

TRADE AND INDUSTRY IN IRELAND IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

It will be convenient to classify Irish trade in the sixteenth century into four divisions, to treat each division separately, and then to summarize results. The basis of classification is economic as well as geographic, and comprises: (1) the English Pale; (2) the southern part of Ireland (the province of Munster and part of Leinster); (3) Connaught (the western province); (4) Ulster (the North of Ireland).

(1) The English Pale in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was that part of Ireland in which the majority of the inhabitants were of English birth or descent and in which English law was current and English customs prevalent. The border line was a variable one, but in gener l we mean by the English Pale the four counties of Dublin, Kildare, Meath,¹ and Louth (often spoken of as Uriell). This part of the country, extending inland some twenty or thirty miles and north and south about fifty miles, was distinctively English.² Its chief cities, Dublin and Drogheda, had been settled by men from Bristol³ and other English cities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The former city became the headquarters of the English administrative system and very rapidly developed into a thriving trade center.⁴ The patronage

¹ The western part of Meath was organized as a separate county, Westmeath (Statute 34^o Henry VIII), and in the latter half of the sixteenth century was included in the Pale.

² The policy of maintaining this English dominance was deliberately adopted by these Bristol traders and their descendants. In 1453 it was enacted by the Dublin Assembly "that all manner men of Irish blood and women, that is to say Irish nonnys, Irish clerks and Irish Journay men, Irish prentyses, servants and beggeris, men, women and children, also all manner of Irish householders, except those that be living within the city 12 years, that they and every of them avoyde by this day 4 weeks, any that may be found within the city after that shall forfeit, goods, cattle and be put in prison."—*Cal. of Ancient Records of Dublin* (ed. Gilbert), (referred to hereafter as *Dublin Records*), I, 280.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 1-2 (Charter of Henry I and its confirmation by John); *ibid.*, II, 542: "diverse citizens of Bristol fitted from thence to Dublin."

⁴ Morris in his history of Chester in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries states that the trade between Chester and the Irish towns had been opened up as early as the ninth century (Morris, *Chester*, p. 457).

of the early Angevin kings protected and fostered its trading relations with Bristol, Chester, Liverpool, London, and other English cities and towns.¹ Since Dublin was the center of administration, its population was constantly being added to by newcomers of English birth, men sometimes of high rank, accustomed to the best of everything in England, and very unwilling to lower their standard of living in Ireland. These men and those of lesser rank holding various civil and military positions came into Ireland in large numbers, brought their families, and settled down in city and country districts. It was this fact which made the trade of the English Pale different from that of other parts of Ireland. There was always a demand, not only for English commodities, but for such foreign luxuries as men of this class were accustomed to enjoy in England. All through the later Middle Ages Dublin was a lively, flourishing town, with an active trade in all sorts of English,² French,³ Flemish,⁴ and oriental⁵ commodities. Twice a year, in the sixteenth century, its merchants went to Bristol Fair,⁶ and brought thence Flemish wares, silks, groceries, merceries, spices, dates, figs, and dyestuffs. In both Dublin and Drogheda there was a flourishing import trade in salt, iron, wine, and coal⁷ and an export trade in

¹ Cf. an order to mayor, bailiffs, and collectors of customs at Dublin not to exact toll on sheepskins and hides brought to that city by burgesses and merchants of Bristol (*Dublin Records*, I, 11). Henry II granted to his burgesses of Dublin freedom from toll, pontage, murage, etc., and all customs for themselves and their goods throughout his entire land of England, Normandy, Wales, and Ireland, *ibid.*, I, 1.

² *Calendar of Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 108; *Dublin Records*, I, 25.

³ *Dublin Records*, I, 15: "cloth of Normandy"; *ibid.*, p. 233: wood "from Caen, Amiens, and from Vermand."

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 15: "cloth of Flanders and Brabant."

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 16: "figs, dates, raisins."

⁶ *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 138.

⁷ Foreign merchants bringing in iron, salt, wine, or coal had to offer their cargoes to the four buyers of the city, and if these did not agree on a price they had to hold their merchandise for forty days and then sell to whomsoever they pleased (*Dublin Records*, I, 299). This custom of community bargains was quite evidently derived from Chester precedent (see Morris, *Chester*, p. 390). "Merchants of Chester shall not sell salt on shipboard, it must be landed and housed before sale."—*Dublin Records*, I, 221. Cf. prohibition against merchants bringing in salt, iron, wine, and other

hides,¹ linen yarn,² woolen yarn, skins of all kinds, tallow, Irish rugs,³ blankets or coverlets, and the shaggy, fringed mantells which were peculiar to the country. In 1611 Robert Cogan, inspector of the Irish customs, valued the Dublin trade at £100,000 and the

merchandise (grain excepted) from the coasts or other parts beyond the sea but such "as shall be his or their own proper goods and merchandise" (*ibid.*, II, 14).

