

NAPOLEON AND IRELAND

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I.

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‘I would have separated Ireland from England, the former of which I would have made an independent republic.’ The man who uttered this sentiment was one who held the destinies of Europe in his hands, but in the evening of his days passed to the grave in lonely captivity on the barren rock of St. Helena. There, fettered by the merciless English, his lifelong foes, he had leisure perforce to dwell on the strange and varied of his life. What must have been his agony of mind to think upon that life and death struggle between him and the English Empire which ended in disaster, ruin, and, I may say, early death to him. How he must have pondered over those vast schemes of his for reducing the haughty, self-styled mistress of the seas, and how he must have recalled with bitter anguish those expectant moments when he yearned to set his foot on English soil and crush for ever the hereditary foe of his country. And in a moment of such sad remembrance he tells what had been his intention had he succeeded in overthrowing England, he would have separated Ireland and made her an independent republic.

I might be induced to pen a lengthy memoir on the relations between France and Ireland, united as they were in close bond against the common enemy, England. But space would forbid, and I can only start with the axiom which I think will be accepted by all Irishmen, viz.,: ‘That England’s difficulty is Ireland’s opportunity.’ On this axiom I might found a proposition which I think will not be made to call for much proof—‘That the enemies of England are the friends of Ireland.’ On the strength of this proposition it will go without saying that France and Ireland ever ought to be close and co-operative friends. History will supply the proofs of it.

From the first moment when the Anglo-Irish struggle for dominion in Ireland ceased to be a mere insular isolated war, and when the question assumed European proportions and importance, the policy and diplomacy of France were devoted to aid the Irish in their efforts

against the English. It may be that the racial spirit which set Gael against Saxon was the identical spirit which roused up Celt against Teuton. However, it may be, it is a strange fact in history that from the earliest historic times England and France have ever been at variance, from the days of William the Conqueror down to our own time. No doubt peace has been patched up every time, but it is only a truce, for sooner or later the issues must be knit, and one or other bite the dust. Fate then has thrown French and Irish into the one camp, hostile to England. It is from the Jacobite wars principally that the Franco-Irish combination is to be adjudged a political force. There were materials in Ireland during those times to have made an invincible Irish kingdom. On the slopes of the Boyne the united army fought desperately against their heterogeneous foe, the scrapings of North Europe. Behind the walls of Limerick the mellow French and the strong, vigorous Gaelic carried in united tones words of defiance to the English invader. And last, sad scene of all, along the meadows of Kilcommodon and over the plains and morasses of Aughrim French cavalier and Irish rapparee rode stirrup to stirrup down to a bloody death, defeat, and ruin, not without carving an equally bloody track through Saxon ranks. On that gloomy field one ponders to think that it was watered once with a profusion of Gallic and Gaelic blood, shed in an ineffectual, but never-dying effort for Irish liberty. If France aided us generously in those wars, we gave her no less generous help in the great campaigns by which the empire of the great Louis and his next successor were built upon the Continent. As to Ireland, she was wrapped up in the apathy out of which the genius of a Swift could not awaken her. It was when the tap of drum and the clash of sword and musket were again heard in the land that Ireland leapt to her feet, demanded freedom, and got an instalment. Arms might have won more, but timidity, indecision, and respect for the English connection prevailed. Ireland laid down the weapons by which she had gained the portion of rights conceded her, by which she could only hope to guard and defend them and by which alone she could ever hope to advance her position and regain steadily full restitution of all her stolen power and rights. At such a moment the country produced a man who judged of the posture and affairs as clearly

as he might have of a proposition in Euclid, and who took calm and deliberate steps accordingly to solve the problem. The man was Wolfe Tone. A man of pure patriotism, he probed public affairs, stated for himself the case of Ireland, mapped out his diagnosis and then set to devise and execute his plan.

Once more the threads of the connection between France and Ireland were taken up, and this time by one who knew what he wanted, and who went the best way to secure it without wavering or indecision. He, one man, was more dangerous by far to the vaunted prowess of England than even the host of French whom King James of inglorious memory brought into this country. Tone decided for himself that his country ought to be separated utterly from England, of itself he saw that project was incapable of success, and he consequently resolved to bring about a Franco-Irish alliance which should at last bring about the destruction of England. Alas! that he failed!

