

**THE UNKNOWN POWER
BEHIND THE IRISH NATIONALIST
PARTY: ITS PRESENT WORK
AND CRIMINAL HISTORY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649727810

The Unknown Power behind the Irish Nationalist Party: Its Present Work and Criminal History by Anonymous

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Cover @ 2017

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*Ashtown, Frederick Hiller House,
3.1.1907*

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AND CRIMINAL HISTORY*

BY THE EDITOR OF
"GRIEVANCES FROM IRELAND"

LONDON
SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO., LTD.
25 HIGH STREET, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.

OFFICES OF "GRIEVANCES FROM IRELAND"
DUDLEY HOUSE
36-38 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND, W.C.
1907

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PRINTED AND BOUND BY
HASKELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

107846-190

P R E F A C E

IN the history of secret political and agrarian societies the organisation described in the following pages merits a conspicuous place. It is not a newly fledged body like the United Irish League, but—so far as age goes—a venerable institution which, under various aliases, has existed for three centuries and a half. Until a brief article on its history appeared in the December, 1906, issue of *Grievances from Ireland*, it was practically unknown, except as a name, in the United Kingdom; while in Ireland it was generally looked on as a harmless Benefit Society, affording sick relief and burial fees to its members. To the world in general it appeared in the lovely garb of an angel of light and comfort, adopting for its motto, "Friendship, Unity, and True Christian Charity." But this is not the real character of the Ancient Order of Hibernians; it is only an assumed one. As the following pages amply prove, it was formed for the purpose of driving the English Government out of Ireland, and that is as much its object to-day as ever it has been in the past. It has, unfortunately, been more than disloyal, down to about thirty years since. For the first three centuries of its history its operations have

been stained with outrages, murder, and blood. It is not asserted that these crimes are committed by it at the present time, yet we look in vain for any official expressions of regret for its past offences, while we listen with amazement to its modern leaders glorying in its traditions, without any exceptions whatever; and we look forward to its future with well-grounded apprehension.

If the Ancient Order of Hibernians were a small body we might look upon it with indifference. But it is not a small body. On the contrary, as Mr. Michael Davitt boasted in 1904, it is, perhaps, "the most powerful pro-Celtic organisation in the world." Some of its officials stated in 1906 that it numbers 380,000 members. At a meeting reported by *The Freeman's Journal*, October 9th, 1906, Mr. John E. Redmond, M.P., leader of the Irish Nationalist Parliamentary Party, said:

"I have always held the view that it was a strength to the National Movement, and not a weakness, that England should realise that there was behind the men who were conducting the Constitutional Movement on the floor of the House of Commons, a GREAT UNKNOWN POWER, waiting for an opportunity which might arise to have recourse, if necessary, to other methods to advance the cause of Ireland."

It is a pity that Mr. Redmond has not given the public further particulars concerning this "Great Unknown Power." Probably it would have been indiscreet on his part to do so. He could certainly

not have meant the Clan-na-Gael, the successor of the Fenian Brotherhood, for it is by no means an "unknown" power, being very well known indeed through the revelations made public before the Parnell Commission. Besides, the Clan-na-Gael is not "behind" the so-called Constitutional Movement of the Irish Nationalists, headed by Mr. Redmond; on the contrary, it is bitterly opposed to it, as any one may know who will read *The Gaelic American*, the official organ of the Clan, which is never tired of abusing the Nationalist Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League. We must therefore look elsewhere for this "Great Unknown Power." After careful inquiry and research, we have discovered it to be the Ancient Order of Hibernians, whose past history and present-day work are described at length in the following pages. No other organisation exists which answers in every respect to the description given by Mr. John Redmond. It is a rapidly increasing power, especially during the past two years, with branches in Ireland, England, Scotland, the United States, Canada, Australia, and in many other parts of the British Empire, and with secret passwords and proceedings. Everywhere its members are required to be Nationalists, at enmity with British rule in Ireland. It has a religious basis. None but Roman Catholics are allowed, under any circumstances, to join its ranks, and it is necessary that every member shall attend regularly to his or her religious duties. Everywhere it is pledged to maintain the authority of the Church

of Rome. But here comes in the strange fact that, since its birth in the sixteenth century, it has often been denounced by Roman Catholic Bishops in the strongest possible terms, and only quite recently by the Scottish Roman Catholic Bishops. On the other hand, as is proved in the last chapter of this book, within the last few years it has received the benediction of Pope Pius X., and the approval of Cardinal Logue, Cardinal Moran, Cardinal Gibbons, and many Archbishops, Bishops, and priests in England, Ireland, and America. While attention is necessarily directed in these pages to this aspect of the case, the ordinary doctrinal position of the Church of Rome is in no way discussed. We have to deal here only with the agrarian and political work of a powerful organisation which has secured for itself the support and approval of a considerable number of the rulers of the Church of Rome.

No attempt has been made to exaggerate the indictment of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Perhaps it would be almost impossible to exaggerate its atrocities, from its unhappy birth down to the time when the Molly Maguires of Pennsylvania (a branch of the Order) committed wholesale murders in the coal regions, as late as the year 1876, unrebuked by the parent body from that day to this. It will be observed that full proofs and references are given for every statement in this book, and that in the overwhelming majority of instances our authorities are the friends of the Order. The italics in the quotations are ours, with but few exceptions.

We venture respectfully to suggest that the operations of this "Great Unknown Power"—for hitherto it may be truly said that its secret operations have been unknown to the outside public—are worthy of the serious attention of His Majesty's Government, and of all statesmen and politicians, and, in fact, of every real well-wisher to Ireland, whatever his ordinary political views may be. While this preface is being written we are awaiting, with no little anxiety, for the proposals of the Government, by which they have promised to give an instalment of Home Rule to the men in Ireland who support this "Great Unknown Power," and to the United Irish League, as well as to the loyal minority. Who will benefit by this instalment of an increased political power? The loyal portion of the people reject it. Is it wise or safe to give it to the members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, or to the United Irish League? It is certain that that increase of political power will be used to augment the difficulties of British rule in Ireland. The United Irish League rules Ireland, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, of evil history, apparently rules the League. Should loyal subjects of King Edward VII. grant to such bodies increased facilities for carrying on their mischievous operations? It is not true wisdom to please the disaffected, and terrorise the loyal and best subjects of the Crown in Ireland.