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IRISH PROTESTANT NATIONALISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

W. B. YEATS, during a debate on divorce in the Irish Free State Senate, described the Anglo-Irish as "no petty people. We are one of the great stocks of Europe". Brendan Behan, in less lyrical vein, made a character in *The Hossage* define an Anglo-Irishman as "a protestant on a horse". This paper is concerned with the behaviour of those who chose to dismount from the high horse of Protestant ascendancy during the later nineteenth century.

The position of a minority is never entirely easy, but it may be less agonizing—at least in the moral sense—when the minority is striving to assert its rights to equal citizenship than when it is called upon to surrender its privileges. Few of the solid block of Protestants in north-east Ireland had doubts about the choice that should be made. Theirs was a colonial role, and they were determined to maintain it. It was admirably expressed by a speaker at a meeting held in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, on the morning of the signing of the Ulster covenant on September 27, 1912. The Reverend William McKean, ex-moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, after a reference to the seventeenth-century Ulster plantation, declared: "We have been loyal to the trust reposed in us by the English king and the English people, and have stamped a new type of religious thought and industry on every part of the province that has come under our influence, which is in happy accord with all that is truest and best in the life of the great empire with which we are connected. . . . The Irish question is at bottom a war against Protestantism; it is an attempt to establish a Roman Catholic ascendancy in Ireland, to begin the disintegration of the empire by securing a second parliament in Dublin."

The attitude shown in this Unionist apologia, which could with little alteration have been made a century earlier, was distinguished by a stark if not refreshing simplicity. No such unambiguous attitude was possible for Protestant dissidents, whose choice could range from a modest modification of the Act of Union to full-scale republican separatism. In addition, after 1829 they found themselves in a new situation created by Catholic emancipation. O'Con-

nell's followers had been transformed from passive voting fodder into active members of the political nation, and the parish—the natural social unit of rural Ireland—had become an electoral cell with the parish clergy its leaders. When Protestant nationalists helped to effect further breaches in the wall of Protestant ascendancy they would find the Catholic clergy beside them; the priest had entered politics.

O'Connell's campaign for the repeal of the Act of Union attracted only modest Protestant support, a Protestant Repeal Association expiring after a few months' existence in 1848. There were Protestants in the Young Ireland and Nation group, but Thomas Davis and his colleagues, whether Protestant or Catholic, were uncomfortable allies, for the tradition they cherished was one derived from Wolfe Tone and French revolutionary ideals. Understandably hostile to the attempts of some of O'Connell's associates to identify Irish nationality with Catholicism they objected to the Liberator's support for denominational education in the proposed Queen's Colleges, contending that it would obstruct the building of the nation by perpetuating sectarian differences. The deaths of Davis and O'Connell, the abortive rising of 1848, the toll of the famine years, closed the era of repeal. It had added to the roll of imprisoned or exiled protestant patriots such names as William Smith O'Brien, that most moderate of revolutionary landlords, John Mitchell, John Martin, and the future Fenian leader Thomas Clarke Luby. It left a legacy of unresolved questions: acceptance, modification or complete dissolution of the Union, primacy of faith or fatherland, French revolutionary or counter-reformation ideals, tenant right or landlord wrong? Nor was resolution made easier by their often simultaneous presentation.

If we except Fenian activities, the late 1850s and 1860s are virtually barren of serious efforts to secure even a modest measure of Irish autonomy. Yet there were a number of events of importance for the future development of Irish nationalism: the conversion of Isaac Butt to Home Rule, the execution in 1867 of the "Manchester Martyrs", Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869. Butt, formerly a stout defender of Protestant ascendancy and the Union, had, it was rumoured, contemplated joining the short-lived Protestant Repeal Association in 1848; he was briefed for the defence in the later treason trials of Smith O'Brien and Thomas Meagher.¹ His subsequent experience as a defending counsel for the Fenian prisoners of 1865 seems to have convinced him of the necessity of Home Rule for Ireland. The bearing of the prisoners impressed many Protestants, includ-

ing those who were not even constitutional nationalists; among those who petitioned for their reprieve were the vice-provost and seventeen fellows of Trinity College, Dublin.² In 1868 Butt started the Amnesty Association, which in its campaign in behalf of the imprisoned Fenians aroused sympathy for the men, if not the means employed, and renewed interest in their objective.

