service of the Earl of Leicester sometime before 1581 and hence would naturally be opposed to Ormond, whose closest friends at court seem to have been the Earl of Sussex and Lord Burghley. The handsome young captain had been given special permission by the Queen in April of 1582 to remain in England for military training and court service while keeping his band in Munster and his salary therefrom. See Raleigh's letter to Leicester from August, 1581 in Edwards, p. 17 and the Queen's letter to the Lord Deputy, Edwards, pp. 30-31.

many formerly loyal subjects who had served against Desmond were now fighting with or aiding him because they had been mistreated by English soldiers or were in deadly fear that the Queen would ultimately pardon and restore the Earl as before, so that he might ultimately effect revenge upon them. He believed that if these men were dealt with privately, "permitted to possess their own countries quietly, and were well persuaded that the Earl should never be restored, they would be brought to serve her Majesty..."⁹⁶ Perhaps Raleigh's support was tied to politics and his desire to remain within the Queen's graces or perhaps it was even tied to his determination to possess Lord Barry's great estates adjacent to Cork Harbor. Obviously Raleigh's plan precluded pardon for Desmond, but the Queen had nonetheless authorized St. Leger to deal with the Geraldine Earl probably as a sop to those who feared that without the Geraldines, the Butler Earl would destroy the existing balance and become sovereign of southern Ireland. It is important to note that Lord Burghley's advice to offer Desmond something more than just his pardon and freedom was rejected by Elizabeth at a time when she was corresponding with Ormond, to whom she opted to leave the

⁹⁶Mr. Raleigh's Opinion, October 25, 1582 quoted in Bagwell, 3: 101.

ultimate decision in this regard.⁹⁷

The Earl of Ormond, or "Black Tom" as the Irish called him because of his raven-colored hair, returned to Ireland on January 21, 1583 to pursue his old enemy. The Butler Earl was to be provided with one thousand men and six months' provisions to finish off Desmond. He came armed with the power to promise all rebels, except Desmond, a pardon and, further, with considerable discretion to offer them their lands in return for reasonable rents to the Crown. His personal allowance was a generous three pounds per day while his annual pay amounted to over four thousand pounds a year as well as the suspension of his own rents to the Crown until such time as he could make his lands profitable.⁹⁸ The Treasurer of War, Sir Henry Wallop, complained to Walsingham about Ormond's great pay and privileges and adamantly opposed the Earl's demand for a custodiam of all Desmond's lands on the grounds that the influential Butler lord was already too great for Ireland. Wallop's continuing complaints of Ormond's

⁹⁷CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCVIII (1582), p. 417 and Froude, 11: 275. It is interesting to note that Ormond's new commission was announced on December 3 and six days later Lord Burghley wrote to Lord Justice Loftus and Secretary Fenton to inform them of the decision to allow St. Leger to offer Desmond a pardon.

⁹⁸Bagwell, 3: 106 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIX (1583), p. 427.

power, disposition, and haughtiness were of no more concern than St. Leger's premature and incorrect prediction that Ormond would fail to separate Desmond's supporters from that Earl. Like the Treasurer of War and St. Leger, Ormond himself remained in constant touch with Lord Burghley and Secretary Walsingham. Although he was stymied in his attempt to get a custodiam of all Desmond's lands, he had the confidence of the Queen and her principal servants.⁹⁹ In late March, Walsingham advised him of the Queen's satisfaction with his success to date and instructed him to grant protections only to those that agree to "embrue their hands in the blood of their wicked confederates that stood disloyal."¹⁰⁰

Secretary Fenton had completed the musters in Munster by late February and reported that the garrisons of Kilmallock and Limerick had attacked the Seneschal of Imokilly's camp in the Aherlow. Ormond himself conducted several night raids into the Aherlow and other wooded refuges in pursuit of the rebels which resulted in the deaths of seven and the submission and pardon of another 339 rebels. Operating from the town of Clonmel and his own lands in Tipperary, Ormond thus succeeded in pacifying his own lands and those in Waterford County, where the Seneschal and Patrick Condon had been running rampant terrorizing both Cork and Yougal (half of the latter

⁹⁹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIX (1583), pp. 427-429 and vol. C (1583), p. 435.

¹⁰⁰Walsingham to Ormond, March 24, 1583 quoted in Froude, 11: 276.

town having been burned and plundered prior to Ormond's return to Ireland). Condon was among those submitting and Black Tom's successes forced the Earl of Desmond to move into Kerry and to ask for a conference with his old rival. The harrassed, but dedicated, Geraldine leader had had two close calls, barely escaping capture by fleeing into the woods in a fog from the Kilmallock garrison in January and making a similar escape through the bogs about a month later from Captain George Thornton. Ormond's return supported by fresh English soldiers and provisions had turned the tide.¹⁰¹

The able Butler general however, was not without the problems that normally accompanied Irish campaigns. He clamored for more victuals and horses as well as permission to retain more Irish in his bands, since sufficient English soldiers were not available. To his credit, Ormond rejected Secretary Fenton's suggestion that he hire assassins to kill Desmond, but he informed the Privy Council in early April that all efforts to get Desmond to submit to the English terms by John Lacey, Ormond's negotiator, had failed. Although Ormond had by this time succeeded in winning the submission of the Baron of Lixnaw and another 335 rebels, the stubborn, proud Geraldine leader insisted on the retention of his lands as well as life and liberty and hence forced Ormond, who was

¹⁰¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIX (1583), pp. 424, 428, 430.

determined to do so in any case, to pursue him.¹⁰² Desmond had sent his countess to Ormond to negotiate on the Geraldine's terms, but the Butler Earl explained that he was unable to accept these and Lady Desmond submitted herself unconditionally rather than return to a life of running.¹⁰³ The Geraldine Earl had appealed to St. Leger by letter on April 28, 1583, noting that he would rather submit his case directly to the Queen, since he would not submit to Ormond or to any of her Majesty's "cruel officers as have me wrongfully proclaimed" [as a rebel]. He added:

I am contented upon these conditions, so as me country, castles, possessions and lands, with me son, might be put and left in the hands and quiet possession of me council and followers, and also me religion and conscience not barred.¹⁰⁴

Those who knew Desmond realized that he was too proud, despite his physical malady, attributable to the wounds at Affane, and his guerilla fighter lifestyle, to ever surrender to a Butler. The fact that Ormond was continuing to win submissions, having announced the surrender of 247 more rebels at the end of May while inflicting only light casualties, was viewed as

¹⁰²CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIX (1583), p. 427; vol. C (1583), pp. 434-435; and vol. CI (1583), pp. 439, 441.

¹⁰³Bagwell, 3: 108. It should be noted that the Lord Justices disapproved of the numerous protections Ormond granted Desmond's followers and particularly the one given to Lady Desmond and so informed Secretary Walsingham. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. CII (1583), p. 452.

¹⁰⁴Desmond to St. Leger, quoted in Froude, 11: 277.

suspect by St. Leger and others.¹⁰⁵ It was their opinion that this was only a tactic required by the unfavorable circumstances of the time and that these chiefs had submitted with Desmond's assent and the promise to rise again when the situation proved more favorable. Secretary Fenton, who only two months before had informed Walsingham that he had advised the Lord General to have Desmond assassinated, now wrote to the same correspondent complaining that Ormond was, in fact, protecting the Geraldine's followers and that it would be better to grant Desmond a pardon or, at least permission to go to England. At the same time Ormond himself was reporting to Secretary Walsingham that he had Desmond on the run, having cut off his food supply and killed or starved his princial followers. Appealing to his friend Lord Burghley, the determined Butler Earl asked that St. Leger's commission to deal with Desmond be ended and pleaded for money, munitions, and victuals.¹⁰⁶

It is interesting to note that despite Ormond's progress in pacifying Munster, there was considerable concern among

¹⁰⁵By this time Ormond had granted 921 protections while executing or slaying only 294 rebels, according to his own reports to the Privy Council. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIX (1583), p. 430; vol. CI (1583), p. 439; and vol. CII (1583), p. 448.

¹⁰⁶CSPE-Ireland, vol. CI (1583), pp. 441, 445; vol. CII (1583), pp. 448-449.

English officials in Ireland about the renewed possibilities of foreign intervention. In December, 1582, Sir Nicholas Malby had informed Burghley that he had dispatched a bark to Spain to determine if Desmond's expectations of foreign aid were well founded. Lord Justices Loftus and Wallop expressed their concern about the dangers of a landing on the Irish coast and by March, rumors of a joint expedition against Ireland by the French and Spanish navies were being given serious consideration. These rumors were particularly inflamed by the arrival of William Barnewall in Ireland in April. Barnewall, a merchant returning from Lisbon, reported that Viscount Baltinglas was preparing to return to Ireland with a sizeable invasionary force provided by the pope, which might be further supported by a Spanish Armada of one hundred ships and fifty thousand men. The Lord Justices and Council advised the Privy Council of this information and recommended that Barnewall be sent back to Lisbon to gather more information and that a new governor be appointed for Ireland. The Privy Council however, obviously enjoying more accurate intelligence than was available to Irish officials, decided against both suggestions. Although the rumors continued throughout the summer months, their importance diminished as Ormond continued to make progress and no foreign aid was sent.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCVIII (1582), p. 414; vol. XCIX (1583), p. 422; vol. C (1583), pp. 432, 434; vol. CI (1583), pp. 441-443; vol. CII (1583), pp. 447, 451, 454; vol. CIII (1583), pp. 456-457.

