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LORD CASTLEHAVEN'S MEMOIRS.[6]

In the year 1638 the Earl of Castlehaven, then a young man, made the Grand Tour, as became a nobleman of his family in that age. Being at Rome, whither the duty of paying his respects to the Holy Father had carried him—for this lord was the head of one of those grand old families which had declined to forswear its faith at the behest of Henry or Elizabeth—he received a letter from King Charles I., requiring him to attend the king in his expedition against the Scots, then revolted and in arms. With that instant loyalty which was the return made by those proscribed families to an ungrateful court from the Armada down, Lord Castlehaven, two days after the messenger had placed the royal missive in his hands, took post for England. Near Turin he fell in with an army commanded by the Marquis de Leganes, Governor of Milan for the King of Spain, who was marching to besiege the Savoy capital. But the siege was soon raised, and Lord Castlehaven entered the town. There he found her Royal Highness the Duchess of Savoy in great confusion, as if she had got no rest for many nights, so much had she been occupied with the conduct of the defence; for even the wives of this warlike and rapacious family soon learned to defend their own by the strong hand, and could stretch it out to grasp still more when occasion served. But as yet the ambition of the House of Savoy stopped short of sacrilege—or stooped to it like a hawk on short flights—nor dreamed of aggrandizing itself with

the spoils of the whole territory of the church. When Lord Castlehaven came to take leave of the duchess, her royal highness gave him a musket-bullet, much battered, which had come in at her window and missed her narrowly, charging him to deliver it safely to her sister, the Queen of England—as it proved, a present of ill omen; for of musket-balls, in a little time, the English sister had more than enough.

Arriving in London, Lord Castlehaven followed the king to Berwick, where he found the royal army encamped, with the Tweed before it, and the Scotch, under Gen. Leslie, lying at some distance. A pacification was soon effected, and both armies partially disbanded. After this the earl passed his time "as well as he could" at home till 1640. In that year the King of France besieged Arras, and Lord Castlehaven set out to witness the siege. Within was a stout garrison under Owen Roe O'Neal, commanding for the Prince Cardinal, Governor of the Low Countries. This was the first meeting of Castlehaven with the future victor of Benburb, with whom he was afterwards brought into closer relations in the Irish Rebellion. The French pressed Arras close, and the confederates being defeated, and the hope of the siege being raised grown[79] desperate, the town was surrendered on honorable terms. This action over, Lord Castlehaven returned to England and sat in Parliament till the attainder of the Earl of Strafford. When that great nobleman fell, deserted by his wavering royal master, and the king's friends were beginning to turn about—they scarce knew whither—to prepare for the storm that all men saw was coming, Lord Castlehaven went to Ireland, where he had some estate and three married sisters. While there the Rebellion of 1641 broke out. Although innocent of any complicity in the outbreak, his faith made him suspected, and he was imprisoned on a slight pretext by the lords-justices. Escaping, his first design was to get into France, and thence to England to join the king at York, and petition for a trial by his peers. But coming to Kilkenny, he found there the Supreme Council of the Confederate Catholics just assembled—many of them being of his acquaintance—and was persuaded by them to throw in his lot with theirs, seeing, as they truly told him, that they were all persecuted on the same score, and ruined so that they had nothing more to lose but their lives. From that time till the peace of 1646 he was engaged in the war of the Confederate Catholics, holding important commands in the field under the Supreme Council. His *Memoirs*is the history of this war.

After the peace of 1646, concluded with the Marquis of Ormond, the king's lord-lieutenant, but which shortly fell through, Lord Castlehaven retired to France, and served as a volunteer under Prince Rupert at the siege of Landrecies. Then, returning to Paris, he remained in attendance on the Queen of England and the Prince of Wales (Charles II.) at St. Germain till 1648. In that year he returned to Ireland with the lord-lieutenant, the Marquis of Ormond, and served the royal cause in that kingdom against the parliamentary forces under Ireton and Cromwell. The battle of Worcester being lost, and Cromwell the undisputed master of the three kingdoms, Castlehaven again followed the clouded fortunes of Charles II. to France. There he obtained permission to join the Great Condé. In the campaigns under that prince he had the command of eight or nine regiments of Irish troops, making altogether a force of 5,000 men. Thus we find the Irish refugees already consolidated into a brigade some

years before the Treaty of Limerick expatriated those soldiers whose valor is more commonly identified with that title.

