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# The North and Young Ireland

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By Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich

## Background

By Thomas McGrath

This article was delivered as a public lecture by the historian, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, in Ballingarry parish hall in South Tipperary on 28 July 1989. It is published here as delivered. The cardinal did not have an opportunity to work on it further as he died less than a year later in May 1990. The lecture was delivered at the invitation of the Ballingarry Young Ireland 1848 Society, which had been founded a short time before to promote interest in the events of 1848 in Co. Tipperary. Three public lectures were delivered at this time. The others were by the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, Denis McDermott, and the Munster M.E.P. and Tipperary man, T.J. Maher.

Cardinal Ó Fiaich had unveiled a statue of Fr. Michael O’Hickey in Carrickbeg, Carrick-on-Suir on 24 July 1988. On that occasion the present writer asked him to visit Ballingarry. He suggested that I write to him, and with the help of Archbishop Clifford the lecture visit was duly arranged. Cardinal Ó Fiaich’s lecture was delivered before a large audience comprising several direct descendants of the Young Ireland leaders. The following day the cardinal visited the “Warhouse” (the Widow McCormack’s house) at Warhouse Hill and unveiled a monument commemorating the Young Irelanders and 1848 in the village of The Commons in Ballingarry parish, a place he called “sacred ground in Irish history”. The monument is a large, plain two and a half ton piece of Irish granite quarried in the Wicklow mountains.

The inscription on this monument states:

## Young Ireland 1848

*The Young Ireland movement inspired by Thomas Davis culminated during the great famine and mass emigration of 1845-1848. In the Young Ireland rebellion the leaders met for the last time here in The Commons on 28 July 1848. Present were William Smith O’Brien, M.P., Thomas Francis Meagher, John Blake Dillon, Terence Bellew MacManus, James Stephens, John O’Mahony, Michael Doherty, Maurice Richard Leyne, James Cantwell, Patrick O’Donohue and Thomas Devin Reilly. On 29 July 1848 the rebellion ended nearby in a fatal engagement at the ‘Warhouse’ and the leaders were forced into exile in Australia, America, Canada and France. Subsequently Stephens, O’Mahony and Doherty founded the I.R.B. which organised the rebellions of 1867 and 1916.*

*In 1848 Thomas Francis Meagher presented the tricolour to the Irish people with the words “The white in the centre signifies a lasting truce between the ‘Orange’ and the ‘Green’ and I trust that beneath its folds the hands of the Irish Protestant and the Irish Catholic may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood”.*

*Here, where according to tradition the tricolour was raised during the 1848 rebellion, the national flag is flown in commemoration of its origins.*

*Muintir pharóiste Bhaile an Gharraí a thóg an leacht so. An staraí Cairdinéal Tomás Ó Fiaich a nocht é. 29 Iúil 1989.*



The tricolour was jointly raised on the occasion by Rev E.C. Argyll, Rector of Kilcooley and Cardinal Ó Fiaich. The event was covered by RTE on its main evening news. This monument has since been signposted. The Cardinal's sudden death came as a shock to the people of Ballingarry parish, where he had been given a great welcome and where he had made a considerable impact in the space of two days.

## I – Introduction

Long ago, as a child, I often heard my father say that when he was a student of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra at the beginning of the century he followed the coffin of Charles Gavan Duffy to its last resting place in Glasnevin. Gavan Duffy died at Nice in the south of France on 9th February 1903 and a representative committee, which included Armagh's first Cardinal, Michael Logue, was set up at once to arrange for the repatriation of his remains.

After being brought to the Pro-Cathedral for Requiem Mass celebrated by Archbishop Walsh, they were laid to rest within the O'Connell Circle in Glasnevin in the presence of a great concourse of people on Sunday 8th March 1903. Charles Gavan Duffy's son, George, was of course the well-known judge, President of the Irish High Court until his death in 1951, and Charles's daughter, Louise, was still a very active member of *An Réalt* when I knew her in the 1950s and 1960s.

I mention these facts this evening to emphasise that, although nearly a century and a half has passed since the events of Ballingarry in 1848, they are not by any means as remote from us as they may seem at first sight. My grandfather was born in that fatal year, my professor of history, Fr. Aubrey Gwynn, S.J., was a grandson of Smith O'Brien who led the men of 1848, and many of you, I'm sure, can make similar statements about your own grandparents. Tonight I want to have another look at the Young Ireland Movement, concentrating especially on the contribution made to it by Ulstermen, and on the lessons which it holds for Ulster today.