Ormond's success is seen most clearly in the submission of the principal lords of Munster such as the Baron of Lixnaw and the Earl of Clancarthy. The latter was sent the aid of Captain Barkley and his troops when Desmond, in Ormond's words, "fled over the mountain into Kerry" to spoil Clancarthy in April.¹⁰⁸ By the end of May, the former McCarthy More, now Earl of Clancarthy, had written humble letters to both the Queen and the Lord General to request relief from his Geraldine brother-in-law's confiscations.¹⁰⁹ By this time Captain George Stanley was able to report that the unfortunate Earl had been reduced to eighty men, while John Fitz Edmond Fitzgerald, the Seneschal of Imokilly, had but twenty-eight. The latter Irish Catholic leader, who was second in importance in the rebellion only to Desmond, had submitted in June following the capture and execution of his mother by Ormond, who had described her as the "devilish witch" responsible for her son's cruelties. The Lord General could not report that Irish chiefs aware of the English terms were now coming to him with sacks full of heads.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Ormond to the Queen, April 24, 1583, quoted in McCarthy, p. 15. In this same letter Elizabeth's cousin notes that the Queen's view that Desmond should be kept out of Waterford and Tipperary counties as the best means of cutting off his food supplies had "proveth true."

¹⁰⁹McCarthy, pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁰CSPE-Ireland, vol. CII (1583), pp. 448-449 and Froude, 11: 278.

By June the situation of Desmond had become bleak indeed as the Lord General advised the Queen that he had reduced by twenty-one the small number of living followers that Desmond had with him and had made travel in Munster safe once again. He described his Geraldine foe as a wandering and unhappy wretch, followed by only a priest, two horsemen, a single kerne and a boy. The proud Geraldine had, in fact, written to his hereditary enemy on the fifth protesting his loyalty and humbly requesting a meeting with the Lord General.¹¹¹ About the same time, however, Desmond also wrote to the pope requesting that Fitzmaurice's lands be conceded in perpetuity to the latter's son, Gerald, and noting that his house had already been honored by his Holiness by reason of his defense of the faith and the cause of the Pope against "nefandam atque impiam potestatem Reginae maledictae Angliae."¹¹² Thus although Ormond consented to see Desmond, the English terms were too harsh for him and hence the proud Geraldine remained free in the mountains and never came in.¹¹³

Despite his successes, Ormond's enemies continued to agitate against him and his position as Lord General. Wallop,

¹¹¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. CII (1583), p. 452.

¹¹²Desmond to Pope Gregory XIII, June 18, 1583 quoted in Spicilegium Ossoriense, p. 80.

¹¹³CSPE-Ireland, vol. CIII (1583), p. 457.

Loftus, Fenton, and St. Leger had all advised the home government of their opinion that it was nothing if not impolitic to end the war in Munster by pardoning traitors. On June 12th, Sir Francis Walsingham wrote the Earl of Ormond also informing him that it was impolitic to grant so many protections to rebels without holding them answerable for the wrongs they committed against loyal subjects, thus parroting the words of the Earl's critics in Ireland. He also advised him that unless Ormond captured Desmond soon, the Queen would seek another solution to reduce her charges. The Queen herself, writing to Ormond's enemy, St. Leger, the following day, stated that she agreed with his opinion that lands in Munster belonging to rebels should be surrendered and regranted in a manner similar to the policy of her father, King Henry VIII. On July 3rd, the Queen addressed Ormond herself, stating that although she was happy that Desmond had been abandoned by the Seneschal and others, that her Lord General should reduce the number of soldiers, and thus her costs, revoke his protections and seize the rebels unprepared, since she had been informed they were only waiting for winter to break out once again. Ormond, who had found it necessary to write to Lord Burghley to request that, if the rumors were true, he should not be relieved from command a second time when he was on the verge of bringing the war to a successful conclusion, once again appealed to his old friend.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴CSPE-Ireland, vol. CII (1583), pp. 445, 449, 451-453 and vol. CIII (1583), p. 455.

Although he continued to report that the former rebels offered protection were repentant and served him well and that peace was acceptable to good subjects, he was justly outraged at the Queen's suggestion that he should revoke his protections and wrote Burghley thusly:

My Lord, the clause in the Queen's letter seems most strange to me, I will never use treachery to any, for it will both touch her Highness's honor too much and mine own credit; and whosoever gave the Queen advice thus to write is fitter to execute such base service than I am. Saving my duty to her Majesty, I would I were to have revenge by my sword of any man that thus persuaded the Queen to write to me.¹¹⁵

This letter by the able and ambitious Butler Earl was not written until September 13th, by which time Ormond had been able to report that former rebels had begun ploughing the fields once again and he thought that even the Seneschal of Imokilly would become a good subject. The Queen, who was never long in the camp of those who doubted Ormond, had provided him with a warrant, despatched on the last day of July, to grant pardons in Munster upon his certificate. This expression of confidence in her cousin was undoubtedly effected by Lord Burghley, who in August returned some of St. Leger's letters to the Queen to Ormond, thus keeping them from her eyes. Seeing his continuing progress and the direction of the

¹¹⁵Ormond to Burghley, September 10, 1583, quoted in Froude, 11: 280 and CSPE-Ireland, vol. CIII (1583), pp. 456-457.

Queen's support, the Lord Justices wrote to Burghley in early September, stating that they had never intended to touch the Earl of Ormond in honor or reputation and repeating their desire to be relieved of their post. Nonetheless, the Lord General was required to respond formally to his critics and on October 20th, sent his answer to the Lord Justices concerning abuses to be reformed in Munster including, evidently, those which were attributed to him and complained of being "backbitten" in England. He even accused St. Leger of encouraging Desmond to hold out by falsely spreading the rumor that the Lord General was about to be relieved.¹¹⁶

Despite the political infighting and the shortage of victuals, money, and munitions so traditional in Elizabethan campaigns in Ireland, Black Tom's return at a time when Munster was in ruins and exhausted by the war permitted him

¹¹⁶CSPE-Ireland, vol. CIII (1583), pp. 460; vol. CIV (1583), pp. 462, 467; vol. CV (1583), p. 475 and Bagwell, 3: 111. A letter of Sir Henry Wallop to the Earl of Leicester, September 19, 1583, is the best example of the conflict existing between the Lord Justices and Ormond. In this letter, Wallop discounts the Lord General's achievements, noting that both the Countess of Desmond and the Seneschal of Imokilly had agreed to submit before Ormond came over. He also points out, not without obvious frustration, that the Lord General never consults the Lord Justices, except to advise them of actions already taken, but rather alleges he is following the Queen's instructions. In discussing the disposition of Desmond's lands, he notes with dismay that Ormond sometimes speaks of his claim to all of these lands and concludes by noting that Ormond has many friends at Court who inform him of conversations there and hopes the information he provided is not used against him. See Carew MSS., 2: 364-365.

to close out the fighting in less than six months. His ambitions aside, the Butler Earl was feared and respected in Ireland and had a wise and understanding friend in England in Lord Burghley. Having entered Kerry in late June to secure Desmond's own lands against him and insure that no aid was coming by sea, the Lord General marched from Castlemaine, where he had received Clancarthy and the O'Sullivans to mercy, through Kerry and Muskerry to Dingle and east to Cork and Kinsale.¹¹⁷ In Cork, Ormond had received pledges of the most important nobles and gentlemen in Munster, including the Earl of Clancarthy, Lords Barrymore, Roche, and Lixnaw, the White Knight, the Seneschal of Imokilly and divers captains of gallowglass of the Mac Swineys and Mac Sheehys.¹¹⁸ In all some 2,109 nobles and gentlemen were ultimately listed as receiving his protection and although Desmond remained in hiding upon Slieve Logher, the rebellion had virtually been suppressed. The Privy Council dispatched Lord Ormond the authority to discharge superfluous soldiers on September 19th, after hearing the report of his campaigns presented by his representative, Captain Barkley. The Army was thus reduced

¹¹⁷CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIX (1583), p. 427; vol. CII (1583), pp. 448, 452; vol. CIII (1583), p. 456.

¹¹⁸Bagwell, 3: 112.

from a strength of one thousand to six hundred men and further cuts were planned.¹¹⁹

Although the Earl of Desmond may still have had faint hope of foreign assistance through his correspondence with his agents and comrades in Spain and Italy or may still have hoped, as the first able historian of this period, James Anthony Froude, suggested, that a fresh rebellion in the Pale or a rising in Ulster were still possible, he did not live to see any of these dreams come true.¹²⁰ The former lord of all Munster was nearly captured by Lord Roche's men in early September, but managed another of his narrow escapes, though his chaplain was not so lucky. While the Earl rested in Kerry and upon Slieve Logher, St. Leger noted that there were still some rebels active in the Aherlow woods, Muskerry

¹¹⁹CSPE-Ireland, vol. CII (1583), p. 455; vol. CIII (1583), p. 456; vol. CIV (1583), p. 469.

¹²⁰Froude, 11: 279. Desmond's hopes were matched by the government's fears as expressed in a letter of the Lords Justices to the Earl of Leicester, September 23, 1583, in which they quote James Golde, Attorney of Limerick, as follows:

You may gather 'how small a flood is like to set Desmond afloat again, and both what himself dreameth upon while he lieth thus asleep, and what the expectation and hope is of the greater part of those late protectees.'

The Lords Justices went on to add that they had received reports of foreign aid expected in the north and feared a "general revolt." See Carew MSS., 2: 366.

and Carberry, and Lord Burghley twice wrote to Ormond in expectation of Desmond's capture. On November 10th, 1583, the once great Earl of Desmond was finally tracked down in the woods of Glanageenty between Tralee and the Atlantic and decapitated by one of Owen O'Moriarty's men named Daniel Kelly. The O'Moriarties, who were kin to the Geraldines, had led some six men from the garrison at Castlemaine and their own force of twenty five kerne to Desmond's hiding place by night to avenge a cattle raid made the day before by Desmond's men. The crippled Earl was slain in his bed in the small cabin where he was hiding and for all intents and purposes the rebellion was at an end. A jubilant Lord General wrote to Lord Burghley:

So now is this traitor come to the end I have long looked for, appointed by God to die by the sword to end his rebellion, in [sic] despite of such malicious fools as have divers times untruly informed of the service and state of Munster [i.e., St. Leger].¹²¹

To the Secretary of State he wrote:

I do send her Highness (for proof of the good success of the service and the happy end thereof) by this bearer, the principal traitor Desmond's head, as the best token of the same, and proof of my faithful service and travail; whereas her charges may be diminished, as to her princely pleasure shall be though meet.¹²²

¹²¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. CIV (1583), p. 470; vol. CV (1583), pp. 475, 478, 480 and Ormond to the Privy Council, November 15, 1583 quoted in Mac Carthy, p. 15.