A list of commodities bought and sold in the Dublin market, compiled from charters of the fourteenth century and customs lists of the same period, reveals the following:

corn	cloth	iron of Bristol	carts	figs
malt	canvas	iron of Spain	brewing-vessels	dates
cattle	Irish linen	cloth of Flanders	millstones from Wales	buge (fur)
hides	pitch	cloth of Normandy	salmon	tar
sheep	buckram	cloth of Brabant	herring	glass
wool	caldrons	English cloth	butter	silk
wool fells	onions	horseshoes	iron	slates
other fells	alum	nails	lead	madder
deer hides	ashes	shears	tin	chalk
goatskin	wine	kitchenware	copper	wax
Irish frieze	honey	ploughshares	coals	boards
Irish rugs	fish	timber	salt	
salt fish	tallow			

¹ Regulations of the Dublin Assembly in regard to the tanning of hides and their sale to foreigners are very numerous all through the sixteenth century. The Tanners' Guild was one of the largest and most important in the city (*ibid.*, I and II, *passim*). Numerous city charters gave Dublin citizens customs privileges, of which that on hides was seemingly very important. Cf. also the reference to Irish trade in "The Libel of English Policy," *Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series), I, 187.

² *Itinerary of Fines Moryson* (ed. 1617), Part III, 160: "Ireland yields much flax, which the inhabitants work into yarn and export the same in great quantity, and of old they had such plenty of linen cloth as the wild Irish used to wear, 30 or 40 ells in a shirt all gathered and wrinkled and washed in saffron because they never put them off till they were worn out." Cf. also Beverly to Walsingham, April 30, 1586, "Yarn Exported to Manchester," *Cal. S. P. Ireland*, Eliz., 1586-88, p. 50. Cf. also the following from the Dublin Assembly Roll of 1582: "Whereas the linen drapers or such as were accustomed to sell linen cloth in the markets of this city being forreners are now to be forbidden the same."—*Dublin Records*, II, 167.

³ Entries in the port register of Chester, 17^o Henry VIII:

Introitus Navis Vocate —le Michael de Dublyn, magister Ricardus Bresail.
 Wattherus Barbe 11 packes sheepe fells.
 Joh'es Chambres 11 packes yarn—Rugges, chekers, lamb fells and 1 doz. mantells.
 Will Neuman 4 pks yarn, chekers, sheepe fells, goat and fox felles and 7 diker hides.
 Johnes Bennett—4 pks yard, chekers, Ruggs, Mantells, blankets, fells, linen cloth and 1 flock bed.
 Nickers Hankok—201 gr'ts yarn, chekers and mantells.
 Rob'tus Bailiffs—5 packs Rugges, chekers, lynen cloth, etc.

There were seven other partners having stock in this venture, each one getting "Ruggs, chekers, mantells and fells" of various kinds.

In the 30^o Henry VIII "Le Mare Rose" was registered in the port of Chester and had for cargo "martin skynnes, chekers, blankets mantells and caddows [coverlets]."—Morris, *Chester*, p. 479.

trade of all the rest of Ireland at £110,000.¹ He estimated Dublin's imports at £80,000 and her exports at £20,000. In the same year he set the Drogheda trade at one-fifth as much as that of Dublin.² From the commercial point of view Drogheda was far less favorably situated for trade development. It was a frontier town of some size and of importance as a distributing center not so much of English as of Irish trade. Its chief exports were hides, yarn, wool, fells, and tallow, in return for which it received much wine,³ both French and Spanish, and some few English and other commodities.

In Dublin the merchants were an organized body,⁴ very active in municipal affairs, and influential enough to bring pressure to bear on English members of the Privy Council.⁵ Their commercial policy was one of protection. Foreign merchants, it is true, were admitted to the market, but they were debarred from the retail trade and were subjected, of course, to the jealous scrutiny of the local guilds.⁶ In spite of this limitation the trade was of enough importance to attract merchants from the cities and towns of Brittany, Southern France, and the Netherlands. Some of these acquired the franchise,⁷ and thus the right to participate in retail as well as wholesale trade. But in general the policy of the native traders was one of rigid exclusiveness designed to secure an absolute monopoly of both local and retail trade.⁸

¹ *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 175.

² *Ibid.*

³ Perrot to Walsingham, February 15, 1586, *Cal. S. P. Ireland*, Eliz., 1586-88, p. 28.

⁴ *Dublin Records*, I, *passim*.

⁵ "Whereas the sum of £500 hath been disbursed by the brethren of the Trinity Guild for prosecuting of sundry suits in England through which the Queen's Majesty had granted to the whole corporation of this city certain immunities."—*Ibid.*, II, 167.

⁶ Cf. enactments against foreigners exercising arts in the city; foreigners were not to sell except by wholesale. "No forreyner shall kepe shop or exercise any art craft faculty or science in this city without permission by the Mayor and 6 Aldermen."—*Ibid.*, pp. 457-59. Cf. also, in 1551, petition of freemen for enforcement of the law against foreign trade (*ibid.*, p. 427).

