THESIS,

THE STORY OF IRELAND,

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BY

N. A. Weston,

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The Story of Ireland.

It shall be the purpose of this short thesis to set forth the many trials and few triumphs of Ireland. The life of a nation is like the life of a man. It may be happy, or it may be unhappy, or it may have a fortunate mingling of the joyful and the sorrowful. The fate of Ireland has been preeminently an unhappy one.

An Englishman would say that Ireland should not be called a nation. But, though her life has been linked to that of another country, the distinctive characteristics of her people in language, customs, and native institutions separate her from all other nationalities. Ireland, though united to England is still an individual country.

The happiness of any land depends upon the government. The government is the will of the people. As has been said, Ireland has been preeminently unhappy.
and it is also a fact that the government of the land has not been the government of the will of the people. This has been the source of all of Ireland’s woe. No people can formulate rules and apply them to another people, and insure prosperity, peace and happiness.

Government is an institution of human society. It results from the formation of men into families, tribes, and nations. When there was no human society there was no human government. Government is the regulation of the affairs of an organized society in which all the members have interests in common. The best governments are the product of the universal will of the governed.

The principle object of a government is the general good of all whom it affects. Justice must be established between all the individuals that come within the scope of the institution, and the peace and happiness of home must
be insured as far as it is in the power of government to do so. The common defense of all must be provided for, the general welfare promoted, and the blessings of liberty secured.

Government is a human necessity. The disposition of some to do wrong renders it an indispensable thing. Yet it is not merely a repressive agent. It is necessary for the good as well as the bad. The good of everyone must be cared for as well as the individual protected. The combination and cooperation of a government do many things for the advancement of a nation. Science, art, education, civilization—all healthy influences are to be encouraged and advanced.

Having stated the nature and purpose of government, the inquiry may now be made into the condition of the English Government of Ireland. It may be seen whether or not it has been a government of the will of the people, and whether or not it has fulfilled its
proper purpose, establishing justice, insuring domestic peace, providing for the common defense, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty. In the end it may be determined what has been the cause of Ireland's misfortunes. Their extent and character may be viewed, and methods for the inauguration of a better condition of things proposed.

For over seven hundred years Ireland has been politically connected with England, and yet it is plain to see that even to day the two lands are not united. Indeed they are far from being united. The pages of history record nothing but a continual struggle between them. England has always been aggressive and tyrannical, Ireland has always been resisting and rebellious. Immemorial social and political revolutions have deprived Ireland of all her primitive characteristics, and yet her relations with England are no more friendly and confiding than in
the days when Strongbow landed on the shores of Wexford.

England has condescended to call Ireland sister, but her feelings are anything but sisterly. The English idea is that Ireland was made for English purposes. The spirit of the British government has always been deaf to the appeals and an enemy to the rights of Irishmen. It sometimes seems as if they had no rights which the Englishman is bound to respect. Ireland has been legally and morally suppressed. Moreover it must be said to the discredit of England that the controlling force in English councils relating to Irish affairs has been a kind of prudence that was akin to fear. All that Ireland has ever gained has been through terrorism. She has not been content and grateful for what England has been pleased to give her, and she has shown that force is a useless and impossible instrument of government.

The reader cannot peruse the history of Ireland without
a shudder at its records of honor and without being ashamed of one's own humanity. Ireland's history has been an exceedingly chequered one. Good and evil have shown themselves at all times and in innumerable ways. Out of good has grown evil, out of evil has grown good. Passions have raged that would have disgraced devils; and virtues have been shown that would have honored angels. It has been at once a glorious and an inglorious, a humane and an inhuman history.

Prejudice and slander have played their part in the history of this benighted land. There have always been influences at work that have had a tendency to disfigure everything that was truly Irish. Most nations have had historians that were fairly considerate of facts, but rarely has Ireland been so fortunate. England always reviles and maligns those whom she fails to conquer. She did so with this country in the times of the revolution.
she has done so with Ireland through all the centuries of their relationship. The Irish people have been denounced as semi-barbarians, and their history as a record of dissensions. These malicious slanders have caused the world to believe that the Irish are an ungrateful people, and that England is truly the benefactor that she claims to be.