The execution of Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien in November, 1867, on a charge of complicity in the rescue of Fenian prisoners, during which a policeman was accidentally killed, had an effect on the public imagination not to be equalled until the executions of the 1916 leaders. Requiem masses were offered in Catholic churches draped in black, funeral processions were organized, not only in Irish towns and in Manchester but as far away as New Zealand, and the anniversary of the execution became in subsequent years the occasion of the largest ceremonies in the nationalist calendar.

Several factors were responsible for the emotion aroused. The evidence connecting the three men with the death of the police sergeant was questionable and the wide-spread conviction of their innocence led most Irishmen to regard them as martyrs. There had been no execution of a similar nature for many years. The triple hanging was public, attended by a large crowd which included those who had come, like Bacon's young traveller, to see "capital executions and such shows" and slake their thirst for vengeance. (Public executions were abolished the following year.) The detailed accounts of the hangings in many newspapers, Allen's youthfulness (he was nineteen), the presence of priests in the condemned cells and on the scaffold, and the fervent religious and patriotic tone of the men's last letters from prison ensured their immediate recognition as martyrs and strengthened the identification of faith and fatherland. It is significant that the Sullivan brothers in their popular nationalist writings of a later date should describe Allen, who had been brought up as a Protestant, as renouncing "the alien religion" on his conversion to Catholicism.³

The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 marked the formal end of Protestant ascendancy in ecclesiastical affairs. The decay in the Irish economy and the threat of a land act, which materialized in 1870, added to the discontent of some Irish conservatives and caused them to wonder whether their interests might not be better protected by an Irish parliament than by Westminster, where Gladstone's policy seemed to be increasingly moulded by radicals. Of the 61 who were founding members of Butt's Home Government Association (formed in May 1870) 35 were Protestants, 28 of these Conservatives, almost all middle-class.⁴ Though within two years Cath-

olics were in a majority on the executive council of the Association, Protestants were still strongly represented in what amounted to a private organization with a membership fee that debarred popular participation. Yet this home rule body made little headway in enrolling landlords and Protestant gentry; as early as August, 1871, an official, Alfred Webb, a Quaker, advised a Catholic member (W. J. O'Neill Daunt) to abandon hope of "attracting any large number of our protestant fellow countrymen".⁵ An Ulster protestant landlord offered the following explanation to the same member: "The only thing which I believe prevents the protestant party and gentry generally from joining the movement is the fear that out of home rule may arise a series of assaults upon the rights of property against which England would protect them".⁵

Butt on the contrary believed that federal home rule would avert such assaults. The Catholic masses and clergy were basically conservative and would be weaned from radicalism if they were granted tenant right, support for denominational education, and a measure of Home Rule to satisfy national aspirations. A separate if subordinate parliament would protect Ireland against secular and radical influences emanating from England, preserve substantially the rights of private property and enable all classes to co-operate in improving the Irish economy.

Such a programme required a political party and action at Westminster. The loose Home Government Association, after a conference in November, 1873, gave way to the Home Rule League, which was more broadly based and with more clearly defined objectives. After the general election of January, 1874, fought under the provisions of the 1872 Ballot Act, the Home Rule M.P.s formed a distinct party with its own whips, secretaries, and council. Of the 59 Home Rule members 13 were Protestants, as were 3 of the 12 Liberals; all 32 Conservatives were Protestant.⁵ The result, while gratifying to home-rulers in point of numbers, confirmed what had already been evident in the Home Government Association somewhat earlier, the departure of Conservatives; more ominous was the representation of Ulster which, by returning only two home-rulers, showed how strong among its mainly Protestant electorate was hostility even to the mild federalist request for autonomy.