⁷ Fiants. Eliz., Nos. 364, 403, 1058, *Report of the Deputy Keeper of Records in Ireland*, XI, Appendix: Grant of English liberty to Melchior Baeldefitz; Walbrane Baede, merchant, born at Ipres in Flanders; Grant of English liberty to Lawrence Roner, goldsmith, and John Haws, carpenter, Germans; Grant of English liberty to Pier Trembler of Rossepointe, coppersmith, a Frenchman, and his issue.

⁸ In the records of the Dublin Assembly there is some slight indication of protest against such a policy.

With regard to English merchants as distinct from aliens, the Englishman in Ireland was upon the same footing in matters of trade privileges as the native Irish. So far, at any rate, as Dublin merchants were concerned, the same rule applied to Irishmen in England. Indeed, during the Middle Ages it is pretty clear that Dublin merchants enjoyed exemption even from local tolls in the English towns with which they had trade relations.¹ In the sixteenth century, however, there is evidence of a disposition on the part of some English towns to collect customs from Irish merchants. The Irish protested—with what success does not appear.² The controversy is nevertheless interesting, because it reveals the fact that even as early as the sixteenth century the English were beginning to discriminate against the Irish in matters of trade privileges.

From the evidence of early charters and customs lists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from the frequent references in the state papers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and, lastly, from the report of Robert Cogan in 1611, we have enough data to justify the statement that the trade of the English Pale was distinctively an English trade.³ The majority of the people were English by birth and breeding. What they had to eat and to wear was obtained through the medium of English and continental markets and fairs.⁴ The English Pale was but England in miniature, at least inside the walls of its chief city. Of this its charters, customs lists, and guild regulations are convincing proof.

¹ The first Dublin charters give to the citizens exemption in all parts of the king's dominions. This policy was adopted by John and the later Angevin kings (*Dublin Records*, I, 1-37).

² Petition to Burghley that the Irish merchants may not pay customs at Chester and Liverpool, 1582 (*Cal. S. P. Ireland*, Eliz., 1574-85, p. 417).

³ "From England the importation is greater than the export out of Ireland because Ireland hath not commodities of many kinds to fit England as England hath to serve Ireland, especially Dublin, which is supplied from hence with cloth and all sorts of Flemish wares, lawns, cambrics, etc."—*Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 138.

⁴ Even marmalade, the most indispensable adjunct of an English breakfast, was not unknown in Ireland in the sixteenth century, as witness the following: "Pardon to James Cantwell, burgess or merchant hitherto dwelling at Baltinglas, for receiving goods from suspected persons, especially for buying two boxes of a confection of quinces, pears and plums called Marmelot. Fiants. Eliz., No. 327, *Report of Deputy Keeper of Records in Ireland*, XI, Appendix.

MUNSTER AND SOUTH LEINSTER

In the southern part of Ireland we get a different kind of trade. This part of the country was distinctively Irish; the early settlers had become so thoroughly assimilated with the native population that they were frequently spoken of as "more Irish than the Irish." This was the country of the Desmonds and the Butlers, two powerful Anglo-Irish families, whose constant quarrels kept the country in unrest and hindered the development of peaceful industries. The chief cities and towns were Waterford, Cork, Wexford, Ross, Kinsale, Youghal, and Limerick. Some of these traced their origin back to the period of Danish occupation,¹ and throughout the later Middle Ages and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were lively centers of trading activity.² In 1611 Robert Cogan spoke of Waterford as the second city for trade in Ireland. Its exports and imports he valued at £30,000.³ Its merchants, like those of Dublin and Drogheda, did a certain amount of trading in the English towns, especially Bristol, but by far the greater part of its commercial intercourse seems to have been with the Netherlands,⁴ with Southern and Western France,⁵ and particularly with Spain⁶ and Portugal.⁷ All through this period Waterford was noted for its production of Irish rugs or coverlets,⁸ and these constituted an important item of the export trade. Other commodities, exported chiefly to France and Spain, were hides,⁹ fresh and

¹ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 335-40.

² "Certain Portingales have arrived."—*Cal. S. P., Ireland*, Eliz., 1509-73, p. 83 (1548); "A Flanders ship has arrived."—*Ibid.*, p. 100 (1549); "The Spanish Merchants and their factor Madriage shall have justice."—*Ibid.*, p. 307 (1566).

³ *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 175.

⁴ January 20, 1549, *Cal. S. P. Ireland*, Eliz., 1509-73, p. 100.

⁵ *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 207; *ibid.*, 1601-3, p. 128.

⁶ *Cal. S. P. Spanish*, Eliz., 1567-79, p. 165; cf. also n. 5 above. All through the latter half of the sixteenth century Waterford advertisements of news from Spain are so numerous as to indicate much coming and going.

⁷ *Cal. S. P. Ireland*, Eliz., 1509-73, p. 380.