## II – Young Ireland

The name *Young Ireland* was never officially adopted by any movement of the 1840s as its proper title. In fact it was first used by an English journalist as a kind of nickname, implying that Davis, Duffy, Dillon and the others were imitating the Young England movement, the rather reactionary Tory group of Disraeli and Co. For this reason the Young Irelanders didn't like the name. When Daniel O'Connell and the Young Irelanders had their first clash about the Colleges Bill in 1845, O'Connell made a somewhat sarcastic reference to Young Ireland:

*There is no such party as that styled Young Ireland. There may be a few individuals who take that denomination on themselves . . . Young Ireland may play what pranks they please. But I do not envy them the name they rejoice in. I shall stand by Old Ireland; and I have some slight notion that Old Ireland will stand by me.*

It was an ungenerous reference by O'Connell to the younger men and he withdrew it almost immediately, to be followed by a conciliatory speech on the other side from Davis. But the seeds of distrust had been sown between the two sides.

Of course the name *Young Ireland* was not a misnomer for men who, as compared with O'Connell, then approaching 70, were nearly all in their 20s. In 1842 when *The Nation* was founded Smith O'Brien was 39, but Davis was only 28, Dillon and Duffy 26, Martin 30, Mitchel 27, McManus 31, O'Doherty and Meagher 19 each, and D'Arcy McGee 17.



I suppose we could describe the Young Irelanders therefore as the group of young men who were closely associated with *The Nation* weekly newspaper, and some of whom (but not all) were members and strong supporters of the Repeal Movement. When O'Connell founded the Loyal National Repeal Association in 1840, he got little support at first either in Parliament or outside it. In the general election of 1841 only about 18 of the candidates returned were Repealers. Many of the middle-class Catholics who had supported O'Connell in the struggle for Catholic Emancipation were content with the Whig administration and looked forward to a share in the spoils. Even O'Connell himself was defeated in Dublin and had to rely on Cork county to give him a seat. It was only after a year's agitation that the new Repeal movement began to gather strength.

### III – The Nation

It was just at this critical moment for the Repeal organisation that the three Ds of the movement – Davis from County Cork, Dillon from County Mayo and Duffy from County Monaghan – met under an elm tree in the Phoenix Park in spring or summer of 1842 and decided to launch *The Nation*, which became the most famous newspaper in Irish history. All three were in the legal profession, but Duffy was the only one who had previous newspaper experience. He had come from his native Monaghan to Dublin in 1836 to work on *The Morning Register*, the daily paper of the Catholic Association.

He then moved to Belfast in 1839 to become editor and later proprietor of *The Vindicator*, a bi-weekly Catholic paper there which supported O'Connell. He infused such a strong spirit of independence into the Belfast supporters of O'Connell that the *Liberator* was able to hold a largely attended meeting in Belfast in January 1841. It had to be held indoors, however; every pane of glass in *The Vindicator's* office was broken by the mob, and Duffy helped to smuggle O'Connell safely out of the city.

So when the three came together to found *The Nation*, it was natural that the northerner, although two years younger than Davis and the same age as Dillon, should be appointed editor, and as he put up the capital he was also proprietor of the new journal. Davis became the main writer – in both prose and verse – for which he received £400 per year, a good salary in those days. Circulation rose to about 10,000 copies, but every copy was read publicly to scores in clubs and reading rooms after Sunday Mass.

The first issue of *The Nation* appeared on 15th October, 1842, its name derived from a Paris newspaper *La Nation*. It was edited from D'Olier Street and sold at 6d a copy every week. Its motto was: "To create and foster public opinion and make it racy of the soil". A prospectus set out clearly the aims of the founders:

*Nationality is their first great object, a nationality which will not only raise our people from their poverty, by securing to them the blessings of a domestic legislature but inflame and purify them with a lofty and heroic love of country . . . a nationality which may embrace Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter, Milesian and Cromwellian . . . neither Gael nor Sean-Ghall, neither Protestant nor Catholic but Irish.*

The nationality to which *The Nation* aspired therefore was going to be in the first place a nationality which could never be surrendered or put up for sale or diminished for political gain. Ireland was a nation and no amount of political reforms or material concessions under Britain could compensate for the loss of her nationhood. O'Connell would sometimes say, especially during periods when he was in close alliance with the Whigs: "If we get the justice



we require, then our Repeal Association is at an end". This would never have satisfied Young Ireland and they became an advance guard, a ginger group, within the Repeal organisation.

