# Frederick Engels

# HISTORY OF IRELAND

# (to 1014)

FIRST PUBLICATION IN ENGLISH

IRISH COMMUNIST ORGANISATION

# ENGELS : HISTORY OF IRELAND to 1014.

first publication in English

TRANSLATED BY ANGELA CLIFFORD.

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IRISH COMMUNIST ORGANISATION

# TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

This is the first publication in English of the HISTORY OF IRELAND by Engels. A Russian translation has been available for about 20 years. The original German version, from which this translation is made, was published in 1962 in the WORKS OF MARX AND ENGELS, Volume 16. The editor of the German edition gives the following note on the History:

"The uncompleted HISTORY OF IRELAND is part of a larger historical work on this subject planned by Engels, and on which he worked in the last months of 1869 and the first half of 1870. Engels wished, by using Ireland's history as an example, to unmask the system and methods of English colonial rule, and to expose its serious effects on the historical fate of both the oppressed and oppressor nations. Apart from this, he wanted to under-take a criticism in it of the English bourgeois historians, national-economists, and geographers, who falsified Irish history and reality in a chauvinistic spirit.

"Engels had the idea of writing a book on Irish history in the summer of 1869. In September of 1869 he undertook a journey through Ireland in order to become better acquainted with the country. For his planned book Engels studied a large amount of literature and numerous historical sources, including the works of ancient and mediaeval authors, annals, old collections of laws, folklore and literature, descriptions of journeys, and numerous writings on history, archeology, economy, geography etc. The bibliography on Irish history which Engels made contains over 150 titles. Most of the extracts he made at this time in preparation for his book are contained in 15 notebooks, not including the notes and fragments on loose pages or newspaper cuttings. Engels had to learn the ancient Irish language to study the Irish sources, and he himself translated extracts from the Irish annals and old Scandinavian Sagas into German. Marx supported Engels throughout his studies for the history, and placed great significance on the projected work. Marx and Engels formulated opinions on the most important problems of Irish history in the course of discussions between them.

"In May 1870 he began to arrange the collected materials. The following work-plan, written by him for this purpose, has survived:

1. Natural destiny (Naturbestimmungen)
2. Ancient Ireland
3. English Conquest
   1. The first invasion
   2. Pale and Irishry
   3. Subjugation and expropriation
4. English Rule
   1. The Penal Laws 1691-1780

2. Rising and Union, 1780-1801.
3. Ireland in the United Kingdom
   a) The time of the small peasants. 1801-1846.
   b) The time of the extermination. 1846-1870.

"Engels found time to write only the first chapter, "Natural Destiny". The second chapter, "Ancient Ireland", remained uncompleted and Engels cound not begin with the writing of the last two chapters, although he had collected most of the material for the whole book. Engels was forced to break off the work by the important political events of July 1870. The Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune, the fight against the Bakuninists, extensive practical work in the International, - all these prevented Engels from completing his work. He made full use of his scientific researches in his theoretical and practical work. Engels relied to a considerable extent on a series of scientific inferences, which he reached during his research into the order of Celtic Ancient Ireland, when writing the corresponding sections of his book, THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE STATE (1884)."

# ENGELS' TOURS OF IRELAND

Engels made two tours of Ireland, in 1856 and 1869. On his first tour he was accompanied by Mary Burns, an Irishwoman from a Fenian family whom he married in 1845. (When she died in 1863 he married her sister, Lizzy). He gives the following account of his first tour in a letter to Marx:

Manchester,
23rd May 1856.

"Dear Marx,

In our tour of Ireland we went from Dublin to Galway, on the west coast, then twenty miles inland, then to Limerick, down the Shannon to Tarbert, Tralee and Killarney and back to Dublin. In all, about 450-500 English miles through the country, so we've seen about two-thirds of the whole country. With the exception of Dublin - which is to London what Dusseldorf is to Berlin, and whose character is completely that of a small one-time capital, and which is entirely English-built - the country, and especially the towns, make one feel as if one were in the south of France or Northern Italy. Gendarmes, priests, lawyers, bureaucrats, squires in pleasing profusion, and a total absence of any and every industry, so that it would be hard to understand what these parasitic growths live on if the misery of the peasants didn't supply the other half of the picture. Strong measures are evident throughout the length and breadth of the country and the government meddles in everything; there is no trace of so-called self-government. Ire-

-land can be regarded as the first English colony, and as one which because of its proximity is still ruled directly in the old way. Here it can be clearly seen that the so-called liberty of the English citizens is based on the oppression of the colonies. In no other country have I seen so many gendarmes, and the Schnapps-expression (drink-sodden expression - A.C.) of the Prussian gendarme is developed to the highest perfection here among the constabulary, who are armed with carbines, bayonets and handcuffs.

Characteristic of the country are its ruins, the oldest dating from the fifth and sixth centuries, the latest from the nineteenth, and covering the whole intervening period. The oldest are all churches; after 1100 churches and castles; and, after 1800, peasants' houses. The whole of the West, and the neighbourhood of Galway in particular, is covered with these ruined peasant houses, most of which have only been abandoned since 1846. I never thought a famine could have such a tangible reality. Whole villages are devastated, and in between them are the splendid parks of the smaller landlords (mostly lawyers), almost the only people still living there. Famine, emigration and clearance together have brought this about. There are not even cattle in the fields. The land is an utter desert which nobody wants. It is a little better in Co. Clare, south of Galway, where at least there are some cattle. The hills towards Limerick are very well cultivated, mostly by Scottish farmers, the ruins have been cleared and the country has a bourgeois appearance. There is a lot of mountain and bog land in the South-West, but some wonderfully rich forest growth as well. Beyond that there are fine pastures, especially in Tipperary. And towards Dublin one can see that the land is being taken over by the big farmers.

The country has been completely ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 (for in reality the wars and the state of siege lasted that long). It is a fact that most of the ruins were produced by destruction during the wars. This gave the people their singular character; and in spite of all their Irish nationalist fanaticism they feel they're not at home any more in their own country. Ireland for the Saxon! This is now being realised. The Irishman knows he can't compete with the Englishman who comes with every advantage. Emigration will go on until the almost exclusively Celtic character of the people has gone to the devil. How often have the Irish made the attempt to come to something, only to be crushed politically and industrially again and again. They have been artificially forced by consistent oppression to become a lumpenised nation; and now it is notorious that they fulfil the function of providing England, America, Australia, etc. with casual labourers, prostitutes, pimps, thieves, swindlers, beggars and other lumpen. This lumpen characteristic is found in the aristocracy as well. The estate owners, who everywhere else have taken on bourgeois qualities, have become lumpenised here. Their country seats are surrounded by enormous, wonderfully beautiful parks, but all around them is desert. Where the money comes from is not easy to see. These fellows ought to be shot dead. Of mixed blood, most-

ly tall, strong, handsome fellows, they all wear enormous moustaches under colossal Roman noses, give themselves the sham military airs of retired colonels, travel around the country after all sorts of pleasures, and, if one makes an enquiry, they haven't a penny, are laden with debts, and live in dread of the Encumbered Estates Court..."

*

Engels toured Ireland a second time in 1869. He again gives an account of this tour in letters to Marx:

"27th September, 1869.

I...have just discovered the whole secret of why Ireland is so "over-populated" from "Realities of Irish Life" by Trench. This man of integrity proves, with examples, that, on an average, the Irish peasants cultivate the land so intensely that an outlay of £10-15 per acre, which pays itself off completely in 1-4 years, causes the value of the leasehold to rise from 1 shilling to 20 shillings, and from 4 shillings to 25-30 shillings per acre. The increased value goes into the landlord's pocket.....

Ireland's trade has expanded enormously in the last fourteen years. Dublin harbour was beyond recognition. I heard a great deal of Italian, and of Serbian, French and Danish spoken on the quay at Queenstown. There are indeed a good many 'Italians' in Cork, as the comedy goes. The country itself looks absolutely depopulated, and the thought immediately occurs that there are too few people here. The state of war strikes one everywhere. Bands of the Royal Irish Constabulary are to be seen everywhere with cutlasses, and sometimes revolvers, at their sides and their police truncheons held openly in their hands. In Dublin a battery of field artillery drove right through the middle of the city, something I've never seen in England. There are soldiers everywhere, everywhere.

The worst thing about the Irish is that they become corruptible as soon as they stop being peasants and become bourgeois. Admittedly this is the case with all peasant nations. But it is especially bad in Ireland. For this reason the press is shockingly lousy..."

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# THE WRITING OF THE HISTORY

Engels began work on the "History of Ireland" when he returned from his second tour of Ireland towards the end of 1869. The following are extracts from letters he wrote to Marx while working on the History:

"24th October, 1869.

...Irish history shows how disastrous it is for a nation to have subjugated another nation. All the swinish atrocities which are committed in England have their origin in the Irish Pale. I have still to work through the Cromwellian period but this much appears certain to me, that things would have taken a different turn for England as well, if there hadn't been the necessity for military rule and the creation of a new aristocracy in Ireland..."

*

"17th November, 1869.

...Prendergast's "Cromwellian Settlement" is out of print. You will therefore do me a great favour if you order it second-hand at once. Butt's "Irish People" : none in London. Other Irish pamphlets, e.g. those by Lords Rosse and Lifford: cannot find. These are the answers my book dealer got from his London commission agent. He also told me that in general English book dealers can't mess around with getting things published in Ireland as it wasn't customary to have a commission agent in Dublin, but only in London. I'll write direct to Duffy.

I've found some very useful stuff on Ireland, Wolfe Tone's Memoirs, etc, but only in the catalogue. As soon as I ask for these things in the library they, like Wakefield, are not to be found. Some old fellow must have had the whole lot out together and returned them en masse, so the whole pile is hidden away somewhere. At all events the things must be found.

The wise bourgeois thinker is Goldwin Smith, "On Irish History and Irish Character". Ireland was destined to be a grazing land - so Leonce Lavergne, the prophet, has it - ergo pareat (therefore let perish) the Irish people!...."

*

"29th November, 1869.

...Last week I waded through the tract written by old Sir John Davies (Attorney-General for Ireland under James)... It emerges clearly from these that common property in land still existed in the year 1600. This fact was brought forward by Mr. Davies, in the pleas regarding the confiscation of forfeited lands in Ulster, as a proof that the land did not belong to individual owners (peasants), and therefore belonged either to the lord who had forfeited it, or from the beginning to the crown. I have never read anything finer than this. Redivisions took place every two or three years. In another pamphlet he gives an exact description of the income etc. of a Clan chief. I have never seen these things quoted and if you can use them I'll send them to you in detail. I've also caught out Monsieur Goldwin Smith very nicely, for this gentleman has never read Davies and therefore puts up the most

absurd assertions in extenuation of the English. But I'll get the fellow..."

*

"16th December, 1869.

...That damned Giraldus Cambrensis keeps flickering in front of me like a will-o-the-wisp. I must find him because he is the first authentic source on the condition of Ireland when the English arrived... At least hunting for sources is quite different from what hunting for customers at the cursed Exchange was..." (For 20 years Engels was an industrialist in Manchester. Shortly before this he retired from business to give his whole time to developing the ideas of Marxism and doing work in the First International - A.C.)

*

"19th January, 1870.

...For better or worse the ancient Irish laws are about to be published, so I'll have to wade through those too. The more I go into it the clearer it becomes to me that the English invasion cheated Ireland of her whole development, and threw her back hundreds of years. And it started in the 12th century. And it must not be forgotten that the Danish invasions and plundering over 300 years had already considerably retarded the country; but these, of course, had stopped 100 years before.

In recent years Irish research has been governed by a more critical spirit, especially Petrie's antiquarian things. Petrie has mede it necessary for me to read a little Celtic-Irish (with a translation beside it, naturally). It doesn't seem all that difficult, but I'm not going into it any deeper; I have enough philological rubbish in my head..."

*

"29th March, 1870.

...I'm now rummaging about in the ancient Celtic laws, which are a tough mouthful to chew. Firstly, the text isn't very clear because it assumes a knowledge of ancient Irish rights which doesn't exist any more. 2. It is badly defaced. 3. The translation is very bad, and is even definitely wrong in places; yet this much is clear, that the agricultural relationships were not quite so simple as the worthy Davies - who had an interest in doing so - represented them. But the laws, as far as they've been published, give only the intricate, not the simple side. Moreover, I'm not finished with the business yet. I'm forced to look into the Celtic text from time to time, and since I haven't a Celtic grammar I don't get on very fast. This much is clear to me, that the publishers, with all their knowledge of Cel-

tic, understand the content no better than I do .."

*

"8th May, 1870.

...The best part of the ancient Irish law was that on the family. Those must have been dissolute times. Polygamy was at least tolerated, and the concubines were also divided into 6 or 7 classes, one of which the IMRIS, "whom he (the man) has with the consent of her husband". Decisions on the disposition of property were also highly naive. If both have the same amount then the man and (first or chief) wife dispose of it together. If the man has everything and the wife has nothing, the husband controls. If the wife has everything and the husband nothing "the wife plays the part of the husband and the husband the part of the wife". Yet infinitely more civilised than the present English laws... Do you know of an Irish grammar, or can one be had second hand? I would be horribly vexed to have quoted a Celtic word wrong - perhaps in the genitive or nominative plural instead of nominative singular."

*

"15th May, 1870.