⁸ "I pray you provide for me half a dozen of the finest and lightest Irish rugs to lay upon beds that can be gotten."—Sir George Heneage, Vice Chamberlain, to Sir George Carew, December 22, 1590 (*Cal. Carew MSS*, 1589-1600, p. 47). Cf. also Bagwell, *Ireland under the Tudors*, III, 448.

⁹ *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 175.

tanned, tallow, Irish frieze, some timber, pipe staves, herrings, hake, and salmon.¹ Cork, the second city of the southern province, also did a large export trade in hides,² Irish woolen goods, fells, and fish.³ Wexford, in the southern part of Leinster, owed its importance to the herring fisheries along the coast and also furnished timber of good quality (with which Westminster Hall was roofed in the fourteenth century), pipe staves, some Irish cloth, and also hides. Limerick, the third largest city of Munster, was situated on the banks of the river Shannon. Its chief export commodity was fish, particularly salmon, for which the Shannon River was famous then as now. In the smaller towns of Munster there was just about the same kind of trade. Spanish fishing-fleets are mentioned as coming annually to Dingle-Cush and Baltimore.

The chief import commodity of the larger cities and the smaller port towns in this region was, first and last, wine.⁴ The English settlers attributed the excessive consumption of wines and native liquors to the humors of the climate. Whatever the cause, wine was without question the chief item of the import trade in all parts of the country. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the wine imported at Dublin and Drogheda was mainly French, in accordance with the prevalent taste of the English in the Pale.

¹ "For in former years there hath been accustomed to come thither a-fishing two or three thousand."—Perrot to Walsingham, December 16, 1587, *Cal. S. P. Ireland*, Eliz., 1586-88, p. 447.

² "Cork's trade during the period of the wars amounts to about 100 lasts per annum (value £10,000);" (Cork in this period had absorbed the trade of a group of small towns in southern Munster).—*Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 207.

³ The whole coast of West Cork and South Kerry was then frequented by fishermen from Spain and France; it was, in fact, to those countries what Iceland and Newfoundland are now, the source from which they drew a great deal of their provisions for the Lenten season ("Town Life in Mediaeval Ireland," *Irish Arch. Soc.*, III, 83). In 1553 Philip II agreed to pay £1,000 a year for twenty-one years to gain for his subjects the right to fish on the Irish coast (Bagwell, *Ireland under the Tudors*, III, 447). Bagwell gives no authority for this statement.

⁴ *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, *passim*. "Her Majesty's impost of wines and customs should be renewed by Parliament and some defects helpen that were in the act expired concerning the great quantity of aqua vitae bastards and Canary wines brought into this country. The impost of wines rise to the sum of £1,000 and 1,000 tuns of Spanish wine are brought yearly into the provinces."—*Ibid.*, 1575-88, pp. 285-86.

In the sixteenth century there is some indication that even in those ports the French wine trade was decreasing in importance and had begun to be superseded by that with Spain and Portugal. In Southern Ireland geographic and economic factors had fostered from the very beginning a close trading relationship with the countries of Southern Europe.¹ The Spanish fishing-vessels brought cargoes of wine and found a ready market in the cities and towns of the southern coast. Salt, iron, English and Flemish commodities, such as pewter ware, silks, groceries, merceries, and dyestuffs, formed also a large part of the import trade.² Both Waterford and Cork had some trade with the Netherlands and with France, but their most important trade was that with Spain. The Spanish kings might declare war, the English government might issue prohibitory proclamations,³ but in spite of all kinds of hindrances there does not seem to have been any great interruption of trading relations between the two countries. In the latter part of the sixteenth century there was a decrease in the volume of both exports and imports, due to the wasted and impoverished condition of Munster after the Desmond rebellion, but no change apparently in trade routes. Not only did Irish merchants come and go without hindrance in all parts of Spain, but Spanish merchants had free access to the ports and havens of Southern and Western Ireland. Even when England and Spain were openly at war, merchants from Spain were constantly arriving in Waterford. Indeed, the English government drew much of its information about military and naval preparations in Spain through that channel. On the other hand, of course, the intimate commercial relations between Southwest Ireland and Spain afforded the

¹ "One Kyst a merchant of this town (Waterford) this day arrived here out of Lisbon, saith that at his first coming thither he meant to pretend himself and his goods to be French, as some few English there do, but perceiving that all Irish men had free traffic there and safe access, he shewed himself to be as he was and so was freely communicated of all things that his countrymen knew."—Perrot to Walsingham, February 7, 1585/6, *Cal. S. P. Ireland*, Eliz., 1586-88, p. 25.

² Robert Cogan's Report, in 1611, *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 174.

³ Proclamation against traffic with Spain, March 10, 1602: "As traffic with Spain leads to the bringing of letters, messages, priests and seditious persons into the country."—*Tudor and Stuart Proclamations* (ed. Steele), II, 15.

Spaniards an easy opportunity to foster Irish disaffection toward English rule, and may be reckoned perhaps among the factors which contributed to the various rebellions in Ireland under Elizabeth.