¹²²Ormond to Walsingham, November 28, 1583 quoted in Mac Carthy, p. 16.

The Earl's headless body was put on display in Cork for a time until his former followers seized it, hid it, and secretly buried it in a nearby chapel where only the Fitzgeralds were buried.¹²³ Thus the Butlers triumphed over the Geraldines and the Irish-Catholic cause that Fitzmaurice initiated was dissipated.

¹²³Bagwell, 3: 114. Basing his account of Desmond's death on Archdeacon Rowan's article in Kerry Magazine (January, 1584), Bagwell maintains that the O'Moriartys carried Desmond from the cabin wounded in the arm and severed his head from his shoulders because they feared his rescue might be imminent. According to this account, the Geraldine Earl cried out before his death, saying "I am the Earl of Desmond, save my life!" See Ibid., p. 113. The O'Moriarties were undoubtedly also motivated by the fact that there was a bounty of one thousand pounds for Desmond's head. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. CIII (1583), p. 455.

CHAPTER VII

EPILOGUE

The first attempt to end English rule in Ireland with foreign assistance, primarily from Pope Gregory XIII, was concluded in tragedy by 1583. The entire province of Munster has been almost depopulated. The extent of the desolation was best described by Edmund Spenser in his View of the Present State of Ireland:

Notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, that you would have thought they would have been able to stand long, yet ere one year and a half they were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stormy heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they look like anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eat of the dead carrions, happy were they if they could find them yea, and one another soon after, insomuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and if they found a plot of watercresses or shamrocks, there they flooded as to the feast for a time, yet...in a short space there were almost none left, and a most populous and plentiful country [was] suddenly made void of man and beast.¹

¹Spenser, p. 135.

This devastation was brought about by the English sword and the Irish response to it, which Spenser and his contemporaries believed to be the only way to reform Ireland to English ways. The English considered the Irish as little better than wild beasts and savages, and indeed Spenser supposedly traced their lineage to the barbarian Scythians.² The Irish and Anglo-Irish considered English rule oppressive, and no less a figure than Lord Burghley agreed; writing to Sir Henry Wallop in June, 1582, he noted "that the Flemings had not such cause to rebel against the oppression of the Spaniards as the Irish against the tyranny of England."³ Even Sir Henry Wallop, who continued to oppose Ormond's granting of the Queen's protection to many prominent rebels and the general pardon advocated by the Lord General, nonetheless recognized the profound change in the Irish brought about by these wars.⁴ Writing to Sir Francis Walsingham in November, 1581, upon hearing of the recall of Lord Deputy Grey,

²Ibid., pp. 77, 123.

³Wallop to Lord Burghley, June 10, 1582 quoted in Hennessy, p. 47. Hennessy maintained that Lord Burghley, alone among English policy makers, opposed this rule by coercion, but this is obviously only a partial truth since the Lord Treasurer played a major role in determining Irish policy.

⁴CSPE-Ireland, vol. CVI (1583), p. 484 and vol. CXI (1584), p. 527. Initially the Lord Justices opposed a pardon for the Countess of Desmond or others that did not come personally from the Queen and later maintained that a general pardon was impolitic.

which he opposed, he stated that if the Queen intended by this action:

to keep the Pale only, as in times past hath been done, and content herself with the name of Queen, without profit or commodity, the state is so far altered from former times, their hearts so much alienated from her and our nation, and so greatly affected to foreign nations and Papistry, as I fear she will be deceived in that expectation, and lose even the Pale... This late discovered conspiracy and combination in the Pale, which stretched to all the best houses of English name, doth prognosticate the same.⁵

The alienation, which was to last for centuries, might have been greater had it not been for the foresight of Lord General Ormond. Tough, competent, respected and absolutely dedicated to England, this Anglo-Irish earl and cousin of the Queen was nonetheless sympathetic to the plight of the Irish kerne and their chiefs. Thus, despite the opposition of the Lord Justices, he asked for a pardon for the Countess of Desmond and her daughters and succeeded in having the protections he granted, even to no less a rebel leader than the Seneschal of Imokilly, upheld by the Queen. Politically wise, he always stayed close to the center of power and particularly to his friend Lord Burghley, and therefore was able successfully to withstand the ill-will of Wallop, St. Leger and others who tried to bring him down from his lofty position.

⁵Wallop to Walsingham, November 6, 1581 quoted in State Papers Concerning the Irish Church, p. 56.

In testimony to his craftiness, it should be noted that he requested the Lord Justices to act as godfathers to his newly born son, at a time when they opposed his protections and his claim to be heir general of the house of Desmond.⁶ Upon the naming of his old friend Sir John Perrott as the new Lord Deputy, Ormond was ordered to remain in Ireland and provide the new deputy with all the information he could to assist him and Perrott was instructed to take the Earl's opinions into consideration. Concerned by the accusations of treason directed against him in England (probably by St. Leger), Ormond sailed over to Wales without authority to meet Perrott in May, 1584, but complied with orders to return despite his dismay at being relieved as Lord General in April, prior to making known in England all his achievements in restoring order to Munster.⁷ In the end, though, the Earl was more successful at upholding his own positions than those of his countrymen and as historian Cyril Falls noted, "failed in his role of mediator" because the English were too uncompromising and shortsighted and the Irish too "wild and irresponsible".⁸ Falls rightfully points out that Ormond has

⁶CSPE-Ireland, vol. CIV (1583), p. 470; vol. CVII (1584), p. 489; vol. CVIII (1584), p. 498 and vol. CIX (1584), p. 506. It is interesting to note that Ormond's loyalty to the crown was explained by some in Ireland by the rumor that he had slept with the Queen. See Adamson and Folland, p. 64.

⁷CSPE-Ireland, vol. CX (1584), pp. 513, 515 and Bagwell, 3: 123.

⁸Cyril Falls, "Black Tom of Ormond," The Irish Sword, vol. V, no. 18 (summer 1961): 22.

not been given his proper place in historical accounts, but the "greatness" he attributes to the Butler lord is somewhat overdone.⁹ Although he had the courage to take difficult paths and the ability to maintain his positions, despite his suspension between two peoples, belonging fully neither to the English nor the Irish, he was nonetheless a man concerned with his own estate above all else. While playing a key role in bringing down the house of his hereditary Geraldine rivals, Ormond was paid well, receiving £15,848 Irish between May 31, 1579 and his discharge on April 9, 1584. Having won years before the concession to the prize wines coming in on the east coast from Desmond, he sought and also successfully obtained the same rights over the prize wines of Galway on the west coast in 1584.¹⁰ Although his claim to all of

⁹Ibid., pp. 12, 13, 15. While acknowledging Ormond's guilt in the feuds growing out of the Butler-Geraldine rivalry, Falls unfairly places the majority of wrongdoing on the shoulders of Desmond. In recounting his martial feats, Falls exaggerates Ormond's influence both in the first Desmond war, where he maintains that "he did more than Sidney and Perrott with the forces of the government to subdue Fitzmaurice," and in the second Desmond war, where he alleges that the Lord General's campaign of 1583 showed the most "brilliantly displayed" mastery of Irish warfare ever witnessed before or after. Ormond's contributions were certainly vital and even crucial to success, but his support by the government and his base of Irish troop support gave him the firepower and cunning he needed for successful harassment of the rebels. His final campaign against Desmond involved little actual warfare since most of the great earl's adherents had already determined that there were not sufficient supplies or foreign aid to make a continuation of the struggle possible.

¹⁰CSPE-Ireland, vol. CIX (1584), p. 506 and vol. CXII (1584), p. 535.

Desmond's lands was never seriously considered, Wallop reported to Walsingham in December 1584, that the earl had seized a great quantity of escheated lands in county Tipperary, amounting to 30,000 acres of land formerly a part of the barony of Clanwilliam. Though this territory was outside of his jurisdiction, no one seriously challenged what he claimed once the Earl of Desmond had passed from the scene. He received a similar parcel of land in the composition of Connaught (i.e., surrender and regrant under English terms of all land) in 1585. Despite the fact that his palatinate was granted in recognition of the grace and favor in which he was held, he tried to extend his holdings to the whole country and had vast claims in every province except Ulster.¹¹ His ambition and his personal designs stood in the way of true greatness, but his tremendous influence on Irish history during this period cannot be denied. As the historian Gerald A. Hayes-McCoy noted in a recent work, "Every lord had his own horizon."¹² Ormond too was guilty of this failing.

The Earl of Desmond cannot be exempted from historical criticism for the narrowness of his horizons or the rashness

¹¹CSPE-Ireland, vol. CXIII (1584), p. 541; COD, 5 (preface): viii-ix; Bagwell, 3: 127.