...The continual reading of Irish books, i.e., with an English translation beside them, was unbearable without at least a quite superficial knowledge of the tone and inflection-laws of the language. I have discovered an atrocious Irish grammar of the year 1773... The only good grammar is by Dr. John O'Donovan, ... the best Irish expert of the century..."

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# PUBLICATION OF THE HISTORY

Part of the first chapter of the History, translated into English from a Russian translation, was published by the Connolly Association in the "Irish Democrat" in seven instalments between 1950 and 1953. The instalments appeared in the issues for November and December 1950; August, September and December 1951; and January and June 1952. The following Preface appeared with the first part in November 1950:

"The History of Ireland which Engels began but never completed was never quite published in either Britain or Ireland, though numerous quotations from it have appeared in other works. The Irish Democrat intends to publish the entire material available. It should, however, be noted that the text given below is strictly copyright. It is a double translation, having been taken from English and Ger-

man into Russian, and re-translated into English from the Russian by Desmond Greaves. It is hoped to subsequently republish the whole in book form, by which time it is hoped the original text may be available."

Publication was stopped after about a third of the History had been published. That was over fourteen years ago. And, though the German text has been available for a number of years, the promised publication in book form has never materialised.

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This translation aims at being both accurate and readable, and a few liberties have been taken in the rather technical first part in the interests of clarity. In most cases quotes from English publications which Engels translated into German, are given in the original English. In a few instances, however, a retranslation is used since the original quote could not be found. Some of the Notes are free adaptations of the notes in the German edition, and others have been added by the translator. The bibliography and the Index of names are taken from the German edition, and have been slightly extended.

ANGELA CLIFFORD

# HISTORY OF IRELAND

At the north-western corner of Europe lies the land whose history will occuppy us, an island of 1,530 German or 32,500 English square miles. But another island, three times as large, lies obliquely interposed between Ireland and the rest of Europe. For the sake of brevity we usually call this island England; she blocks Ireland off completely from Europe towards the north, east and south-east, and allows a free view only in the direction of Spain, Western France and America.

The channel between the two islands, 50-70 English miles wide at the narrowest points in the South, 13 miles wide at one point in the North and 22 miles wide at another, allowed the Irish Scots to emigrate from a point in the North to the neighbouring island and to found the Scottish Kingdom even before the fifth century. In the South it was too wide for Irish and British boats and a serious obstacle even for the flat-bottomed coastal vessels of the Romans.

But once the Friesans, the Angles and Saxons, and after them the Scandinavians, were able to venture beyond the sight of land on the open seas in their keeled vessels, this channel was a obstacle no longer; Ireland fell a victim to the raiding expeditions of the Scandinavians, and presented an easy booty for the English. As soon as the Normans had built up a powerful, unified government in England, the influence of the larger island made itself felt - and in those times this meant a war of conquest.*

If during the war England gained control of the sea, then this precluded the possibility of successful foreign intervention. Finally, if the larger island became unified into one state, it must then strive to assimilate Ireland completely. If this attempt at assimilation succeeds the whole course of Irish history must be affected by it.

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See Note 1 on page 27.

Once the assimilation takes place, though it may be condemned, it can never be reversed. But if after 700 years of fighting this assimilation has not succeeded; if instead each new wave of invaders flooding Ireland is assimilated by the Irish; if, even today, the Irish are as far from being West Britons, as they say, as the Poles are from being West Russians after only 100 years of oppression; if the fighting is not yet over and there is no prospect that it can be ended in any other way than by exterminating the oppressed race - then, all the geographical pretexts in the world are not enough to prove that it is England's destiny to conquer Ireland.

To understand the nature of the soil and mineral resources of present-day Ireland we have to return to the distant epoch when the so-called carboniferous mountains were laid down.*

The centre of Ireland, to the north and south of a line from Dublin to Galway, forms a wide plain rising to 100-300 feet above sea-level. This plain, the foundation so to say of the whole of Ireland, consists of the massive bed of limestone (carboniferous limestone), which forms the middle layer of carboniferous mountains. It is on beds like these that the coal-measures of England and other places rest.

Towards the South and North, this plain is encircled by a mountain chain which extends along the coast, and consists almost entirely of older mountain-formations which have broken through the limestone. These older mountain-formations contain granite, mica-slate, Lower-Silurian, Upper-Silurian, Devonian, together with argillaceous slate and sandstone, rich in copper and lead, found in the lowest layer of the carboniferous mountains; apart from this they contain a little gold, silver, tin, zinc, iron, cobalt, antimony and manganese.

The limestone itself rises to mountains only in a few places: it reaches 600 feet in the centre of the plain, in Queen's County, and a little over 1000 feet in the West, on the southern shore of Galway Bay (Burren Hills).

At several points in the southern half of the limestone plain there are to be found isolated coal-bearing mountain-ridges of considerable extent and from 700-1000 feet above sea-level. These rise from depressions in the limestone plain as plateaus with steep escarpments.

"The Escarpments in these widely separated tracts of Coal-measures

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* Unless otherwise stated, all the geological data given here is from J. Beete Jukes, "The Student's Manual of Geology". New edition. Ediburgh 1862. Jukes was the local superior during the geological survey of Ireland and therefore the prime authority on this territory, which he treats in special detail.

are so similar, and the beds composing them so precisely alike, that it is impossible to suppose otherwise than that they originally formed continuous sheets of rock, although they are now separated by 60 or 80 miles... This belief is strongly confirmed by the fact, that there are often, between the larger areas, several little outlying patches in which the Coal-measures are found capping the summits of small hills (as at B in figure 75),* and that wherever the undulation of the limestone is such as to bring its upper beds down beneath the level of the present surface of the ground, we invariably find some of the lower beds of the Coal-measures coming in upon them." (Jukes, page 285)

Other circumstances, which are too detailed for us here and which can be found in Jukes, pages 286-289, contribute to the certainty that the whole Irish central plain arose through denudation, as Jukes says, so that the lower layer of limestone was exposed after the carboniferous mountains and the higher limestone deposits - a transverse thickness of at least 2,000-3,000 and possibly 5,000-6,000 feet of stone - had been washed away. Jukes even found another small coal-cliff on the highest ridge of the Burren Hills, which are pure limestone and 1,000 feet high (page 513).

Several noteworthy areas containing coal-measures have survived in Ireland; but of these only a few contain enough coal to justify mining. Moreover the coal itself is anthracite, that is, it contains little hydrogen, and cannot be used for all industrial purposes without some addition.

There are also several small coal-fields in northern Ireland in which the coal is bituminous, that is, ordinary coal rich in hydrogen. These deposits did not originate in exactly the same way as those in the South. But a similar washing away process did occur even here. This is shown by the fact that fragments of coal, as well as sandstone and blue clay originating near it, are to be found to the south-east of a coal-field on the surface of limestone valleys near Belturbet and Mohill. In several cases large pieces of coal have been discovered by well-sinkers; and in some cases the quantity of coal was so considerable that it was thought that deeper shafts must lead to a coal-bed. (Kane, "Industrial Resources of Ireland", 2nd edition Dublin, 1845, page 268)

It is obvious that Ireland's misfortune is of ancient origin; it begins directly after the carboniferous strata were deposited. A coun-

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*This figure is taken from Jukes, page 286:

try whose coal deposits are eroded placed near a country rich in coal is condemned by nature to be the farming country for the larger country when it is industrialised. That sentence, pronounced millions of years ago, was fulfilled in this century. We will see later moreover, how the English assisted nature by crushing almost every seed of Irish industry as soon as it appeared.

Primary (or Palaeozic), Secondary (Mesozoic), and Tertiary (Cainozoic) mineral layers occur mainly in the North-East; what interests us most amongst these are the beds of red marl in the vicinity of Belfast, which contain almost pure rock-salt to a thickness of 200 feet, (Jukes, page 554), and the chalk overlaid with a layer of basalt, which covers the whole of County Antrim. Generally speaking, there are now important geological developments in Ireland between the end of the carboniferous era and the Ice Age.

It is known that after the Tertiary Epoch there was an era in which the low-lying lands of the medium latitudes of Europe were submerged by the sea, and in which such a low temparature prevailed in Europe that the valleys between the island-mountaintops were filled with glaciers, which extended down to the coast. Icebergs used to separate themselves from these glaciers and carry rocks, of all shapes and sizes which had been detached from the mountains, out to sea. When the ice melted the rocks and other debris was deposited - a process still daily occurring on coasts of the polar regions.

During the ice age all of Ireland except the mountain tops was submerged by the sea. The degree of submergence was not the same everywhere, but an average of 1,000 feet can be accepted; the granite mountain chains south of Dublin must have been submerged by over 1,200 feet.

If Ireland had been submerged by only 500 feet, only the mountain chains would have remained exposed. These would then form two semi-circular groups of islands around a wide strait between Dublin and Galway. A still greater submergence would make these islands smaller and decrease their number, until, at a submergence of 2,000 feet, only the most extreme tips would project from the water.*

During the period of submergence, the limestone plains and mountain slopes must gradually have been swept clean of much of the older stone covering them; subsequently there followed the depositing of the drift peculiar to the ice-age on to the whole of the area covered by water. Pieces of rock weathered from the mountain-islands and fine fragments of rock which fell from glaciers as they pushed their way slowly and powerfully through the valleys which were being eroded by this movement

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*Ireland has an area of 32,509 English square miles. 13,243 square miles are 0-250 feet above sea level; 11,797 are 251-500 feet above sea level; 5,798 are 501-1000 feet above sea level; 1,589 are 1001-2000 feet above sea level; 82 square miles are over 2001 feet above sea level.

- earth, sand, gravel, stones, rocks, worn smooth within the ice but sharp-edged above it - all this was carried out to sea, by icebergs which were detaching themselves from the shore, and deposted there. The beds formed in this way vary according to circumstances and contain: loam (originating from argillaceous slate), sand (originating from quartz and granite), calcareous gravel (derived from calcareous mountains), marl (where finely-crumbled limestone mixes with loam), or a mixture of all these components. They always contain a mass of stone of all sizes, somethimes rounded sometimes sharp ranging up to colossal erratic boulders, which are commoner in Ireland than in the North German Plain or between the Alps and the Jura.

During the subsequent re-emergence of the land from the sea, it was given roughly its present surface. In Ireland, little washing away appears to have taken place then; varying thicknesses of drift cover nearly all the plains, extend into nearly all the valleys, and are also found high up on the mountain slopes.*

Limestone is the most frequently occuring stone in it, and for this reason the whole stratum is usually called limestone gravel here. Bigger blocks of limestone are also extensively strewn over all the lowlands, one or more in every field; apart from limestone, a lot of other local stones, especially granite, are to be found near the mountains they originated on. These speak for themselves. Granite from the northern side of Galway Bay appears commonly as far as the Galtee Mountains and more rarely as far as Mallow (Co Cork).

The north of the country is covered with drift to the same height above sea-level as the central plain; the South has a similar deposit, originating from the local mainly Silurian rocks, between the various more or less parallel mountain-chains running though it. This appears plentifully in Glenflesk and the Laune near Killarney.

The glacier-tracks on the mountain slopes and valley-bottoms are common and unmistakeable in the south-west of Ireland. I remember seeing more sharply-stamped ice-trails than in Killarney (in the Black Valley and the Gap of Dunloe) only in Oberhasli and here and there in Sweden.

The water appears to have receded to such an extent that Britain was for a time connected by dry land not only with the continent, but also with Ireland. At least this seems the only the similarity between the Fauna of these lands can be explained. Ireland has the following extinct large mammals in common with the continent: the mammoth, the Irish giant-stag, the cave-bear, a kind of reindeer, etc. In fact, if the water had receded sufficiently to allow an emergence of less than 240 feet over the present level, it would be enough to connect Ireland with Scotland, and one of less than 360 feet would join Ireland and Wales with wide bridges of land.** The fact that Ireland took in a wider area after the ice-age than at present is proved by the underwater peat

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* See note two on page 27. **See Map 15a, Stieler's Handatlas, 1868. This map gives a very vivid presentation of the formation of the terrain, as does No 15d for Ireland particularly. (Note by Engels)

bogs with upright tree-trunks and roots which occur around all the coasts, and which are identical in every detail with the lowest layers of the neighbouring inland turf-bogs.

From an agricultural point of view, Ireland's soil is a most fertile loam almost entirely formed from the drift of the ice-age, which, here, thanks to its origin in slates and limestone, is not the barren sand with which the Scottish, Scandinavian and Finnish granite has covered such a large part of North Germany.

The variety in the rocks, fragments of which have been dispersed and are still being dispersed on this soil, provides it with a corresponding variety of mineral elements which the vegetation requires; and if one of these, say lime, is greatly lacking in one field, plenty of pièces of limestone of all sizes are to be found everywhere - quite apart from the underlying bed - so it can be added quite simply.

When the well-known English agronomist, Arthur Young, was travelling around Ireland in 1770, he did not know which amzed him more: the natural fertility of the soil or its barbaric management by the peasants. "A light, dry, soft, sandy, loam soil" prevails where the land is good. In the "Golden Vale" of Tipperary and also elsewhere he found:

> "the same sort of sandy reddish loam I have already described, incomparable land for tillage". From there, in the direction of Clonmel, "the whole way through the same rich vein of red sandy loam I have so often mentionded: I examined it in several fields, and found it to be of an extraordinary fertility, and as fine turnip land as ever I saw." (Volume 1 page 504).