Secondly, the nationality advocated by *The Nation* was an inclusive one. The nation included all people of Irish birth, whether their ancestors came with the Celts or the Cromwellians or in between, no matter what were their religious, political or cultural allegiances. Here the Young Irelanders showed themselves in touch with the political and cultural nationalism of continental countries. It was probably Davis who brought into Irish nationalism the romantic ideas which were transforming European thought at that time.

Thirdly, Davis emphasised the significance of the spiritual side of a people, of a national language, of national feeling in providing a country with a moral claim to political independence. Gavan Duffy wrote that it was Davis who made him understand what their political aims should be. Hence the men of *The Nation* introduced a far stronger emotional



Cardinal Ó Fiaich at The Warehouse. From left: Thomas Croke, John Ward (Cardinal's chauffeur), Dr. Tom McGrath, Fr. P. Morris P.P., the Cardinal, Archbishop Clifford of Cashel and Emly, James and Mrs. Connolly and their children. (Photo: courtesy Dr. T. McGrath).

content into Irish nationalism. They rejected the economic laws of the market-place in favour of the common good of all. The ideal political organisation was the nation-state, bound together by the spirit of nationality. By giving every member of the community a sense of belonging, all activities would be linked together as an expression of the identity of the nation.

Fourthly, *The Nation* writers saw themselves as the voice of national self-respect and saw their task as being the creation of national spirit. In addition to covering Repeal activities and exposing the excesses of landlords, the paper always published much material on Ireland's past, especially those parts which contained inspiration for later generations – biographies of saints, scholars and soldiers, especially the early Irish missionaries on the continent and the Wild Geese in continental armies, deeds of valour by Irish heroic figures, exhortation to strengthen the Irish language as a badge of nationhood, translations from Gaelic and especially the composition of Irish historical ballads in English.

To O'Connell, *The Nation* was therefore a mixed blessing. It created new enthusiasm for Repeal, and made it more attractive for educated people, for young people and for some Protestants. But inevitably the Young Irelanders supported views in advance of O'Connell and he feared they would compromise him with the authorities or would try to undermine him.

While Davis turned out to be the greatest and most popular writer of Irish historical ballads, it was in fact Duffy who began the practice and then urged Davis to take it up. Up till then Davis had never written a poem. Already when Duffy was editor of *The Vindicator* in Belfast he had begun to publish popular verse and to write some historical ballads himself. A collection of these later appeared under the title "The Ballad Poetry of Ireland". When he moved to Dublin he repeated this experiment in *The Nation*, beginning with the publication of his own poem *Fág a' Bealach* in the third issue:

*Close your ranks, the moments come,  
Now ye men of Ireland, follow,  
Friends of freedom, charge them home,  
Foes of freedom, fág a' bealach.*

(The very fact that he rhymes bealach with follow, hollow and wallow shows he didn't know much Irish). Davis was the only one of the original group who showed a keen interest in the Irish language and tried to bring Gaelic phrases into his verse. His colleagues often teased him about this. A popular song of the time was "O let us go down to lovely Kingstown", and they said Davis would want

*"Come down my dearie  
To pretty Dunleary".*

Of Duffy's historical ballads Lecky said that they had a fire and a strength which no similar compositions in Ireland had shown. His "Munster of the North" about the Rising of 1641 was probably his best-known ballad. It received an editorial in the London *Times* in which its literary merit was praised but its content condemned, and several other papers condemned it, one going so far as to say that the man who wrote it had the intellect and heart of Satan.

Having achieved some success as a writer of popular ballads himself, Duffy urged Davis to follow his example, and soon the pupil was beating his master, turning out a succession of high-class poems and songs, some of which were destined to become the best-loved songs in Ireland during the 19th and 20th centuries. "A Nation Once Again", "The West's Awake", "Clare's Dragoons", "She is a rich and rare land", "In Bodinstown churchyard there is a green grave", "Orange and Green", "The Green above the Red", "Lament for Owen Roe O'Neill", "The Penal Days", "The Dungannon Convention" were all published by Davis in *The Nation*.



His first poem was "My Grave" in the third issue; but it was the "Lament for Owen Roe" which first made his name. When one includes also McCann's "O'Donnell Abu", Ingram's "Who fears to speak of '98" and M. J. Barry's "Step Together" it's obvious that without *The Nation* the corpus of Irish patriotic songs would be very poor. Much of the poetry was naturally not of a very high quality but it appealed to the ordinary people, could be sung to tunes which they knew and was lively and rousing in spirit. A selection of it was later collected and published under the title *The Spirit of the Nation*. This little book has run into score of editions and is still in print after nearly 150 years.