¹²Gerald A. Hayes-McCoy, "The Completion of the Tudor Conquest, and the Advance of the Counter-Reformation, 1571-1603," Early Modern Ireland, p. 107.

and harshness of many of his actions, but he was a more capable and dedicated man than historians have given him credit for being.¹³ Though he was an overly prideful man, had a bad temper, and was severely lacking in education compared to his Butler rival, he was a charismatic leader among the Irish and a man of courage and determination when once he became committed to a cause. Gerald Fitzgerald was his father's son and a true Geraldine in that he was thoroughly imbued with Irish traditions and ways of life. This great Anglo-Irish lord was stubborn and sometimes painfully indecisive as has been noted upon the return of his cousin Fitzmaurice in 1579, but it should be remembered that Fitzmaurice came with only about one hundred men and hopeful promises of more foreign aid and manpower, and that Desmond

¹³Bagwell, 3: 114, for example, describes Desmond as a "man of little talent or virtue who had nothing heroic about him." He concedes, however, that he should not be "severely condemned for refusing to see that days of feudal or tribal independence were over" and is at a loss to explain the intense fidelity of the native Irish to him except by virtue of his position. This is not an adequate definition of the man and thus, despite his many failings, it is obvious that the Geraldine earl's credits and goals were better understood by the Irish. Unfortunately the vast majority of written accounts of this period are English and hence the overly dour view of the last of the Geraldine earls.

had already spent too much of his life in confinement -- over eight years in England alone -- to commit himself immediately. The extent of his involvement in Fitzmaurice's plans cannot be precisely determined, but what is certain is that his courage and position in the feudalistic society of sixteenth century Ireland was respected by the Irish people and particularly so, once he became committed to the papal camp. His enemies, aside from the English, were mainly Butler adherents, and although he lacked the broad vision of Fitzmaurice or the soldiering abilities of Sir John, he remained the leader of his people (the majority of whom were intensely loyal to him throughout the war despite great suffering and loss of life, limb, and goods), and he has survived in legend as a national hero. His struggle for the right to worship and live the way his ancestors had, despite its ultimate failure and disaster for his family and people, was nonetheless worthy of admiration in the face of English political and cultural oppression and misrule. Not as politically gifted as his Butler rival or perhaps as far sighted, he was nevertheless true to the Geraldine traditions of pride, religious and cultural heritage, and independence.

The English Tudors displayed an unwillingness to expend substantial funds on Ireland, a lack of understanding and appreciation of Irish culture or institutions, and a feeling

of cultural superiority which forced English governmental servants and administrators to resort to callous, drastic, and unworthy means to subject the Irish to English rule at the cheapest possible cost. Since Irish chiefs were set in a feudal society dominated by the clan and since many were unable to read or write and still lived under the same roof with their animals, it is not surprising, but is nonetheless unfortunate, that the English considered them as savages and sometimes behaved as Charlemagne had against the Saxons. In an age of religious warfare, the idea of adopting a conciliatory policy tolerating religious and native custom was unheard of except as an expedient. Nonetheless, a consistent policy of conciliation which did not attempt to revamp the fabric of Irish life and their institutions by force undoubtedly would have avoided the Desmond wars.¹⁴ Irish policy, however, remained a product of expediency, in which the maintenance of the island kingdom was secondary to the more basic political struggles with the French and Spaniards, especially in the Netherlands, and the religious confrontation with the Papacy. Queen Elizabeth's incredible frugality even in the face of rebellion is well illustrated by a letter written to Lord Burghley by Lord Justices Wallop and Loftus toward the end of the war. Pleading for money for discharged English soldiers

¹⁴Theodore Maynard, Queen Elizabeth (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1940), p. 347.

who had undergone the hardships of Irish guerilla campaigns and had survived, they appealed in these words to the Queen's most powerful minister:

We are right sorry so often to importune your lordship with a suit so offensive unto her Majesty as this is; but seeing how near the case toucheth her Majesty in honor and us in conscience, to turn a sort of wretched souls to begging, without paying them their entertainment which (God knoweth) they have hardly earned; and having none other intercessor then only your Lordship..."¹⁵

The historian A.L. Rowse, who displays an overwhelming and unfair bias for English culture and describes Desmond as a "zany", is nonetheless perceptive in his observation that if the Queen:

had been prepared to lay out more money on Ireland in the middle decades of her reign, it is possible that she would not have had to pour out the large sums necessary in the end to conquer the country.¹⁶

He goes on to point out that while the Queen's characteristic moderation, ability to compromise and delay until opportunity for gain became apparent had been successful elsewhere, they failed her in Ireland. It should be noted, however, that despite the quality of the soldiers and administrators she sent there and their reports, she lacked first hand experience with the Irish scene and might have reacted more decisively if she had had that experience.¹⁷

¹⁵CSPE-Ireland, vol. XCIX (1583), p. 429.

¹⁶Rowse, The Expansion of Elizabethan England, p. 128.

¹⁷Ibid.

The ablest of the Queen's governors in Ireland, Sir Henry Sidney, was as we have seen, among the most frustrated because the Queen preferred to rely on the sacrifices of her administration and army and upon the effort of enterprising individuals authorized to colonize and "plant" parts of Ireland, rather than upon a more direct but costly policy of governmental expansion backed up by strategic military might as urged by Sir Henry. It should be noted, however, that the expansion of direct English government to Munster and other provinces was almost as intolerable to the independence of great Irish lords as was the "plantation" of their lands by English adventurers or "undertakers." The whole question of who controls the land was, of course, central to the first and second Desmond wars, which were themselves segments in the continual struggle for the Irish land. The policies of confiscating the lands of disloyal lords begun during the reign of Queen Mary in an effort to extend the shire ground and the policy of surrender and regrant of lands by loyal Irish or Anglo-Irish chiefs in return for English titles, were both continued during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.¹⁸ In order to avoid the former policy, as we have seen, in 1575 the Earl of Desmond placed his lands in trust by

¹⁸F. T. Butler, Confiscation in Irish History (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1917), p. 14.

feoffment to the Baron of Dunboyne during the remainder of the Earl's life and that of his countess, providing for his daughters as well as his only son.¹⁹ Before entering into rebellion some Irish lords would marry their sons to the daughters of men of seemingly good stature in English eyes and pass their lands to these men, while the sons expressed dissatisfaction. Thus, the White Knight, Edmund Mac Gibbon, married his son to the daughter of Lord Dunboyne. Both Lord Roche and Patrick Condon were said to have used the same tactic when they rebelled in an effort to take revenge against some of the English "undertakers" with whom they were forced to contend for their lands under English law.²⁰ For these and other reasons involving the disparity between the English and Irish systems of land tenure and inheritance, the status of lands in Munster under English law after the Second Desmond rebellion was difficult to determine.

Even before the end of that conflict in 1582, Sir Henry Wallop, then Lord Justice, urged that the Seneschal of Imokilly and others of Desmond's close companions and feudal vassals ought to be executed and their lands confiscated.²¹ It is not

¹⁹CSPE-Ireland, vol. XLVII (1574), p. 37 and vol. CIX (1584), p. 508.

²⁰Rowse, The Expansion of Elizabethan England, p. 134.

²¹Froude, 11: 282.

surprising that he urged a similar confiscation of Desmond's lands upon the latter's death in November, 1583, recommending a parliament should be held to entitle the Queen to them. As has been noted, the Earl of Ormond, who himself unsuccessfully claimed Desmond's great palatinate, was instrumental in successfully arguing against these executions. At the same time the Countess of Desmond claimed a great part of her deceased husband's lands as "her jointure" and Sir Thomas of Desmond again put forth his claims to the earldom.²² The English ignored all of the above claims and instead appointed a commission in 1584 headed by Sir Henry Wallop and Sir Valentine Brown, among others, to survey the rebel lands. They concluded in November of that year after surveying only the counties of Limerick, Kerry, Cork, and Waterford, but no decisions were arrived at for many months thereafter.²³

The suppression of the Second Desmond rebellion had cost the Queen half a million pounds and the English logic of the time demanded retribution from Desmond and his followers. Desmond's palatinate consisted of the royal grant of lands

²²CSPE-Ireland, vol. CV (1583), p. 479; vol. CVI (1583), p. 479; vol. CVII (1584), p. 492. For a discussion of Sir Thomas of Desmond's claims and the actions taken to pursue them, see McCarthy, pp. 16-18.

²³CSPE-Ireland, vol. CX (1584), p. 516 and vol. CXII (1584), p. 541. See Carew MSS., 1: 414-418, for a listing of the "yearly extents and standing rents" of Desmond's lands in the year 1572. The list includes all the various feudal services due the earl from "advowsons" to "refections."

from Norman times to which had been added huge tracts in central Kerry, north Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and Tipperary. His lands extended for 110 miles and included "well-founded claims" to supremacy over great Irish chiefs such as McCarthy More and McCarthy Reagh, who controlled south Kerry and west Cork, respectively.²⁴ Under English laws of inheritance, on the other hand, the title to much of Desmond's vast possessions was "more than questionable" and thus the conflict between English and Irish systems of land tenure and inheritance remained critical. In 1585 the problem was "solved" in Connaught by a composition which ended the Irish system of tenure in that province and most importantly from the English point of view, undermined the independence of the Irish chiefs west of the Shannon. The landholders there had their estates confirmed by the Queen and received English titles, while agreeing to give up all Irish exactions (such as coyne and livery) and pay the Crown a specified quit-rent.²⁵ The attainder of the Earl of Desmond and his followers in the Irish parliament of 1586, resulted in the confiscation of

²⁴MacCurtain, pp. 81-82.

²⁵Butler, p. 9 and Rowse, The Expansion of Elizabethan England, p. 151.

his vast estates, the country which the Geraldines had ruled over for nearly 400 years. The acts (Elizabeth Chaps 7 and 8) resulted in the forfeiture of approximately 577,000 acres to the Crown, but disputes immediately arose as to the status of freeholders who possessed ancient charters showing title to their lands before the Geraldines laid claim to them. Although English lawyers argued that in the case of certain Gaelic sub-rulers, namely some of the lesser McCarthys who had also been attainted, that their lands should also fall to the Crown; they failed in this contention when the Earl of Clancarthy (McCarthy More) intervened. He convinced a Kerry jury that his lordship over these minor septs entitled him to their lands and indeed Clancarthy's "loyalty" during the Second Desmond Rebellion and the fact that these minor McCarthies had not held any titles from the Crown valid under English law, made his claim convincing.²⁶

In 1585 the new scheme for the colonizing of Munster had been devised by Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham, who may have consulted Sir Walter Raleigh, whose grant of 42,000 acres was three and a half times greater than the parcel of lands granted to other "undertakers". Enterprising

²⁶MacCurtain, p. 82. The Earl of Clancarthy subsequently signed over much of this land to Sir Valentine Brown in return for loans worth only sixty per cent of the yearly revenue derived from the land. Attempts to repay the loans and win return of the lands proved fruitless. See MacCarthy, pp. 24-25.