Expressions of national sentiment were not confined to politicians or Dublin businessmen whose motives might not be disinterested. When Butt launched his association in 1870 he could count on the sympathy of a number of members of the professional middle class, including Protestant clergymen.⁶ Among them were several of the fellows and professors of Trinity College,

Dublin. In 1869, two T.C.D. Fellows, Thomas Ebenezer Webb, Professor of Moral Philosophy, and George Ferdinand Shaw, addressed a meeting of a Grattan monument committee. Webb, after referring to Grattan's efforts for Catholic emancipation, spoke of him as "an Anglo-Irishman who always maintained the dignity of his country and its right to have its own individuality and its personality recognized, without being merged in those of any other country". Shaw said that though now one heard little of repeal he thought that "there was never a period in which the subject of repeal lay more deeply or universally in the Irish heart".⁷ Other sympathizers included Samuel Haughton, Professor of Geology, and the Reverend Joseph Allen Galbraith, Professor of Experimental Philosophy, who became an official of the Home Government Association. The Professor of Modern History, James W. Barlow, gave a series of lectures on Irish history that drew favourable comment from nationalist periodicals and from Thomas Clarke Luby. Luby, lecturing in New York, noted an increased movement of Irish Protestants to Irish nationality, the happy result of disestablishment, a "measure achieved by Gladstone, the I.R.B. and the Fenians". The true aim of the Trinity College training was to anglicize Irishmen, but all had apparently changed. Not only were the dons affected, but the general tone was altered and even those doubtful about self-government because of religious animosities were "at the same time full of generous national sentiments, at bottom . . . hostile to British supremacy" (Sept. 20, 1873).

Protestant nationalists and federalists in Ulster appealed on somewhat different grounds. Those who were Presbyterian ministers asserted that the Protestant ascendancy was in reality an established church ascendancy, as was evident from the filling of official positions and the choice of parliamentary candidates; when in the 1830s Henry Cooke, the "Presbyterian Pope", had proclaimed the bans of marriage between prelacy and presbyterianism he had sold his fellow Presbyterians into tory bondage. The Reverend Henry Wallace, Professor of Christian Ethics, Assembly's College, Belfast, during a lecture in November, 1868, asserted that it was unlawful to have introduced an established church into Ireland at any time. An effort was being made to denationalize them, and no respect was being shown to national religion or to the sentiments of the people as Irish people. He declared that the love of country would inspire a strong resistance to anglicization and invoked Ireland's cultural heritage: "You cannot obliterate, you cannot root out these traditions, you can never root out these ancient songs and you can never put a stop to the music of Carolan" (Nov. 7, 1868).⁸

The necessity of abolishing Catholic-Protestant animosities was of peculiar importance in Ulster. Another evocation of the past was made in October, 1872, when at a meeting of the newly formed Belfast Home Rule Association the principal speaker, Captain Macartney, quoted from an address⁹ to the people of Belfast issued in January, 1792, by a "well-known" society (the United Irishmen) in support of Catholic emancipation; he echoed its hopes for a day when Catholic and Protestant should be cordially united and equally interested in the country's social welfare.¹⁰ Other Protestant speakers included John Ferguson of the Glasgow Home Rule Association and the Reverend Isaac Nelson, a Presbyterian minister. Nelson had in his own person experienced the rigours of religio-political sectarianism; during the Belfast riots of 1864 he had been assaulted and house property he possessed damaged when he tried to protect some Catholics. Ten years later his houses stood untenanted (they were in a Protestant quarter of the city), some indeed almost demolished. In 1878 he narrowly escaped injury when his own residence was attacked (Feb. 23, 1878).