Further:

> "The rich land reaches from Charleville, at the foot of the mountains, to Tipperary, by Kilfenning, a line of twenty-five miles, and across from Ardpatric to within four miles of Limerick, sixteen miles." (Volume 1 page 485). "the richest in the country is the Corcasses on the Maag,... a tract five miles long, and two broad, down to the Shannon... When they break this land up, they sow first oats, and get 20 barrels an acre, or 40 common carrels, and do not reckon than an extra crop; they take ten or twelve in succession, upon one ploughing, till the crops grow poor, and then they sow one of horse beans, which refreshes the land enough to take ten crops of oats more; the beans are very good... Were such barbarians ever heard of?" (Volume 1, page 478)

Further, near Castle Oliver, Co. Limerick,

> "...the finest in the country is upon the roots of the mountains, it is a rich, mellow, crumbling, putrid, sandy loam, eighteen inches to three feet deep, the colour a reddish-brown. It is dry sound land, and would do for turnips exceedingly well, for carrots, for

cabbages, and in a word for everything. I think upon the whole, it is the richest soil I ever saw, and is applicable to every purpose you can wish; it will fat the largest bullock, and at the same time do equally well for sheep, for tillage, for turnips, for wheat, for beans, and in a word, for every crop and circumstance of profitable husbandry." (Volume 1 page 485)

On the river Blackwater near Mallow

"...there are tracts of flat land in some places one quarter of a mile broad; the grass everywhere remarkably fine, and lets at 30s. It is the finest sandy land I have anywhere seen, of a reddish-brown colour, would yield the greatest arable crops in the world, if in tillage; it is five feet deep, and has such a principle of adhesion, that it burns into good brick, yet it appears a perfect land. In floods much of it is overflown. The banks of this river, from its source to the sea, are equally remarkable for beauty of prospect, and fertility of soil." (Volume 1 page 385). "Friable, sandy loams dry, but fertile, are very common, and they form the best soils in the Kingdom for tillage and sheep. Tipperary and Roscommon abound particularly in them. The most fertile of all, are the bullock pastures of Limerick, and the banks of the Shannon in Clare, called the Corcasses... Sand which is so common in England, and yet more common through Spain, France, Germany and Poland, quite from Gibraltar to Petersburgh, is no where met with in Ireland, except in narrow slips of hillocks, upon the sea coast. Nor did I meet with or hear of a chalky soil." (Volume 2 page 74).

Young's judgement on the soil of Ireland is summarised in the following sentences:

"If I had to give the characteristics of an excellent soil, I would say: the soil on which an ox can be fattened and which will equally well produce a good turnip crop. Incidentally, I can think of little or none of this soil in England, while in Ireland it is not unusual." - "Natural fertility, acre for acre over the two kingdoms is certainly in favour of Ireland." (page 73 volume 2) - "So far as I can judge the soil of the two kingdoms, Ireland's by far wins precedence."*

In 1808-10 Edward Wakefield, an Englishman likewise versed in agronomy, travelled around Ireland and recorded the result of his observations in a valuable work.** His remarks are better-ordered, more extensive and fuller than those in Young's travel-book; on the whole they agree.

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* A Tour in Ireland - Arthur Young, 3 vols. London 177 . Vol 2, pages 28, 135, 143, 154, 165. Vol 2, 2nd section, page 4. See note 3 on p27.

* An Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political - Edward Wakefield, London, 1812, 2 volumes.

Wakefield found little disparity in the nature of the soil on the whole. Sand occurs only on the coast (it is so seldom found inland that large quantities of sea-sand are transported inland for improving the turf and loam soils): chalky soil is unknown (the chalk in Antrim is, as has already been mentioned, covered with a layer of Basalt, the products of the decomposition of which produce a highly fertile soil. In England the chalky soils are the worst, "...and tenacious clays, such as those found in Oxfordshire, in some parts of Essex, and throughout high Suffolk, I could never meet with..." The Irish call all loamy soils clay; there might be real clay in Ireland as well, but not on the surface as in several parts of England in any case. Limestone or limestone-gravel is to be found everywhere, "The former (limestone) is a useful production, and is converted into a source of wealth that will always be employed with advantage". Mountains and turf-bogs certainly reduce the fertile surface considerably. The land in the North is not so fertile; yet even here there are highly luxurious valleys in every County, and Wakefield unexpectedly found a highly fertile tract even in furthest Donegal amongst the wildest mountains. The extensive cultivation of flax in the North is in itself sufficient proof of fertility, as this plant does not thrive in poor soil.

"A great portion of the soil of Ireland throws out a luxuriant herbage, springing up from calcareous subsoil, without any considerable depth. I have seen bullocks of the weight of 180 stone*, rapidly fattening on land incapable of receiving the print of a horse's foot, even in the wettest season, and where there were not many inches of soil. This on one species of the rich soil of Ireland, and is to be found throughout Roscommon, in some parts of Galway, Clare and other districts. Some places exhibit the richest loam that I ever saw turned up by a plough; this is the case throughout Meath in particar. Where such soil occurs, its fertility is so conspicuous, that it appears as if nature had determind to counteract the bad effects produced by the clumsy system of its cultivators. On the banks of the Fergus and Shannon, the land is of a different kind, but equally productive, though the surface presents the appearance of a marsh. These districts are called 'the caucasses'; the substratum is a blue silt, deposited by the sea, which seems to partake of the qualities of the upper stratum; for this land can be injured by no depth of ploughing.

"In the counties of Limerick and Tipperary there is another kind of rich land, consisting of a dark, friable, dry, sandy loam, which if preserved in a clean state, would throw out corn for several years in succession. It is equally well adapted to grazing and tillage, I will venture to say, seldom experiences a season too wet, or a summer too dry. The richness of the land, in some of the vales, may be accounted for by the decomposition of soil carried thither from the upper grounds by the rains. The subsoil is calcareous, so that the

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* 8 lbs to the stone (note in Wakefield).

richest manure is thus spread over the land below, without subjecting the farmer to any labour." (Volume 1 pages 79,80)

If a thinnish layer of heavy loam lies directly on limestone, the land is not suited to tillage and bears only a miserable crop of grain, but it makes excellent sheep-pastures. This improves it further by producing a thick grass mixed with white clover and...*

Dr. Beaufort** states that there occur in the West particularly in Mayo, many turloughs - shallow depressions of different sizes, which fill with water in the winter, although not visibly connected with streams or rivers. In the Summer this drains away through underground fissures in the limestone, leaving luxurious firm grazing ground.

"Independently of the caucasses, the richest soil in Ireland is to be found in the counties of Tipperary, Limerick, Roscommon, Longford, and Meath. In Longford there is a farm called Granard Hill, which produced eight crops of potatoes without manure. Some parts of the county of Cork are uncommonly fertile, and upon the whole, Ireland may be considered as affording land of excellent quality, though I am by no means prepared to go to the length of many writers, who assert, that it is decidedly acre for acre richer than England." (Vol 1 p 81)

The last observation, directed against Young, rests on a misunderstanding of Young's opinion, quoted above. Young does not say that Ireland's soil is more productive than England's, each taken in their present state of cultivation - productivity is naturally far higher in England; Young merely states that the n a t u r a l fertility of the soil is greater in Ireland than in England. This is no contradiction of Wakefield.

After the last Famine in 1849 Sir Robert Peel sent a Scottish agronomist, Mr. Caird, to Ireland to report on means of improving agriculture. In a publication issued soon afterwards he said about the West of Ireland - the worst stricken part of the country apart from the extreme North-West:

"...I was much surprised to find so great an extent of fine fertile land. The interior of the country is very level, and its general character stony and dry; the soil deep and friable. The humidity of the climate causes a very constant vegetation, which has both advantages and disadvantages. It is favourable for grass and green crops, but renders it necessary to employ very vigorous and persevering efforts to extirpate weeds. The abundance of lime everywhere, both in the rock itself, and as sand and gravel beneath the surface, are of

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* There is an omission in the manuscript. According to Wakefield it is "wild burnet". (Note by editor of German edition).

** Revd. Beaufort - Memoir of a map of Ireland, 1792. Pages 75-6. Quoted in Wakefield, Volume 1, page 36.

the greatest value."

Caird also confirms that County Westmeath consists of the finest pasture land. Of the region north of Lough Corrib (Co Mayo) he writes:

"The greater part" (of a farm of 500 acres) "is the finest feeding land for sheep and cattle - dry, friable, undulating land, all on limestone. The field of rich old grass are superior to anything we have, except in small patches, in any part of Scotland I at present remember. The best part of it i s t o o g o o d f o r t i l l a g e , but about one half of it might be profitably brought under the plough... The rapidity with which the land on this limestone subsoil recovers itself, and without any seeds being sown, reverts to good pasture, is very remarkable." *

Finally we note a French authority:**

"Of the two divisions of Ireland, that of the north-west, embracing a fourth of the island, and comprehending the province of Connaught, with the adjacent counties of Donegal, Clare and Kerry, resembles Wales, and even, in its worst parts, the Highlands of Scotland. Here again are two millions of unsightly hectares, the frightful aspect of which has given rise to the national proverb, "Go to the devil or Connaught"***. The other, or south-east and much larger division, since it embraces three-fourths of the island, and includes the provinces of Leinster, Ulster, and Munster, equal to about 6 millions of hectares, is at least equal in natural fertility to England proper. It is not all, however, equally good; the amount of humidity there is still greater than in England. Extensive bogs cover about a tenth of the surface; more than another tenth is occupied with mountains and lakes. In fact five only out of eight millions of hectares in Ireland are cultivated. Even the English admit that Ireland, in point of soil, is superior to England. The conformation of the country is peculiar; mountains range among nearly the whole extent of its coasts, the interior being a vast plain, and for the most part highly fertile. Ireland contains 8 millions of hectares. Rocks, lakes, and bogs occupy about two millions of these, and two millions more are indifferent land. The remainder - that is to say,

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* Caird: The Plantation Scheme, or the West of Ireland as a field for investment. Edinburgh, 1850. He also wrote travel reports on the condition of agriculture in the main counties of England for The Times of 1850-1. The above quotations are found on pages 6, 17-18, 121.

** Leonce de Lavergne: Rural Economy of England, Scotland and Ireland, translated from the French. Edinburgh 1855

*** This expression as will be seen later, owes its origin not to the dark mountains of Connaught, but to the darkest period in the entire history of Ireland.
See notes 4 and 5 on page 27.

about half the country - is rich land, with calcareous subsoil. What better could be conceived?"

We see therefore that all authorities agree that Ireland's soil contains all the elements of fertility to an extraordinary degree. This, not only in its chemical ingredients, but also in its structure. The two extremes of heavy impenetrable clay, completely impermeable, and loose sand, completely permeable do not occur. But Ireland has another disadvantage. As the mountains are mainly around the coasts, the watersheds between river-basins are mostly low-lying, and therefore the rivers are not capable of carrying all the rain water out to sea. Thus extensive turf bogs arise inland, especially on the watersheds. In the plains alone 1,576,000 acres are covered in turf bogs. These are mostly depressions or troughs in the land, most of which were once shallow sea-basins which were gradually overgrown with moss and marsh plants, and were filled up with their decomposing remains. As with our north German moors, their only use is for future turf cutting. Cultivation can only gradually reclaim their edges. The soil in these former sea-basins in mainly marl and its lime content (varying from 5% to 90%) is due to the shells of fish. Thus the material for their development into arable land exists within each of these turf-bogs. Apart from this most of them are rich in iron ore. Besides these low lying turf bogs, there are 1,254,000 acres of mountain moor. These are the result of deforestation in a damp climate and are one of the most peculiar beauties of the British Isles. Wherever flat or almost flat summits were deforested - and this occured extensively in the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century to provide the iron works with charcoal - a layer of turf formed under the influece of rain and mist, which gradually spread down the slopes where the conditions were favourable. Such moors cover the ridges of the mountain chain dividing Northern England from north to south; and are found in abundance wherever substantial mountain ranges are marked on the map of Ireland. The turf bogs of Ireland are by no means hopelessly lost to agriculture. In time we will see what rich fruits these, and the "moderately poor land" contemptuously mentioned by Lavergne, can produce given correct management.

# CLIMATE

Ireland's climate results from its position. The Gulfstream and the prevailing South-West winds provide warmth and make for mild winters and cool summers. In the South-West the summer lasts far into October which, according to Wakefield, is there regarded as the best month for sea-bathing. Frost is rare and of short duration, snow usually melts immediately on the low-lying land. Spring weather prevails throughout the Winter in the inlets of Kerry and Cork, which are open to the south-west and protected from the North; here, and in certain other places, myrtle thrives in the open (Wakefield mentions a country-

-residence where it grows into trees 16 feet high and is used to make stable-brooms. Volume 1 page 55), and laurel, arbutus and other evergreen plants grow into substantial trees. In Wakefield's time, the peasants in the South were still leaving their potatoes in the open all winter - and they had not been frost-bitten since 1740.

On the other hand Ireland also suffers the first powerful downpour of the heavy Atlantic rain clouds. Ireland's average rainfall is at least 35 inches, which is considerably more than England's average, yet is definately lower than that of Lancashire and Chesire and scarcely more than the average for the whole of the West of England. In spite of this the Irish climate is decidedly pleasanter than the English. The leaden sky which often causes days of continual drizzle in England is mostly replaced in Ireland by a continental April sky; the fresh sea-breezes bring on clouds quickly and unexpectedly, but drive them past equally quickly, if they do not come down immediately in sharp showers. And even when the rain lasts for days, as it does in late Autumn, it does not have the same chronic atmosphere that it has in England. The weather like the inhabitants has an acute character, it moves in violent contrasts; the sky is like an Irish woman's face, here also rain and sunshine succeed each other suddenly and unexpectedly and there is none of the grey English boredom.