West Country gentlemen like Sir Warham St. Leger, Sir William Courtenay, and Sir George Bouchier took their shares along with Sir Christopher Hatton from the Court and Edmund Spenser, now Deputy Clerk of the Council of Munster. St. Leger, in partnership with Richard Grenville once again, took over the same lands from which they had been driven in 1569. It is not surprising that this scheme ultimately failed as had the first "plantation" of Munster and that the remainder of the men who were the original undertakers were killed or driven from the land in the rebellion of 1598. In the interim many Irish families had been permitted to rent the land since only 245 English families had settled there by 1592 and only 13 of 58 undertakers resided in Ireland by that time. It is ironic that the chosen means to provide support for the English church and government in Ireland was the very same tactic that had sparked the first Desmond rebellion. During the next century the English employed confiscation and plantation on a large scale to provide a meet reward for whatever they termed rebellion.²⁷

Finally, it should be noted that the Desmond wars had a religious significance for Ireland in that they introduced

²⁷David B. Quinn, Raleigh and the British Empire (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), pp. 130-131, 136 and Rowse, The Expansion of Elizabethan England, pp. 141-144. For a list of the "undertakers" in February of 1589, see MacCarthy, p. 17. An interesting addition to the list was the Earl of Ormond, who had recently acquired 3000 acres.

the Counter-Reformation there. Writing to Lord Burghley in June of 1582, the then Lord Justice Wallop listed among the causes of the rebellion the strong Irish affection for:

the Popish Religion, which agreeth with their humor, that having committed murder, incest, thefts, with other execrable offences, by hearing a mass, confessing themselves to a priest, or obtaining the Pope's pardon, they persuade themselves they are forgiven.²⁸

In November of the same year, the Lord Justices, in a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham, charged that the Earl of Desmond had used religion as a pretext for rebellion and an excuse to seek foreign assistance because of his opposition to the restraints placed upon his keeping of soldiers (i.e., "idle men") and upon coyne and livery imposed by the President of Munster before his death.²⁹ While there is modicum of truth in both allegations, there is no doubt that religion was a major driving force behind the rebellion and that Desmond was sincere in his attachment to it. Religion, though the Irish version of the Catholic faith was interspersed with superstitions and limited in depth, was nonetheless a vital part of the way of life that was at stake and for which the Irish were fighting. Writing some years after the rebellion, Edmund Spenser, who as an English official and unsuccessful

²⁸State Papers Concerning the Irish Church, p. 59.

²⁹Ibid., p. 64.

"undertaker" despised the Irish, observed that it was a mistake to try to impose Protestantism on the Irish "with terror and sharp penalties." By way of irony he added:

I know that most of the Irish are so far from understanding of the popish religion as they are of the protestant profession, and yet do they hate it, though unknown, even for the very hatred which they have of the English and their government...³⁰

The religious character of the Second Desmond revolt cannot be denied, despite English assertions and observations about the shallowness of the Irish knowledge of their faith. The exposure given to the Irish Catholic cause by the efforts of James Fitzmaurice on the Continent, especially after the massacre of Smerwick, resulted in an increasing influx of missionary priests into Ireland and of Irish youths leaving their native country for seminaries on the Continent.³¹ As we have observed, the Irish clergy were deeply involved in both the struggle with Protestantism and with the English rule in Ireland. In this regard it should be noted that the Bishop of Killaloe, Cornelius O'Ryan, who was sent to Spain in late 1582 by Desmond to obtain aid, did in fact return to the west coast in January of 1584 with two ships containing artillery, powder, matches, calivers, and bags of silver and

³⁰Spenser, p. 208.

³¹Black, p. 479.

gold. Upon learning of the Geraldine Earl's death, however, both ships returned to Spain.³² Another of the Irish bishops, Dermot O'Hurley, Archbishop of Cashel since his papal appointment in 1581, and a longtime intriguer in Irish Catholic plans for his homeland, was not so fortunate. Returning to Ireland in September, 1583, he was soon captured, tortured by toasting his feet in burning hot boots and made to confess, supposedly after he was informed that his alleged letters to Desmond, Baltinglas and other "rebels" had been intercepted. He was executed in June, 1584, adding yet another coal to the fire of the Irish Catholic cause.³³ The dream of Fitzmaurice of using the religious issue to fuse disparate Anglo-Irish and Irish lords into a common bond opposed to English rule and misgovernment by obtaining the support of foreign powers remained alive both on the Continent and in Ireland. This searching for and partial achievement of a common bond of disaffection with English rule was the beginning of a nascent nationalism in Ireland.

The English had attempted to transform the whole of Irish life and tradition that was subversive to English rule

³²CSPE-Ireland, vol. CVII (1584), pp. 489, 491.

³³CSPE-Ireland, vol. CVIII (1584), p. 498. The method of torture was suggested by Sir Francis Walsingham when the Lord Justices wrote to him complaining that they had no rack upon which to torture the Archbishop. See CSPE-Ireland, vol. CVI (1583), p. 482 and Bagwell, 3: 116-117.

and were aided in this endeavor by the Irish penchant for clan feuds. Not until James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, a justifiably great figure in Irish history, came onto the scene did the Irish have a rallying point from which a truly national feeling could be built. Although the Earl of Desmond had as much or more charisma in the eyes of the common people in Munster, he did not possess the broad view of affairs in Ireland and on the Continent that his valiant cousin possessed, nor did he command the respect of his enemies as did Fitzmaurice. Thus, the latter's untimely death stripped the Catholic cause of much of its widespread appeal and made it more of a Geraldine rising in the eyes of most of the Anglo-Irish and Irish lords of Ireland. Opposition to the English-imposed cess in the Pale and the religious zeal of Viscount Baltinglas briefly revived the fervor inspired by Fitzmaurice, but the "glory" of Glenmalure was quickly smashed by the brutal realities of Smerwick and the subsequent devastation of Munster. It is important to note that even English accounts of Fitzmaurice's activities grant that he was "subtle and dissembling of mind" and his following amongst the Irish attests to his possession of the qualities of leadership and creative energy that accompanied his sincere dedication to his religion and his people. He was, too, a distinguished soldier, a determined diplomat, and a man of vision and character. While it is true that Philip II was not prepared to intervene more directly in Ireland and thereby risk an

Anglo-French alliance against him, it is also true that had Fitzmaurice lived the extent of the Second Desmond war would have been considerably greater. No doubt, without substantial foreign aid the outcome would ultimately have been the same, but his death was a relief to the English and an irretrievable loss to the Catholic Irish cause. Fitzmaurice was the moving force behind the guerilla wars known as the Desmond rebellions, while his much maligned cousin, the great Geraldine Earl, was the last symbol of the proud Anglo-Irish chief and the feudalistic Irish way of life made famous by the bards and poets. Together they fought to stem the tide of Anglicization, but like the American Indian, to whom the English of this era sometimes compared the Irish, they lacked the political unity necessary to overcome their English governors. The long drawn-out struggle with the English had begun before their time, had become bitter and deep with emotion during the Desmond decades, and would continue for a long time thereafter.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

The Desmond Rebellions were savage guerilla struggles centered on the extensive Desmond estates in southern Ireland which threatened to engulf the whole island in a "rebellion" against English rule. They were fought with ruthless cruelty on both sides between the years 1569-1573 and 1579-1583. Despite the dedication and valor of their most inspiring leader, James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald of Desmond, who hoped to use the religious issue to fuse the disparate Anglo-Irish and Irish lords into a united Celtic front against English rule and misgovernment, the Catholic-Irish cause faltered for lack of any substantial foreign assistance from a potential Catholic ally such as Spain, France, or the Papacy, without which the rebels could not hope to defeat superior English arms. The great Tudor Queen, Elizabeth I, sent some of her most capable administrators and captains to this troubled island to crush what they termed "rebellion" through a ruthless and cruel policy of starvation and destruction of the Irish land and peoples. The frugal Tudor Queen and her top ministers devoted long hours to the Irish situation, expending a half a million pounds to suppress the Second of the Rebellions, finally depriving the Anglo-Irish Desmonds of their great palatinate-like estates in Munster in 1586.

Despite the many interesting facets of this savage and historic conflict, modern historians have tended to ignore this period of Irish history. There are in fact no definitive or even first rate histories of Elizabethan Ireland which cover the subject matter in depth. The American historian Conyers Read, for example, who was the author of an excellent three volume study of Sir Francis Walsingham's public life entitled Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth (1925) and also of a two volume study of Sir William Cecil's service to the Queen entitled Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (1960), provides only scant information on the Irish situation in either work. In his study on Walsingham, Read does not discuss Walsingham's role with Irish policy since "any adequate exposition of it would involve a larger discussion of the Irish situation than the importance of it, from the point of his public career, would warrant."¹ While in the case of Lord Burghley, he justifies the exclusion of this material on the grounds that it contributed neither to a greater understanding of Irish history or of Burghley's role in Tudor history.² However, Burghley's position as the Queen's most trusted advisor and his close personal friendship with Sir John Perrott, the Earl of Ormond, the Earl of Desmond, and

¹Read, Walsingham, 1: x.

²Read, Burghley, p. 10.

many other important actors on the Irish stage who appealed for his aid or support, belies this point. Certainly Burghley's view that Ireland suffered under a necessary sort of English tyranny in itself marks this as a fit subject for the author's works.

It should be noted nonetheless, that Read does indicate some of the intelligence that Walsingham gathered on Fitzmaurice while the latter was lobbying for French aid in the mid-1570's and while that English statesman was serving as the Ambassador to the French court.³ He also delves into the factions at the English court and how they lined up on one side or the other in the Ormond-Desmond land controversy of the 1560's in his work on Burghley.⁴ Thus the above criticism is not intended to diminish the value of the author's scholarly analysis of these great Tudor statesmen, but rather to illustrate an example of a skilled Tudor historian who chose, for the most part, to avoid the Irish wars in his works.