Religious affiliation is no guide in distinguishing the moderate nationalist for whom federal Home Rule was the ultimate objective from those who sought repeal or even from those who, as the heirs of Tone, demanded an Irish republic. Protestants as well as Catholics may be found among all three groups. John Martin became a home-rule M.P. in 1871 only because he decided that the temper of the times was unfavourable to repeal; he was sufficiently unregenerate in spirit a year later to declare in Glasgow that he was a very moderate man but "he could not condemn the most desperate Fenian that ever conspired".¹¹ Protestantism failed to bridge the political gap between John Ferguson, ex-I.R.B. man, and such extremely moderate men as Mitchell Henry and William Shaw, Congregationalist banker; Henry, who after several defeats as a Liberal candidate in England had become a home-rule M.P. for county Galway, wrote to Butt in 1875 that "Ferguson of Glasgow and no doubt others are to be feared as allies, for they are republicans and with many of their sentiments I have no sympathy".¹² Nor can religion be used to separate in the late 1870s the active obstructionists led by Biggar and Parnell and the decorous followers of Butt and his successor Shaw.

Is there then any justification for distinguishing between Protestant and Catholic nationalists, since it seems impossible to isolate Irish Protestant nationalism as a political entity? The answer is yes if we remember that the Irish Protestant who was a nationalist representative was peculiarly aware of his position. John Martin, in a speech on the declaration of the poll for the

Meath election of January, 1871, said: "I am a protestant and a catholic people have chosen me as their representative", whereupon a voice interjected: "You are a nationalist, though" (Jan. 14, 1871). Nationalism was not always enough. In the Galway election held a year later the chairman (a priest), introduced the candidate as the nominee of "the great patriarch of the West, Dr. McHale", the archbishop of Tuam, and added that "he was the elected also of the priests and people of Ireland" (Feb. 3, 1872). When, in 1875, Archbishop McHale celebrated the golden jubilee of his episcopacy a Home Rule League deputation, which included Protestant and Catholic clergy, presented an address praising him for cultivating the spirit of nationality in his diocese; in contract a separate address was presented by a deputation of M.P.s who described themselves as the Catholic representatives of Ireland (June 12, 1875).

If at certain times and in certain constituencies clerical influence was not exercised or was divided between candidates, as a general rule a would-be M.P. appealing to a Catholic electorate could not expect to succeed unless he had the backing of the clergy, which took the form of endorsement by a bishop and his clergy, some of whom might appear on an election platform. The clergy formed an important part of the election machinery throughout the 1870s in the absence of a regular rank-and-file organization. Parnell did not hesitate to call upon them for disciplinary purposes, as in the case of H. W. Villiers Stuart, returned for Waterford in 1880. Stuart, in a letter to the *Times* shortly after his election declared that he was not a home-ruler in the sense of being a party member. Parnell reported the matter to the Bishop of Waterford, pointing out that the Bishop, on receiving satisfactory assurances from Villiers Stuart, had issued to the clergy of Waterford a circular which was read in all the churches, directing them to advise their flocks to vote for Stuart (May 8, 1880). The recalcitrant was suitably admonished.

There was no uniform pattern of clerical influence in the general election of 1880, which was marked in a number of constituencies by struggles between followers of Parnell and candidates of a whiggish complexion. Parnell, who was returned for three constituencies, had declined an invitation from the "bishops, priests and people of Sligo" to contest a seat there (Apr. 10, 1880). On the other hand some of his candidates met clerical opposition, notably in Wexford, where the clerical chairman of a meeting invoked memories of 1798 and reminded his audience that the papal soldier candidate the Chevalier O'Clery, had "offered his blood at the foot of Pius IX" (Apr. 3, 1880). O'Clery was, however, defeated and Parnell himself won in Cork despite the manifesto

supporting his opponent issued by the bishop and clergy of Cork (Apr. 10, 1880). Nonetheless by 1885 Catholic clergy were normally present at conventions to select nationalist candidates, the average attendance consisting of 150 laymen and 50 priests, evidence of the alliance concluded between Parnell and the Catholic clergy.¹³ Clerical participation after the Parnell split in 1891 ceased at Parnellite conventions but persisted among the anti-Parnellite majority. It was formally embodied in the procedure laid down in September, 1900, by the reunited party. It is true that the clerical delegation at election conventions consisted of "the clergy of all denominations",¹³ but with a few rare exceptions this meant the Catholic clergy of the constituency.

