

# *Attempted Rising — July 1848*

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## **Introduction**

In January 1847, William Smith O'Brien and the Young Irelanders founded a new organization known as the Irish Confederation, which established affiliated Confederate Clubs in different parts of the country. They had some success in Munster, particularly in Tipperary and Cork. It was here that the Catholic Association had enjoyed its greatest support in the 1820s and that the Repeal Association established a solid base during the early 1840s. Following the death of Daniel O'Connell at Genoa in May and the trauma of the third year of Famine, the country appeared cowed at the end of 1847, generally showing little enthusiasm for the mildly revolutionary Confederate Club programme.<sup>1</sup>

The only definite policy adopted by the Irish Confederation was that any attempt made by the authorities to arrest its leaders would be resisted. This, it was hoped, would be the flash point to a rising.<sup>2</sup> The Confederate leader, William Smith O'Brien, came to Carrick-on-Suir, County Tipperary, on 24 July 1848, because he had been informed that this area was the best organized in the country. The authorities perceived that the Carrick area was like a powder keg ready to explode and consequently did not move for a whole week. A real opportunity for staging a revolutionary insurrection, with the potential for broad-based support, existed in Carrick at this time; but O'Brien did not accept this opportunity and yielded to clerical pressure to leave. The attempted rising, centred around O'Brien, ended in fiasco at the Widow Mrs McCormack's house at Farrenrory, near Ballingarry, on Saturday, 29 July 1848.

## **Council of Three Hundred, January 1848**

In early January 1848 Monaghan-born Charles Gavan Duffy presented his report on the future policy of the Irish Confederation to its council. Gavan Duffy's report directed that the Irish Confederation concentrate its efforts on winning parliamentary seats and securing control of such elective institutions as the corporations and poor law boards of guardians. It was envisaged that when the Irish members stopped the entire business of parliament, their forcible expulsion might ensue, in which case they would combine with the delegates from the other institutions to form the Council of Three Hundred (the same number of members as had sat in the old Irish parliament). Gavan Duffy proposed that such a body would demand repeal and if refused would, as a last step, issue a unilateral declaration of Irish independence. Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin employed this same policy many years later. In a series of votes during January 1848, a majority in the council of the Irish Confederation carried Gavan Duffy's report. Derry-born John Mitchel opposed any constitutional policy and appealed for support for his physical force methods to the wider membership of the Irish Confederation. On 7 February 1848, Mitchel along with his brother-in-law, John Martin, and Thomas Devin Reilly resigned from the Irish Confederation.<sup>3</sup> Five days later Mitchel launched a new weekly, named the *United Irishman* (Dublin) from which he propounded the radical nationalist view.

On 5 April 1848, a James W. O'Cavanagh personally delivered a letter, written by him, to John O'Mahony's home at Mullough informing him that:

A Repeal<sup>4</sup> Club has been formed in Carrick-on-Suir out of which it is expected a meeting will be called on tomorrow evening to take into consideration the propriety of electing two members for the council of three hundred. Most of the members being at a loss to find any person in the vicinity competent, I beg leave with your permission to propose you as a person fully competent if it shall be consistent with your wishes. You will much oblige me if in either case you may drop me a line, negative or affirmative. I will not propose it until I am confident of having you fully supported.<sup>5</sup>

It is significant that the members of the Repeal (Confederate) Club in Carrick thought O'Mahony the most competent person in the area to represent them on the Council of Three Hundred. There is no surviving letter of response from O'Mahony to O'Cavanagh; neither does O'Mahony make reference to O'Cavanagh's invitation in his writings. We do not know if O'Mahony agreed to be nominated, or if he was nominated, to the Council of Three Hundred. The reasonable assumption at this point is that he declined because of his aversion to political affairs.

### **Revolution in Paris, February 1848**

In France, the dissatisfaction with the government and against King Louis Philippe's principal minister, Francois Guizot, in particular, had been growing during 1847. Up to then it had largely been a campaign of middle-class politicians for electoral reform. On the 23 February 1848 it became the cause of the common people of Paris. Late that day a great throng of people made their way to the ministry of foreign affairs only to find their passage blocked by a troop of cavalry and infantry. A shot rang out, and in the panic that followed a whole volley was fired. At least forty people were killed. Louis Philippe abdicated the following afternoon, of 24 February, and a provisional government was set up. The new government would probably have decided in favour of regency but the invasion of the chamber of deputies by a crowd of workers, on that same afternoon, pushed them towards a republic. The workers demonstration also meant that the new provisional government was forced to include the socialists Louis Blanc and the printer Ferdinand Flocon, as well as a solitary but symbolic worker, Alexandre Martin Albert. The Second French Republic was proclaimed from the Hôtel de Ville in Paris. By March outbreaks had taken place in Berlin, Vienna, Prague and Budapest.<sup>6</sup>

In Ireland the outbreaks in the European capitals provided the initial spark that ignited the forces lurking beneath the subdued appearance of the country and gave fresh impetus to the Irish Confederation. The comparatively peaceful popular revolution, which took place in Paris, and the subsequent inauguration of a French republic, electrified the political atmosphere in Dublin where the conviction grew that change was inevitable.<sup>7</sup>