The first time Napoleon was brought into contact with the question of Ireland was in the early part of 1798. The Italian War had just concluded. Bonaparte had returned to Paris, having forged an advantageous treaty on Austria. He had detached that Government from its league with England, which now stood practically alone, if we except Prussia which was then but a second-rate Power. At leisure now to turn their attention to England the French Directory projected a great invasion. For that end an army called the Army of England was organised along the northern coasts of France. Bonaparte was made General-in-Chief. The main idea was to invade the soil of England, but it was also intended to land a large force in Ireland. Wolfe Tone had memorialised the Directory to proceed urgently with this business in view of the projected rising out amongst the peasantry. The expedition under Hoche to Bantry Bay had failed through stress of weather, and Tone was now, as ardently as ever, prosecuting efforts to have another expedition fitted out and despatched. The mysterious death of Hoche was an immense blow to him. He approached Bonaparte and urged on him the value of rending Ireland from the Crown of England. We read in his diary under date of April 1st, 1798, that Merlin, President of the French Directory, told Lewines, an Irish agent and intimate friend of

Tone, 'That France never would grant peace to England on any terms short of the independence of Ireland.'

However, affairs in France were then at cross purposes. In the first place, the Directory was suspicious of Bonaparte, and wished to get him away from France as far as judicious policy could send him. It was advanced that the most vital and vulnerable point of England was her Indian Empire, and that to humble her it was necessary to overthrow her dominion there. It was resolved then to send an expedition to Egypt to secure an overland route to India, and the Directors were only too happy to press Bonaparte to take command of it. On his part he was nothing loth, for inclination and a warm imagination drew him to the scenes of the great Alexander's campaigns. He had not in this epoch any definite views with regard to England. He wished to keep his feet at any rate, a difficult thing in those troublous days in France. Moreover, there was treachery amongst the Directors themselves; some of them were practically sold to England, and had engaged themselves to urge forward a speedy treaty of peace. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered that the Army of England was allowed to languish away into a mere pretension, while Bonaparte was hurried away on the Right Wing, so called, to the East. On May 20, 1798, he sailed from Toulon. On May 23rd, the insurrection broke out in Ireland, only to fail from lack of succour. And one must perforce come to the conclusion that in those three intervening days Napoleon's final fate was weighed and decided to his later inevitable ruin. From the beginning of 1798 the Egyptian Expedition seems to have been decided on, and however eloquently Tone may have tried to impress on Bonaparte the value of coming to Ireland, French policy had already traced another path for him to follow.

We have not to skim over a period of Bonaparte's career which has no connection with Ireland. Baulked in his designs in the East, as well as by the Battle of the Nile as by the unsuccessful Siege of St. Jean d'Acre, he hurriedly returned to France, which was falling derelict. By a vigorous effort he made himself master, saved the country, and once more prepared to measure his strength with his ever-present enemy. In the beginning of 1803 Robert Emmet is said to have visited Paris and

to have been received in an interview with the First Consul. There are no details extant as to the nature of this conference, but we learn that Emmet came away with a strong dislike amounting to distrust of Bonaparte. There is no doubt that the First Consul had as yet little or no fixed plans concerning his struggle with England. Of a fleet he had practically none. As to the army it was just in progress towards that perfect machine which afterwards conquered Europe. What then did Emmet want, what did he ask for? France was then at peace with England, the treaty of Amiens was then in force, and Bonaparte could not stir up or aid an insurrection in Ireland against the English Crown without committing a gross act of treachery. If Emmet wanted immediate assistance when he came to Paris in the spring of 1803 he committed an error. If, on the other hand, he wished to provoke a quarrel between France and England to lead to a rupture of the peace he was within his right, and might have succeeded had he mollified the First Consul and used diplomacy with effect. However it might have been, Emmet made no arrangement with Bonaparte, he waited for no French aid, he returned to Ireland, and the sad sequel of it all took place before St. Catherine's Church. On May 20th war was declared between France and England, on July 23rd the premature insurrection broke out in Ireland, and on September 20th Emmet paid the penalty of failure on the scaffold.