Though the presence of Protestants in the Irish nationalist ranks was generally accepted and indeed at times emphasized for political purposes, there were occasions when it was resented. One such was the O'Connell centenary of 1875. The Lord Mayor of Dublin (Peter Paul McSwiney) sent out a circular letter proposing the establishment of a National O'Connell Committee in Dublin to keep watch "on the eternal as well as the temporal interests of the people he loved so well" and asserting that to make a united Ireland "our motto must be Faith and Fatherland".¹⁴ Asked if the circular were genuine he replied that it was, adding "I am for faith and fatherland. So was O'Connell. So are the Irish people. Like him they are Catholics first and repealers afterwards. They are no more federalists than they are Protestants."¹⁴ He found sympathizers in the editors of two provincial newspapers, the *Galway Vindicator* and the *Kilkenny Journal* as well as in an M.P. (P. J. Smyth), but his scheme collapsed.

On the same occasion some Glasgow priests planning a rival procession to that of the nationalist one appealed to their audience "not to be led away by the nose by Protestants and other renegades", and called for the removal of John Ferguson from the presidency of the Glasgow Home Rule Association. Some of the Association members took part in this meeting. Ferguson offered to resign, but defended the principle of a non-sectarian Irish organization. A large meeting was held to protest against the priests' remarks, and speakers who announced themselves as Catholics, on behalf of the executive council of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, condemned sectarianism. Ferguson was confirmed as president amid scenes of enthusiasm (Aug. 21, 28, 1875).

A potentially more serious incident occurred in 1879 when J. G. Biggar addressed a meeting of London Irishmen on the future of the Irish race. Biggar, originally a Presbyterian, had become a Catholic in 1877. He began by

defining the Irish race as consisting of "all Irishmen of the Roman Catholic faith wherever they were to be found". Protestants he did not consider Irishmen at all. They were merely West Britons who had, by accident, been born in Ireland; and from his own experience he could say that they were the bitterest enemies of Ireland. He rejoiced that Irishmen had clung to their faith. It was that which had preserved their nationality, and had prevented their being absorbed and lost sight of in the great English and Scottish towns where they had settled.¹⁵

Though Biggar's speech contained interesting suggestions about an alliance between Irish nationalists and the English working class and the persuasive value of physical force in dealings with the English governing class, it was his description of Protestants as West Britons that excited the greatest attention. The *Cork Examiner* (March 11, 1879) reported that Biggar was in strong disfavour with his party, that Parnell had taken the statement as personal and that his resentment was shared by other non-Catholic home-rulers and approved of by all the Catholic members except one. At one stage it looked as if Biggar might be expelled from the party, but a letter from the chairman of his London meeting pleading that Biggar's words had been misconstrued and Biggar's own partial retraction, in which he listed "honourable exceptions", averted further storms (Mar. 29, Apr. 19, 1879).

In the following year the Reverend Isaac Nelson threw in the apple of discord when he was reported as attacking clerical control of education. Biggar accused him of saying, after a conversation with a Catholic priest, that "these men are only trading on the ignorance of the ignorant and lording it in the name of religion over the consciences of men".¹⁶ Nelson denied that he was attacking "the most venerable of all the European forms of organised Christian government" as he knew too well the sufferings of the clergy under "the upstart tyranny and cruel zeal" of Knox and Cranmer. But he did not "give up the liberty of dissenting from the opinions and objecting to the actions of Laud and Rinuccini".¹⁷ If he was attacking any community it was "that ecclesiastical chameleon called the Protestant Church, which has always been the relentless oppressor of Ireland and which is always on the side of sectarian bigotry" (Oct. 16, 1880).