It has been pronounced chauvinist and racialist and anglophobic, I suppose, because of lines like those in *The West's Awake*:

*But hark a voice like thunder spake,  
"The West's awake! the West's awake",  
Sing oh! hurra! let England quake,  
We'll watch till death for Erin's sake!*

It has also been called anti-feminist, because even though there were good women poets writing in *The Nation*, not a single poem written by them was chosen for inclusion in the anthology. Of the five women poets of *The Nation* only one was from the north – Elizabeth Willoughby Treacy from Ballymena. She wrote under the pen-name *Finola* and a collection of her poems was published in Belfast in 1851. *The Nation* said: "they are Irish to the core . . . in their inspiration, in their aim . . . and sometimes . . . in their language". In 1871 she married a Corkman, Ralph Varian, and survived to support Home Rule and the Land League.

*The Nation* owed a great deal of its warmth and intimacy to the fact that every Sunday night Duffy, Davis, and Dillon, together with John Edward Pigot, John O'Hagan and sometimes a few others, would meet in one another's apartments and discuss political and literary projects, criticise each other's compositions and carry on lively debates until long into the night. Fr. Mathew's Temperance Crusade ensured that there was no strong drink and, as Thomas Carlyle's literary style strongly influenced their writings, someone described the evenings as "Tea and Thomas".

While *The Nation* did not preach "physical force", the militant tone of much of its poetry and its constant recall of deeds of valour left its readers more sympathetic to any appeal to arms that might come in the future in Ireland. Lord Chancellor Plunket was asked one time what was the tone of *The Nation* and replied "Wolfe Tone". In other words, *The Nation* up to 1848 was prepared to praise and celebrate fighting and dying for Ireland provided it was in the past. But even such a gentle soul as Thomas Davis praised the sword occasionally in preference to his own powerful pen:

*The tribune's tongue or poet's pen  
May sow the seed in prostrate men,  
But 'tis the soldier's sword alone  
Can reap the harvest when 'tis grown.*

Finally, since many of the poems in *The Nation* were concerned with local events, placenames and traditions of a particular area, it helped to stimulate a strong sense of local pride, loyalty and patriotism during an era when there was no G.A.A. Though Davis was a Corkman, he provided Tipperary with a fine anthem for the Munster Final:

Though Britain boasts her British hosts,  
About them all right little care we,  
Give us to guard our native coasts  
The matchless men of Tipperary.

Tall is his form, his heart is warm,  
His spirit light as any fairy,  
His wrath is fearful as the storm  
That sweeps the hills of Tipperary.

Lead him to fight for native land,  
His is no courage, cold and wary,  
The troops live not on earth would stand  
The headlong charge of Tipperary.

#### IV – Duffy's Contribution

As well as publishing *The Nation* every week, the Young Irelanders began a series of cheap popular books on Irish history, novels, biography and essays, under the general title of *The Library of Ireland*. This was in keeping with their motto "Educate that you may be free". Again the suggestion came from Duffy, who was impressed by a series of shilling books from an English publisher. Duffy's project was enthusiastically taken up by the Young Irelanders and the result was *The Library of Ireland*, published monthly by James Duffy, another Monaghan man, comprising in its original form 22 volumes in paper wrappers, one volume per month at a shilling each.

Many of the volumes are still in print and several were based on original research. They included MacNevin's *History of the Volunteers of 1782*, Duffy's *Ballad Poetry of Ireland* ("our Anglo-Irish Ballads", he wrote, "are the production of educated men, with English tongues but Irish hearts"), John Mitchel's *Life of Hugh O'Neill* (Mitchel's first book), D'Arcy McGee's *Irish Writers of the 17th century*, Fr. C. P. Meehan's *Confederation of Kilkenny*, O'Daly's *History of the Geraldines*, translated by Fr. Meehan, several novels of William Carleton and several collections of popular poetry.

*The Library of Ireland* came to an end after 22 months in the Famine disaster of 1847, but it was the inspirer of all Irish popular literature during the rest of the 19th century. James Duffy continued to publish other little books in the same size and familiar green binding, and other publishers like Sullivan in Dublin and Cameron and Ferguson in Glasgow followed with books of the same kind into the present century.