The lack of detailed, relatively recent studies on the Irish wars, in general, and on the Desmond Rebellions, in particular, will be amply demonstrated in the discussion which follows. This essay will examine the key primary and secondary

³See Read, Walsingham, 1: 116-123.

⁴See Read, Burghley, pp. 240-241.

sources touching on at least some aspect of the history of the Desmond risings or the background surrounding them in an effort to delineate the historical significance of the sources available and facilitate future researches into a fascinating, but underworked field of history.

One of the first problems the historian seeking a complete and objective account of this underworked but intriguing period encounters is that most of the sources, both primary and secondary, are written from the English point of view and as such evince varying degrees of bias for the English cause. The most thoroughly researched and complete account of the period was written by Richard Bagwell in 1890. His three-volume work, entitled Ireland Under the Tudors, is indispensable in that it is based almost exclusively on primary sources from which the author frequently quoted. Unfortunately Bagwell does not always distinguish his opinion of how events occurred when the English and Irish sources disagree, as they frequently do, and thus despite the thoroughness of his approach he sometimes leaves the reader in a confused state of mind. Nevertheless, Bagwell's work represents an excellent starting point and despite its weaknesses, his work is, nonetheless, the greatest scholarly analysis of the subject. Bagwell himself is somewhat biased towards the English point of view, although he states that

he consulted the Irish annalists on every important issue in an effort to balance their views with those of the English writers. He points out a major problem in his preface when he notes that:

All the native annalists (i.e., Irish) are jejune to an exasperating degree. Genealogy seems to have been the really important thing with them and they throw extremely little light on the condition of the people. We are forced therefore to rely on the accounts, often prejudiced and nearly always ill-informed, of English travellers and officials.⁵

Thus, Bagwell makes it obvious that there are problems with both English and Irish sources alike and hence the historian writing on this period must focus his effort on the primary sources and strive for the maximum in objectivity.

There is a long list of primary sources which contain information on the Desmond Rebellions, but the single most important sources are the Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, 1509-1573 and the Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of Elizabeth (ed. H. Hamilton, 2 vols., 1860).⁶

These calendars consist primarily of cogent summaries of the copious correspondence flowing between London and English governmental officials or private citizens of import in Ireland.

⁵Bagwell, 1: xii.

⁶Refer to the Bibliography for more complete references to all sources discussed in this paper.

Although there are very few direct quotations and the correspondence is sometimes so abbreviated that it conveys almost no usable information, the letters and papers in these volumes nonetheless represent the most thorough primary source account of the historical events of this period. The contents of these calendars should be supplemented by the numerous other primary source materials available. These include the Calendar of Carew Manuscripts (ed. J. S. Brewer and William Bullen, 5 vols., 1871) which primarily contain official correspondence between the Lord Deputy or lesser Irish administrators and the Queen or key members of her Privy Council. Although much of the correspondence herein is summarized in the previously mentioned Calendar of State Papers for Ireland, the detailed pieces of correspondence found in this collection add needed depth and in some cases provide important items of information not found elsewhere. The Carew manuscripts also contain "The Book of Howth", a work by unknown authors who wrote a sketchy, but useful, first-hand account of the events of this era. Finally in using the Carew manuscripts it should be noted that the editors have provided an excellent introduction which provides additional insight into the problems faced by historians writing about this period. They point out, for example, that there exists great divergencies in the accounts of Irish history available and suggest that the bitterness engendered

during the Tudor period has in some ways carried over to the accounts that were written by contemporaries or near contemporaries. They note, for example, that:

As the Englishmen learned to associate with the name of Irish all that was vile, savage, and degrading, the Irishman was naturally taught to connect all forms of oppression, cruelty, and wrong with the name of Englishmen...⁷

The contents of these works should be supplemented by Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland (ed. R. Holinshed and J. Hooker, 6 vols., 1808), the Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616 (ed. by J. O'Donovan, 7 vols., 1966), and the Annals of Loch Cé (ed. W. M. Hennessy, 2 vols., 1871). These works can be balanced against one another since Holinshed's history presents the English point of view, while the annals edited by O'Donovan (better known as the Annals of the Four Masters) and those of Loch Cé are the work of Irish annalists. Holinshed's account is fairly complete and despite its bias is useful for filling in areas which the Calendar of State Papers do not deal with adequately. The Annals of the Four Masters and especially those of Loch Cé are sketchy, but of great value in some areas. Both are useful for their Irish color and frank idiom.

⁷Carew MSS., 2; introduction: xiii.

In studying the events immediately preceding the outbreak of the First Desmond Rebellion in 1569, three works provide useful primary source material. These are first, Unpublished Geraldine Documents (ed. S. Hayman, 1870) which contains the original documents on the Ormond-Desmond controversy argued in London in 1564-1565 from the Public Records Office, State Papers Collection and Thomas Russell's narrative on "Relations of the Fitzgeralds of Ireland," which is an extremely valuable account of the rebellion compiled by an author whose father served with the Earl of Desmond. The second work is the Fitzwilliam Accounts, 1560-1565 (ed. A. K. Longfield, 1960), which contains the accounts of Sir William Fitzwilliam, who served as vice treasurer and treasurer at war in Ireland from July 1559 to April, 1573 and for a time as Lord Deputy as well. These provide valuable data for analysing military affairs, the cost of victuals, the difficulties in paying English troops, etc. The Sidney State Papers, 1565-1570 (ed. T. O. Laidhin, 1962) are also helpful in bringing to light the instructions Sir Henry Sidney received from the Queen while serving in his first term as Lord Deputy, especially as regards the Ormond-Desmond controversies. This source consists exclusively of a collection of letters from Queen Elizabeth to Sidney.

Primary sources most helpful for supplementing the account of the First Desmond Rebellion that can be drawn from the Calendar of State Papers for Ireland include the

previously mentioned Unpublished Geraldine Documents as well as The History of that Most Eminent Statesman, Sir John Perrott, Knight of the Bath and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (ed. R. Rawlinson, 1727). This last mentioned work contains an interesting account of Sir John Perrott's campaigns against Fitzmaurice, while the former was serving as President of Munster. It is based largely on interviews with contemporaries.

The period between the First and Second Desmond Rebellions (i.e., 1573-1579) is illuminated to some extent by the Letters and Memorials of State in the Reigns of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, King Charles the First, Part of the Reign of King Charles the Second, and Oliver's Usurpation (ed. Arthur Collins, 1746), which contains much of the correspondence of Sir Henry Sidney, who was serving his second term as Lord Deputy at this time. The Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally at Rome in the Vatican Archives and Library (ed. J. M. Rigg, 2 vols., 1926) is extremely valuable in tracing the intrigues of Sir Thomas Stukeley on the Continent (1571-1579), particularly since The Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of Elizabeth contains only fragments of information on these efforts, since it is based, in this instance, primarily on the incomplete and frequently inaccurate reports of English spies and agents on the Continent. The letters contained herein are mostly those of Vatican diplomats or those of

Stukeley and Fitzmaurice and are quoted in more substantial form than in most calendars.

The primary sources for the Second Desmond Rebellion are more numerous and include "The Irish Correspondence of James Fitzmaurice of Desmond" (Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 2nd series, II, 1859); The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen, 1532-1594 (ed. Fathers of the Congregation of the London Oratory, 1882); and A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth From the Year 1571 to 1596 (ed. W. Murdin, 1759). The first mentioned source contains some of the valuable correspondence addressed by Fitzmaurice to the lords of Ireland upon his return to Ireland in 1579 with a small invasionary force. The collection of letters of Cardinal Allen contains some of his correspondence with Doctor Nicholas Sanders, the English scholar and papal legate who accompanied Fitzmaurice upon his return to Ireland. Additional correspondence belonging to both Fitzmaurice and Dr. Sanders accompanied by an informative commentary can be found in "Some Letters and Papers of Nicholas Sander, 1562-1580," (Publications of the Catholic Record Society, vol. XXVI, 1926).⁸ Finally, the

⁸Sanders' only biographer, Thomas McNevin Veech, spells his name with an "S" at the end; however, some sources leave off the "S", making it "Sander" instead.

collection of papers gathered by Murdin are valuable in that they contain much of the correspondence flowing between Lord Deputy, Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton and Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, in the year 1581. More valuable than any of the above references, however, are the State Papers Concerning the Irish Church in the Time of Queen Elizabeth (ed., W. M. Brady, 1868). This important source includes extracts of correspondence from all the lord deputies and officials of note in Ireland at this time, including Sir Henry Sidney, Sir William Pelham, Sir John Perrott, and others who corresponded with the Queen or members of her Privy Council. It is particularly useful in delineating the English view of the Irish Church and the important role of religion in this rebellion. There are a number of other primary sources of at least some value in bringing to light the history of these great struggles. The Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, 1547-1580 (ed. R. Lemon, 1856) is useful in providing information on the actions taken by authorities in England in response to both dangerous threats and rebellions in Ireland. Its companion volume, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1581-1590 (ed. R. Lemon, 1865) has only the briefest of summaries of correspondence with few references to Ireland, although some information not found elsewhere is available here. The same is true of the combined works, Cabala, Mysteries of State and Government in Letters (1663) and The

Compleat Ambassador (ed. D. Digges, 1655), which contains several pieces of correspondence pertaining to Irish affairs. Two primary sources that need mentioning are The Walsingham Letter Book or Register of Ireland, May 1578 to December 1579, which contains almost all of vital correspondence during this period and A View of the Present State of Munster (ed., W. L. Renwick, 1970), in which the great poet Edmund Spenser recounts his Irish service to Lord Deputy Grey (1580-1582) as secretary and his impressions gained while serving in other administrative posts, which he held thereafter in Ireland. Spenser's account is particularly colorful and his emotion-packed description of the devastation wrought in Munster after the burning and killing were ended has been quoted by numerous authorities. Renwick's commentary is very helpful, though his positing of Spenser's defense of Lord Grey is not effective.