Now, events were entering on a new phase. Both countries were in open hostility, and every means was lawful by which to gain advantage. Bonaparte set to plan out the great attempt by which he would for ever overwhelm England and her Empire. His idea was to wreck beyond repair the political supremacy of the English people. He did not, he says, design to unite England with France, but he wished to set up a popular Government, to abolish the nobility and great landed gentry, and to leave her but an industrial path to follow. As to Ireland she was, as said at the beginning, to be a separate independent republic. Just then there were in Paris some United Irish refugees who had surrendered to the English Government in 1798 when the projected insurrection had manifestly proved, as it seemed to them, incapable of success. They were transported to Fort George in Scotland, and thence

when released, went some to the Continent, some to America. In Fort George serious differences occurred between the leaders, especially between Thomas Addis Emmet and Arthur O'Connor. These differences were to prove, as dissensions amongst Irishmen have proved, and will always prove, a great blow to Ireland.

In 1803 on the failure of Emmet's rising and when the rupture of the Peace of Amiens had thrown France and England into war, Bonaparte organised an Irish Legion, more or less on the lines of the old Irish Brigade. This brigade had been disbanded in 1792 by the Revolutionists as a matter of domestic policy. The Irish Legion of 1803 was designed in an indefinite way to be the nucleus of the Irish army which should be organised on the French landing in this country. The colonel of this legion was MacSheehy. Meanwhile T. A. Emmet was pursuing negotiations with the First Consul, but in a more diplomatic manner than his brother. On December 13th, 1803, he sent a memorial to Bonaparte concerning proposals to use the services of the United Irish then in Paris with a view to go into Ireland on a French expedition. The First Consul sent the following answer, of which the original is given in Dr. Madden's Memoir of T. A. Emmet:—

'The First Consul has read with greatest attention the memoir which has been addressed to him on December 13th.

'He desires that the United Irish should be convinced that it is his intention to secure the independence of Ireland and to give protection, entire and efficacious, to all those of their body who will take part in the expedition and enter the French service.

'The French Government cannot issue any proclamation before the Irish territory has been reached by the expedition. But the general who will command the expedition will be furnished with sealed letters wherein it shall be declared by the First Consul that he will not make peace with England without stipulating for the independence of Ireland, provided however that the French army shall be joined by a considerable body of the United Irish.

'Ireland shall be treated in every respect as America has been in the late war.

‘Every person who shall embark with the French army destined for the expedition shall be commissioned as French; in case of being arrested and not being treated as a prisoner of war reprisals will be made on English prisoners.

‘Each corps formed in the name of the United Irish will be considered as making a part of the French army. Finally, if the expedition should not succeed and that the Irish should be compelled to return to France, France will maintain a certain number of brigades, and will give pensions to all persons who shall have formed part of the Government or of the authorities of the country. The pensions will be assimilated to those which are accorded in France to those of a corresponding grade or post not on active service.

‘The First Consul desires that a Committee of United Irish should be formed. He sees no inconvenience in members of this Committee issuing proclamations and instructing their countrymen of the state of affairs. These proclamations will be inserted in the *Argus* and the different journals of Europe in order to enlighten the Irish people on the part they have to take and on the hopes on which they have to rest. If the Committee should desire to make a relation of the acts of tyrant exercised in Ireland by the English Government it shall be inserted in the *Moniteur*.’