Still, Ireland has a history of which she may justly be proud. She has had periods of peace and progress and literary eminence, and since the days of the Anglo-Norman invasion there have been cases of patriotism and lofty patience which have not been surpassed in the most noble country of the earth. Sad, indeed, has been much of the history, but the strength of human love and human hope has prevented her from declaring her weakness and succumbing to the sin of self-abasement. She still sustains the indignant
struggle against injustice, flushed by the hope of coming triumph.

The peace of Ireland was interrupted in the ninth century by the incursion of the Danes, who came down upon the Island like wolves. For two hundred years they kept the land in perpetual turmoil. The Danes were followed by a greater scourge, the Anglo-Normans, who landed in Wexford in the middle of the twelfth century. Henceforward we have but the history of the conflict of Tipton and Celt. There was a warlike race, the other a peace-loving people. The rivalry of the two parties in the land deluged its beautiful fields with blood.

The bitterness of the struggle has lasted throughout the ages. The contest that had its beginning then is going on now. There is still an Irish and an English party in Ireland whose differences are only disguised by the circumstances of a new age. The Irish party is moved by Irish ideas;
The English party by alien desires. England only cares for Ireland in so far as she may aid her in the endeavor to maintain social and political supremacy.

The source of much of the trouble of today had its origin soon after the landing of the English. Henry II entered Ireland with the idea of civilizing it. He proposed to reform the morals and manners of the people. He considered that the possession of property was an inducement to sin, and hence decided upon the removal of this inducement as the means to his end. He confiscated all the possessions of the people and bestowed them upon his followers. The Irish people resented this manner of conversion and for four centuries the blood of Ireland dripped from the English swords that attempted to force the conditions upon them.

What blood-shed could not accomplish the treachery and scheming of James I and his son Charles completed.
These misguided rulers confiscated nearly all the property that remained in the hands of the original owners, and even robbed the descendants of the early English invaders. The Irish law of proprietorship was abolished, and the land legally handed over to persons since known as landlords. They tyrannized, dispossessed, and devoted the lands to whatever use they pleased. Such is the principle of landlordism. The land question troubles to-day relate to the ownership. The Irish are clamoring for a condition wherein the land shall be owned by and shall be for the benefit of the people.

It is but a step from the intrigues of Charles to the barbarities of Cromwell. Cromwell though a plunderer like his predecessors was a more honest man. He did not endeavor to conceal his purposes. He thought that by killing all the Irishmen he could and by robbing them of their lands and bestowing them upon his followers he was extending the kingdom of the Lord. The
Irish stood in the same relation to Cromwell, as the Canaanites of old did to the Israelites.

During the troubles of 1688, the contest between James II and his son-in-law William was transferred to Ireland. The Irish supported James probably on account of his Catholic tendencies. He was unsuccessful in his wars with William, and his fall seemed to extinguish the last hope of nationality in Ireland. The people had linked themselves to a deceiver and a coward. He had failed and brought misery and desolation upon them. James was contemptible, stupid, and obstinate. He lost the affection and respect of his subjects, and even today he lives in the traditions of Ireland by the most despicable appellations.

Upon the subjugation of the land by William followed what is known as the penal period. This period was a sorrowful and miserable one for Ireland. At the treaty
of Limerick which closed the wars with Williams the Irish people were guaranteed the full enjoyment of their religious and civil rights. The Irish army was no sooner disbanded than the treaty was treacherously broken. "England keeps no faith with a disarmed foe." The infamous penal code was passed depriving the Irish Catholics of all human rights. The land was turned into one vast prison. The population, hopeless and worn out by the struggle of ages, sank down in despair. The sable pinions of gloom and sorrow shadowed the benighted land. The people lost hope. They broke up into small parties. Their aims became local and personal. Organization disappeared. The history of Ireland seemed about to close forever in ignominy and shame.