CONNAUGHT

Connaught, the western province of Ireland, was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a wild and desolate country with few trading commodities, except those provided by nature rather than industry. Its most important, in fact its only city, Galway, must be excepted from such a general statement. Galway was distinctively an English town. Its citizens, all through the three centuries of their corporate existence, had prided themselves on their English origin and had jealously excluded the wild Irish of the vicinity from the privileges of citizenship.¹ Galway in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a walled city of stately homes and prosperous merchants. It was, in fact, the outpost of English civilization in Western Ireland, although it owed its prosperity in large measure to its commercial relations with the continent of Europe.²

The great industry of Western Ireland was fishing. The bays and inlets along its coast were among the best fishing-grounds in Europe for herring, cod, and ling and hake. Its rivers yielded large quantities of salmon and other choice fresh-water varieties. It is said that Spanish fleets of 600 sails came annually to Ireland to traffic in fish alone,³ and that the king of Spain in 1553 was willing to pay £1,000 a year for the fishing privilege in Irish waters.⁴ Bretons, Portuguese, and English fishermen were hardly less eager to share the trade.⁵ Indeed, there can be little doubt that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the fishing-grounds of Western Ireland were as much coveted by European fishermen as were

¹ "The daring spirits who built up that early Galway were English and they desired nothing less than to be mingled with the inhabitants of the land and to learn their ways."—Callwell's *Old Irish Life*, pp. 1-27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ "Great traffic yearly of the Spaniards with Ireland at the least with 600 sails of ships and barks for fishing only."—*Cal. Carew MSS*, I, 422.

⁴ Bagwell, *op. cit.*, III, 447.

⁵ "Galway Bay. The English, Bretons and Portingalls had a great trade here of fishing for cod, ling, hake and conger."—*Cal. Carew MSS*, IV, 296.

those of Newfoundland in the century following. It is not possible to determine how much of the fishing in these waters was carried on by the native Irish, but it was doubtless enough to provide a substantial quantity of fish for export trade. Most of this trade fell to Galway because of the favorable location of her fine harbor, and because of the fact that she had no rival port in the west to compete with her. Her merchants also managed to build up a considerable traffic with the back country in hides, skins, and other raw products obtained from the wild Irish. In addition to these the weavers of the city itself produced certain commodities which commanded a steady market abroad, notably Galway mantells, Irish friezes, rugs, and coverlets. The export trade of this port may be taken to represent that of Connaught as a whole, which Galway practically monopolized. Briefly, then, the West of Ireland in the sixteenth century exported hides, skins, linen products of the back country, the woven fabrics for which Galway, like Waterford, was famous, and, above all, fish.¹

The imports were wine and salt; iron, chiefly from Spain, and English and Flemish commodities. The wealthy merchants of Galway were as gorgeously attired and as well fed as their brethren of Dublin.² And so Flemish merceries as well as oriental spices, dates, figs, raisins, dyestuffs, etc., were not the least important items of exchange.³ There are, however, many indications that Galway no longer occupied at the end of the sixteenth century the position in Irish commerce which had caused her to be reckoned one of the chief cities of Ireland in the fourteenth century. Political and economic factors conspired together to debase her. Her trade was disorganized by the Irish rebellions of the sixteenth century, and her chief customer was cut off by the Elizabethan wars with

¹*Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, pp. 174-75. Callwell, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²The customs lists in various Galway charters indicate the extent and variety of the trade of Galway in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries:

ginger	alum	English cloth	peas	wheat	hawks	other skins
saffron	iron	Irish cloth	beans	corn	calves	eels
pepper	sables	Spanish iron	wooden plat-	butter	cows	horses
cloves	silk	kitchenware	ters	salt	herrings	coal
other spices	goats	spike nails	oxen	tallow	wool fells	salmon
wax	tanned hides	barley	wine	honey	lambskins	dry fish
sheep	pack-horses		malt			

³*Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 174.

Spain. She suffered most of all perhaps from the increasing competition of the Newfoundland fishing-banks.

ULSTER

Ulster, the northern province, was in this period the least civilized part of Ireland. It was the country of the O'Neills and the O'Donnells, a province which possessed no corporate towns and few markets. For this reason it is difficult to estimate the extent or the value of its trade, but, as in every other part of Ireland, there was a consuming thirst and, in consequence, a traffic in wine, in exchange for which the merchants from Galway and from France received hides and cattle.¹ The northern coast had an extensive fishing trade, exploited largely by fishermen from Brittany² and Western France. Some of the rivers also, especially the Bann,³ had an abundance of salmon and other fish, which made the fishing privilege there not one to be despised. The out islands of Scotland,⁴ off the northern coast, also furnished hides and fish in abundance for such merchants as found the trade of enough importance to venture so far north. The unsettled state of Ulster

¹ "In Carrickfergus twice a week a good market was kept, where, out of the English Pale, the Isle of Man, and Scotland came much merchandise, victuals, and other commodities out of France and in one summer 3 barks of 40 tuns apiece discharged their loading of excellent good Gascony wine, the which they sold for 9 cowskins the hogshead."—*Ibid.*, II, 342. O'Neill is said to have kept usually in his cellars at Dungannon 200 tuns of wine (Holinshed [ed. 1809], VI, 331). "O'Donnell is the second best lord in Ulster and hath lords under him as the said O'Neill hath. He is best lord of fish in Ireland and he exchangeth fish always with foreign merchants for wine by which he is called in other countries the king of fish."—*Cal. Carew MSS*, II, 308.