In March 1848 John Mitchel, William Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher<sup>8</sup> were arrested but allowed out on bail. It was while out on bail that O'Brien and Meagher, together with Edward Hollywood, headed a delegation, sent from the Irish Confederation, to bring greetings to the new French republic. Hollywood was a Dublin silk-weaver chosen in the same democratic spirit, which placed Albert in the new provisional government. They left for France on 22 March.<sup>9</sup> On 3 April, Alphonse de Lamartine formally received the Irish Confederation delegation led by O'Brien, at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris. Beyond enthusiasm they received no help from France.<sup>10</sup>

### **Mitchel's Deportation, 27 May**

Throughout the early months of 1848, the political temperature in Ireland generally, and particularly in Dublin, continued to rise with the arrest, conviction and deportation of Mitchel.

O'Brien, Meagher and Mitchel all came up for trial in May. In the case of O'Brien and Meagher, on the 15 and 16 May respectively, the juries failed to agree. Both men were released in triumph. Mitchel would not be so fortunate. On 25 May, he was tried under a recent act creating the new offence of treason-felony, designed to make it easier to secure a conviction than for the more vigorously-defined law on treason. On 26 May 1848, Mitchel was found guilty. The sentence given the following day was that he should be transported beyond the seas for a period of fourteen years. Though many in the Dublin Confederate Clubs wanted to make a rescue bid, Meagher, along with Dublin born Richard O'Gorman,<sup>11</sup> restrained them after O'Brien advised very strongly against making the attempt. At this time the government had 10,000 police and troops in Dublin city and 40,000 in the rest of Ireland.<sup>12</sup>

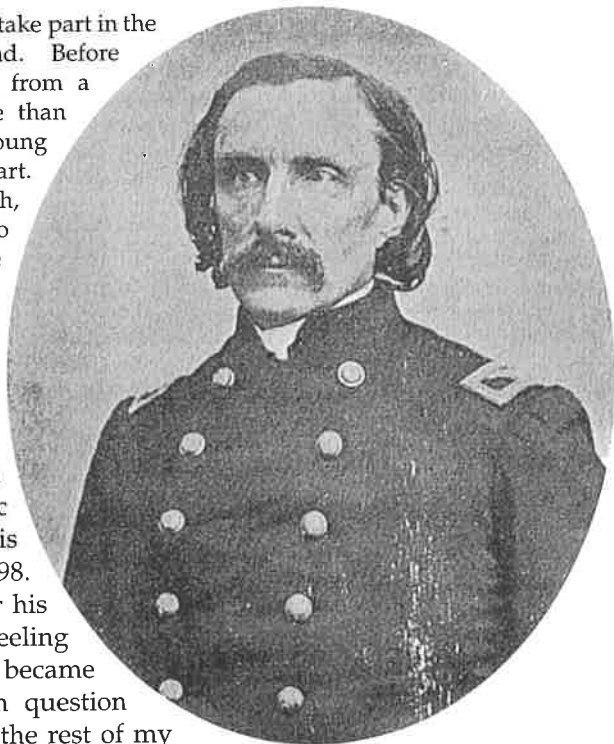
After Mitchel's enforced departure from Ireland, on 27 May, representatives of the Irish Confederation met secretly to cope with this emergency and to determine on a course of action. John Martin, Thomas Devin Reilly and Fr John Kenyon (president of the Confederate Club in Templeberry, County Tipperary) represented the extreme wing; Charles Gavan Duffy, John Blake Dillon and a third man, probably the barrister, John O'Hagan, represented the moderate wing. They planned to raise the country in insurrection, after the autumn's harvest was brought in.<sup>13</sup>

### **O'Mahony Establishes Ballyneale Confederate Club**

John O'Mahony wrote a very detailed account of his role in the attempted rising of 1848. It is significant that O'Mahony begins his narrative with Mitchel's trial; he felt that he had to explain the reason for his inactivity while Mitchel was being transported:

During the early months of 1848, I did not take part in the political movements that agitated Ireland. Before Mitchel's trial I was slowly recovering from a severe illness, and could do little more than sympathize with the movements of the Young Ireland party, which I did with all my heart. Even after that event had roused the South, I kept away from any public adhesion to the party. I wished to wait until the time for action had come, when I made up my mind to take to the Gaulty Mountains and raise the old followers of my family along that range.<sup>14</sup>

O'Mahony was keenly aware of what his community expected of him – and this can be described succinctly as that of the 'gaelic chief', already set out in the role played by his forebears — father and uncle — in 1798. Writing in terms of the level of support for his family, O'Mahony stated that 'The popular feeling in their [the O'Mahonys] regard became concentrated upon me about the time in question [summer of 1848], from the mere fact that the rest of my race in the direct line had died out'.<sup>15</sup> This statement



*John O'Mahony*

reflects the public perception of O'Mahony as well as the burden of responsibility that he himself felt.