Lord Castlehaven returned to England at the Restoration. In the war with Holland he served as a volunteer in some of the naval engagements. In 1667, the French having invaded Flanders, he was ordered there with 2,400 men to recruit the “Old English Regiment,” of which he was made colonel. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle ended this war. Peace reigned in the Low Countries till the breaking out, in 1673, of the long and bloody contest between the Prince of Orange and the confederate Spaniards and Imperialists on the one side, and Louis XIV. on the other. This was the age of grand campaigns, conducted upon principles of mathematical precision by the great captains formed in the school of M. Turenne, before the “little Marquis of Brandenburg”[7] and the “Corsican[80]corporal” in turn revolutionized the art of war. Castlehaven entered the Spanish service, and shared the checkered but generally disastrous fortunes of the Duke of Villahermosa and the Prince of Orange (William III.) against Condé and Luxembourg, till the peace of Nymegen put an end to the war in 1678.

Then, after forty years’ hard service, this veteran retired from the field, and returning to England, like another Cæsar, set about writing his commentaries on the wars. Thus he spent his remaining years. First he published, but without acknowledging the authorship, his *Memoirs of the Irish Wars*. This first edition was suppressed. Then, in 1684, appeared the second edition, containing, besides the *Memoirs*, his “Appendix”—being an account of his Continental service—his “Observations” on confederate armies and the conduct of war, and a “Postscript,” which is a reply to the Earl of Anglesey. And right well has the modern reader reason to be thankful for his lordship’s literary spirit. His *Memoirs* is one of the most authentic and trustworthy accounts we have of that vexed passage of Irish history—the Rebellion of 1641. Its blunt frankness is its greatest charm; it has the value of an account by an actor in the scenes described; and it possesses that merit of impartiality which comes of being written by an Englishman who, connected with the Irish leaders by the ties of faith, family, and property, and sympathizing fully with their efforts to obtain redress for flagrant wrongs was yet not blind to their mistakes and indefensible actions.

Castlehaven, neglected for more than a century, has received more justice at the hands of later historians. He is frequently referred to by Lingard, and his work will be found an admirable commentary on Carte’s *Life of Ormond*. There is a notice of him in Horace Walpole’s *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors* (vol. iii.)

“If this lord,” says Walpole, “who led a very martial life, had not taken the pains to record his own actions (which, however, he has done with great frankness and ingenuity), we should know little of his story, our historians scarce mentioning him, and even our writers of anecdotes, as Burnet, or of tales and circumstances, as Roger North, not giving any account of a court quarrel occasioned by his lordship’s *Memoirs*. Anthony Wood alone has preserved this event, but has not made it intelligible. … The earl had been much censured for his share in the Irish

Rebellion, and wrote the *Memoirs* to explain his conduct rather than to excuse it; for he freely confesses his faults, and imputes them to provocations from the government of that kingdom, to whose rashness and cruelty, conjointly with the votes and resolutions of the English Parliament, he ascribes the massacre. There are no dates nor method, and less style, in these *Memoirs*—defects atoned for in some measure by a martial honesty. Soon after their publication the Earl of Anglesey wrote to ask a copy. Lord Castlehaven sent him one, but denying the work as his. Anglesey, who had been a commissioner in Ireland for the Parliament, published Castlehaven's letter, with observations and reflections very abusive of the Duke of Ormond, which occasioned first a printed controversy, and this a trial before the Privy Council; the event of which was that Anglesey's first letter was voted a scandalous libel, and himself removed from the custody of the Privy Seal; and that the Earl of Castlehaven's *Memoirs*, on which he was several times examined, and which he owned, was declared a scandalous libel on the government—a censure that seems very little founded; there is not a word that can authorize that sentence from the Council of Charles II. but the imputation on the lords-justices of Charles I.; for I suppose the Privy Council did not pique themselves on vindicating[81] the honor of the republican Parliament! Bishop Morley wrote *A True Account of the Whole Proceeding between James, Duke of Ormond, and Arthur, Earl of Anglesey*."