The Roman, Pomponius Mela, gives us the oldest report on the Irish climate (in "De Situ Orbis"*) in the first century of our era:

> "Above Brittaine is Ireland, almost of like space but on both sides equall, with shores evelong, of a evyll ayre to rypen things that are sown, but so aboundant of Grasse which is not onelie rancke but also sweete, that the Cattell may in small parte of the daye fyll themselves, and if they bee not kept from feedying, they burste with grazing over-long. [The inhabitants thereof are unnurtured, and ignorant of all virtues more than other nations, but yet they have some knowledge, howbeit altogether voide of godlinesse**]

"Coeli ad maturanda semina iniqui, verum adeo luxuriosa herbis non laetis modo sed etiam dulcibus!" We find this part amongst others translated into modern English by Mr. Goldwin Smith, Professor of History formerly of Oxford and now in Cornell University, America. He reports that it is difficult to gather in the harvest of wheat and

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* "The Rare and Singular Worke of Pomponius Mela, that excellent and worthy Cosmographer of the situation of the world, most orderly prepared, and devided every part by it selfe: with the longitude and latitude of everie Kingdom, Regent, Province, Rivers, Mountains, Cities and Countries." Translated into Englishe by Arthur Golding, Gentleman. - Thomas Hacket, London, 1590 (Translator's Note)

** [Completion of Pomponius Mela's information on Ireland. Not quoted by Engels - Translator's Note]

continues:

"Its (Ireland's) natural way to commercial prosperity seems to be to supply with the produce of its grazing and dairy farms the population of England."*

From Mela to Goldwin Smith up to the present day, - since 1846** by a noisy chorus of Irish landlords - how often has this assertion been repeated, that Ireland is condemned by its climate to provide not Irishmen with bread but Englishmen with meat and butter, and that the destiny of the Irish people is, therefore, to be brought over the ocean to make room in Ireland for cows and sheep.

It can be seen that to establish the facts of the Irish climate is to unravel a contemporary political question. And indeed the climate only concerns us because of its importance for agriculture. Rain measurements, at their present incomplete stage of observations, are only of secondary importance for our purpose; how much rain falls is not so important as h o w and w h e n it falls. It is here that agronomical judgements are most important.

Arthur Young considers that Ireland is considerably damper than England; this is the cause of the amazing grass-bearing qualities of the soil. He speaks of cases when turnip and stubble-land, left unploughed, produced a rich harvest of hay in the next Summer. A thing of which there is no example in England. He further mentions that the Irish wheat is much lighter than that grown in drier lands: weeds and grass spring up in abundance under even the best management, and the harvests are so wet, and so troublesome to bring in that revenue suffers greatly. (Young's "Tours", volume ll, page 100)

At the same time however he points out that the ground in Ireland counteracts this dampness of the climate. It is generally stony, and for this reason lets the water through more easily.

"Tough, stony, heavy loam, difficult to work, is not uncommon in Ireland, but it is quite different to English clay. If as much rain fell on English clay, (a soil which occurs rarely in Ireland, and then only mixed with a lot of stones) as on the rocks of the Sister-island, these stretches could not be cultivated. Here however, the rocks are covered in green, and where they consist of limestone with only a thin layer of humus, they carry the softest and most beautiful turf

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* Goldwin Smith, Irish History and Irish Character, Oxford and London, 1861. - What is more amazing in this work, which under the mask of "objectivity", justifies English policy on Ireland, the ignorance of the professor of history, or the hypocrisy of the liberal bourgeoisie? We will touch on both again later. (Note by Engels)

** See Note Six on page 28.

in the world." (Volume 11, Second section, pages 3,4)

The limestone is known to be full of cracks and fissures which let the excess water through easily.

Wakefield devotes a very comprehensive chapter to the climate, in which he assembles all the earlier observations up to his own time. Dr. Boate ("Natural History of Ireland" 1645) describes the winters as mild, with three or four periods of frost every year, each of which usually lasts for only two or three days; the Liffey in Dublin freezes over scarcely once in 10 to 12 years. March is usually dry and fine, but then the weather becomes rainy; there are seldom more than two or three consecutive dry days in Summer: and in the late autumn it is fine again. Very dry summers are rare, and famine never occurs because of drought, being mostly caused by too much rain. It seldom snows on the plains, so cattle remain in the open all the year round. Yet years of heavy snow do occur, as in 1635, when the people had difficulty in providing shelter for the cattle. (Wakefield, Volume 1, page 216 and following).

In the beginning of the last century, Dr. Rutty ("Natural History of the County of Dublin") made accurate meteorological observations which stretched over 50 years, from 1716 to 1765. During this whole period the proportion of South and West winds to North and East winds was 73:37 (10,878 South and West against 6,329 North and East). Prevailing winds were West and South-West, then came North-West and South-East, and most rarely North-East and East. In summer, autumn and winter West and South-West prevailed. East is more frequent in spring and summer, when it occurs twice as frequently as in autumn and winter; North-East is most frequent in Spring, when, likewise, it is twice as frequent as in autumn and winter. As a result of this the temperatures are more even, the winters milder and the summers cooler than in London, while on the other hand the air is damper. Even in Summer, salt, sugar, flour etc. soak dampness out of the air, and corn must be kiln-dried, a practice unknown in certain parts of England. (Wakefield, Volume 1, pages 172-81)

Rutty could at that time only compare Irish climate with that in London, which, as in all eastern England is dry. If material from west and especially north-western England had been at his disposal, he would have found that his description of the Irish climate - distribution of winds over the year, wet summers, in which sugar, salt etc. are ruined in unheated rooms - fits this area completely, except that western England is colder in winter.

Rutty also kept data on the meterèological charachter of the seasons. In the fifty years referred to, there were 16 cold, late or too dry springs: a little more than in London; further 22 hot and dry, 24 wet, and 4 changeable summers: a little damper than in London, where the number of dry and wet summers are equal; further, 16 fine, 12 wet, 22 changeable autumns: again a little damper and more changeable than in London; and 13 frosty, 14 wet and 23 mild winters: which is

considerably damper and milder than in London.

According to measurements made in the Botanical Gardens in Dublin, the following total amount of rain fell each month in the ten years between 1802 and 1811 (in inches): December: 27.31; July: 24.15; November: 23.49; August: 22.47; September: 22.27; January: 21.67; October: 20.12; May 19.50; March: 14.69; April: 13.54; June: 12.07; Average for the years: 23.36 (Wakefield, Volume 1, page 191). These ten years were unusually dry. Kane ("Ind. Res." page 73) gives an average of 30.87 inches for 6 years and S y m o n s ("English Rain Fall") puts it at 29.79 inches for 1860-2.

Because of the fleeting nature of local showers in Ireland, such measurements mean very little unless they extend over many years and are undertaken at frequent stations. This is proved by the fact that of the three stations measuring rainfall in Dublin in 1862 the first recorded 24.63, the second 28.04, and the third 30.18 inches as the average. The average amount of rainfall recorded by 12 stations in different parts of Ireland in the years 1860-2, was not quite 39 inches according to Symons (individual averages varied from 25.45 to 51.44 inches).

In his book about Ireland's climate*, Dr. Patterson says:

> "The frequency of our showers, and not the amount of rainfall itself, has caused the popular notion about the wetness of our climate... Sometimes the spring sowing is a little delayed because of wet weather, but our springs are so frequently cold and late that early sowing is not always advisable. If frequent summer showers make our hay and corn harvests risky, then vigilance and diligence would be just as successful in such exigencies as they are for the English in their 'catching' harvests, and improved culitivation would ensure that the seed-corn would aid the peasants' efforts."

In Londonderry the number of rainfree days each year between 1791 and 1802 varied between 113 and 148 - the average for the period was 126. In Belfast the same average emerges. In Dublin it varies from 168 to 205, - average 179. (Patterson, ibid.)

According to Wakefield, Irish harvests fall as follows: wheat mostly in September, more rarely in August, occasionally in October; barley usually a little later than wheat; and oats approximately a week after barley, therefore usually in October. After considerable research, Wakefield concluded that not nearly enough material existed for a s c i e n t i f i c description of Irish climate, but nowhere does he state that it provides a serious obstacle to the cultication of corn. In fact he found that the losses incurred during wet harvest-times were due to entirely different causes, and states so quite exp-

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* Dr. W. Patterson, An Essay on the Climate of Ireland, Dublin, 1804. Page 164.

licitly:

> "The soil of Ireland is so fertile, and the climate so favourable, that under a proper system of agriculture, it will produce not only a sufficiency of corn for its own use, but a superabundance which may be ready at all times to relieve England when she may stand in need of assistance." (Vol. 2, page 61.)

At that time of course - 1812 - England was at war in Europe and America,* and it was much more difficult to import corn - corn was the primary need. Now America, Rumania and Germany deliver sufficient corn, and the question is one of cheap meat. And because of this Ireland's climate is no longer suited to tillage.

Ireland has grown corn since ancient times. In her oldest laws, recorded long before the arrival of Englishmen, the "Sack of Wheat" is already a definite measurement of worth. Fixed quantities of wheat, malt-barley and oatmeal are quite regularly mentioned in the tributes of inferiors to tribal and other chiefs.** After the English invasion the cultivation of corn diminished because of the continual battles, without ever ceasing completely; it increased between 1660 and 1725 and decreased again from 1725 to 1780; more corn as well as a greater quantity of potatoes were again sown between 1780 and 1846, and since then they have both given way to the steadily advancing cattle-pastures. If Ireland is not suited to the cultivation of corn would it have been grown for 1000 years?

Of course the regions near the mountains where the rainfall is always greater, are less suited to corn-growing - notably in the South and West. Besides the good years, a series of wet summers will often occur there, as between 1860 and 1862, which do great harm to the wheat. Wheat, however, is not Ireland's principal grain, and Wakefield even complains that too little of it is grown for lack of a market - the only one being the nearest mill. For the most part barley is grown only for the secret distilleries (secret because of taxation). Ireland's principal grain was and still is oats. In 1810 more than ten times as much oats was grown as of all the other sorts of corn put together. As oats are harvested after wheat and barley, the harvest is usually in late September or October when the weather is usually fine, especially in the South. And in any case, oats can take a considerable amount of rain.

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* See Note 7 on page 28.

** "Ancient Laws and Institutions of Ireland - Senchus Mor". Two volumes, Dublin, printed for Her Majesty's Stationary Office and published by Alexander Thom (London, Longmans) in 1865 and 1869. See Volume 2, pages 239-251. The value of one sack of wheat was 1 screpall (denarious) or 20-24 grains of silver. The worth of the screpall is fixed by Dr. Petrie in "Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland, anterior to the Anglo-Norman Invasion", Dublin 1845, 4°. Pages 212-219. See note 8 on page 28.

e have already seen that Ireland's climate as far as the amount and istribution of rain throughout the year is concerned, corresponds al-ost entirely with that of the north-west of England. The rainfall s much greater in the mountains of Cumberland, Westmorland, and North ancashire (Corriston 96.03, in Windermere 75.02 inches, average in the ears 1860-62), than in certain stations in Ireland known to me, and et hay is made and oats are grown there. In the same years the rain-all varied from 25.11 in Liverpool to 59.13 in Bolton, the average eing about 40 inches; in Cheshire it varied from 33.02 to 43.40 inch-s, the average being approximately 37 inches. In Ireland, as we saw, t was not quite 39 inches in the same years. (All figures from Sy-ons.) In both counties corn of all kinds, and in particular wheat, s cultivated; Cheshire carried on mainly cattle-rearing and dairy arming until the last epidemic of cattle-plague, after which the attle died and the climate suddenly became quite admirably suited for heat-growing. If there had been an epidemic of cattle plague in reland causing devastation similar to that in Cheshire, instead of reaching that Ireland's natural occupation is cattle-rearing, they ould point to the place in Wakefield which says that Ireland is des-ined to be England's granary.

f one looks at the thing impartially and without being misled by the ries of the interested parties, the Irish landowners and the English ourgeois, one finds that Ireland, like all other places, has some arts which because of soil and climate are more suited to cattle-rear-ng, and others to tillage, and still others - the vast majority - hich are suited to both.

ompared with England, Ireland is more suited to cattle-rearing on the hole; but if England is compared with France, it too is more suited o cattle-rearing. Are we to conclude that the whole of England hould be transformed into cattle-ranches, and the whole agricultural opulation be sent into the factory towns or to America - except for few cattle-ranchers - to make room for cattle, which are to be ex-orted to France in exchange for silk and wine? But this is exactly hat the Irish landowners who put up their rents and the English bour-eoisie who decrease their wages demand for Ireland: Goldwin Smith as said it plainly enough. And yet the social revolution inherent n a transformation from tillage to cattle-rearing would be far greater n Ireland than in England. In England, where a high standard of cul-ivation prevails and where agricultural labourers have already been eplaced by machinery to a large extent, it would mean the transplant-tion of at most one million; in Ireland, where small and even cottage-arming prevails, it would mean the transplantation of four million: he extermination of the Irish people.

t can be seen that even the facts of nature become national disputing oints between England and Ireland. It can also be seen however, how he public opinion of the ruling class in England - and it is only this hat is generally known on the Continent - changes with the fashion and n its own interests. Today England needs grain quickly and dependably - Ireland is just perfect for wheat-growing. Tomorrow England needs

meat - Ireland is only fit for cattle-ranching. The existence of five million Irish is a smack in the eye to all the laws of political economy, they have to go, but they will decide where they stay (sie müssen fort, sie mogen sehen, wo sie bleiben)!