We are not concerned here with Gavan Duffy's political career in Australia, lasting over two decades from the mid-1850s until the mid-1870s, when he became Prime Minister of Victoria. But since Duffy survived into the 20th century whereas Davis had died over half a century earlier, it fell to Duffy in his old age to write the definitive account of *Young Ireland* which influenced future generations. He became the historian of Young Ireland. His most important work, *Young Ireland*, covering 1840-50, appeared in 1880, followed by *Four Years of Irish History*, covering 1845-49, in 1883 and *The League of North and South*, covering the early 1850s in 1886. His life of Thomas Davis was published in 1890 and his 2-volume autobiography, *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, in 1898.

From these books Duffy emerges as a very modest man who tended to play down his own part in the events of 1843-45 and to give Thomas Davis all the credit. He has been accused of





being prejudiced against O'Connell, and it is true that together with Mitchel in his *Last Conquest of Ireland* Duffy was responsible for lowering the esteem of the people for O'Connell in the 20th century. But more than anyone else Duffy contributed to the creation of the modern image of Davis. Until Duffy's life of Davis appeared in 1890, no study of Davis had appeared.

Duffy's life of him and his other books called attention to his nobility of character, his idealism, his tolerance at a time when many young people in Ireland were seeking something more inspiring than the political squabbles of the post-Parnell era. They were looking for a hero and he gave them Davis. He probably softened Davis's temper and gave him a sweet composure which he didn't always possess, thus turning him into an extraordinarily attractive patriot from the past who proved most inspiring to Irish patriots of the 20th century. He almost turned Davis into a plaster saint.

Naturally there was an anti-Davis reaction among some, particularly among the new Anglo-Irish literary school at the end of the 19th century. In Yeats's opinion Young Ireland had deliberately subordinated arts and letters to political and propagandist ends. He assailed the patriotic verse of the Young Irelanders, especially *The Spirit of the Nation*. Others have described Davis as arrogant and found his writings bombastic. John Eglinton wrote about the need for the de-Davisization of Irish literature. Yet when the immediate controversy with Gavan Duffy about *The New Irish Library* was over, Yeats was prepared to seek for himself a place with the Young Ireland poets and didn't want to be excluded because *his* poetry had a more dreamy quality than theirs:

*Know that I would accounted be  
True brother of a company  
That sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong,  
Ballad and story, rann and song.*

*Nor may I less be counted one  
With Davis, Mangan, Ferguson,  
Because to him who ponders well,  
My rhymes more than their rhyming tell  
Of things discovered in the deep  
Where only body's laid asleep.*

In concentrating on Davis and Duffy in this part of my talk, I have not been trying to draw any comparison between them. They were, I feel, complementary to each other and each learned from the other. Duffy learned from Davis to broaden his patriotism in order to include Protestants as well as Catholics. Davis learned from Duffy the need to channel inspiration into a viable and regular publication. Without Duffy there would have been no *Nation* and without Davis there would have been no outstanding writer to fill it. In providing Duffy for *The Nation*, therefore, the North contributed an indispensable founding father to Young Ireland.

## V – Mitchel's Role

When Davis died tragically, on 16th September, 1845, Duffy brought the Banbridge solicitor John Mitchel, a native of County Derry and a Unitarian in religious loyalty, from the North to Dublin to replace Davis as the main writer of *The Nation*. Thus Mitchel forsook the law for journalism and gained a place in Irish writing which his biographer later considered the highest since the death of Swift. Where Davis was romantic and poetic, Mitchel wielded a

sledge-hammer. Davis was cool and rational, Mitchel was hot and volatile. Davis was a rebel by reason; Mitchel was one by feeling.

Davis was in my view the greater patriot for he had no place in his make-up for hatred or invective; Mitchel was the greater writer and could produce pages as powerful, tender, sarcastic and witty as were ever written by an Irishman. Some of the poems of Davis are very moving and some of his prose passages provide the philosophy of Irish Ireland, but Mitchel's *Jail Journey* is a masterpiece which can hold its own with prison literature in any language.

Duffy also brought over from London a trained journalist whom he had met as a schoolboy – Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a native of Carlingford – whom Duffy reckoned the best of the Young Ireland poets after Mangan and Davis. Others who came into the movement “in the day of disaster, almost of desperation”, as Duffy described it, were Thomas Francis Meagher and Richard O'Gorman. This group formed the backbone of what Duffy calls “the second Young Ireland party”.

Inside his first year as chief leader-writer Mitchel was beginning to frighten some of *The Nation's* readers with the increasingly violent tone of the paper. When a Government newspaper advocated sending troops into troubled spots by railway, Mitchel replied that the people should fill up the cuttings and level the embankments. O'Connell naturally objected to this strong language, and in an effort to distance himself from *The Nation* took steps to have it banned from the Repeal Reading Rooms.