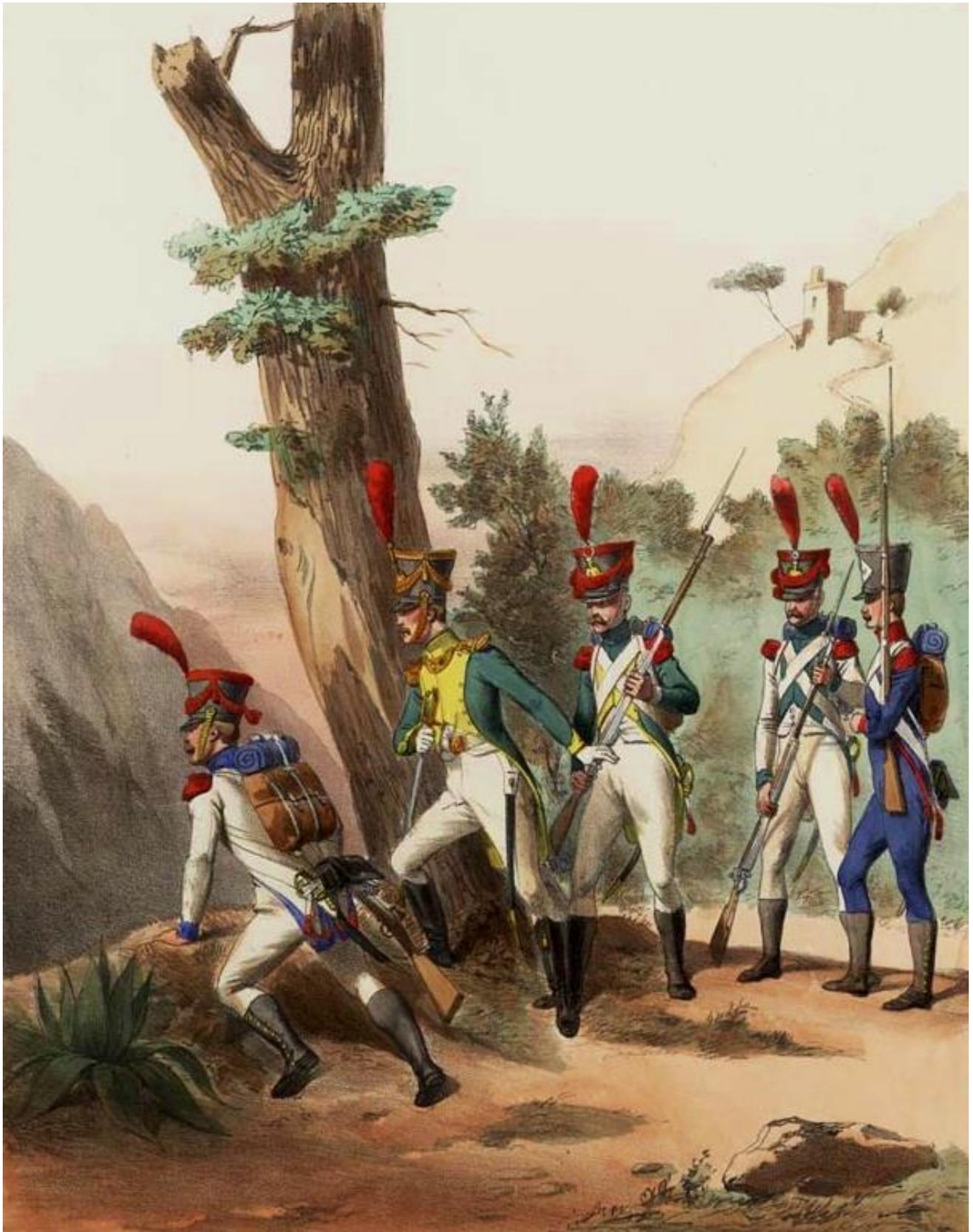
CALMA.



The flag of the Irish Legion as described below. The Irish Legion were the only foreign legion of French army permitted to bear an Imperial Eagle (pictured).



Soldier's regalia of the Irish Legion. The cross-belt plate (top) is believed to have been worn by a Captain Patrick McCann, who died following the Battle of Flushing in 1809. Held by the National Museum of Ireland.



Officer and Grenadier (centre) of the Irish Legion in a 1830 painting by Alfred de Marbot.