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# NOTES

ONE The formation of a centralised feudal State in England between the 11th and 12th centuries followed its conquest by Willian the Conquerer, Duke of Normandy, in the year 1066. The King's power was especially strengthened by the reforms made by Henry the 2nd in the 12th century. The English monarchy's appetite for conquest had Ireland as its object too. After the campaigns of 1169-1171 the Anglo-Norman barons founded a colony in the South-East of Ireland, which later received the term Pale. So-called because the conquerers erected fortifications at its boundaries. The colony served England as a base for their continual wars against the population of the as yet unconquered parts of Ireland, which ended in the 16th-17th centuries with the subjection of the whole land.

TWO 'Drift' - deposit of the products of glacial erosion.

THREE "A Tour in Ireland" - Arthur Young. The edition used for the purposes of this translation is the 1780 edition. The page references at the end of quotations refer to this edition.

FOUR This refers to the cruel reprisals taken against the Irish population and their wholesale expropriation, which began soon after the suppression of the National Uprising, by the troops of the English Republic between 1641 and 1652. As a result of the Acts of the English Parliament of 1652-1653 (See Note 5), some of the Irish landholders were declared "Guilty of insurrection", and forcibly transplanted into the barren province of Connaught and to the swamps of County Clare.

FIVE The Long Parliament passed the Order of Ireland Act on 12th August, 1652 during the English revolution, and after the suppression of Ireland's National-Liberation Uprising between 1641-52. The Act legalised the force-and-terror regime of the English colonisers in Ireland and sanctioned the robbery of Irish land in the interests of the representatives of the English bourgeoisie and of the new civic nobility. After this Act was passed, the majority of Irish people were declared "guilty of insurrection". Even those Irish who,

while not directly concerned with the Insurrection, had not shown the necessary "submission" to the English State, were counted amongst the "guilty". Those declared "guilty" were classified into categories according to the extent of their involvement in the Insurrection, and submitted to hard reprisals; either sentenced to death, sent into exile, or had their property confiscated. On the 26th September, 1653, the Order of Ireland Act was completed by a new Act, which prescribed the forcible transplantation of the Irish affected by confiscations into the barren province of Connaught and County Clare; and which fixed the division of the confiscated lands amongst the creditors of Parliament and the officers and soldiers of the British Army. Both Acts confirmed the economic basis of English landlordism in Ireland.

SIX — The Repeal of the Corn Laws in the year 1846 lead to a drop in corn prices as a result of lower demand for Irish corn in England, as well as to the increased demand for wool and other products of animal-husbandry in Ireland. This contributed to a considerable extent to the transfer to pastural farming by the landlords and well-to-do farmers. This resulted in the large-scale expulsion of Irish small farmers from the soil in the middle of the 19th century.

SEVEN — At this time England was at war with Napoleonic France and the European nations dependent on it. (In 1812) England declared war against Napoleon in alliance with Russia, Spain and Portugal.) Apart from this the war between England and the United States of America had begun in 1812. This was caused by the ruling class's politics in England, as they would not recognise the United States' national sovereignty, and wished to re-establish colonial rule in North America.

EIGHT — The third volume of this publication, which contains the conclusion of the collection "Senchus Mor", only appeared in 1873, after Engels has already written his work.

Engels was the first to appreciate the meaning of this monument of Ancient-Irish laws for the study of the social order in Ancient Irish Society.

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# ANCIENT IRELAND

The writers of ancient Greece and Rome, and also the fathers of the Church, gave very little information about Ireland.

In spite of this there exists, even to the present day, a native literature which is quite rich in content, in spite of the many Irish manuscripts lost in the wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. It includes poems, grammars, glossaries, annals and other historical writings and law-books. With very few exceptions, however, this whole literature, which embraces the period at least from the 8th to the 17th centuries, exists only in manuscript. For the Irish language printing existed only for a few years, and then only from the time when it had begun to die. Of this rich material, therefore, only a small part is accessible.

Amongst the most important of these annals are those of the Abbot Tigernach (died 1088), those of Ulster, and above all, those of the Four Masters. The latter were collected in 1632-36 in a monastery in Donegal under the direction of Michael O'Clery, a franciscan monk, who was helped by three other Seanchaidhes (antiquarians), from materials which now are almost all lost. They were published in 1856 from the original Donegal manuscript which still exists, having been edited and translated into English by O'Donovan*. The earlier editions by Dr. Charles O'Connor (the first part of the "Four Masters", and the "Annals of Ulster") are untrustworthy in text and translation.**

The beginning of most of these annals presents the mythical pre-history of Ireland. Its base was formed by old folk-legends, which were spun out endlessly by poets in the 9th and 10th centuries, and were then brought into suitable chronological order by the monk-chroniclers. The "Annals of the Four Masters" begins with the year of the world 2242, when Caesair, a granddaughter of Noah, landed in Ireland forty days before the Flood; thus the ancestors of the Scots, the last immigrants to Ireland, were derived from Japhet in direct line of descent and were brought into connection with Moses, the Egyptians and Phoenicians, as the German chroniclers of the middle ages connected the ancestors of the Germans with Troy, Aeneas or Alexander the Great. The "Four Masters" devote only a few pages to this legend (in which the only valuable element, the original folk-legend, is not distinguishable even now); the "Annals of Ulster" leave it out altogether; and Tigernach, with a critical boldness wonderful for his time, explains that all the

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* "Annala Rioghachta Eireann. Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters". Edited, with an English translation, by Dr. John O'Donovan. Second Edition. Dublin - 1856. 7 Volumes in 4°. (English Note by Engels.)

** See note 1 on page 44.

the written records of the Scots before King Cimbaoth (approximately 300 BC) are uncertain. But when new national life awoke in Ireland at the end of the last century, and with it new interest in Irish literature and history, just these monks' legends were counted to be their most valuable constituent. With true Celtic enthusiasm and specifically Irish naivete, belief in these stories was declared an intrinsic part of national patriotism, and this offered the super-cunning world of English scholarship - whose own efforts in the field of philological criticism are gloriously well-known to the rest of the world! - the wished-for pretext for throwing everything Irish aside as arrant nonsense.*

Since the 30th year of this century a far more critical spirit has come into being in Ireland especially through Petrie and O'Donovan. Petrie's already-mentioned researches prove that the most complete agreement exists between the oldest surviving inscriptions, which date from the 6th and 7th centuries, and the Annals; and O'Donovan is of the opinion that already in the 2nd and 3rd centuries of our era these begin to report historical facts. It makes little difference to us whether the credibility of the Annals begins several hundred years earlier or later since, unfortunately, during that period, they are almost wholly fruitless for our purpose. They contain short, dry notices of deaths, accessions to the throne, wars, battles, earthquakes, plagues, Scandinavian raiding expeditions, but little that has reference to the social life of the people. But, if the whole juridicial literature of Ireland were published, they would take on a completely different meaning; many a dry notice would take on new life through explanations found in the law books.

Almost all of these law books, which are very numerous, still await the time when they will see the light of day. After being plagued by numerous Irish antiquarians, the English Government agreed in 1852 to set up a Commission for publishing the ancient laws and ins-

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* One of the most naive products of that time is "The Chronicles of Eri, being the History of the Gaal Sciot Iber, or the Irish People, translated from the original manuscipts in the Phoenician dialect of the Scythian Language by O'Connor", London 1822, 2 volumes.

The Phoenician dialect of the Scythian language is naturally Celtic Irish, and the original manuscript is a pleasant verse chronicle. The publisher is Arthur O'Connor, exile of 1798, uncle of Feargus O'Connor who was later leader of the English Chartists, an ostensible descendent of the ancient O'Connors, Kings of Connaught, and, after a fashion the Irish Pretender to the Throne. His portrait stands in front of the title, a man with a handsome, jovial Irish face, strikingly resembling his nephew Feargus, grasping a crown with his right hand. Underneath is the caption: "O'Connor-cear-rige, head of his race, and O'Connor, chief of the prostrate people of his nation: Soumis, pas vaincus (Subdued, but not conquered)."
(Note by Engels)

titutions of Ireland. But the Commission consisted of three Lords (who are never far away when there is state money to be spent) three lawyers of the highest rank, three Protestant clergymen, and Dr. Petrie and an official who is the chief surveyor in Ireland. Of these gentlemen only Dr. Petrie and two clergymen, Dr. Graves (now Protestant bishop of Limerick) and Dr. Todd, could raise any claim to understand anything at all about the tasks of the Commission, and of these three Petrie and Todd have since died. The Commission was instructed to arrange the transcription, translation and publication of the legal content of the ancient Irish manuscripts, and to employ the necessary people for this purpose. It employed the two best people that were to be had, Dr. O'Donovan and Professor O'Curry, who copied, and made a rough translation of, a multitude of manuscripts; both died, however, before anything was ready for publication. Their successors, Dr. Hancock and Professor O'Mahoney, then took up the work and up to the present the two volumes already cited, containing the "Senchus Mor", have appeared. According to the publisher's acknowledgement only two of the members of the Commission, Graves and Todd, have taken part in the work, through some annotations to the proofs. The Officer, Sir Th. Larcom, placed the original maps of the survey of Ireland at the disposal of the publishers for the verification of place names. Dr. Petrie soon died, and the other gentlemen confined their activities to drawing their salaries conscientiously for 18 years.

This is how public works are carried out in England, and even more in English-ruled Ireland. Without jobbery,* they cannot start. No public interest may be satisfied without a pretty sum or a fat sinecure being siphoned off for Lords and Government proteges. With the money that the whole superfluous Commission has wasted the entire unpublished historical literature could have been published in Germany - and done better.

The "Senchus Mor" has until now been our main source for information about conditions in ancient Ireland. It is a collection of ancient legal decisions which, according to the later-composed introduction, were put together on the orders of St. Patrick, and his counsel enabled rapidly-expanding Christianity to be brought into harmony with the Irish. The High-King of Ireland, Laeghaire (428-458, according to the "Annals of the Four Masters"), the Provincial-Kings, Corc of Munster and Daire, probably a prince of Ulster, and also three bishops: St. Patrick, St. Benignus and St. Cairnech, and three lawyers: Dubthach, Fergus and Rossa, are supposed to have formed the "Commission" which put the book together - and there is no doubt that they did their work more cheaply than the present Commission, who only had to

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* Jobbery: the using of public office to one's private advantage or to that of relations and frieds, and like wise the using of public money for indirect bribery in the interests of a Party, is called jobbery in England. An individual transaction is called a job. The English colony in Ireland is the main centre of jobbery. (Note by Engels).

publish it. The "Four Masters" give 438 as the year in which the book was written.

The text itself evidently rests on very ancient heathen materials. The oldest law-forms in it are written in verse with a precise metre and the so-called harmony - a kind of alliteration, or rather consonant-assonance - which is peculiar to Irish poetry, and frequently it goes over to full rhyme. As it is certain that old Irish law-books were translated in the 14th century from the so-called Fenian dialect (Bérla Feini), the language of the 5th century, into the then current Irish (Introduction (T.I.) Page xxxvi and following,) it emerges that also in the "Senchus Mor" the metre has been wiped away to a greater or lesser extent in certain places; but it appears often enough to give the text a definate rythmical pattern together with occasional rhymes and powerfully harmonious places. It is almost sufficient to read just the translation to find out the verse forms. But then there are also throughout it, especially in the latter half, numerous pieces of undoubted prose; and, whereas the verse is certainly very ancient and has been handed down traditionally, these prosaic insertions seem to originate with the compilers of the book. At any rate the "Senchus Mor" is quoted frequently in the glossary composed in the 9th and 10th centuries,** and written down some time before the English invasion. Several manuscripts (the oldest of which appears to date from the beginning of the 14th century or earlier) contain a series of mostly corresponding annotations and longer commenting notes on this text. The annotations are in the spirit of old glossaries; verbal quibbles take the place of etymology and the explanation of words, and the annotations are of varying worth, being often badly defaced or largely incomprehensible, or at least without knowledge of the rest of the law-books. Their age is uncertain. The greater part, however, probably dates from after the English invasion. As the texts show only a very few traces of developments in the law, and these are only a more precise fixing of details, the greater part, which is purely explanatory, can certainly be used with some discretion as a source for the earlier time.

The "Senchus Mor" contains:

1. The Law of seizure, that is to say, almost the whole judicial procedure;
2. The Law of flogging, for settling disputes between people of different territories;
3. The Law of Saerath and Daerath (see below)*; and
4. The Law of the family.

From this we obtain much valuable information on the social life of that time, but, as long as many of the expressions remain unexplained and the remaining manuscripts are not published, much remains dark.

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* See Note 2 on page 44. ** should continue: and attributed to the King and Bishop of Cashel, Cormac

In addition to the literature the surviving monuments: churches, round towers, fortifications and inscriptions also enlighten us about the life of the people before the arrival of the English.

From outside sources we need only mention a few passages about Ireland in the Scandinavian sagas and the life of St. Malachy by St. Bernhard, which are not fruitful sources, and then come immediately to the first Englishman to write about Ireland out of his own experience.