Immediately after the Restoration, as it is well known, an act was passed, commonly called in that age "the Act of Oblivion," by which all penalties (except certain specified ones) incurred in the late troublous and rebellious times were forgiven. So superfine would have been the net which the law of treason would have drawn around the three kingdoms, had its strict construction been enforced, that it was quite cut loose, a few only of the greatest criminals and regicides being held in its meshes. So harsh had been Cromwell's iron rule that there were few counties of England in which the stoutest squires, and even the most loyal, might not have trembled had the king's commission inquired too closely into the legal question of connivance at the late tyrant's rule. And in the great cities, London especially, the tide of enthusiasm which now ran so strongly for the king could not hide the memory of those days when the same fierce crowds had clamored for the head of the "royal martyr." Prudent it was, as well as benign, therefore, for the "merry monarch" to let time roll smoothly over past transgressions. But though the law might grant oblivion, and even punish the revival of controversies, the old rancor between individuals and even parties was not so easily appeased after the first joyful outburst. Books and pamphlets by the hundred brought charges and counter charges. But these "authors of slander and lyes," as Castlehaven calls them, outdid themselves in their tragical stories of the Irish Rebellion of 1641. Nor have imitators been wanting in this age, as rancorous and more skilful, in the production of "fictions and invectives to traduce a whole nation." To answer those calumnies by "setting forth the truth of his story in a brief and plain method" was the design of Castlehaven's work.

Then, as now, it was the aim of the libellers of the Irish people to make the whole nation accountable for the "massacre," so called, of 1641, and to confound the war of the Confederate Catholics and the later loyal resistance to Cromwell in one

common denunciation with the first sanguinary and criminal outbreak. Lord Castlehaven's narrative effectually disposes of this charge. In a singularly clear and candid manner he narrates the rise and progress of the insurrection, and shows the wide difference between the aims and motives of those who planned the uprising of October 23, 1641, and of those who afterwards carried on the war under the title of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland. The former he does not hesitate to denounce as a "barbarous and inhumane" conspiracy, but the responsibility for it he fixes in the right quarter—the malevolent character of the Irish government and the atrocious spirit of the English Puritan Parliament, which, abandoning all the duties of protection, kept only one object in view—the extirpation of the native Irish.

With the successful example of the Scotch Rebellion immediately before them, it was a matter of little wonder to observant and impartial minds in that age that the Irish should have seized upon the occasion of the growing quarrel between the king and Parliament as the opportune moment for the[82] redress of their grievances. For in the year 1640, two years after the pacification of Berwick, the Scotch Rebellion, primarily instigated by the same cause as the Irish—religious differences—broke out with greater violence than ever. The Scots' army invaded England, defeated the king's troops at Newburn, and took Newcastle. Then, driven to extremity by those Scotch rebels, as mercenary as they were fanatical,[8] and his strength paralyzed by the growing English sedition, Charles I. called together "that unfortunate Parliament" which, proceeding from one violence to another, first destroyed its master, and then was in turn destroyed by its own servant. Far from voting the Scotch army rebels and traitors, the Parliament at once styled them "dear brethren" and voted them £300,000 for their kindness. Mr. Gervase Holles was expelled from the House for saying in the course of debate "that the best way of paying them was by arms to expel them out of the kingdom." The quarrel between King and Commons grew hotter, until finally it became evident that, notwithstanding Charles' concessions, a violent rupture could not be long delayed.

No fairer opportunity could be hoped for by the Irish leaders, dissatisfied with their own condition, and spurred on by the hope of winning as good measure of success as the Scotch. The plan to surprise the Castle of Dublin and the other English garrisons was quickly matured; but failing, some of the conspirators were taken and executed, and the rest forced to retire to the woods and mountains. But the flame thus lighted soon spread over the whole kingdom, and occasioned a war which lasted without intermission for ten years.

The following reasons are declared by Castlehaven to have been afterwards offered to him by the Irish as the explanation of this insurrection:

First, that, being constantly looked upon by the English government as a conquered nation, and never treated as natural or free-born subjects, they considered themselves entitled to regain their liberty whenever they believed it to be in their power to do so.

Secondly, that in the North, where the insurrection broke out with the greatest violence, six whole counties had been escheated to the crown at one blow, on

account of Tyrone's rebellion; and although it was shown that a large portion of the population of those counties was innocent of complicity in that rising, nothing had ever been restored, but the whole bestowed by James I. upon his countrymen. To us, who live at the distance of two centuries and a half from those days of wholesale rapine, these confiscations still seem the most gigantic instance of English wrong; but who shall tell their maddening effect upon those who suffered from them in person in that age—the men flying to the mountains, the women perishing in the fields, the children crying for food they could not get?