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In this reply Bonaparte definitely binds himself to despatch a force to Ireland. But he required two things of the United Irish, viz.: co-operation and a definite plan. He received neither. From T. A. Emmet's papers we learn that the First Consul pertinaciously and continually pressed for the formation of a United Irish Committee. In the reply just given he reiterates his demand. But no Committee was formed. Arthur O'Connor was consulted, and from Emmet's account appears to have been most unsympathetic. O'Connor in his version uses the following words: 'These [the United Irish leaders in Paris] were persons who were opposed to me, who had communications with France, and this party was re-organised in Paris in 1803. Their plans were connected with Robert Emmet's plot, but were not communicated to me; they were divulged to me by the French Government. The person in this party in Paris who had most influence was Russell. Bonaparte in conversing with me expressed himself unfavourably of the attempt and of those who engaged in it.' In these words O'Connor throws much light on the side issues of Robert Emmet's insurrection. His allusion to Russell is significant. Russell was a man of deep, earnest religious views, which ill accorded with the particular philosophy of O'Connor, who, therefore, was naturally indisposed to favour the opinions of such a patriot. His comment on being kept in the dark as to Emmet's plans is explained by the differences which arose at Fort George. And lastly, the interview with Bonaparte is only half told. Napoleon at St. Helena, according to the work of his physician, Barry O'Meara, said that the Irish business had failed because the leaders were divided and because they had no plans to offer. Moreover, he said, he did not like Arthur O'Connor, but distrusted him. In their interview he must have seen how O'Connor disliked the Emmets. O'Connor represents the First Consul as having 'spoken unfavourably' of the insurrection and of those engaged in it, but in saying so he was only re-echoing his own language calculated to deter Bonaparte from embarking in the Irish project.

The more serious allegations urged by Bonaparte against the United Irish are, unfortunately, too plain. He urged the formation of a Committee to organise plans for establishing an Irish Republic. O'Connor was communicated with and asked to join this Committee. But T. A. Emmet admits the plan wholly failed. He asserts there were two parties amongst the United Irish; one wishing for a separate, independent Irish republic; the other desiring a close connection, perhaps even a union, between France and Ireland. As to the relative merits of these parties we will not presently dwell upon. But they were material in thwarting the original ideas of Bonaparte and in putting away from him the hope of finding a body of Irishmen ready to take up the government of their country on its deliverance from their deadly enemy. So ardently had Bonaparte taken an interest in the project that he engaged even in details concerning the Irish Legion, as exemplified in the following extract from a letter from T. A. Emmet to Dr. M'Neven, dated January 21st, 1804:—'You will, no doubt, be rejoiced to hear that the First Consul himself has taken the trouble of dictating the device for your colours. They are green in the centre; a tricoloured circle with R.I. [Republique Irlandaise: Irish Republic.] The legend on the colours is to be 'l'Independence d'Irlande—Liberté de Conscience.' You are to be aware that your uniform is somewhat changed on demand of M'Sheehy; the amarinth is exploded, and yellow, the second National colour, substituted in its place.' From this note and also from the answer of the First Consul just a month previous, Emmet appears to have been very intimate with Bonaparte. But he was not a military man, his was another profession. As negotiator he was admirable, but he certainly did not show decision of execution or display pertinacity in urging forward the expedition to Ireland. The letter from which I have just quoted is dated January, 1804, and shows a warm zeal in the preparations for organising an Irish military force. His ardour began, however, soon to abate, and we find him writing to M'Nevin in April and May in rather vacillating language. He finds fault with the First Consul's conduct with regard to the Irish expedition, but he does not appear to have helped much in realising Bonaparte's views as to concerted action. There was then published in Paris a violent anti-

English paper edited by the notorious Goldsmith. This worthy conducted the paper which was called the *Argus* on very virulent lines. Later on he was discarded by Napoleon, and found a new light of inspiration, transferring himself to London he was as scurrilous of France as he had been of England. It appears that in this classic journal a mystic paragraph appeared, thought to have been instigated by Napoleon. It was to the effect that France was well disposed to peace if the English Government would expel persons hostile and obnoxious to the Republic, which shadowed forth a measure of reciprocity. This reciprocity was very vague, as was the whole affair, but of course it pointed to the suggested expulsion of the United Irishmen. Whether Bonaparte was the author of this journal, and if he were, whether he was sincere, are matters for cogitation. But in any case T. A. Emmet took fright and discussed the probable issue of affairs as hinted at in the *Argus*. In May, 1804, Napoleon became Emperor of the French. He addressed a personal letter to the King of England offering peace, but discussing no terms. This offer was refused in the characteristic manner, through the red tape of a Government office. War to the death was thus pronounced, and, as a matter of fact, for another nine long years it raged without intermission and deluged both nations in blood and debt. Still Emmet had lost confidence. It cannot be that he was afraid of his personal liberty or anticipated expulsion. It must be that either his republican spirit revolted against the new Imperial regime, or else that he thought Napoleon had abandoned all idea of the expedition to Ireland. As to the latter supposition it was mistaken as we shall presently see. If, on the other hand, his republican sentiments urged him to expatriate himself from France and from Ireland for ever, it does credit to his spirit though it did no profit to his country. However it may be, he embarked at Bordeaux for America in October, 1804. His son says that for reasons unascertainable, he had given up hopes of assistance from France, and so abandoned his interest in Irish politics and retired to the free and youthful United States.