Sylvester Gerald Barry, known as Giraldus Cambrensis, Arch-deacon of Brecknock, was a grandchild of the amorous Nesta, daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr, Prince of South Wales, and mistress of Henry 1 of England and the ancestor of almost all the leading Norman families who were involved in the first conquest of Ireland. In 1185 he went with John (later "the landless") to Ireland and in the following years wrote, first the "Topographica Hibernica", a description of the land and the inhabitants, and then the "Hibernia Expugnat", a highly-coloured history of the first invasion. It is mainly the first work which concerns us here. Written in highly pretentious Latin, and filled with the wildest belief in miracles and with all the Church and national prejudices of the time and the race of its vain author, the book is nevertheless of great importance as the first report of a foreigner which is detailed to some degree.*

From now on Anglo-Norman sources about Ireland naturally become more abundant; however, little knowledge is gained about the social circumstances of the part of the island that remained independent, and it is from this that conclusions regarding the ancient could be worked out. It is only towards the end of the 16th century, when Ireland as a whole was first systematically subjugated, that we find more detailed reports about the actual living conditions of the Irish people, and these naturally contain a strong English bias. We will find later that, in the course of 400 years which elapsed since the first invasion, the condition of the people changed little, and that where it did change it was not for the better. But, precisely because of this, these newer writings - Hanmer, Campion, Spencer, Davies, Camden, Moryson and others - which we will have to consult frequently, are one of our main sources for a period 500 years earlier, and a welcome and indispensible supplement to the poor original sources.

EARLY HISTORY The mythical pre-history of Ireland tells of a series of immigrations, which took place one after the other and mostly ended with the subduing of the island by the newest immigrants. The three last ones are: that of the Firbolg,

* "Giraldi Cambrensis Opera", ed. JS Brewer, London, Longmans, 1863 - A (weak) English translation of the historical works including the two works already mentioned was published in London by Bohn in 1863. ("The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis").
(Note by Engels)

that of the Tuatha-de-Danaan, and that of the Milesians or Scots, the latter being supposed to have come from Spain. Popular writing of history changed Firbolgs (fir - Irish fear, Latin vir, Gothic vair - man) into Belgian without further ado; the Tuatha-de-Danaans (tuatha - Irish, people, tract of land, Gathic thiuda) into Greek Danai or German Danes as they felt the need. O'Donovan is of the opinion that something historical lies at the basis of at least the named immigrations. According to the "Annals" there occurred in the year 10 AD an insurrection of the Aitheach Tuatha (which Lynch, who is a good judge of the old language, translated as: plebiorum hominum gens), that is a plebeian revolution, in which the whole nobility (Saorchlann) was slain. This points to the dominion of Scottish conquerors over the older inhabitants. O'Donovan draws the conclusion from the folk-tales that the Tuatha de Danaan, who were later transformed in folk-lore into elves of the mountain forest, survived up to the 2nd or 3rd century of our era in isolated mountain areas.

It cannot be doubted that the Irish were a mixed people even before large numbers of English came among them. The predominent type was fair-haired already in the 12th century, as it still is. Giraldus (Top. Hib. III, 26) says of two strangers, that they had yellow hair like the Irish. But there are also to be found, even now, especially in the West, two quite different types of black-haired people. The one is tall and well-built with fine facial features and curly hair, people of whom one thinks that one has already met them in the Italian Alps; this type occurs most frequently in the South-West. The other, stocky and short in build, with coarse, lank, black hair and flattened, almost negroid faces, is found more frequently in Connaught. Huxley attributes this dark-haired element in the originally light-haired Celtic population to an Iberian (that is, Basque) admixture,* which would be correct in part at least. However, at the time when the Irish come clearly into the light of history they have become a homogeneous people with Celtic speech and we do not find anywhere any other foreign elements, apart from the slaves acquired by conquest or barter, who were mostly Anglo-Saxons.

The reports of the classical writers of antiquity about the people do not sound very edifying. D i o d o r recounts that those Britons which inhabit the island called Iris (or Irin? it is in the accusative Ἶριν ) eat people. S t r a b o gives a more detailed report:

> "Concerning this island I have nothing certain to tell, except that its inhabitants are more savage than the Britons, since they are man-eaters as well as heavy eaters;*** and since, further, they count it an honourable thing, when their fathers die, to devour them, and openly to have intercourse, not only with the other women but also with their mothers and sisters;"**

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** See page 35 for this note. *** this should continue: (πολυφάγοι, which to another reading is ποηφάγοι, plant-eaters).
* See Note 3 on page 45.

The patriotic Irish historians have been more than a little indignant over this alleged calumny. It was reserved to more recent investigation to prove that cannibalism, and especially the devouring of parents, was a stage in the development of probably all nations. Perhaps it will be a consolation to the Irish to know that the ancestors of the present Berliners were still honouring this custom a full thousand years later:

> "But the Weletabi who reside in Germany, which we call Wilze, who are not ashamed to say that they have a greater right to eat their parents than the worms have." (Notker, quoted in Jacob Grimm's "Rechtsaltumer" page 488).

And we will see the consuming of human flesh returned to more than once under English rule. As far as the Phanerogam (to help myself to an expression of Fourier's*), used to reproach the Irish, is concerned: such things occurred amongst all the barbarous peoples, how much more amongst the unusually gallant Celts. It is interesting to note that even then the island carried the present native name: Iris, Irin and Jerne are identical with Eire and Erinn; and how even the Ptolemies already knew the present name of the capital, Dublin, Eblana (with the right accent Ἔβλανα). This is all the more noteworthy since the Irish Celts have since ancient times given this city another name, Athcliath, and for them Duibhlinn - the black pool - is the name of a point on the River Liffey.

Moreover we also find the following passage in P l i n i u s' "Naturgeschichte", IV, 16:

> "The Britons travel there " (Hibernia) "in boats of willow-branches across which animal-skins have been sewn together."

And later Solinus says of the Irish:

> "They cross the between Hibernia and Britannia in boats of willow-boughs, which they overlay with a cover of cattle-hide." (C. Jul. Solini "Cosmographia" c. 25)

In the year 1810 Wakefield found that on the whole west coast of Ireland "no other boats were found except ones which consisted of a wooden frame covered over with a horse- or ox-hide." The shape of these boats vary according to the district, but they can all be distinguished by their extraordinary lightness, so that mishaps rarely occur on them. Naturally they are of no use on the open sea, for which reason fishing can only take place in the creeks and amongst the islands.

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** Strabo Rerum Geographicarum, Volume XVII. English translation used: "The Geography of Strabo" H.L. Jones, 1917-32. Volume 2, page 259. (Note to page 34)

* See Note 4 on page 45.

Wakefield saw these boats in Malboy, Country Clare. There were 15 feet long, 5 feet wide and 2 feet deep. Two cow-hides with the hair to the inside and tarred on the outside were used for one of these, and they were arranged for two rowers. Such a boat cost about 30 shillings. (Wakef. II page 97). Instead of the woven willows - a wooden frame! What an advance in 1800 years and after nearly 700 years of the "civilising" influence of the foremost maritime nation in the world!

As for the rest, several signs of progress can be seen. Under King Cormac Ulfadha, who was placed on the throne in the second half of the third century, his son-in-law, Finn Mac Cumhal is said to have reorganised the Irish militia - the Fianna Eirionn* - probably on the lines of the Roman legion with differentiation between light troops and the ranks (Linientruppen - translator); all the later Irish armies on which we have information have the following categories of troops: the picked soldiers - the light soldiers - the gallowglas - the heavy infantry or the ranks. Finn's heroic deeds are celebrated in many old songs, some of which still exist; these and perhaps a few Scottish-Gaelic traditions form the basis of Macpherson's "Ossian" (Irish Oisin, son of Finn), in which Finn appears as Fingal and the scene is transferred to Scotland**. In Irish folklore Finn lives on as Finn Mac-Caul, a giant, to whom some sort of wonderful feat of strength is ascribed in almost every locality of the island.

Christianity must have penetrated Ireland quite early, at least the east coast of it. Otherwise the fact that so many Irishmen played an important part in Church-history even long before Patricius cannot be explained. Pelagius the heretic is usually taken to be a Welsh monk from Bangor, or rather Banchor at Carrickfergus. The fact that he comes from the Irish monastery is shown by Hieronymus, who describes him as being "stupid and thick-witted with Scottish gruel" ("scotorum pultibus praegravatus"). This is the first mention of Irish oat-meal broth (Irish lite, Anglo-Irish stirabout), which was even then the staple food of the Irish people and continued to be so until the introduction of potatoes, when it took second place. Pelagius' chief followers were Celestius and Albinus, also Scots, that is, Irishmen. According to Gennadius, Celestius wrote three detailed letters to his parents from the monastery, from which it can be seen that alphabetical writing was known in Ireland in the fourth century.

The Irish people are called Scots and the land Scotia in all the writings of the early Middle Ages; we find this term used by Claudian, Isidor, Beda, in the geographies of Ravenna, Eginhard and even by Alf-

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* Feini, Fenier, is the name given to the Irish nation throughout the "Senchus Mor". Feinechus, Fenchus, Law of the Fenier, often stands for the "Senchus" or for another lost law-book. Feine also describes the class, feine, the plebs, the lowest free class of people (Note by Engels).

** See Note 5 on page 45.

red the Great: "Hibernia, which we call Scotland" (Igbernia the ve Scotland hatadh")*. Present Scotland was called Caledonia by foreigners and Alba, Albania by the inhabitants; the transfer of the name Scotia, Scotland, to the northern area of the eastern isle did not occur until the eleventh century. The first substantial emigration of Irish Scots to Alba is taken to have been in the middle of the third century; Ammianus Marcellinus already knows them there in the year 360. The emigrants used the shortest sea-route, from Antrim to the peninsula of Kintyre; also, Nennius explicitly says that the Britons, who then occuppied all the Scottish lowlands up to the Clyde and Forth, were attacked by the Scots from the West, by the Picts from the North. Further, the seventh of the ancient Welsh historical "Triads"** reports that the gwyddyl ffichti (see below) came to Alba over the Norse (Nord-mannisch - translator) sea (Môr Llychlin) and settled on the coast. Incidentally, the fact that the Sea between Scotland and the Hebrides is called the Norse Sea shows that this "Triad" was written after the Norse conquest of the Hebrides. Large numbers of Scots came over again at about the year 500, and they gradually formed a kingdom, independent of both Ireland and the Picts. They finally subdued the Picts in the ninth century under Kenneth MacAlpin and created the state to which the name Scotland, Scotia was transferred, probably first by the Norsemen, about 150 years later.

Invasions of Wales by the gwyddyl ffichti or gaelic picts are mentioned in ancient Welsh sources (Nennius, the "Triads") of the 5th and 6th centuries. These are generally accepted as being invasions of Irish Scots. Gwyddyl is the Welsh form of gavidheal, which the Irish call themselves. The origin of the term Picts can be investigated by someone else.

Patricius (Irish Patrick, Patraic, as the Celts always pronounce their c as k in the Ancient Roman way) brought Christianity into dominance in the second quarter of the 5th century without any violent repercussions. Trade with Britain which had been of long standing also became livelier; architechts and building workers came over and the Irish learned to build with mortar from them, up to then they had only known dry-stone building. As mortar-building occurs between the 7th and 12th centuries, and then only in church buildings, that is proof enough that its introduction is connected with that of Christianity, and further, that from now on the clergy, as the representative of foreign culture, severs itself completely from the people in their intellectual development. Whilst the people made no, or only extremely slow, social advances, there soon developed amongst the clergy a literary learning which was extraordinary for the time and which, in accordance with the customs then, manifested itself mostly in zeal for converting heathens and founding monasteries. Columba converted the British Scots and the Picts; Gallus (founder of St. Gallen) and Fridolin the Allemanni,

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* See Note 6 on page 45.

** See Note 7 on page 45.

Kilian the Franks on the Main, Virgilius the City of Salzburg. All five were Irish. The Anglo-Saxons were also converted to Christianity mainly by Irish missionaries. Furthermore, Ireland was known throughout Europe as the nursery of learning, so much so that Charles the Great summoned an Irish monk, Albinus, to teach him at Pavia, where another Irishman, Dungal, followed him later. The most important of the Irish scholars, who were famous at that time but are now mostly forgotten, was the "Father", or as Erdmann calls him, the "Carolus Magnus"* of philosophy in the Middle Ages - John Scotus Erigena. Hegel says of him, "Real philosophy began with him first." He alone understood Greek in Western Europe in the 9th century, and he formed a continuity with the Alexandrian-neoplatonic school** by his translation of the writings of Dionysius Auropagita, the last exponent of the old philosophy. His teaching was very bold for the times. He denied the eternity of damnation, even for the devil, and brushed close to Pantheism. Contemporary orthodoxy did not fail to slander him. It took a full 200 years before the branch of learning founded by Erigena found development in Anselm of Canterbury.***

## NORSE INVASIONS

But before this development of culture could have an effect on the people, it was interrupted by Norse raids. The raids, which formed the basis of Scandinavian, and particularly Danish, patriotism, occurred too late, and the nations from which they originated were too small, for them to result in conquest, colonisation, and the forming of states as was the case with the earlier invasions of the Germans. Their advantages, as far as any lasting historical development they caused is concerned, are infinitesmally small against the immense and fruitless (even for the Scandinavians themselves) disturbances they caused.