Thirdly, the popular alarm was[83] heightened by the reports, current during Strafford's government in Ireland, that the counties of Roscommon, Mayo, Galway, and Cork, and parts of Tipperary, Limerick, and Wicklow, were to share the fate of the Ulster counties. It hardly needs the example of our own Revolution to prove the truth of Castlehaven's observation upon this project: "That experience tells us where the people's property is like to be invaded, neither religion nor loyalty is able to keep them within bounds if they find themselves in a condition to make any considerable opposition." And this brings to his mind the story related by Livy of those resolute ambassadors of the Privernates, who, being reduced to such extremities that they were obliged to beg peace of the Roman Senate, yet, being asked what peace should the Romans expect from them, who had broken it so often, they boldly answered—which made the Senate accept their proposals—"If a good one, it shall be faithful and lasting; but if bad, it shall not hold very long. For think not," said they, "that any people, or even any man, will continue in that condition whereof they are weary any longer than of necessity they must."

Fourthly, it was notorious that from the moment Parliament was convened it had urged the greatest severities against the English Roman Catholics. The king was compelled to revive the penalties of the worst days of Edward and Elizabeth against them. His own consort was scarce safe from the violence of those hideous wretches who concealed the vilest crimes under the garb of Puritan godliness. Readers even of such a common and one-sided book as Forster's *Life of Sir John Eliot* will be surprised to find the prominence and space the "Popish" resolutions and debates occupied in the sittings of Parliament. The popular leaders divided their time nearly equally between the persecution of the Catholics and assaults upon the prerogative. The same severities were now threatened against the Irish Catholics. "Both Houses," says Castlehaven, "solicited, by several petitions out of Ireland, to have those of that kingdom treated with the like rigor, which, to a people so fond of their religion as the Irish, was no small inducement to make them, while there was an opportunity offered, to stand upon their guard."

Fifthly, the precedent of the Scotch Rebellion, and its successful results—pecuniarily, politically, and religiously—encouraged the Irish so much at that time that they offered it to Owen O'Conally as their chief motive for rising in rebellion; "which," says he (quoted by Castlehaven), "they engaged in to be rid of the tyrannical government that was over them, and to imitate Scotland, who by that

course had enlarged their privileges" (O'Conally's *Exam.*, October 22, 1641; Borlace's *History of the Irish Rebellion*, p. 21).

To the same purpose Lord Castlehaven quotes Mr. Howell in his *Mercurius Hibernicus* in the year 1643; "whose words, because an impartial author and a known Protestant, I will here transcribe in confirmation of what I have said and for the reader's further satisfaction":

"Moreover," says Mr. Howell, "they [the Irish] entered into consideration that they had sundry grievances and grounds of complaint, both touching their estates and consciences, which they pretended to be far greater than those of[84] the Scots. For they fell to think that if the Scot was suffered to introduce a new religion, it was reason they should not be punished in the exercise of their old, which they glory never to have altered; and for temporal matters, wherein the Scot had no grievance at all to speak of, the new plantations which had been lately afoot to be made in Connaught and other places; the concealed lands and defective titles which were daily found out; the new customs which were enforced; and the incapacity they had to any preferment or office in church or state, with other things, they considered to be grievances of a far greater nature, and that deserved redress much more than any the Scot had. To this end they sent over commissioners to attend this Parliament in England with certain propositions; but they were dismissed hence with a short and unsavory answer, which bred worse blood in the nation than was formerly gathered. And this, with that leading case of the Scot, may be said to be the first incitements that made them rise.… Lastly, that army of 8,000 men which the Earl of Strafford had raised to be transported into England for suppressing the Scot, being by the advice of our Parliament here disbanded, the country was annoyed by some of those straggling soldiers. Therefore the ambassadors from Spain having propounded to have some numbers of those disbanded soldiers for the service of their master, his majesty, by the mature advice of his Privy Council, to occur the mischiefs that might arise to his kingdom of Ireland from those loose cashiered soldiers, yielded to the ambassadors' motion. But as they were in the height of that work (providing transports), there was a sudden stop made of those promised troops; and this was the last, though not the least, fatal cause of that horrid insurrection.