When Napoleon ascended the throne and had his offer of peace to England thrown back in his face, he set to plan the greatest maritime expedition of modern or ancient times. He was at peace with the rest of

the Continent. England alone stood in his path. But the policy of England abroad was the reflex of her policy in Ireland, viz., to divide and rule. While Europe lay apparently in happy peace she was insidiously setting up the various kings and princes for war against France. But of all this anon. Immediately on being crowned at Notre Dame Napoleon visited the coasts at Boulogne and developed his plan of attack on England. His idea was to make an invasion in force on the southern coasts of Kent, rapidly march to London, seize the Government, reform it before the aristocracy had time to inflame the people to a bloody and lengthy war. Meantime, however, he saw that the expedition to Ireland was essential to the carrying out of this project. Not alone would the attention of the English be distracted, but the permanent separation of Ireland from England was in itself equal to the destruction of English prestige. The following is a despatch sent by the Emperor to his Chief of the Staff:—

‘Mayence, Sept. 27th, 1804.

‘TO MARSHAL BERTHIER.

‘MY COUSIN—The expedition of Ireland is resolved upon. You will have a conference touching this with Marshal Augereau. There are at Brest means of embarking 18,000 men. General Marmont, on his part, is ready with 25,000 men. He will endeavour to land in Ireland, and will be under the orders of Marshal Augereau. The grand army of Boulogne will be embarked at the same time, and will do all that is possible to effect a landing in the County of Kent. You will make known to Marshal Augereau that he will shape his actions according to events. If the information given to me by the Irish refugees and by those whom I have sent to Ireland is borne out, a large number of the Irish will range themselves under his flag on his landing; he will then march straight to Dublin. If, on the contrary, this movement is delayed, he will take up a position and await General Marmont and until the Grand Army has embarked. The Admiralty trust that the fleet will be ready by October 22nd, the army will also be in readiness by that date. It is, above all, necessary that Marshal Augereau should have a good commander of the artillery.

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A few days later the Emperor forwarded another despatch to the Minister of Marine, giving orders to fit out this expedition:—

‘Mayence, Sept. 29th, 1804.

‘M. DECRES, MINISTER OF MARINE.

‘I have already made known to you my intentions on the manner in which I project my three expeditions—Surinam, Demerara, and Essequibo, St. Helena, and Dominique.

‘In this despatch I make known to you my views on Ireland. It is necessary to leave out one of the transports and replace it by La Pensee or by La Romaine, and complete L’Ocean, working if necessary by torchlight. I think that is the only way to carry 18,000 men, of whom 3,000 will be cavalry, artillery, engineers, non-combatants, and 15,000 infantry, also 500 horses, of which 200 for cavalry, 200 artillery, and 100 for the staff; less than that will not constitute an army corps.

‘The point of landing that you suggest to me seems the most convenient. The North and Lough Swilly is, in my opinion, the most advantageous place. It will be required to set sail from Brest, double Ireland out of sight of land on every side, and approach as a vessel coming from the New World would approach the island. In speaking thus I am only speaking politically, and not nautically, because the currents should decide the point where one ought to strike the land. Politically, it would be more advantageous to pretend an attack on Scotland than further southwards. This manoeuvre will disconcert the enemy. Thirty-six hours’ after anchoring the fleet should set sail, leaving behind the brigs and transports. The guns of La Volontaire will be placed at the entrance to the port either for the use of the army or for coast batteries or any unforeseen event. Concerning all those details I am in agreement with you. But the disembarking in Ireland can only be a preliminary act, if it should turn out a good operation we would be in great good luck. The squadron should then, after being reinforced with all the able sailors of the transports enter the English Channel and make for Cherbourg, there to receive tidings of the position of the army

before Boulogne and to aid the passage of the flotilla. If, when arrived before Boulogne, the winds are contrary for several days and oblige the fleet to pass the Strait [of Calais], it will sail for the Texel; it will find there seven Dutch vessels and 25,000 men embarked, and will take them under convoy to Ireland. One of these two operations should succeed, and then whether I have 30,000 or 40,000 men in Ireland, or whether we are both in England and Ireland, we shall have won the war.