Ireland was far from being inhabited by a single nation at the end of the 8th century. A high-kingship of the whole island existed only in

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* Charles the Great.

** See Note 8 on page 46.

*** More about Erigena's doctrines and works is to be found in Erdman's "Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie", second edition, Berlin 1869. Volume 1 pages 241-247. Erigena, who was not a clergyman, shows real Irish wit. When Charles the Bald, King of France, who was sitting opposite him at table, asked him the difference between a Scot and a sot, Erigena answered: "The width of a table". (Note by Engels.)

name, and not even that quite frequently. The provincial-kings, whose number and territories were continually changing, fought amongst themselves, and the smaller territorial princes likewise carried on their private feuds. On the whole, however, there seems to have been a certain accord in these internal wars which held the ravages within certain limits, so that the land did not suffer too much. In 795, several years after the English had been raided by the same plundering nation, Norsemen landed on the Isle of Rathlin, off the coast of Antrim, and burnt everything down; in 798 they landed near Dublin and after this they are mentioned nearly every year in the Annals, as heroes, strangers, pirates, and never without report of losccadh (burning down) of one or more places. Their colonies on the Orkneys, Shetlands and Hebrides (Western Isles, Sudhreyjar in the Old Norse sagas) served them as operational bases against Ireland, and against what was later known as Scotland, and England. At about the middle of the 9th century they were in possession of Dublin*, which, according to Giraldus, they rebuilt into a substantial city. He attributes the erection of Limerick and Waterford to the same source. The name Waterford is only a stupid anglecisation of the ancient Norse Vedhrafiordhr, which means either Storm-bay (Wetterfohrde) or ram-bay. As soon as the Norsemen settled down, their prime necessity became the ownership of fortified harbour-towns. The population of these remained Scandinavian, but in the 12th century it had long since assimilated Irish speech and customs. The quarrelling of the Irish princes amongst themselves greatly simplified pillage and settlement for the Norsemen, and even the temporary conquest of the whole of Ireland. The extent of Ireland's value to the Scandinavians as one of their regular pillaging lands is shown by the so-called death-song of Ragnar Lodbrôk, the Krâkumâl, composed at about the year 1000 in the snake-tower of King Ella of Northumberland. In this song all the ancient pagan savagery is drawn together, as if for the last time, and under the pretext of celebrating King Ragnar's heroic deeds in song, all the Nordic peoples' raids in their own lands, on coasts from Dunamunde to Flanders, Scotland (here already called Skotland, perhaps for the first time) and Ireland are briefly pictured. About Ireland is said:

"We hew'd with our swords, heap'd high the slain,
Glad was the wolf's brother of the furious battle's feast;
Iron struck brass-shields; Ireland's ruler,
Marstein, did not starve the murder-wolf or eagle;
In Vedhrafiördhr the raven was given a sacrifice.

"We hew'd with our swords, started a game at dawn,
A merry battle against three kings at Lindiseyri;

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* The assertion of Snorris in the Haraldsaga, that Harald Hårfagrs sons, Thorgils and Frodi, were the first of the Norsemen to occuppy Dublin - that is, at least 50 years later than stated - is a direct contradiction of several Irish accounts, which are unimpeachable, for this period. Evidently Snorris is confusing Harald Hårfagr's son, Thorgils, with the undermentioned Thorgils (Turgesius).
(Note by Engels) See note 10 on page 46.

Not many could boast that they fled unhurt from there.
Falcon fought wolf for flesh, the wolf's fury devoured many;
The blood of the Irish flow'd in streams on the beach in
the battle.*

By the first half of the 9th century, a Norse Viking, Thorgils, called Turgesius by the Irish, had succeeded in subduing all Ireland under his rule. But, with his death in 844, his kingdom fell apart, and the Norsemen were driven out. The invasions and battles continued with varying success. Finally, at the beginning of the 11th century, Ireland's national hero, Brian Borumha, who was originally King of only a part of Munster, gained the Kingship of all Ireland, and led the decisive battle against the concentrated force of the invading Norsemen on the 23rd April (Good Friday), 1014 at Clontarf, close to Dublin, as a result of which the power of the invaders was broken forever.

The Norsemen who had settled in Ireland, and who possessed great power in Leinster (The King of Leinster, Maolmordha, had come to the throne in 999 with their help and was maintained there by it), had sent messengers to the Channel Isles, the Orkneys, Denmark and Norway asking for reinforcements, in anticipation of the impending decisive battle. Help came to them in large numbers. The Niâlssaga recounts** how Jarl S. Laudrisson armed himself for the departure on the Orkneys, and how Thorstein Siduhallsson, Hrafn the Red and Erlinger of Straumey went with him, and how he came to Dublin (Durflin) with all his army on Palm Sunday.

"Brodir had already arrived with his whole force. Brodir tried to learn by means of sorcery how the battle would turn out, and the answer was this: if it was fought on a Friday, King Brjan would

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* "Hiuggu ver medh hiörvi, hverr lâthverr of annan;
gladhr vardh gera brôdhir getu vidh sôknar laeti,
lêt ei örn nê ŷlgi, sâ er Îrlandi stŷrdhi,
(môt vardh mâlms ok rîtar) Marsteinn konungre fasta;
vardh î Vedhra firdhi valtafn gefit hrafni.

Hiuggu ver medh hiörvi, hâdhum sudhr at morni
leik fyrir Lindis eyri vidh lofhûnga threnna;
fârr âtti thvî fagna (fêll margr î gyn ûlfi,
haukr sleit hold medh vargi), at hann heill thadhan kaemi;
Ŷra blôdh î oegi aerit fêll um skaeru."

Vedhrafiördhr is, as we have said, Waterford; I do not know whether Lindiseyri has been discovered anywhere. On no account does it mean Leinster as Johnstone translates it; 'eyri' (sandy neck of land, Danish öre) points to a quite distinct locality. Valtafn can also mean falcon-feed and is mostly translated as this here, but as the raven is Odin's holy bird, the word obviously has both meanings. (Note by Engels)

** See Note 11 on page 46.

win the victory but die; and that if it was fought before that time, then all who were against him would fall. Then Brodir said that they should not fight before Friday."

There are two versions of the battle itself, that of the Irish Annals and the Scandinavian one of the Niâlssaga. According to the latter:

"King Brian had come up to the fortified town" (Dublin) "with his entire army, and on Friday the army of the Norsemen issued from the town. Both hosts arranged themselves in battle array. Brodir headed one wing, King Sigtrygg* the other, Earl Sigurd was stationed in the middle.

We are told that King Brjan did not wish to give battle on Good Friday; therefore a shield-castle (composed of warriors with long shields)

"was set about him and his army stationed in front of that. Ulf Hreda headed the wing facing Brodhir, and Ospak with King Brjan's sons headed the wing facing Sigtrygg, but Kerdjalfad stood in the middle and had the banners carried before him."

When the battle began Brodhir was chased into a wood by Ulf Hraeds where he found safety. Jarl Sigurd had a hard struggle against Korthialfadh, who fought his way to the flag and slew the flag-bearer as well as the next man who seized the flag; then all refused to carry the flag and Jarl Sigurd took the flag from the pole and hid it in his clothing. Soon after he was pierced by a spear, and with this his part of the army appears to have been defeated. Meanwhile Ospak attacked the Norsemen in the rear and defeated Sigtrygg's section after a hard fought battle.

"Thereupon the entire host took to flight.

"Therstein Hallson stopped while the others were fleeing and tied his shoe thong. Then Kerjalfard asked him why he was not running too.

"'Because I can't get home this evening anyway', said Thorstein, 'as I live out in Iceland!' Kerdjalfad spared him."

Brodhir now saw from his hiding place that Brian's army was pursuing those who fled from the battle and that few people remained at the shield-castle. Then he ran out of the wood, broke through the shield-castle and slew the King. (Brian, who was 88, was obviously not capable of joining in the battle and had remained in the camp.)

"Then Brodir shouted: 'Let it pass from mouth to mouth that Brodir felled Brjan!'"

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*King of the Dublin Norsemen according to the "Annales Inisfalensis" (Note by Engels)

But the pursuers returned, surrounded Brodhir and seized him alive.

> "Ulf slit open his belly, led him round and round an oak tree, and in this way unwound all his intestines out of his body, and Brodir did not die before they were all pulled out of him. Brodhir's men were slain to the last man."*

According to the "Annals of Inisfallen" the Norse army was divided into three sections. The first consisted of the Dublin Norsemen and also 1000 Norwegian volunteers, who all wore long shirts of mail. The second was made up of the Irish auxiliary forces from Leinster under King Maolmordha. The third of reinforcements from the Islands and Scandinavia under Bruadhair, the commander of the fleet that had brought them, and Lodar the Jarl of the Orkneys. Brian also placed his troops in three sections; the names of the leaders given here do not correspond with those given in the "Niâlssaga", and the account of the battle is insignificant. The account given in the "Four Masters" is shorter and clearer: "In AD 1013 (a constant mistake for 1014)

> "The foreigners of the west of Europe assembled against Brian and Maelseachlainn;" (usually called Malachy, King of Meath under Brian's High Kingship) "and they took with them ten hundred men with coats of mail. A spirited, fierce, violent, vengeful, and furious battle was fought between them, - the likeness of which was not to be found at that time, - at Cluaintarbh" (Meadow of the Bulls, now Clontarf) "on the Friday before Easter precisely. In this battle were slain Brian, son of Ceinneidigh,... in the eighty-eigth year of his age; Conaing,... the son of Brian's brother; Toirdhealbhach, son of Murchadh,..." (there follow a multitude of names). "The (enemy) forces were afterwards routed by dint of battling, bravery, and striking, by Maelsseachlainn, from Tulcainn to Athcliath, against the foreigners and the Leinstermen; and there fell Maelmordha, son of Murchadh, son of Finn, King of Leinster;... There was a countless slaughter of the Leinstermen along with them. There were also slain Dubhghall, son of Amhlaeibh, and Gillaciarcain, son of Gluniairn, two tanists of the foreigners, Sichfrith, son of Loder, Earl of Innse hOrc; Brodar, chief of the Danes of Denmark, who was the person that slew Brian. The ten hundred in armour were cut to pieces, and at the least three thousand of the foreigners were there slain." **

The "Niâlssaga" was written down in Iceland approximately 100 years after the battle occurred; the Irish Annals are based, at least in part, on contemporary information. The two are completely independent of each other. Yet not only do they correspond in all the main points, but they also complete each other. We can only find out who

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* "Njal's Saga" translated by Carl F. Bayerschmidt and Lee M. Hollander, 1955. See page 356. (Translator's note.)

** "Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland" by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616. Translated by John O'Donovan, 1851. Page 773.

Brodhir and Sigtrygg were from the Irish Annals. Sigurd Laudrisson is the name of Sichfrith, Lodar's son. Sigfrith is in fact the correct Anglo-Saxon form of the ancient Norse name, Sigurd. In Ireland, Scandinavian names appear - on coins as well as in the Annals - in the Anglo-Saxon forms only, not in the ancient Norse. The names of Brian's generals are adapted for easier pronunciation by the Scandinavians in the "Niâlssaga". One of the names is, in fact, ancient Norse, and some have dared to to conclude from this that Brian had Norsemen in his army too. Ospak and Kerthialfadh appear to be Celtic names; the latter might be a distortion of the Toirdhealbhach mentioned in the "Four Masters". The date of the Battle - given as the Friday after Palm Sunday in the one, and as the Friday before Easter in the other - is the same in both, as is the place of the battle. Although this is given as Kantaraburg (otherwise Canterbury)* in the "Niâlssaga", it is also explicitly said to be close to the gates of Dublin. The course of the Battle is reported more precisely in the "Four Masters": The Norsemen attacked Brian's army on the Plain of Clontarf. They were thrown back from there past the Tolka, a little stream near the northern part of Dublin, towards the city. Both report that Brodir slew King Brian, but the detailed accounts are in the Norse source.

It can be seen that our reports on this Battle are quite informative and authentic, considering the barbarity of that time. There are not many 11th century battles on which such reliable and corroborating accounts are available from both sides. This does not prevent Professor Goldwin Smith from describing it as a "shadowy conflict" ("Ir. Hist." p. 48). Certainly, the most robust facts quite often take on a "shadowy" form in our learned Professor's head.

After their defeat at Clontarf, the Norse raids became less frequent and less dangerous. The Dublin Norsemen soon came under the domination of the neighbouring Irish princes, and, after one or two generations, disappeared amongst the native population. The only recompense the Irish got for the devastation caused by the Scandinavians was three or four cities and the beginning of a trading bourgeoisie.

*

The further back we go into history, the more the characteristics used to distinguish between different peoples of the same race disappear. This is partly because of the nature of our sources, which become briefer and contain only the most essential information, and partly because of a development in the peoples themselves. The nearer you go to the original stock, the more individual branches of it resemble each other. Jacob Grimm has always quite correctly

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* See note 12 on page 47.

treated the information given by Roman historians, who described the War of the Cimbri, Adam of Bremen and Saxo Grammaticus, all the literary written records from "Beowulf" and "Hildebrandslied" to the "Eddas" and the sagas, all the books of law from the leges barborum* to the ancient Danish and Scandinavian laws, and old Germanic judicial procedures as equally valuable sources for enlightenment on the German national character, customs and legal conditions. It is true that special characteristics are purely local, but the character reflected in them is common to the whole race; and the older are the sources used, the more do local differences disappear.