*The Nation* was now being described as an infidel journal by O'Connell and some of the Catholic bishops. Finally, on the Peace Resolutions of 27th-28th July, 1846, when Meagher made his famous “Sword Speech”, came the break between O'Connell and the Repeal Association on the one hand and the Young Irelanders led by Smith O'Brien on the other. When efforts to bring them together again failed, the Young Irelanders formed the Irish Confederation in January 1847.

The trouble with the Confederates was that they couldn't agree on an immediate policy. Smith O'Brien had still hopes of winning over some of the landed class; John Martin, Mitchel's brother-in-law, was trying to woo the Northern Presbyterians; James Fintan Lalor was urging Duffy to link the national question with land reform. In the midst of the Famine, Lalor's letters had a profound effect on Mitchel and since he was not allowed to advocate these views in leading articles in *The Nation*, he withdrew from it and founded his own newspaper, *The United Irishman*, in January 1848, aided by John Martin and Thomas Devin Reilly. It lasted 16 weeks and preached with apocalyptic fervour an end to cant and a call to arms.

Its defiant language pushed up sales at once to about 5,000 per week. It's interesting that all three who now advocated the most revolutionary programme among the former Young Irelanders were Ulstermen, Martin from Co. Down and Reilly from Co. Monaghan. Leon Ó Broin, in his life of *Charles Gavan Duffy*, calls this the beginning of a schism which has lasted down to our own days – a republican minority prepared to resort to force to achieve its goal and a majority seeking its aims through constitutional action, though not closing the door to the contingency of revolutionary action in certain circumstances. When Mitchel's amendment was defeated at a meeting of the Irish Confederation by 317 votes to 188, he and Reilly left the Confederation and his former friendship with Duffy deteriorated into great bitterness later.

For the time being, however, they were not very far apart. In February 1848 Louis Philippe was overthrown in France and revolutions broke out in many European capitals. A deputation led by O'Brien went to Paris to congratulate the new Republic and returned with a tricolour but no support. Mitchel returned to the Confederation at the end of March and was in and out for the next month. Under the new Treason Felony Act he was arrested on 13th May, sentenced to



14 years' transportation and allowed to be carried overseas without a hand being raised to rescue him.

It was only then that plans began to be made to seek money, arms and officers. Preparatory meetings were held, including one organised by Meagher and Doheny on Slievenamon in June. Duffy was the next to be arrested – on 9th July – and very shortly Martin, D'Alton Williams, Kevin O'Doherty, editors of rebel newspapers, were all in jail. The Confederation leaders still at liberty found themselves faced with the terrible choice of allowing themselves to be arrested one by one or calling out their followers in a rebellion for which no preparations had been made. They decided to rise, an extraordinary decision because things had not improved since Mitchel had been defeated on this issue, and Smith O'Brien agreed somewhat reluctantly to lead the Rising.

## VI – Ballingarry

It's not part of my purpose tonight to go into the various moves and meetings which ultimately led to the engagement between the small groups of insurgents and the small group of police at the 'War-house' at The Commons. You know far more about it than I do. Those engaged were obviously for the most part from the neighbouring counties, but one northerner gave a good account of himself here and can't be passed over in silence.

That was Terence Bellew McManus, a native of Tempo in Co. Fermanagh, an associate of Gavan Duffy in his youth, who had worked in Manchester and Liverpool since about 1840 but had kept closely in touch with the Repeal movement and later with the Irish Confederation. When plans were finally approved for a Rising in Ireland, McManus undertook to seize a few ships in Liverpool, load them with arms from Chester Castle and proceed to Ireland. Was it from this plan of McManus's that the Fenians got their idea for 1867?

McManus's efforts to create a diversion in Liverpool came to nought and he crossed to Ireland by steamer on the night of Monday, 24th July, hoping to join O'Brien in South Tipperary and redeem himself. He reached Ballingarry on Thursday morning, 27th July, and remained there till Saturday, 29th July when news arrived at The Commons about 1 p.m. that the police were approaching from Ballingarry. They were about 40 strong under Sub-Inspector Trant.

As the police approached they made a dash for a house on top of a nearby hill and proceeded to barricade the entrance. This was the Warehouse, where the Widow McCormack and her children lived. McManus made an attempt to pile hay against the back door and set it on fire but O'Brien ordered him to desist, because he had learned the children were inside. O'Brien and McManus then approached the front of the house, with O'Brien hoping for a bloodless surrender, but the police opened fire and they had a remarkable escape.