"Out of these premises it is easy for any common understanding, not transported with passion or private interest, to draw this conclusion: That they who complied with the Scot in his insurrection; they who dismissed the Irish commissioners with such a short, impolitic answer; they who took off the Earl of Strafford's head, and afterwards delayed the despatching of the Earl of Leicester; they who hindered those disbanded troops in Ireland to go for Spain, may be justly said to have been the true causes of the late insurrection of the Irish.

"Thus," continues Castlehaven, "concludes this learned and ingenious gentleman, who, as being then his majesty's historiographer, was as likely as any man to know the transactions of those times, and, as an Englishman and a loyal Protestant, was beyond all exception of partiality or favor of the Papists of Ireland, and therefore could have no other reason but the love of truth and justice to give this account of

the Irish Rebellion, or make the Scotch and their wicked brethren in the Parliament of England the main occasion of that horrid insurrection."

As for the "massacre," so called, that ensued, Lord Castlehaven speaks of it with the abhorrence it deserves. But this very term "massacre" is a misnomer plausibly affixed to the uprising by English ingenuity. In a country such as Ireland then was—in which, though nominally conquered, few English lived outside the walled towns—an intermittent state of war was chronic; and therefore there was none of that unpreparedness for attack or absence of means of defence on the part of the English settlers which, in other well-known historical cases, has rightfully given the name of "massacre" to a premeditated murderous attack upon defenceless and surprised victims. To hold the English as such will be regarded with contemptuous ridicule by every one acquainted with the system of English and Scotch colonization in Ireland in that age. The truth is, the cruelties on both sides were very bloody, "and though some," says Lord Castlehaven, "will throw all upon the Irish, yet 'tis well known who they were[85] that used to give orders to their parties sent into the enemies' quarters to spare neither man, woman, nor child." And as to the preposterous muster-rolls of Sir John Temple—from whom the subsequent scribblers borrowed all their catalogues—giving *fifty thousand (!)* British natives as the number killed, Lord Castlehaven's testimony is to the effect that there was not one-tenth—or scarcely five thousand—of that number of British natives then living in Ireland outside of the cities and walled towns where no "massacre" was committed. Lord Castlehaven also shows that there were not 50,000 persons to be found even in Temple's catalogue, although it was then a matter of common notoriety that he repeats the same people and the same circumstances twice or thrice, and mentions hundreds as then murdered who lived many years afterwards. Some of Temple's, not the Irish, victims were alive when Castlehaven wrote.

But the true test of the character of this insurrection is to be found, not in the exaggerated calumnies of English libellers writing after the event, but in the testimony of the English settlers themselves when in a position where lies would have been of no avail. We will therefore give here, though somewhat out of the course of our narrative, an incident related by Castlehaven to that effect.

Shortly after he had been appointed General of the Horse under Preston, Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Catholics in Leinster, that general took, among other places, Birr, in King's County. Here Castlehaven had the good fortune, as he says, to begin his command with an act of charity. For, going to see this garrison before it marched out, he came into a large room where he found many people of quality, both men and women. They no sooner saw him but, with tears in their eyes, they fell on their knees, desiring him to save their lives. "I was astonished," says Castlehaven, "at their posture and petition, and, having made them rise, asked what the matter was? They answered that from the first day of the war there had been continued action and bloodshed between them and their Irish neighbors, and little quarter on either side; and therefore, understanding that I was an Englishman, begged I would take them into my protection." It is enough to say

that Lord Castlehaven, with some difficulty, and by personally taking command of a strong convoy, obtained for them the protection they prayed for from the exasperated and outraged population around them. But what we wish to point out is this: that here are those victims of Sir John Temple's "massacre"—not the garrison of the fort, observe, but the English settlers driven in by the approach of Preston's army, after terrorizing the country for months—now, with the fear of death before them, confessing on their knees that from the first day of the war they had arms in their hands, and that little quarter was given on either side!

How well the English were able to take care of themselves at this time, and what *their* "massacres" were like, are shown by the following extract from a letter of Colonel the Hon. Mervin Touchett to his brother, Lord Castlehaven. Col. Touchett is describing a raid made by Sir Arthur Loffens, Governor of Naas, with a party of horse and dragoons, killing such of the Irish as they met, to punish an attack[86] upon an English party a few days before: "But the most considerable slaughter was in a great strength of furze, scattered on a hill, where the people of several villages (taking the alarm) had sheltered themselves. Now, Sir Arthur, having invested the hill, set the furze on fire on all sides, where the people, being a considerable number, were all burned or killed, men, women, and children. I saw the bodies and the furze still burning."