The alliance between Parnell and the Catholic clergy, though a *mariage de convenance* rather than a union of hearts, was not threatened throughout the 1880s by dissensions arising from Catholic-Protestant differences. The proportion of Protestants in the parliamentary party continued to be above that

in the electorate of nationalist Ireland, nor was there any marked change up to the end of our period. Indeed the presence of Protestants was a positive advantage as a proof both of nationalist broadmindedness and of the assured place awaiting them in an Irish legislature. Two pronouncements of the Irish Catholic hierarchy, its calling on the party in 1884 to urge the claims of Catholic education on the House of Commons and its declaration in favour of Home Rule in 1886, were evidence that it had overcome earlier fears of radical or revolutionary sympathies among Irish members, some of whom had supported the admission to parliament in 1880 of the atheist Charles Bradlaugh; two years later they opposed him. There was no questioning of Parnell's leadership on the basis of his religious allegiance, even though with the decline of the convention system of choosing candidates between 1886 and 1890 clerical influence lessened, since the choice was made by Parnell and a group of his advisers. And although the clergy opposed Parnell during the leadership controversy in 1891 they did not take the initiative; in addition, it should be noted that most of the Protestants in the parliamentary party became anti-Parnellites. Yet even if we cannot accept Yeats's contention that "the Bishops and the Party/That tragic story made", (*Come, gather round me, Parnellites*), the spectacle was calculated to confirm the feeble knees of any Ulster Unionist who was wavering in his politico-sectarian faith.

The Protestant who chose the nationalist side had to accept certain restraints on his activities and public pronouncements. Clerical influence was a fact of political life. On certain issues, notably that of education, he had to imitate Agag and walk delicately. For such men as Butt and Mitchell Henry no difficulty arose since they favoured denominational education, but it was otherwise for those who supported public as against clerical control and held with Davis that mixed education was necessary if a genuine national unity was to be achieved. It is noteworthy that among nationalists it was the Catholic Michael Davitt who was most outspoken in his advocacy of mixed education and in his criticism of the clerical managerial system. And when the Irish party reversed its attitude on the admission of Bradlaugh, Davitt continued to deny the validity of religious tests for M.P.s.

The Protestant nationalist in the later nineteenth century laboured under certain difficulties. He had cut himself off from the majority of his co-religionists. He suffered, consciously or unconsciously, from a sense of collective guilt over the treatment of his Catholic countrymen and recognized that Protestant ascendancy had been largely responsible for the appearance of the priest

in politics; he was also painfully aware of the all too contemporary prominence of Protestant clerics in Unionist and Orange assemblies. Open criticism of Catholic clerical influence would give ammunition to anti-home-rulers for whom Home Rule was Rome rule. Signs of anti-clericalism in a Protestant could easily be construed as thinly-disguised anti-Catholicism, an unpleasant survival from an unregenerate past. Thus handicapped, the Protestant nationalist tended to adopt the policy prescribed in seventeenth-century France during one stage of the Jansenist controversy and preserve a "reverent silence" on delicate issues.

Northern Protestant nationalists had to work in a highly unfavourable, indeed hostile, atmosphere and were regarded by their co-religionists as a fifth column within the Protestant citadel; those who were working-class suffered equally with their Catholic mates in times of tension, as in the 1912 expulsions from Belfast shipyards. The Reverend Isaac Nelson had concentrated his fire on the Church of Ireland, though it is clear, despite his disavowals, that he also aimed at Catholic clerical influence. A younger man, the Reverend J. B. Armour of Ballymoney, from 1892 onwards fought a sustained battle as a Gladstonian home-ruler. He shared Nelson's view that the Protestant ascendancy was an Episcopalian one and like him was an advocate of united secular and separate religious education. He declared at a meeting of the General Assembly in 1886 that if denominational education were introduced the Presbyterian motto should be compulsory, secular education: "the living churches will attend to the religious education of the young without Caesar's crutch".¹⁸ If he did not share the Catholic enthusiasm for denominational education he frequently declared that Catholics as a body had never got justice nor their talents a fair chance. He strove in vain to prevent his church assembly tying itself to Unionism, which he saw as the political expression of the late established church.