Just as the Scandinavians and the Germans differed less in the 7th and 8th centuries than they do today, so also must the Irish Celts and the Gallic Celts have had a greater resemblance originally, than do present-day Irishmen and Frenchmen. This is the reason why we should not be surprised when we find that the very characteristics which Caesar reports of the Gauls are ascribed to the Irish by Giraldus some twelve hundred years later, and which, furthermore, are discernable in the Irish national character even today, in spite of the admixture of Germanic blood...**

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# NOTES

O N E The reference is to the Collection "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores", which appeared in 1814 and 1825/26 in four volumes, published by Charles O'Connor.
This work contains the first publication of a part of the "Annales IV Magistrorum" as well as the "Annales Tigernachi", which were written between the 11th and 15th centuries and cover events after the 3rd century, also of the "Annales Ultonienses", which were composed by various chroniclers of the 15-17th centuries and report events since the middle of the 5th century, as well as the "Annales Inisfalensis" mentioned by Engels later on (the beginning of their compilation is usually estimated at approximately 1215, the presentation of events is continued until 1318).

T W O Saerrath and Daerrath - two kinds of ownership in Ancient Ireland, whereby the owner - usually an ordinary member of the community - was given the use of cattle usually, but later also land, by the leader of the Clan or family and by other representatives of the family-nobility. This ownership was connected with a partial loss of personal freedom (to a greater degree in the form of Daerrath than in the form of

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* See notes 13 and 14 on page 47.

** See note 15 on page 47.

Saerrath) and with the fulfillment of heavy obligations in the interests of the owner. This form of dependence was characteristic for the period of the dissolution of the family-connection in ancient Irish society, and the beginning of the processes of their feudalisation. At this time, while land was held in common, cattle and agricultural goods were already in private ownership; and the seeds of a form of private landownership were already in existence. In Ireland such relations were regulated by the Bréhons - Guardians of and commentators on the old law-usages - and found their reflection in the ancient Irish collection of laws, "Senchus Mor".

Engels' instruction to 'see below' refers to the section of this chapter which remained unwritten.

T H R E E This explanation was given by Huxley in an open lecture on the theme "The ancestors and predecessors of the English people", which he gave in Manchester on the 9th Jan. 1870. The Manchester Examiner and Times of the 12th January 1870 carries a full account of the lecture.

F O U R Charles Fourrier, "Le nouveau monde industriel et societaire, ou invention du procede d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribuee en series passionees," Paris, 1829. See page 399of this edition for Engels' reference.

F I V E The "Poems of Ossian" were written by the Scottish poet Macpherson, who published them in the years 1760-1765 as works, allegedly originating from the legendary Celtic bard, Ossian. The poems are set in a background which is partly ancient Irish and partly later Scots.

S I X The references are to the following works:
Claudianus, "De IV consulatu Honorii Aug. Panegyricus";
Isidorus Hispalensis, "Etymologiarum Libri XX";
Beda Venerabilis, "Historiae Ecclesiasticae Libri Quinque";
Anonymus Ravennatis, "De Geographia Libri Quinque";
Eginharto, "Vita et Gesta Carili Magni";
Alfred the Great, "Anglo-Saxon version of the Historian Orosius".

Engels used extracts from the above-mentioned books from "Die Deutschen and die Nachbarstamme" by K. Zeuss, pages 568-569 of the edition which appeared in Munich in 1837.

S E V E N "Triads" - Welsh works of the Middle Ages, composed in an original poetic-form adopted from the ancient Celts of Wales. Characteristic of these is the use of triple quantities of persons, objects and apparitions. According to the

contents the "Triads" are divided into history, theology, law, poetry, and learning. The earliest "Triads" were composed not later than the 10th century, but surviving manuscript descriptions of these works refer to the 12th-15th centuries.

E I G H T Alexandrian-Neoplatonic School - a mystic trend in ancient philosophy, which arose in the 3rd century a.d. in Alexandria (Egypt) and was the expression of the ideology of the slave-owning aristocracy in the decaying period of the Roman State. The objective idealism of Plato as well as the idealistic side of Aristotle's teaching, which was developed in the neo-platonic philosophy to the recognition of godly origin, served as sources for neo-platonism. In the 5th century a.d., one of the unknown adherents of the neo-platonic school signed his works, in which the attempt had been made to merge Christian teaching with neo-platonism, with the name of the first Christian Bishop of Athens, Dionysius Areopagita.

N I N E The "Haraldsaga" recounts the heroic deeds and the life of the Norwegian King Harold, the founder of the dynasty Harfagr ('Fine Hair'). It was written down at the beginning of the 13th century by the mediaeval Icelandic poet and chronicler, Snorri Sturlusson. The saga is contained in his book, "Heimskringla", in which the history of Norwegian kings from the most ancient times to the 12th century is given.

T E N "Krâkumâl" - (Song of the Kraka). Ragnar Lodbrok, King of Denmark, is generally believed to have lived in the 9th century. After a variety of adventures, he was at last made prisoner by Ella, a Northumbrian prince. He was condemned to die by the bite of vipers, and is reported to have sung this song, describing his exploits in battle, while the poison was taking its effect. According to tradition, Kraka, Ragnar's wife, sang this song to their children, in order to spur them on to avengeing their father. The text Engels used was from "Altnordishces Lesebuch", by Frantz Eduard Christoph Diotrich, Leipzig, 1864. Pages 73-80.

There is a very weak translation of the work by the Rev. James Johnstone: "Lodbrokar Quida; or the death-song of Lodbroc". The translation used in the text is from the German one given by Engels.

E L E V E N "Niâlssaga" - One of the most popular Icelandic sagas. According to the latest research it was written down at the end of the 13th century from oral tradition and older written records. The main subject of the saga is the life and death of the Icelandic Hawdings (representative of the family aristocracy), Gunnar, and of his friend, the wise and peace-loving Bondes (free peasant) Nial, an expert and commentator on the ancient customs and laws. Two historical events are covered: the history of the Chris-

tianisation of Iceland on the threshold of the 10th-11th centuries; and the Norsemen's battle against the Irish King Brian Borumha. It is, as Engels showed, an authentic source for the study of one of the most important events of 11th century Irish history - the victory of the Irish over the Norse invaders in the year 1014. Engels used the text from "Altnordisches Lesebuch", (See Note 10), pages 103-108.

T W E L V E — According to more recent research the place mentioned in the "Niâlssaga" is to be read as Kankaraborg or Kincora, the residence of King Brian in Munster.

T H I R T E E N — "Beowulf" - An 8th century poem about the heroic deeds of the legendary hero Beowulf, the most important of the surviving written records of the ancient Anglo-Saxon poetry. Folksagas about the life of the Germanic races in the first half of the 6th century form its basis.

"Hildebrandtslied" - (Song of Hildebrandt). An 8th century ancient High German heroic poem, surviving only in fragments. It is the oldest surviving German saga.

"Edda" - A collection of songs about the gods and heroes of the Scandinavian peoples; it survived in manuscript form from the 13th century, and was discovered by the Icelandic Bishop Sreinsson in 1643. The songs in the "Edda" reflect Scandinavian society in the period of the decay of the gentile order and the emigration of the nations.

F O U R T E E N — Leges Barborum - Accounts of the legal customs of various Germanic tribes in the period between the 5th and 9th centuries.

F I F T E E N — Here Engels' handwriting breaks off. From the plan for the second chapter of his work on the history of Ireland, it emerges that Engels also wanted to deal with the Clan system, land-ownership and the ancient Irish laws in this chapter.

# NOTES FROM THE HISTORY OF IRELAND

The English have been able to reconcile the people of a great variety of races to their rule. The Welsh, who held so tenaciously to their nationality and language, have completely disappeared within the British state. The Scottish Celts, though rebellious up to 1745*, have since then been almost completely exterminated first by the Government and then by their own aristocracy, and have now no thought of rebellion.

The French of the Channel Isles fought furiously against France during the great Revolution. And even the Frisians of Heligoland are satisfied with their lot; And it may be a long time yet before even the laurels of Sadowa** arouse their hurt cries for unification with the great fatherland. Only the Irish were too much for the English. The reason for this is the terrific recuperative powers of the Irish race. After the most gruesome suppression, after every attempt to exterminate them, the Irish were, after a short respite, stronger than ever before. They absorbed their main strength from the very foreign garrison imposed on them to suppress them. Within two generations, often within one, the foreigners became more Irish than the Irish, Hiberniores ipsis Hibernis. The more the Irish accepted the English language and forgot the Irish, the Irisher they became.

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The bourgeoisie turns everything into a commodity, even the writing of history. It is part of their being, of their conditions of existence, to debase all goods: they debase the writing of history. And the best-paid historians are the ones best able to falsify history for the purposes of the bourgeoisie. Witness Macaulay, who, for that very reason, is the inept G. Smith's unattained paragon.

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The agrarian murders in Ireland can not be suppressed as long as they are the only effective remedy against the extermination of the people by the landlords. They are effective, that is why they continue, and why they will continue, in spite of all the coercion laws. Their number varies, as it does with all social phenomena; they could even become epidemic in certain circumstances, that is, occur in completely meaningless situations. The epidemic can be suppressed, but not the sickness itself.

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WRITTEN BETWEEN MAY AND MID-JULY 1870 - FROM THE MANUSCRIPT.

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* See Note 1 on page 50.

** See note 2 on page 50.

## OBSERVATIONS FOR THE PREFACE TO A COLLECTION OF IRISH SONGS *

Some Irish folk-music is very ancient, some has arisen in the last three to four hundred years, and some only in the last century. At this time a lot was written by one of the last Irish bards, Carolan. In the past these bards or harpists - poet, composer and singer in one person - were quite numerous. Every Irish chieftain had his own bard in his castle. Many travelled around the land as wandering singers, persecuted by the English, who correctly saw in them the main channel of the national, anti-English tradition. Ancient songs about the victories of Finn Mac Cumhal (whom Macpherson stole from the Irish and turned into a Scot under the name Fingal in his "Ossian" **, which is based entirely on Irish songs), the magnificence of the ancient royal palace, Tara, the heroic deeds of King Brian Borumha, and later songs about the battles of Irish chieftains against the Sassenach (Englishmen) were all preserved in the living memory of the nation by the bards. And they also celebrated the battle exploits and independence of contemporary Irish chieftains. When in the 17th century, however, the Irish people were completely crushed by Elizabeth, James 1st, Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange, their landholdings robbed to give to English settlers, outlawed in their own land and transformed into a nation of outcasts, the wandering singers were hounded in the same way as the Catholic priests, and had died out by the beginning of this century. Their names are unknown, of their poetry only fragments have survived, the most beautiful legacy they have left their enslaved, but unconquered people is their music.

Irish poems are all written in four line verses. For this reason a four line rhythm lies at the basis of nearly all Irish melodies. Sometimes it may be a little hidden, and frequently a refrain or chorus on the harp accompanies it. Some of these songs are still known by their Irish names or first lines, even in those considerable parts of Ireland where Irish is spoken only by the old people or even not at all. The greater part, which is later, has English names or texts however.

The melancholy dominating most of these songs is still the expression of the national disposition today. How can it be otherwise amongst a people whose conquerors are always inventing new, up-to-date methods of oppression. The latest method, which was introduced forty years ago and pushed to the extreme in the last twenty years, consists of driving Irishmen from their homes and farms - which, in Ireland, is the same as driving them from the country. Since 1841 the population has dropped by two and a half millions, and over three million Irishmen have emigrated. All this has been done for the profit of the large landowners of English descent, and on their instigation. If it goes on like this for another 30 years, there will be Irishmen only in America.

WRITTEN ABOUT THE 5th JULY, 1870. FROM THE MANUSCRIPT.

*See note 3 on page 50.

** See note 5 on page 45.

# NOTES

ONE The uprising which occurred in 1745 in the Scottish Highlands, was the peasants' answer to the suppression and the driving from land and soil, which occurred in the interests of the Anglo-Scottish land-aristocracy and bourgeoisie. A part of the aristocracy in the Scottish highlands, which was interested in the retention of the feudal-patriarchal clan-system, and which supported the claims of the representative of the overthrown dynasty of the Stuarts on the English throne, took advantage of the dissatisfaction of the highland-ers. Declared aim of the uprising was to set Charles-Edward, a grand-son of James II, on the throne. The suppression of the rising, resulted in the annihilation of the Clan-system in the Scottish highlands, and the strengthening of the process of the driving out of the Scottish peasantry from the land.

TWO The island of Heligoland, first settled by the Friesians, went into Danish ownership in the 18th century. In 1807 Heligoland was taken into possession by England during the Anglo-Danish War (1807-1814) and in 1814 after the Kiel peace treaty it was ceded to England by Denmark. This treaty was later ratified by the Vienna treaties of 1815. In 1890 England swapped Heligoland for Zanzibar with Germany.

THREE Engels wrote these observations at the request of Marx's eldest daughter, Jenny. They were destined for the collection of songs, "Erin's Harp". Jenny Marx sent Engels' observations to Dr. Kugelmann in Hanover on the 17th July, 1870 for redirection to Joseph Risse, who edited and published the collection. Judging from the edition of Erin's Harp which appeared in 1870 in Hanover, Engels' observations were not used in the foreword. They were first published in 1955 in Number two of the Italian magazine, "Movimento Operaio", and in 1957 in the French magazine, "La Pensee".

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