We remember the horror-stricken denunciations of the English press some years ago when it was stated, without much authentication, that some of the French commanders in the Algerine campaigns had smoked some Arabs to death in caves. But it would seem from Col. Touchett's narrative that the English troopers would have been able to give their French comrades lessons in the culinary art of war some centuries ago. A grilled Irishman is surely as savory an object for the contemplation of humanity as a smoked Arab!

But whatever the atrocities on the English side, we will not say that the cruelties committed by the Irish were not deserving of man's reprobation and God's anger. Only this is to be observed: that whereas the "massacres" by the Irish were confined to the rabble and Strafford's disbanded soldiers, those committed by the English side were shared in, as the narratives of the day show, by the persons highest in position and authority. They made part of the English system of government of that day. On the other hand, the leading men of the Irish Catholic body not only endeavored to stay those murders, but sought to induce the government to bring the authors of them on both sides to punishment. But in vain! On the 17th of March, 1642, Viscount Gormanstown and Sir Robert Talbot, on behalf of the nobility and gentry of the nation, presented a remonstrance, praying "that the murders on both sides committed should be strictly examined, and the authors of them punished according to the utmost severity of the law." Which proposal, Castlehaven shrewdly remarks, would never have been rejected by their adversaries, "but that they were conscious of being deeper in the mire than they would have the world believe."

So far the "massacre" and first uprising.

Now, as to the inception of the war of the Confederate Catholics, and its objects, Lord Castlehaven's narrative is equally convincing and clear.

Parliament met in the Castle of Dublin, Nov. 16, 1641. The Rebellion was laid before both Houses by the lords-justices, Sir William Parsons and Sir John Borlace. Concurrent resolutions were adopted, without a dissenting voice, by the two Houses, declaring their abhorrence of the Rebellion, and pledging their lives and fortunes to suppress it. Castlehaven had a seat in the Irish House of Lords as an Irish peer, and being then in Ireland, as before related, took his seat at the meeting of Parliament. Besides Castlehaven, most of the leaders of the war that ensued were members of the Irish House of Lords. These Catholic peers were not less earnest than the rest in their unanimous intention to put down the Rebellion. Both Houses thereupon began to deliberate upon the most effectual means for its suppression. "But this way of proceeding," says Castlehaven, "did[87] not, it seems, square with the lords-justices' designs, who were often heard to say that 'the more were in rebellion, the more lands should be forfeit to them.'" Therefore, in the midst of the deliberations of Parliament on the subject, a prorogation was determined on. The lords, understanding this, sent Castlehaven and Viscount Castelloe to join a deputation from the commons to the lords-justices, praying them not to prorogue, at least till the rebels—then few in number—were reduced to obedience. But the address was slighted, and Parliament prorogued the next day, to the great surprise of both Houses and the "general dislike," says Castlehaven, "of all honest and knowing men."

The result was, as the lords-justices no doubt intended, that the rebels were greatly encouraged, and at once began to show themselves in quarters hitherto peaceful. The members of Parliament retired to their country-houses in much anxiety after the prorogation. Lord Castlehaven went to his seat at Maddingstown. There he received a letter, signed by the Viscounts of Gormanstown and Netterville, and by the Barons of Slane, Lowth, and Dunsany, containing an enclosure to the lords-justices which those noblemen desired him to forward to them, and, if possible, obtain an answer. This letter to the lords-justices, Castlehaven says, was very humble and submissive, asking only permission to send their petitions into England to represent their grievances to the king. The only reply of the lords-justices was a warning to Castlehaven to receive no more letters from them.