Perhaps the most interesting attempt to win over Irish Protestants to nationalism was made by Robert Lindsay Crawford in the first decade of this century. An Orangeman and a prominent layman in the Church of Ireland, Crawford was born in Lisburn (County Down) but was resident in Dublin where he edited and published a weekly paper, the *Irish Protestant*, low church and anti-ritualistic in tone. He became the first Imperial Grand Master of the Independent Orange Order, which broke away from the parent Orange body in 1903. Initially resentful of the tory domination of the official Orange Order, Crawford moved toward a home-rule position while retaining his distrust of

Catholic clerical influence. In the manifesto which the new order adopted in July, 1905, Crawford condemned majority Protestant and Catholic attitudes, stating that it was time that "Irish Protestants should consider their position as Irish citizens and their attitude towards their Roman Catholic countrymen, and that the latter should choose once for all between nationality and sectarianism".¹⁹ Shortly afterwards he extended his condemnation to include Protestant sectarianism, saying that it was "as destructive of national life and progress"¹⁹ as its Catholic counterpart. Crawford received encouragement from Davitt, though in letters marked "private", and from others, including Protestant clergymen; the attitude of nationalist newspapers was more reserved because of his condemnation of clericalism. Appointed editor in 1906 of the new liberal weekly, the *Ulster Guardian*, Crawford conducted a vigorous campaign to instil in Ulster Protestants a sense of nationality. The first Irish trade-union parliamentary candidate, Alexander Bowman, himself a Protestant, had received some Protestant working class support, even though his attitude to the Union was suspect, when he stood in North Belfast against a Conservative in 1885; he was dismissed the following year from the secretaryship of the Belfast Trades Council when he supported the first Home Rule bill.²⁰ Crawford endeavoured to enlist the same support, took the side of the strikers led by James Larkin in 1907 and encouraged a tenuous alliance between Nationalists, independent Orangemen, Liberals, and political Labour. But in a worsening political climate the pace was too rapid for some of the participants. Crawford's barely disguised home-rule sentiments and his condemnation of sweated conditions in the linen trade aroused opposition within the Independent Orange Order and the Ulster Liberal Association and in May, 1908, he was expelled from the order and forced to resign his editorship of the *Ulster Guardian*. After vainly seeking employment he emigrated to Canada in 1910.

The identification of political and religious opinions was characteristic of Ulster Unionism and the rare Catholic Unionist candidate was selected to fight debatable West Ulster seats as he would have been rejected by solidly Protestant constituencies. Yet some nationalist candidates, especially in Ulster, were not averse to making an appeal on grounds of faith as well as fatherland; the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Catholic equivalent of the Orange Order, was the nationalist political machine in some constituencies.

That for some faith and fatherland was the ideal if not the inevitable conjunction raises another question. When Isaac Butt died a number of articles appeared suggesting that in his later years he contemplated becoming a

Catholic and that he accepted a number of Catholic dogmas, e.g. the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.²¹ The question is: when is a Protestant Nationalist not a Protestant? Is Sir Roger Casement, for instance, who became a Catholic shortly before his execution, to be counted in the ranks of Protestant Nationalists? There was a tendency for some Protestant Nationalists who had been reared in an ascendancy atmosphere and had rejected their earlier political tenets to go further and seek a closer identification with the national being by embracing Catholicism. It was a tendency not devoid of satirical possibilities; Pádraic O Conaire presents in one chapter of *Fearfasa Mac Feasa*²² a character of indisputably WASPish antecedents who starts to read primers of the Irish language; he goes to the Aran Islands, adopts the island dress, changes his name from Reginald Somerfield to Arthur O'Neill, gaelicizes it, and finally becomes a Catholic and addresses his unreconstructed wife as Bean Ui Néill. Faith undoubtedly gained, but the cause of fatherland suffered, since each conversion was another proof in Unionist eyes of the identity of Home and Rome Rule.