England pursued a sinister policy. She was selfish and partisan. There was no feeling of sympathy between the rulers and the ruled. England ignored the presence
of four fifths of the population, for while the penal laws were in operation, the Irish Catholics had in reality no existence in Ireland. Nothing could be hoped for the unfortunate land: the Irish party was weak and oppressed and the English party contemptible.

Out of misery sometimes grows prosperity. Upon this darkness dawned a period of light. Independence is the natural desire of all men. They love to test their powers at ruling themselves. So it is with colonists that have long been governed by a mother country. They acquire a knowledge of their own significance, and put themselves up as the equals of their rulers. This natural law demonstrated itself in Ireland. The English Protestants who had settled in Ireland became sympathizers with the Irish in their national longings and conceived the idea of ruling themselves. England had gone too far. Those who had been sent to destroy the hopes of Ireland fostered them.
and then succeeded the triumph of the Irish army of
volunteers and the establishment of independence.
These circumstances led to the rise of Grattan's Par-
liament, the independence of which was declared in 1782.
The movement which produced this result began with Swift,
the satirical Churchman, and ended with the success which
made the crowning glory in the life of Grattan, the patriot
orator. The success was great but yet unfinished. It was
more the success of a party than of a people. It lacked the
great breadth of independence and love which are necessary
to the welfare and prosperity of a people. The greater part of
the inhabitants had no share in the government of the land,
they only perceived the light of liberty streaming along their
prison walls. The time had not yet come when the doors
of freedom were to be opened to them.
Yet a wonderful impetus had been given to the cause
of liberty. Independence gleamed brightly only a little way
before them. The people were encouraged by the republican
victories in America and the revolutionary movements in
France, and they began the agitation which terminated in
the revolution of '98. In this uprising there was union. The
religious liberty and civil equality of men were for the first
time proclaimed in Ireland.

The new struggle was not that of Celt and Norman
or Protestant and Catholic, but of united Ireland against
England. There was more union of sentiment than ever
known before in the history of Ireland. The effort was one
in which the hopes of six centuries, pregnant with the new
spirit of freedom, were unified. But once again fair
hopes sank down in darkness and failure. The attempt
at independence was crushed. Another day was lost
for Ireland. All the means of tyranny were employed
to subdue the conquered people forever. But a darker
destiny than mere subjugation awaited the people.
This destiny came in the establishment of the union. Ireland's noblest effort had failed, and the English minister conceived the plan of uniting the two lands. The confusion of the times furnished opportunity for the accomplishment of this design. By the use of titles, promises, and money he influenced the Irish legislative body to consent to the union, and thus the Act of Union was carried.

But, though the Irish legislators forgot their duty to their country, it did not obliterate the independent national spirit. It was a forced union of the weak and the strong. It was a union in name only and not in soul. It was but the consummation of English treachery and English fraud. Yet the hearts of the people beat true. They could not be forced into insensibility nor dragged into slavery. England made a miserable mistake. She overreached herself. She obtained superiority by brutality and fraud, but in the endeavor to maintain it she has utterly
The soul cannot be claimed by an artificial contract. The union proved to be the road to new and innumerable misfortunes. The people themselves never consented to it. They never gave up their notions of national life and honor. The troubles of England and Ireland today are the troubles of the union.

As has been stated before, the brightest period in Irish history was during the time of the independence of the Irish Parliament. The impulse which was given to prosperity at this time lasted for many years after the union. The increase in population which began in the latter part of the last century and continued during thirty years in this was due to the early improvements in the political condition of the country and to the great productiveness of the potato and the high price of produce during the war with France. The decrease from that period began with the famine in 1846, and has continued...
up to the present time, chiefly owing to the conversion of large districts into pasture lands.
The history of Ireland since the great famine has been the history of misery, increasing discontent and continuous decline.
The report of the register-general in 1885 showed the population to be about 4,962,000 souls, a loss of 3,137,853 since 1841. The island contains about 20,154,511 acres of arable land, and hence has only 156 persons to the square mile. This falls much below the European average of density. This condition is certainly not one of prosperity. It conclusively proves that something is utterly wrong in the regulation of the internal affairs of the land. This wrong is England's misgovernment.
The decline in wealth and industry since 1881 has been especially marked, and at the same time popular discontent and social disturbance have increased.
only outlook for a better future is a dissolution of the union with Great Britain and the return of Ireland to that self-government under which her people were advancing to prosperity at the close of the last century.