Any discussion of the secondary sources must begin with the previously cited work of Richard Bagwell, entitled Ireland Under the Tudors (3 vols., 1890), which presents by far the most complete analysis of these troubled years in southern Ireland. Despite its failings no modern historian can write on Tudor Ireland without referring to this detailed

account.⁹ In terms of finding a necessary balance, the older work of James Anthony Froude, a twelve volume study entitled History of Ireland from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth (1873), must also be utilized. Froude's great work contains a detailed account of Irish history during this period which is rich in primary source quotations. Although this author's work contains several basic errors in its presentation of the history of the Desmond Wars, it, nonetheless, represents the first great work on this period and as such was a basic text for Bagwell's and subsequent studies.¹⁰ It is most noteworthy for its effective and stinging criticism of the Tudor government of Ireland. Although his accounts are often abbreviated and incomplete, his insights and theme are worthy of great respect.

The older works should be supplemented by Cyril Falls' well written work entitled Elizabeth's Irish Wars (1936) and by Brian Fitzgerald's more recent The Geraldines: An Experiment in Irish Government, 1169-1601 (1952). Cyril Falls is a military historian of note whose works are well known for their

⁹See Falls, p. 348 for a similar view.

¹⁰One example of an error made by this author occurs in Froude, 8: 56-57, where Spenser's dramatic description of the deplorable condition of Munster in 1583 is transposed to year 1564, during a period of feuding between Ormond and Desmond which saw some clan fighting and raiding, but nothing so drastic as the wartime ruins described by Spenser for the year 1583.

depth of research and their quality. He begins this work by underscoring the importance of Elizabeth's Irish campaigns, hitherto neglected by most historians, and by pointing out that:

The maintenance of English power in Ireland appears to have been achieved by purposeless slaughter, accompanied by indecision, waste, and corruption, policies were in fact worked out though they were not always steadily pursued, and remarkable advances in efficiency and organization took place.¹¹

Falls' work also provides a detailed description of Irish warfare, for which he acknowledges his debt to the earlier works of Gerald A. Hayes-McCoy, Scots Mercenary Forces in Ireland (1937), and provides four excellent chapters on the period of the Desmond revolts. The author's main weakness is his slight, but noticeable, bias on behalf of the English interpretation of events. This is a natural tendency since most of the detailed sources in this field are English in origin, but Fitzgerald's work on the family history of the Geraldines, including both the Kildare and Desmond branches, cannot be similiarly characterized! His work is decidedly pro-Irish in its interpretations and views, but is nonetheless a most valuable balance to English accounts. Thus, Fitzgerald is a necessary supplement and a complement to the works of both Bagwell and Falls for the historian seeking to arrive at an objective view of the subject matter.

¹¹Falls, p. 11.

The best general histories of Tudor Ireland are Edmund Curtis' concise, but often brilliant, History of Ireland (1936) and J. B. Black's The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603 (1959), which includes a very enlightening chapter on the nature of the Irish problem. Worthy of note also are J. C. Beckett's A Short History of Ireland (1952) and the discussion of Ireland found in A. F. Pollard's The History of England from the Accession of Edward VI to the Death of Elizabeth (1915), which provides considerable insight into English motivation as it pertains to Irish affairs. Margaret Mac Curtain's more recent Tudor and Stuart Ireland (1972) does not supplant earlier works, but does provide a concise and ably written account of the period based upon more recent research. The author also provides a particularly able description of the Irish land tenure system. In the realm of recent research, the overview and keen analysis provided by Patrick O'Farrell's Ireland's English Question; Anglo-Irish Relations, 1534-1970 (1971) is worthy of special note.

More specialized studies include Archbishop David Mathew's The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe (1933), which is written in a metaphorical and somewhat flamboyant style reminiscent of a chronicle of old or the poetic spirit of the ancient Irish bards, and is for this reason somewhat overly dramatic and in some cases unclear, leaving too many unanswered questions in its wake. Aside from Mathew's style, which is, despite this criticism, effective in making

characterizations, his narrative is sometimes inaccurate, such as when he describes Sir Thomas Stukeley's ship, the St. John, in April 1578, as a "fine ship," when in fact it was, according to the testimony of its captain, a poor sea ship, badly in need of refitting with new timbers, ropes, gear and sails as well as caulking to keep it from falling apart at sea!¹² Thus while this work is based on considerable research and contains some valuable primary source documents of the Second Desmond Rebellion, it must be used with care.¹³

There are several biographies which provide considerable insight into important actors in this drama. One of the most important is Sir Walter Raleigh in Ireland (1883) by John Pope Hennessy, which delivers a ringing indictment of English policy in Ireland, in general, and of Raleigh's cruelty as a soldier and his greed for land, in particular. Quoting the great but biased English historian James Anthony Froude on the gentleman pirates of England who like Raleigh sought to establish English colonies in Ireland, he notes:

These western gentlemen had been trained in the French wars, in the privateer fleets, or on the coast of Africa, and the lives of a few thousand savages were

¹²CSP-Rome, 2: 380-383. See Mathew, p. 147, for his reference to Stukeley's ship.

¹³For the miserable condition of Stukeley's ship and its possible effect on his motivation towards an invasion of Ireland see also Pollard, 6: 430 and Black, p. 176.

infinitely unimportant to them. The extinction of the Irish was contemplated with as much indifference as the destruction of the Red Indians by the politicians of Washington, and their titles to their lands as not more deserving of respect...¹⁴

Hennessy's work is especially valuable because it contains many of Raleigh's papers, including eighteen of his letters and numerous other documents pertaining to his activities in the second Desmond rising. His views on Raleigh's activities in Ireland and on English policy on that troubled island have been concurred in by more recent works.¹⁵

William Gilbert Gosling provides an excellent study of Raleigh's half-brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert, entitled The Life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert: England's First Empire Builder (1970), which is of great value because it presents extracts from a number of Gilbert's letters and other original papers concerning his Irish service during the first Desmond rising. Of special importance are the lengthy quotations from Thomas Churchyard's "General Rehersall of Warres" (1579), which graphically describes how Gilbert won his reputation as the most feared of the English captains campaigning against the Irish.

¹⁴Hennessy, p. 49.

¹⁵See, for example, Robert Lacey, Sir Walter Raleigh (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 34-35, where the author notes that Raleigh treated the "naked savages of the Guiana swamps with more respect and kindness than ever he showed to the Irish." See also Adamson and Folland, pp. 55-76.

A third biography of some value is Thomas McNevin Veech's work, Nicholas Sanders and the English Reformation (1935). Lacking in depth, this study nonetheless brings some light to Sanders' role in supporting James Fitzmaurice's final plan for an invasion of Ireland in 1579. It should be supplemented, however, by J. H. Pollen's "Nicholas Sanders" (English Historical Review, VI, 1891). This author has also written an important article entitled "The Irish Expedition of 1579" (The Month, vol. 101, 1903) which utilizes official papal correspondence in defining the respective roles of Stukeley, Fitzmaurice, Sanders, and the Cardinal de Como in the plans to invade Ireland. An equally important article by one of Pollen's contemporaries, John B. Wainwright, entitled "A Bygone Bishop of Mayo" (The Dublin Review, vol. 173, 1923), details Fitzmaurice's plans and movements for the invasion in 1577-1578, in which he was accompanied by Patrick O'Hely, Bishop of Mayo. It includes lengthy quotes from letters written by Bishop O'Hely and the Cardinal de Como.

The religious background for Fitzmaurice's invasion and his attempt to make it into a Catholic-Irish crusade is best described by Myles V. Ronan's The Reformation in Ireland Under Elizabeth 1558-1580 (3 vols. 1930), though his descriptions of many aspects of this period are frequently slavish reproductions of Bagwell's or Froude's earlier efforts. Myles O'Reilly's Lives of the Irish Martyrs and

Confessors (1878) is still of some value while R. D. Edward's more recent chapter entitled "Ireland Under Elizabeth and the Counter-Reformation" found in Elizabethan Government and Society; essays presented to Sir John Neale (ed. S. T. Bindoff et. al., 1961) merits close study. Edwards aptly describes the effect of the Reformation on the attitudes of the Anglo-Irish lords towards the Tudor government in Ireland.

One of the most fascinating puzzles about the Second Desmond rebellion concerns the massacre of a force of 600 Italian and Spanish troops sent over to Ireland by the Pope in 1580. The entire force, under the command of a Colonel Sebastian de San Joseph, surrendered the fort at Smerwick to Lord Deputy Grey after a brief siege and were slaughtered almost to the last man, woman and child, with the exception of the commander and a select party. This bloody episode, as noted in Chapter VI of the text, has best been analyzed by Alfred O'Rahilly's 1938 study entitled The Massacre at Smerwick. This work is especially valuable because the 35 separate accounts of the massacre he cites provide great insight into the historical problems surrounding this event and into the general divergence of English versus Irish interpretations of the history of this conflict-filled period. There is no other comparable study of any of the other controversial aspects of the history of this era.

One of the more important and prolific historians in Tudor Irish history today is David Beers Quinn. His study on The Elizabethans and the Irish (1966) is full of examples of how Tudor Englishmen viewed Irishmen, not infrequently comparing them to the American Indian, and is also full of color on the life and times of the era. His work Raleigh and the British Empire (1947) is helpful in bringing to light the scheme for the plantation of Munster worked out by Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham. A. L. Rowse's The Expansion of Elizabethan England (1965) and his Sir Richard Grenville of the 'Revenge' are also helpful in revealing the various colonizing schemes in Munster and their result. However, Rowse's English bias is pronounced and these works should be used with care.¹⁶ William F. T. Butler's Confiscation in Irish History (1917) is a good starting point for any study of English plantation schemes, although the soon-to-be published work of Professor John A. Murphy on the problems surrounding the confiscation of the Desmond estates will undoubtedly be of considerable value.¹⁷

¹⁶R.D. Edwards, "Ireland, Elizabeth I and the Counter-Reformation" in Elizabethan Government and Society: essays presented to Sir John Neale ed. by S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, and C.H. Williams (London: Athlone Press, 1961), p. 321 also cautions his readers to handle Rowse's The Expansion of Elizabethan England and, incidentally, Mathew's The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe "with caution where they deal with Ireland."