Irish Protestant Nationalism ceases to be of importance after 1914. Its great days, in politics if not in literature, ended in 1891, but if it no longer supplied a Parnell the presence in public life of individuals who thought of themselves as Irish rather than as West British colonial Protestants was of some value in retaining British Liberal support and in maintaining in both islands a non-sectarian conception of Irish nationality. But Protestant nationalism had a *raison d'être* only during the struggle for self-government and the attainment of its aim necessarily implied the disappearance of its role, just as the emergence of a classless society entails the disappearance of the working class. The weakening of Protestant ascendancy, its initial aim, steadily reduced the weight of its own contribution to the national struggle. The tragedy of the Protestant Nationalist lay not in his diminished importance but in his failure to carry the majority of his co-religionists with him, a tragedy foreshadowed in 1914 and enacted less than a decade later in the partition of Ireland. Faced with two states, their very existence, apart from their nature, being a negation of his ideal, he was left with the infinitely more difficult task of joining together what many men had put asunder.

NOTES

1. L. J. McCaffrey, "Irish federalism in the 1870s" p. 8, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, N. S., vol. 52, pt. 6, 1962; D. Thornley, *Isaac and home rule* (London, 1964), p. 8.

2. *Irishman*, June 1, 1867. The total number of fellows was thirty-four. The vice-provost was John Lewis Moore, former professor of modern history. The signatories included two subsequent provosts (George Salmon and J. P. Mahaffy), William Stokes (the son of Whitley Stokes, one-time United Irishman) and John Kells Ingram.
3. T. D., A. M., and D. B. Sullivan, *Speeches from the dock*, ed. Seán Ua Cellaigh (Dublin, 1945), p. 409. Allen, whose mother was a Catholic, was converted some years before his execution.
4. L. J. McCaffrey, "Irish federalism", p. 11, n. 29; D. Thornley, *Isaac Butt*, pp. 92-3.
5. L. J. McCaffrey, "Irish federalism", pp. 12, 14, 22.
6. E.g., the Rev. W. G. Carroll who, at a meeting of the association (Dec. 6, 1871) announced that he had told Gladstone that there was a national party in Ireland nearly three hundred years before there was a Protestant in the world (*Cork Examiner*, Dec. 7, 1871).
7. *Irishman*, Jan. 9, 1869. (Subsequent references to the *Irishman* are given, by dates, in parentheses in the text.)
8. Carolan was the last of the Irish traditional harpers. For Presbyterian antagonism to Church of Ireland ascendancy see W. S. Armour, *Armour of Ballymoney* (London, 1934), ch. v. and *passim*, and J. W. Good, *Ulster and Ireland* (Dublin and London, 1919).
9. *Hibernian Journal*, Jan. 30, 1782, quoted in Rosamund Jacob, *The Rise of the United Irishmen* (London, 1937), p. 100.
10. *Belfast News-Letter*, Oct. 30, 1872.
11. *Northern Whig*, Mar. 21, 1872, sub-leader.
12. Quoted in L. J. McCaffrey, "Irish federalism", p. 38, n. 49.
13. C. Cruise O'Brien, *Parnell and his party* (London, 1957), p. 130. See also p. 129 for the reactions of Michael Davitt and T. W. Rolleston to this procedure.
13. *Freeman's Journal*, Sept. 30, 1900, quoted in F. S. L. Lyons, *The Irish parliamentary party, 1890-1910*, (London, 1951), p. 151.
14. *Nation*, Sept. 18, 1875.
15. *Times*, Mar. 4, 1879.
16. *Freeman's Journal*, Oct. 4, 1880.
17. Rinuccini was the ultramontane papal nuncio to Ireland in 1645-49.
18. W. S. Armour, *Armour of Ballymoney*, p. 58.
19. Quoted in J. W. Boyle, "The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order, 1901-10", *Irish Historical Studies*, xiii (1962), pp. 135, 136.
20. See J. W. Boyle, "Le développement du mouvement ouvrier irlandais de 1880 à 1907", *Le Mouvement Social*, 52 (Paris, 1965). 47.
21. Articles in the *Tablet*, *Vindicator*, quoted in *Irishman*, May 17, 1879.
22. Dublin, 1930, pp. 82-8.