Fr. Fitzgerald, acting P.P. of Ballingarry, and another priest arrived on the scene and tried to persuade the people to disperse. After a further futile attempt by McManus to set fire to the house and the arrival of another body of police 100 strong, during which O'Brien and McManus became separated, McManus set out in the direction of Mullinahone. The Rising of 1848 was over.

In so far as anyone led the insurgents at the Warehouse, it was this Fermanagh man. Not only did he show remarkable courage, but he was the only one who was decisive and practical. O'Brien remarked later: "Had our struggle lasted even a few months, the qualities McManus displayed, even for a few days, would have placed his name in the catalogue of those warriors whose deeds have given to our country the name of heroism".

Father Fitzgerald was no friend of the rebels but had to admit: "With a few others of his daring, things would probably have proceeded much further, nor would the crisis have terminated so promptly". P. S. O'Hegarty sums up: "the priests have been blamed but unduly

and unfairly. What killed the Insurrection was not the priests nor the starvation nor the Government but the absence of plan, preparations and resolute leadership”.

After hiding in the Keeper Hill area for several weeks – Meagher, Leyne and O’Donoghue had surrendered on Sunday, 13th August – McManus boarded a vessel in Cobh for Boston on 30th August. But the ship returned to harbour to be searched for a person suspected of burglary, and McManus was discovered. He was sentenced to death for treason on 23rd October at Clonmel along with O’Brien, Meagher and O’Donoghue, and in the following June the sentences were commuted to transportation for life.

They reached Tasmania before the end of October 1849 and here the three northern Young Irishmen – McManus, Mitchel and Martin – spent their time in isolation from each other until they escaped at different times to receive a warm welcome in the U.S.A. The fourth and most important of the northern Young Irishmen – Gavan Duffy – was put on trial on several occasions and the jury finally acquitted him by a majority of one. He re-established *The Nation* and worked might and main for the Tenant League. But the betrayal of Sadlier and Keogh, coupled with the opposition of churchmen to his efforts to set up a national movement, broke his heart and undermined his health, so in 1855 he sailed to a new career in Australia. “After twelve years of fruitless struggle”, he wrote, “my heart is weary and longs for tranquillity . . .”.

## VII – Conclusion

Many of the topics which agitated the Young Irishmen in their day do not bother us any longer. But as far as the North is concerned their writings are still very relevant and full of wisdom. In fact the most recent study of *The Young Ireland Movement*, by Dr. Richard Davis of the University of Tasmania, published two years ago, comes to the conclusion that “the Catholic-Protestant pluralism they advocated in theory and practised among themselves is perhaps their finest legacy to Ireland at the end of the twentieth century”.

In verse and in prose, in article and songs and speeches, the need for an end to religious dissensions and a coming together of Protestants and Catholics in the service of Ireland is constantly stressed. Probably its best known formulation was the one given to it in verse by Thomas Davis himself:

*What matter that at different shrines  
We pray unto one God,  
What matter that at different times  
Your fathers won this sod –  
In fortune and in name we’re bound  
By stronger links than steel,  
And neither can be safe nor sound  
But in the other’s weal.*

*And oh! it were a gallant deed  
To show before mankind,  
How every race and every creed  
Might be by love combined –  
Might be combined, yet not forget  
The fountains whence they rose,  
As, filled by many a rivulet,  
The stately Shannon flows.*



*We do not hate, we never cursed  
 Nor spoke a foeman's word  
 Against a man in Ireland nursed  
 Howe'er we thought he erred;  
 So start not, Irish born man,  
 If you're to Ireland true,  
 We heed not race, nor creed nor clan,  
 We've hearts and hands for you.*

Similar sentiments were expressed by some of the other poets of *The Nation*, e.g. Jean Frazer:

*Till then the Orange lily be  
 Thy badge, my patriot brother,  
 The everlasting Green for me,  
 And we for one another.*

With this outlook the Young Irelanders seemed to be ideally situated to win the support of some northern Protestants to their cause. Davis and Smith O'Brien were members of the Church of Ireland, Mitchel and Martin were of northern Presbyterian background; Duffy and John O'Hagan were Ulster Catholics who had many Protestant friends. During *The Nation's* first year Davis published his valuable *Letters of a Protestant on Repeal* in which he stressed the need for Protestant participation in order to make Irish nationalism a reality. *The Nation* often praised the good qualities of Northern Protestants – excellent sons, husbands and neighbours to each other – the support for Tenant Right among the Presbyterians, “Scotch thrift, dogged rectitude, implacable integrity” and so on.