Numerous measures have been adopted by the British Government for the relief of suffering Ireland, but all have failed. For instance, the land law of 1881 by which Mr. Gladstone undertook to relieve Irish misery and satisfy discontent has failed to fulfill its purpose. It began its work amid some unhappy circumstances. Mr. Parnell and his followers in the land league, advised the Irish tenant farmers, to abstain from application to the new land courts until the law should have been tried by test cases. For this they were imprisoned and the land league was suppressed. The irritation caused by their arrest and the suppression of the league bore its natural fruit in secret conspiracies.
One of these caused the assassination of Lord Cavendish, the newly appointed secretary for Ireland and Mr. Burke in Phoenix Park on May the 6, 1882. These unfortunate incidents served to strike the death blow to the land law. Other measures have met with a similar fate.

Household suffrage was established in all English and Scotch boroughs in 1869, but not in any Irish constituency. Mr. Gladstone carried a law in 1884 assimilating the suffrage in every part of the united kingdom, to that established in the Boroughs in 1869. The law was resisted by the English but ineffectually.

The removal of the restrictions upon the suffrage resulted in the election of 84 Home Rulers out of one hundred and three Irish members in 1885. This almost unanimous plebiscitum of the Irish people against the legislative union with Great Britain materially changed the condition of the Irish situation.
Before the new parliament met it was understood that Mr. Gladstone having failed to secure a majority large enough to outvote both the conservatives and Home-rulers, would grant the demands of the Irish and enter office by the aid of the Home Rule Party. This union drove Lord Salisbury's conservative ministry from power, and Mr. Gladstone returned to the head of the government, with Mr. John Morley as chief secretary for Ireland, having made pledges to abstain from coercive legislation and to go as far in granting the wishes of Ireland as the rights of the crown and the integrity of the empire would permit.

This great success inspired the Irish leaders and Irish people with new hopes, but they were only to last for a little while and then be blighted as ever before. On the 8th of April 1886 Mr. Gladstone introduced into parliament his Home Rule Bill. It is insufficient
to say that the bill was defeated and Mr. Gladstone's party passed out of power.

The conservative party again assumed control of the government and the prospects for the solution of the Irish difficulties have been somewhat darkened. The attempts to acquire legislative independence have been suppressed, and new coercion acts passed.

But, though those devoted to human freedom and love have failed almost in the moment of triumph, it is not to be conjectured that their noble purposes have been eternally destroyed. Freedom is an imperishable thing; it may be suppressed, but still will seek new ways into the light. The ideas of national independence that have been fostered in the Irish people by Gladstone, Parnell, and many others are working in the minds of the people today. They will continue to do so, and the time is not for distant when the English will be compelled to observe.
the rights of Ireland and grant them all just desires.

The wrongs and misfortunes of Ireland have been recounted at length. It has been seen, that the country was seldom prosperous, that it has never known domestic peace, that it has been eternally at war with another race, that its rulers have been foreigners, robbers and murderers. These things have been the fountain head of all of Ireland’s unhappiness and discontent. England’s misgovernment of Ireland has been the cause of her travail in woe and sorrow through seven centuries.

After beholding the centuries of inhumanities that have been practiced upon Ireland, it is to be hoped that misgovernment shall soon cease. It is to be hoped that in this enlightened age of the world life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall be denied to no man. It is honestly believed by all Irishmen and all
liberty-loving peoples of the earth that the granting of home rule to Ireland will be the only solution of her difficulties. May the time soon come when tyranny shall cease to rule and love shall reign, when Irish civilization shall move forward, not backward. May the enjoyment of the right of self-government soon become the privilege of Ireland. May her heart soon bound with the joyousness of prosperity, peace, and happiness. — May her harp soon be tuned to notes of gladness.

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Nathan A. Weston.