² "There was long since at Port Rush a fishing used by the Bretons in France who came thither every season for dog fish and rays which being well handled are a very great commodity in Spain, especially in the condado for there they are sold by weight and bought by them of Castilia la vieza Cordana, Salamanca."—*Ibid.*, vol. 1603-24, p. 152.

³ "License for the fishing of the Bann. Rent £40. (Provided he be able to enjoy it in quiet.)" Fiants. Eliz., No. 6413, *Deputy Keeper's Report*, XVII, Appendix. "Salmon fishing of Loughfoyle and the Bann. The owners esteem it worth £800 or £1,000 per annum."—*Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 153.

⁴ "From the Derrie and Skerries, Portrush is but a cut over into the Isles of Scotland where there are great fishings and great store of other commodities as cattle, hides, wool, etc."—*Ibid.*, p. 152.

prevented the development of its natural resources, and so its trade was of comparatively little importance.

GENERAL TRADE

A very interesting export trade, which is hard to localize, was that in hobbies, hackneys, and hawks. In the last decade of the fifteenth century the agent of an Italian duke got a license from Henry VII to cross over into Ireland to purchase hobbies.¹ Evidently the experiment was successful, for in 1527 the Duke of Ferrara instructed his agent to purchase (with the king's permission) eight hobby mares and two hobby stallions for breeding purposes. Hurrionimo Ferofino, the agent, seems to have had some difficulties, for in 1528 he wrote that "the blessed and tedious hobby mares have arrived on this side of the sea."² That the trade had become quite extensive is shown by the proclamation, issued in 1580, prohibiting transportation to France and Scotland.³ Hawks of the breed of Ireland seem to have been considered very desirable and were frequently sent by public men in Ireland to their friends in England. The high value of hawks is illustrated by an enactment of the Dublin Assembly in 1573 providing that Mr. Nicholas Fitzimmons "shall have allowance of £8 sterling for a goshawck, which hawk died."⁴

To summarize, then, the export trade of Ireland consisted of: hides, tanned and fresh; fish—herrings, hake, salmon, cod, ling, eels, dried fish; yarn, linen and woolen; Irish cloths—friezes, rugs, coverlets, and mantells, linen cloth; timber, pipe staves; fur, hides; fells—deer, lamb, sheep, coney, marten, goat; tallow, wax, and honey.

The imports were: wine from Gascony, Brittany, Spain, Portugal, and the Canaries; salt—a necessity in the fishing industry; iron, chiefly from Spain; sea-coal, for Dublin and its vicinity, brought from England and Wales.

¹ *Cal. State Papers Venetian*, 1557-58, Appendix, p. 1603.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 1610-11.

³ Lords Justices to the Privy Council, "We pray you not to dislike our proclamation against the passing over of horses, the scarcity is so extreme. The number daily transported to Scotland and France under pretense to be sent to England is very great [January 17, 1580]."—*Cal. Carew MSS*, 1575-88, p. 201.

⁴ *Dublin Records*, II, 82.

The imports into the English Pale and into Cork, Galway, Waterford, and Limerick may be classified as follows: English commodities, a general term including articles bought in the English fairs; Flemish commodities, also a general term, applied not only to the products of the Netherlands, but to such articles as formed a customary part of their overland trade from the orient and the Mediterranean countries; dyestuffs—saffron, Toulouse woad, alum; kitchen utensils, and implements of various kinds.

The carrying trade into and out of Ireland was pretty equally divided between the merchants of its own cities and those of other countries. Men from Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Drogheda, and Galway were found in England, Flanders, France, and Spain, and merchants from those countries were familiar figures in every Irish city. The fishing industry and trade seems to have been partly in the hands of foreigners, and was considered by them a privilege of considerable value.

The value of the Irish trade during this period is difficult to estimate. The wine custom of Galway was farmed for £600 per annum, that of Cork for £550, that of Limerick and its havens for £520. In 1593 Henry Bronckard paid £2,000 for the farm of the whole custom.¹ It is probable that this sum was somewhat less than the actual value of the custom, though thrifty Elizabeth did not, as a rule, allow her "customers" a very wide margin of profit.

The fishing industry, being partly in the hands of foreigners, was less easily controlled, and its value therefore is an uncertain quantity. As for the other chief export, hides, there is no possibility of estimating either the customs value or its total amount until the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1611 Robert Aston petitioned the king for permission to export raw hides and to pay £800 for the privilege.² This petition, and also a proposition to prohibit the export altogether, led to protests which give some idea of the importance of the trade.