But *The Nation* was often attacked by other Repeal organs, e.g. *The Pilot*, for “making pets of Orangemen”. The Orangemen were often referred to in *The Nation* as dupes to English interests, and Davis felt that sectarianism was being deliberately fostered in the north. But it wasn't always easy to preserve a united front on religious matters among the Young Irelanders themselves, especially after the Colleges Bill of 1844 had revealed wide differences not only among them but even among the Catholic Bishops.

The Young Irelanders tried to make personal contacts with Northern Protestants. Mitchel and Martin were appointed inspectors of Confederate Clubs in Ulster and O'Brien and Meagher went on a delegation to the north in late 1847. Probably Davis's best effort to write a song which would cross the religious divide was “Orange and Green will carry the day”. It was set to the tune of *The Protestant Boys* (Lilibulero):

*Tories and Whigs are pale with dismay  
 When from the North  
 Burst the cry forth:  
 Orange and Green will carry the day . . .*

He might have had more success if he had written a song to the tune of *The Boyne Water*, which O'Connell said was often played during the Emancipation campaign and is *Rosc Catha na Mumhan*. *The Nation* also tried to pinpoint the grievances of the Ulster farming class, and it supported people like Sharman Crawford and Dr. McKnight regarding Tenant Right – the seed from which Duffy's *League of North and South* sprouted later.

It tried to carry on contacts with the Northern Federalists like Grey Porter, M.P. for Fermanagh and Sharman Crawford, M.P. for Belfast, the forerunners of Butt's Home Rule Party

of the 1870s. Finally *The Nation* encouraged the setting up of the Protestant Repeal Association in Belfast with which the northern poet Samuel Ferguson, a former Unionist, was associated. Twenty-nine Orangemen were expelled from Belfast lodges for supporting Repeal.

Davis, of course, wasn't the only Young Irelander to try to make some impact on northern Protestants. After his death Martin wrote an open letter to the Orangemen of Co. Down and Mitchel reminded his fellow-countrymen that Derry and Enniskillen witnessed scenes of valour as great as Benburb and the Yellow Ford and that when ejection orders were served on Protestant farmers it wasn't the Pope, their "man of sin", who served them. Meagher delivered a typical oration on *The Ulsterman* in the Music Hall, Belfast on 15th November, 1847 and brought back from Paris in 1848 the green, white and orange tricolour in which the Protestant was placed on the same footing as the Catholic with the noble words which you have inscribed on your monument.

In summing up the results of the Young Ireland movement, therefore, it would seem that in regard to the North (as in regard to all their other activities) they are far more important for their legacy to subsequent generations than for what they achieved in their own. Many of them attained something near their full potential only in exile – Duffy as Prime Minister of Victoria, Meagher as Secretary and temporary Governor of Montana, Mitchel as author of the *Jail Journal*, McGee as architect of Canadian federation. On controversial questions like physical force, they found it easier to split than to compromise.

Even in a non-controversial area like cultural nationalism, only Davis and Smith O'Brien showed a stronger personal interest in the Irish language and tried to promote it. In economic affairs Duffy and O'Brien were closer to O'Connell than they were to radicals like Mitchel and Lalor. After 1848 some like Duffy and McGee were prepared to accept office in the British colonies; others like Mitchel were allies of the Fenians. The camaraderie of the 1840s was shattered in the interminable bickering of the 1850s – Duffy v Mitchel in 1854, O'Brien v Martin in 1861, the brothers-in-law Mitchel and Martin in public disagreement in the 1860s and 1870s.

Yet despite their eclipse their memory remained a powerful influence with subsequent generations. I leave the last word to P. S. O'Hegarty:

*The principles of nationality expounded in **The Nation** were never again wholly obscured. They became an integral part of the Irish consciousness. And the men themselves, their high and selfless endeavour, their nobility – Davis babbling of national work on his deathbed, worn out, Mitchel in the dock at Green Street, in the hulks at Bermuda, in America, gazing with what heartsick longing at a map of Ireland in the corner, Smith O'Brien, McManus, Meagher and O'Donoghue in the dock at Clonmel, Doherty and Stephens and O'Mahony on the run – these dominated the Irish imagination in the years of ignoble politics that followed. The men failed but the cause they championed, the cause they upheld with their bodies and their minds, that cause was secure.*

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