Meanwhile, parties were sent out from Dublin and the various garrisons throughout the kingdom to "kill and destroy the rebels." But those parties took little pains to distinguish rebels from loyal subjects, provided they were only Catholics, killing promiscuously men, women, and children. Reprisals followed on the part of the rebels. The nobility and gentry were between two fires. A contribution was levied upon them by the rebels, after the manner of the Scots in the North of England in 1640. But although to pay that contribution in England passed without reproach, in Ireland it was denounced by the lords-justices as treason. The English troopers insulted and openly threatened the most distinguished Irish families as favorers of the Rebellion. "This," says Castlehaven, "and the sight of their tenants, the harmless country people, without respect to age or sex, thus barbarously murdered, made the

Catholic nobility and gentry at last resolved to stand upon their guard." Nevertheless, before openly raising the standard of revolt against the Irish government, which refused to protect them, they made several efforts to get their petitions before Charles I. Sir John Read, a Scotchman, then going to England, undertook to forward petitions to the king; but, being arrested on suspicion at Drogheda, was taken to Dublin, and there put upon the rack by the lords-justices to endeavor to wring from him a confession of Charles I.'s complicity in the Rebellion. This Col. Mervin Touchett heard from Sir John Read himself as he was brought out of the room where he was racked. But that unfortunate monarch knew not how to choose his friends or to be faithful to them when he found them. He referred the whole conduct of Irish affairs[88] to the English Parliament, thus increasing the discontent to the last pitch by making it plain to the whole Irish people that he abandoned the duty of protecting them, and had handed them over to the mercy of their worst enemies—the English Parliament. That Parliament at once passed a succession of wild votes and ordinances, indicating their intention of stopping short at nothing less than utter extirpation of the native race. Dec. 8, 1641, they declared they would never give consent to any toleration of the Popish religion in Ireland. In February following, when few of any estate were as yet engaged in the Rebellion, they passed an act assigning two million five hundred thousand acres of cultivated land, besides immense tracts of bogs, woods, and mountains, to English and Scotch adventurers for a small proportion of money on the grant. This money, the act stated, was to go to the reduction of the rebels; but, with a fine irony of providence upon the king's weak compliance, every penny of it was afterwards used to raise armies by the English rebels against him. "But the greatest discontent of all," says Castlehaven, "was about the lords-justices proroguing the Parliament—the only way the nation had to express its loyalty and prevent their being misrepresented to their sovereign, which, had it been permitted to sit for any reasonable time, would in all likelihood, without any great charge or trouble, have brought the rebels to justice."

Thus all hopes of redress or safety being at an end—a villanous government in Dublin intent only upon confiscation, a furious Parliament in London breathing vengeance against the whole Irish race, and a king so embroiled in his English quarrels that he could do nothing to help his Irish subjects, even had he wished it—what was left those loyal, gallant, and devoted men but to draw the sword for their own safety? The Rebellion by degrees spread over the whole kingdom. "And now," says Castlehaven, "there's no more looking back; for all were in arms and full of indignation." A council of the leading Catholic nobles, military officers, and gentry met at Kilkenny, and formed themselves into an association under the title of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland. Four generals were appointed for the respective provinces of the kingdom—Preston for Leinster, Barry for Munster, Owen Roe O'Neale for Ulster, and Burke for Connaught. Thus war was declared.

When the Rebellion first broke out in the North, Lord Castlehaven had immediately repaired to Dublin and offered his services to the lords-justices. They were declined with the reply that "his religion was an obstacle." After the prorogation of Parliament, as we have seen, he retired to his house in the country.

Then, coming again to Dublin to meet a charge of corresponding with the rebels which had been brought against him, he was arrested by order of the lords-justices, and, after twenty weeks of imprisonment in the sheriff's house, was committed to the Castle. “This startled me a little,” says Castlehaven—as it well might do; for the state prisoner's exit from the Castle in Dublin in those days was usually made in the same way as from the Tower in London, namely, by the block—“and brought into my thoughts the proceedings against the Earl of Strafford, who, confiding in his own innocence, was voted out of his life by an unprecedented[89] bill of attainder.” Therefore, hearing nothing while in prison but rejoicings at the king's misfortunes, who at last had been forced to take up arms by the English rebels, and knowing the lords-justices to be of the Parliament faction, and the lord-lieutenant, the Marquis of Ormond, being desperately sick of a fever, not without suspicion of poison, and his petition to be sent to England, to be tried there by his peers, being refused, he determined to make his escape, shrewdly concluding, as he says, that “innocence was a scurvy plea in an angry time.”

Arriving at Kilkenny, he joined the confederacy, as has been related.

From this time the war of the Confederate Catholics was carried on with varying success until the cessation of 1646, and then until the peace of 1648, when the Confederates united, but too late, with the Marquis of Ormond to stop the march of Cromwell.