The number of hides that are transported is far greater than that, that is supposed although haply it may not appear to the general officer, for they are secretly and at unseen creeks transported to the great loss of the king's custom. The great vent they have for these hides is at St. Malo's in France, where

¹ Fiants. Eliz., 1593, No. 5956, *Deputy Keeper's Report*, XVI, Appendix.

² *Cal. Carew MSS*, 1603-24, p. 203 (Robert Aston's plot).

they sell the raw hides at 10s. a piece, tanned hides at 15s. They also send hides sometimes to Lisbon, but mostly to Seville and the Canaries, where they fetch the same price as in France.¹

Cork's annual export was about a hundred lasts a year, which at this price would be worth £10,000.

Sir William Petty, in his *Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1672), speaks of Irish trade as follows:

If it be true that there are but about 16,000 families in Ireland, who have above one chimney in their houses and 180,000 others (who live in smook-houses), it will be easily understood what the trade of this latter sort can be, who use few commodities and those such as almost every one can make and produce. That is to say men live in such Cottages as themselves can make in three or four days; eat such food as they buy not from others; wear such clothes, as the wool of their own sheep, spun into yarn by themselves, doth make, their shoes called brogues are but a quarter so much worth as English shoes nor of more than a quarter in real use and value.²

INDUSTRY IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

In Dublin, as in other English cities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, trades and crafts were organized and freedom of the city meant membership in some one of the numerous guilds.³ As early as 1498 we get a list of the guilds taking part in the Corpus Christi pageant of that year.⁴ Later on other guilds came into existence, and in the sixteenth century the franchise lists indicate the existence of a surprisingly large number.⁵ Of all the city organizations that of the Trinity Guild was the most important. Its members were merchant traders and in due time became alder-

¹ *Cal. Carew MSS, loc. cit.*

² *Economic Writings of Sir William Petty* (ed. Hull), I, 88.

³ *Dublin Records*, I, 34.

⁴ Guilds taking part in the pageant of Corpus Christi, Dublin, 1498: gloves, vinters, weavers, bakers, masons, tanners, stainers, coopers, cooks, tailors, mariners, smiths, slaters, skimmers, painters, barbers, butchers, shoemakers, goldsmiths, merchants, salmon-takers, spearmen, house-carpenters, fishermen, ship-carpenters, broiderers, porters (*Dublin Records*, I, 239).

⁵ Saddlers, cutlers, barber surgeons (incorporated by Elizabeth), apothecaries, pewtrers, glasiars, fishmongers, hat-makers, dyers, millers, corvisiers, haberdashers, plasterers, wheelers, curriers, heliers, girdlers, sailors, smiths, brickmakers, farriers, plumbers, tallow-chandlers, button-makers, tanners, musicians, joiners, masons (*ibid.*, I and II. Taken from franchise lists here and there in the sixteenth century).

men and members of the Dublin Assembly. Its regulations in regard to trade and membership were like those of similar guilds in English cities. Apprenticeship was strictly controlled, since membership was esteemed a high privilege. Dublin merchants, like those of Bristol, dressed in gorgeous gowns upon occasions of state and worthily upheld the civic dignity of their town. Craft guilds had become very numerous in Dublin and were apparently well organized in the sixteenth century. Their policy, like that of the traders, was distinctly one of protection. The infant industries of the city had to be protected, and so we find prohibitions against buying outside of Dublin such ready-made articles as could be made by the men of the different faculties within the city itself.

In all of the other cities of Ireland merchant and craft guilds were organized as completely as in England. They had their own regulations for membership and for protection of the local trade. The tanners' guilds were specially regulated by statute.¹ Bad workmanship had to be guarded against, and so the regulations were not only those of the guild and of the city but also those of the Privy Council. Inspectors and say-masters were appointed, and rigid rules were enforced in regard not only to the use of materials but also to the method of curing and of packing.² This industry in the Elizabethan period had become of national importance as a source of revenue, and so we find great activity in its regulation.

Outside the towns industry was, of course, "domestic" in character. In the regions immediately adjacent to the towns there probably was, in Ireland as in England, a certain amount of industry established by the migration of discontented town artificers. Also, in Ireland as in England, these suburban workers probably constituted a dangerous menace to the guild monopoly of the town market. In 1577, for instance, the Dublin Assembly complained that the price of shoes charged by the Shoemakers' Guild was excessive and threatened, if it were not reduced, that the country shoemakers would be allowed free access to the town market. The

¹ Statutes, Ireland 11^o Eliz., c. 2 (*Irish Statutes*, I, 316).