¹⁷Professor Murphy's work is to be published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

The above discussion of primary and secondary sources pertaining to the Desmond Rebellions is not, of course, intended to be all encompassing. The intent has been to provide the researcher with a reliable guide to the sources and, above all, to stress the need for objective research in Tudor Irish history. English and Irish accounts must be carefully compared and analyzed in order to obtain the goal of objective history which every competent historian should strive towards. This study is dedicated towards that objective.

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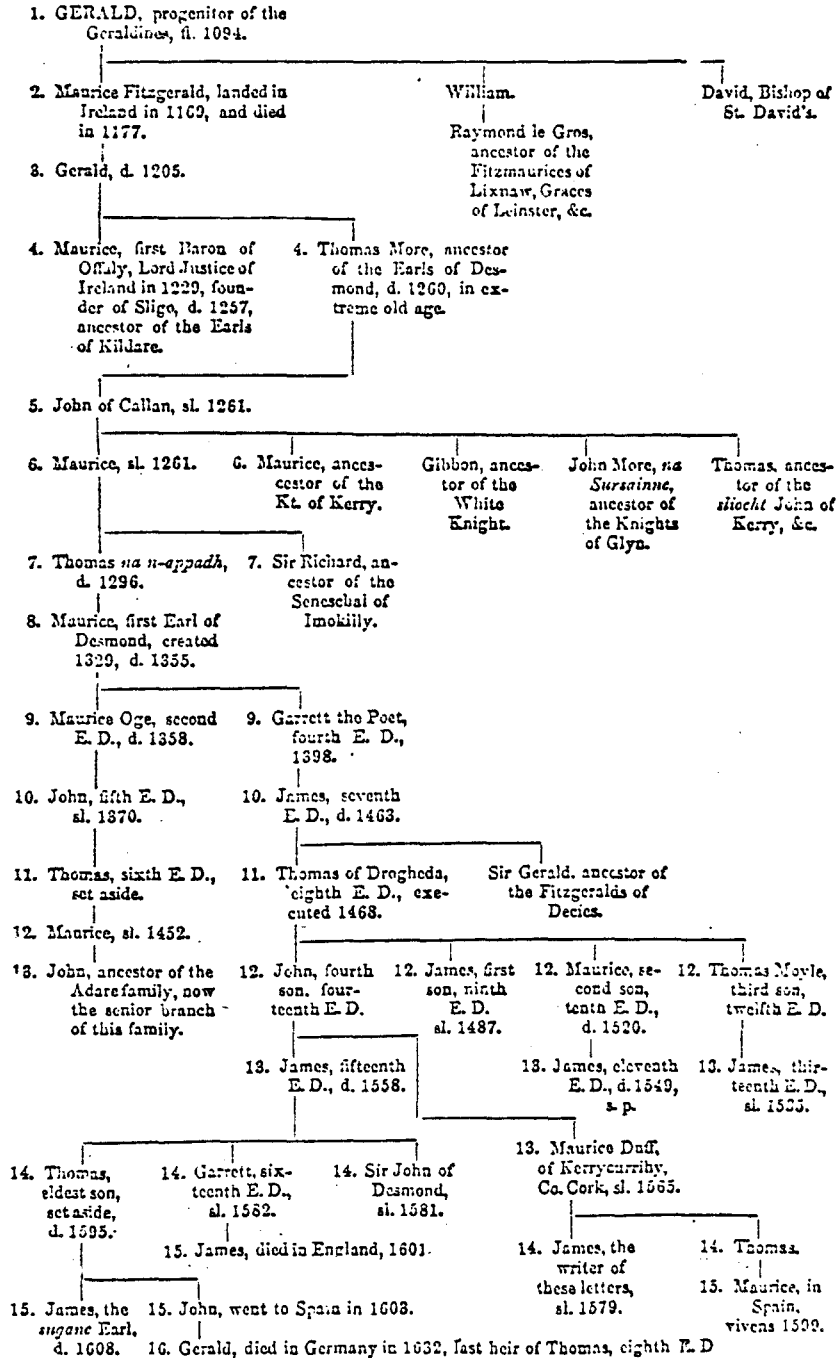
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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

PEDIGREE OF THE DESMOND GERALDINES.



APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Below is a listing of the men, ships, munitions and supplies required of His Catholic Majesty by agents representing James Fitzmaurice in 1578, which has been excerpted from CSP-Rome, 2: 545-546:

"On the other hand to facilitate the said enterprise and the insurrection of the friends and kinsmen, the said James craves, if so it please you, that he be provided with the commodities underwritten; to wit:--

Six ships, one of 400 some's burden, the second of 50, the third of 20, and three small ones for crossing rivers.

"Six hundred soldiers armed and paid for six months.

"Ten captains experienced in warfare.

"Six great pieces of artillery, and at least fifteen lesser pieces.

"Arms for three thousand soldiers.

"Twelve barrels of powder with projectiles and lead in sufficient quantity.

"License to take English ships out of the ports of Spain.

"License to sell in Spain spoils taken during the voyage.

"Four horses to enable advices to be sent to his friends and kinsmen pending disembarkation.

"(It is further) provided that, should some of the possessions of the Geraldines themselves be taken, they remain free in the same family.

"That if the port that is first taken shall belong to the Geraldines or their confederates, it be restored on security given by him to his Holiness or your Majesty for other safe ports and places.

"That there be sent with or soon after him a Legate or Nuncio Apostolic, and Dr. Sander with 20 good priests.

"That if he makes a good beginning, he be succoured within six months at the latest with six thousand foot-soldiers.

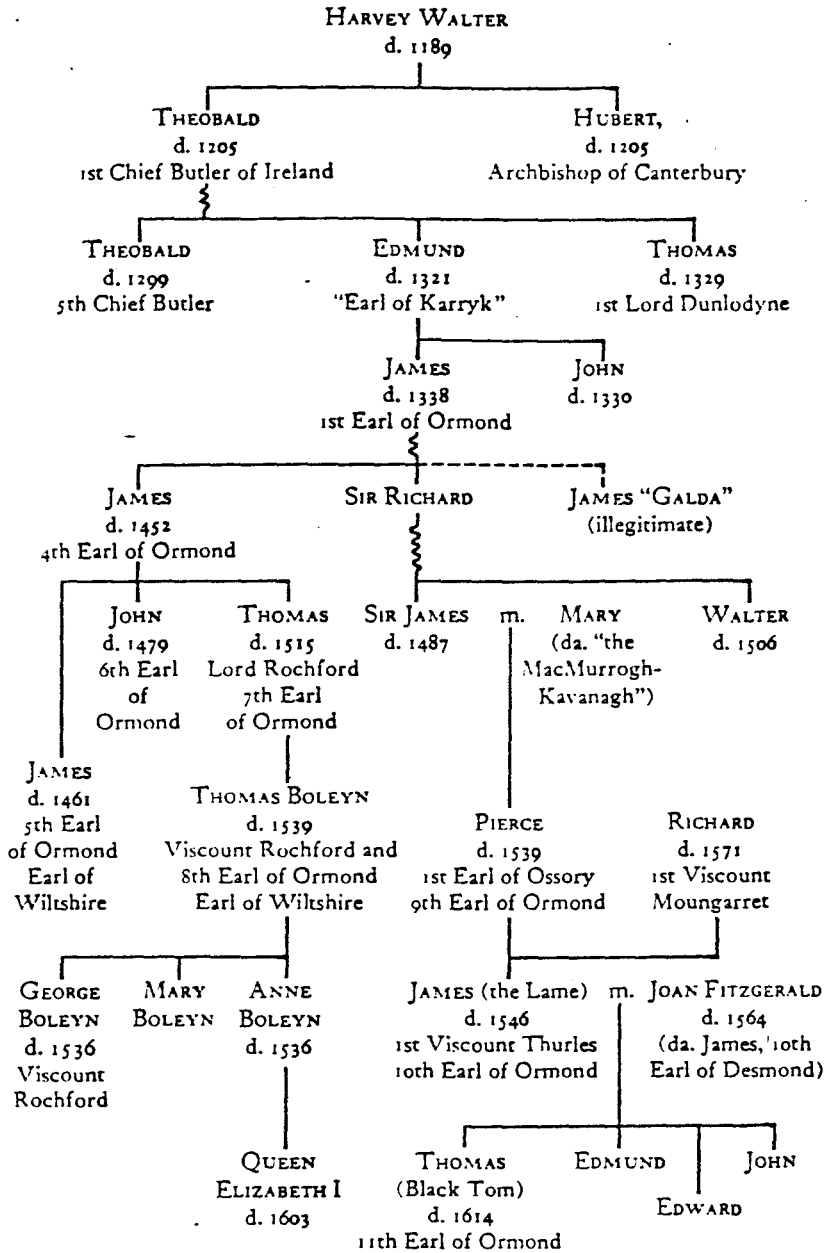
"That your Majesty engage, by writing under your own hand, to undertake the defence of the princes of Ireland against the Queen, when they have expelled the heretics from the island.

"That, if he manage the business successfully, then he be by his Holiness and your Majesty invested, for himself and his descendants, with his said possessions and those titles that shall seem proper."

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

The Earls of Ormond



APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Major Claude R. Sasso has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. William R. Trimble, Director
Professor, History, Loyola

Dr. Hanns Gross
Professor, History, Loyola

Fr. Charles E. Ronan
Professor, History, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below . verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 27, 1979
Date

William R. Trimble
Director's Signature