‘When the squadron has left Brest, Lord Cornwallis will go to await it in Ireland. When he learns that it has landed in the North he will return to wait for it at Brest, so it is indispensable not to return to that port. If even, on leaving Ireland, our fleet finds favourable winds it can sail around Scotland and so reach the Texel.

‘When it sets out from Brest the 120,000 men will be embarked at Boulogne and 25,000 at the Texel. They will have to remain on board ship until the Irish expedition will have succeeded.

‘It is thus that the Irish expedition shapes itself into my mind. So, I approve all the first part of the project up to the landing in Ireland. I will wait for the report that I have requested of you concerning the state of the flotilla.

‘The second part of the project should be the object of your negotiations and of those of the admiral.

‘I think the departure of the Toulon and Rochefort Expeditions ought to precede the Irish one, because the sortie of these twenty vessels will oblige the enemy to despatch more than thirty to meet them. The departure of 10,000 or 12,000 who they will know have set out, will oblige them to despatch troops for the more important places. If things happen as we wish I desire that the Toulon fleet will sail on Vendemaire 20th, the Rochefort on Brumaire 10th, and the Brest expedition before Frimaire 1st.

‘NAPOLEON.’

This important despatch put on foot at once preparations for the landing in Ireland. However, on October 8th, about ten days later, we find an urgent despatch from the Emperor alluding to letters from him reported lost. He says in it:—‘Have you received the plans of Ireland

that I sent you sometime since? The despatches were inclosed with them in the same packet.' On the assumption that these had fallen into the hands of the English and revealed to them the whole project, Napoleon countermanded the expedition. Most minute instructions had been sent concerning the equipment of the fleet at Brest, and whole despatches of Napoleon are to be read containing full and precise commands concerning every item, from providing a musket to the fitting-out of a man-of-war. The preparations were, however, only postponed, and were soon proceeded with. On December 14th, 1804, the Emperor in a despatch gives a tabulated summary of the three flotillas, viz., at Toulon, Rochefort, and Brest. These combined, he computes, amount to 21,675 men. Had these been successfully landed in Ireland, together with Marmont's brigade subsequently, a grand total of close on 50,000 French soldiers would rest on Irish soil. Assuming these were joined, as most likely they would have been by 100,000 Irish, there would in the course of a few months have been formed an invincible allied army of 150,000 men. Before such a force, animated with French dash and Irish doggedness the yeomanry and the militia and the vaunted regular redcoats of England must have vanished. The tactics of the North Cork regiment would have availed little. The martyrs of '98 would have been speedily and terribly avenged.

But alas! for the purposes of men. During the early part of 1805, while the preparations for the expeditions were being rapidly urged forward, England was betimes stirring up animosity against Napoleon. She saw an immense army on the borders of the Channel, within a few hours' sail of her inviolable shores. She saw Ireland, her most vital part, threatened. So the English ministers stirred up a universal war, expecting that the French would be taken unawares while encamped so far away from the inland frontiers. But they reckoned with their host. When the banner of war was hung about by the coalition of Powers, who were in the pay of England and instigated by her, Napoleon moved like a flash of lightning, and in a few months the Coalition was humbled in the dust. But while victory soared over the French flag on the Continent, a catastrophe fell on the French marine which utterly shattered Napoleon's naval hopes. All during 1805, even when the

Emperor had to depart on the Austrian expedition, the fleets were busy preparing for sea. Spain was in league with France against England. It was Napoleon's plan that the French fleet sailing from Toulon should pass the Straits of Gibraltar and join with the fleet of Spain at Cadiz. The united fleets should make sail for the West Indies, so as to avoid the English. They would return with a favourable wind to Brest, there to effect a junction with the other contingent. All things considered, had success attended these operations, the French and Spanish fleets would have reached Ireland in the beginning of 1806 at the furthest. However, misfortune dogged the attempt. The French admiral, Villeneuve, having effected his meeting with the Spaniards did not, it is alleged by Napoleon, carry out his orders. On the contrary, he gave battle to the English in Trafalgar Bay, and was there utterly beaten by Nelson. On October 20, 1805, his fleet and his hopes were for ever smashed at Trafalgar. 'At Waterloo,' says Alison, 'England fought for victory: at Trafalgar, for existence.' Well might Alison say so, for Ireland was preserved to England thereby—for a period, anyhow.