² Fiants. Eliz., Nos. 6,745, 2,457, 2,213, 2,451, and many others.

next year, for similar reasons, the Dublin glovers were similarly warned. Yet of course these suburban industries were exotics fostered by the more or less Anglicized industrial conditions within the Pale. The native Irish country industry was quite another matter, and was certainly not at all concerned with such foreign luxuries as gloves and shoes. The coarse woven Irish friezes and the rugs, "mantells," and coverlets for which Ireland was famous were probably in the main the product of the country weaver, though some of the finer varieties, like Waterford rugs and Galway mantells, may have been woven in the cities. Of the linen industry, which plays so large a part in the later history of the island, only the beginnings are discernible in the sixteenth century. It is apparent that the government was anxious to encourage its growth.¹ But the success of its efforts is questionable. At any rate it is certain that Ireland was still exporting a considerable amount of linen yarn and still importing much of the linen cloth that went into the making of the folded linen head-dresses of the Irish women and the pleated "saffron" shirts of the Irish men. Some interesting light is thrown upon the state of the linen industry in Ireland by the following document which, though undated in the original, probably belongs to the latter part of the sixteenth century:

A brief Declaration concerning Transportation of Linen Yarn.

The transportation of linen yarn out of Ireland was prohibited by Act of Parliament to the intent that the Irish should procure English weavers to dwell there, that the people might be occupied in making of linen cloth, a matter often attempted but will take no hold. For albeit the Irish people will take a little pains to sow flax and make yarn, yet long experience hath made good proof that the Irish will not make any store of cloth, no not so much by a great deal as they do very needfully use. The Irish people do greatly pleasure and profit themselves by selling their yarn to the Irish merchants by the pound weight. And the Irish merchants receive like profits by gathering and making the same from pounds into parts. But the town of Manchester doth reap most profit thereby, having many years since entertained great trade. The men, women and children of that town and the country round about do set themselves dayly to work to make the yarn into linen cloth, and other merchandise greatly to their profit, and are the only people of England that are most perfect in the handling of Irish yarn. The Irish merchants gain little

¹ Cf. *Irish Statutes*, 13 Eliz., c. 2 (ed., 1786, I, 380-81).

or nothing by the transportation of the yarn but their gain (when it hapneth) by the return of the English commodities into Ireland. Therefore there must be a care had what rate is sett on imposts in every port for the linen. The ordinary rate hath been 3*d.* or 4*d.* upon the pack. . . . The merchants' and mariners' profit did consist in that this did bring commodities to Dublin from Liverpool, Manchester, Chester and ports where they trade. So if it please Her Majesty to stop or stay this linen traffic it delayeth shipping and loseth her custom whereby is great profit. Irish merchants and poor people who have no other trade, her Majesty shall thereby suddenly bring into decay, her town of Manchester and its people there standing mostly upon this trade.¹

In the early Tudor period there had been an interesting attempt (1552) by the English government to exploit the mineral resources of Ireland. A German² company of miners had been sent to Wexford County and had begun to work the silver and lead mines of that district. Nothing was accomplished, however; the promoters were accused of being wasteful in their methods, and the project was abandoned. In the latter part of the century Walter Peppard and a group of gentlemen obtained a patent for working the Wexford mines. The results were unsatisfactory; there was much litigation, and it was not until the early part of the eighteenth century that these mines were worked with profit to anybody.

To summarize, then, the industries of the cities of Ireland were of the same kind and carried on in the same manner as like industries in England. In Dublin one might have found as many guilds and crafts as in any average English town. In the country parts the grazing of cattle and sheep, the tanning of leather, the weaving of coarse cloths, and the spinning of flax and wool made up the sum total of the native industries. Of agriculture there was relatively little. Parts of Ireland are well adapted to the cultivation of wheat and other cereals, yet sixteenth-century Ireland produced none at all for export and hardly enough for her own needs. The Elizabethan government had repeatedly to put

¹ Cotton MSS (British Museum), Vespasian F IX, 203. The handwriting is of the sixteenth century which, together with the reference to "her Majesty," fixes the date of this document in the reign of either Mary or Elizabeth. The allusion to the prohibition of the export of linen yarn out of Ireland probably refers to the law passed in the Irish parliament in 13^o Elizabeth (13^o Eliz., c. 2).

² *Cal. S. P. Ireland, Eliz.*, 1509-73, pp. 121-24, 127-28, 130-31.

pressure upon the English grain-producing counties to secure supplies for the queen's forces in Ireland. The probable explanation of this condition of things lies in the disordered state of the island during the greater part of the century. There was too much raiding and rick-burning to make grain a very stable form of property. The Irish peasant preferred to invest his capital in cattle and sheep, which could be driven out of sight in times of disorder. Hides, therefore, constituted the ordinary medium of exchange. In hides rents were paid, fines imposed, and foreign traders satisfied. Both trade and industry were conditioned by a civilization which, to be sure, reached a fairly high level in the towns, but which, in the rural parts of Ireland, was still, during the Tudor period, semi-barbarous.

SUSAN M. LOUGH

WESTHAMPTON COLLEGE
RICHMOND, VA.