In reviewing Napoleon's connection with Ireland, slight as it was, it must be owned that the battle he waged with England was identical with the cause of Ireland. At Trafalgar his hopes of beating England on the sea were annihilated; at Waterloo he was at last overwhelmed beyond all hope by his lifelong inveterate enemy. Had his fleets in 1805 escaped Nelson, as he himself escaped that admiral in 1798 on his voyage to Egypt, then beyond a shadow of doubt the tricolour would have been seen floating over the Castle of Dublin by the St. Patrick's Day of 1806. But that Patrick's Day and many another have come and gone, and still the English Union Jack flutters over those towers. On every Nelson's Pillar that has been raised in the Three Kingdoms that fated word 'Trafalgar' may be read, in whose bay perished the hopes of Ireland in that generation, at least for the coming of the French. But it is a melancholy and a comparatively useless task to ponder over what might have been, at least with special reference only to the past. Our hopes of the possible and of the likely are laid in the future. If we are to peruse and study the annals of history, it must only be for the purpose of gleaning a lesson which will enable us to guide our course to a better

harbour than was the fate of our forefathers. There is no apologia needed for Napoleon's failure. He tried to help Ireland—if for selfish motives or animated by mere cosmopolitan sentiments of justice and freedom, it matters not. It suffices that he yoked some of the greatest military resources of France to the project of driving out the English, and that he lost his fleet, and with it all naval strength whatsoever in the attempt to send an expedition to Ireland. He made a herculean and enormous effort, and he failed. For ten years that failure, like Caesar's ghost, dogged him, and on the plain of Waterloo it at last enveloped himself in its gloomy shroud. Crushed on sea he tried to humble England by preventing her trade with Europe, and he so far succeeded that the English nation were in a panic over the threatened extinction of their commerce. But England at that time held the monopoly, and her unique position soon began to tell. By reprisals and savage arbitrary measures at sea, which involved her in war with the United States in 1812, when old Ironsides Stewart humbled her haughty flag, as Napoleon would have envied to do—by using her supreme command of the sea to the utmost England crushed Napoleon, overawed Europe and held the world in maritime bondage. How different the position now!

Napoleon's attempt to enter Ireland is not to be judged by its failure, but indeed by its possibilities. For Ireland there are four possible states—(1) Union with England, either as now or under Home Rule; (2) Union with France under similar conditions; (3) An independent republic, free of all foreign connection, and possessing consequently the requisite military and naval power; (4) A conditional republic, united with France on similar lines to the union between the States of America. Had Napoleon succeeded, of course the first condition was out of the question. As to the second, union with France, that apparently was not contemplated by the Emperor; in any case, different as the nations are in language, and separated geographically, such a union is also manifestly out of the question. There remains then but the establishment of a republic, as asserted by Napoleon at St. Helena. On the point as to whether such a republic should be absolutely untrammelled and adrift on the troubled sea of the world, or whether it

should be in permanent league with France was the rock which divided the United Irishmen of 1803. Except England were utterly crushed, not like Carthage after the first Punic war, but like China after the Japanese war in our day, Ireland could not exist for any length of time free from the renewed encroachments of England, and if left to herself would find it impossible to repel and overcome them. England to-day is bereft of her former prowess. But she is well able for Ireland. As England is computing her strength always calculates on being equal to and able for any other two nations put together, so Ireland if she dream of being ever being a free and independent republic must reckon on such a combination with France as to be always able to keep England down when once the latter is crushed. That was Napoleon's wish and Emmet's dream. The French should be, to use the imperishable words of his dying speech—'auxiliaries in war, and allies in peace!'

CALMA.