Although the gaelic system had long since collapsed, still in O'Mahony's time, the aura of the gaelic chief persisted. As a phenomenon this was rare in the nineteenth (and already unique in the eighteenth) century. There had not been a rallying point for the Gaelic-speaking population since the time of Patrick Sarsfield. As events would unfold, history would see the gaelic chief in action leading his community, in the activities of John O'Mahony, in the ensuing months. In his recollections, Dublin born Thomas Clarke Luby<sup>16</sup> wrote that:

O'Mahony in those days was found to possess a marvellous hold on the hearts and minds of the surrounding peasantry. In fact, his moral authority in South Tipperary, Waterford and parts of Cork and Limerick, was far more like that of the potent chieftain of a Celtic clan in the old patriarchal days of Irish or Scottish history, then it was like the mere ordinary local influence of a popular country gentlemen in modern days, especially one of somewhat fallen fortunes.<sup>17</sup>

Luby's statement reflects that O'Mahony was perceived as coming from a family with a tradition of providing leadership. People followed O'Mahony because of the magic that his name carried, which went back for generations.

O'Mahony, aware that in the Gailte Mhór area his family could always count on '2000 men in a quarrel', intended to bide his time and await the moment of action when he would move to that area.<sup>18</sup> This was not to be. In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony explained that:

From this purpose I was dissuaded by the Revd. Mr. Power, curate of the parish where I lived (Ballyneale) who wished to establish a club in his locality of which he would have me take the direction. I did so, and, with the Revd. Gentleman's help, I soon succeeded in establishing a rather respectable body of men, and their arming was going on with vigour. Out of this sprang other rural clubs, all in the same district, of which I had the management, and our ramifications were soon extending widely throughout the district of which Carrick was the centre.<sup>19</sup>

O'Mahony's leadership qualities are shown by the density of clubs that quickly formed in the area around Carrick and along the Tipperary-Kilkenny borderlands.<sup>20</sup> He clearly trusted Fr Patrick Power, the local curate at Ballyneale. In the weeks ahead this trust would prove to have been well-placed. O'Mahony commented later that Power, unlike so many of his fellow clerics, was 'a true man'.<sup>21</sup>

### **Role of Catholic Clergy**

The catholic clergy had risen to a new position of political power in O'Connell's time. By the early summer of 1848 the younger priests in particular were becoming members of the local clubs of the Irish Confederation. In some places local clergymen took the lead in setting up clubs, recruiting members, and in some instances serving as club officers.<sup>22</sup> O'Mahony recalled later that:

In Carrick there were several clubs established all under the patronage of the Revd. Mr. Byrne, C.C. of that town, who was the great originator and chief promoter of the movement in that quarter. Under his auspices, a Central Board composed of the Presidents of the various clubs was appointed to sit in Carrick of which Dr. A. O'Ryan of that town was elected Chairman. Of this 'Board of Directors', Fr. Byrne, through Dr. O'Ryan and others of its most influential members, held, though

indirectly, the chief direction. I firmly believe that no serious measure was ever adopted by that body without his advice and sanction.<sup>23</sup>

It is fair to assume that O'Mahony knew whereof he spoke. The club leadership in Carrick were comfortably situated, middle class typified by Dr Anthony O'Ryan, President of the central board of the Confederate Clubs in Carrick and O'Mahony's cousin. Also prominent in the Carrick clubs was Joseph Rivers, of Tybroughney Castle, County Kilkenny, who belonged to a prosperous Waterford commercial and banking family.<sup>24</sup> Rivers was connected through the marriage of his sister, Anne, to Dr O'Ryan. Strong farmers such as the brothers James and William O'Donnell, of Ballyboe, managed the Kilsheelan Confederate Club.<sup>25</sup>

Early in January 1848 there had been riots in Milan, which culminated in the famous 'five days' street fighting in March, during which the Italians succeeded in expelling the Austrian garrison.<sup>26</sup> In a letter printed in the *Nation* (Dublin), dated 21 April 1848, Fr Patrick Byrne, catholic curate at Carrick-on-Suir, affirmed that:

The priests of Ireland are determined to stand by and with the people, come what may; and should insane Whig policy drive them to the adoption of these means which the Milanese so successfully tried, like their sainted and glorious Archbishop, the Irish priest shall be found amid the fight invoking God's blessing upon it. May God avert such a crisis! But should it come, may the wrongs of seven centuries nerve the arm of every Irishman! It is better to have the truth plainly told to the English government, that they may be wise in time, and grant that which alone can satisfy the Irish nation, and continue her one of the brightest gems in Victoria's crown.<sup>27</sup>

The conclusion that O'Mahony later drew from his experience of clerical involvement in 1848 was that it would have been better if 'they had never come into it'.<sup>28</sup> In his retrospective narrative, O'Mahony wrote that:

Thus, in South Tipperary at least, the originators of the movement were priests. They publicly told the people to form clubs, to make pikes and many a one proclaimed from the altar that he would be with the people and lead them on the day of action. *Thus they (the Young Ireland priests) acquired an importance in the movement that they otherwise could not possess.*

The older priests opposed the movement a little at first; but such was the impetus given to the revolutionary organization by Mitchel's deportation, that their opposition was soon silenced. They no longer denounced O'Brien, Mitchel and their friends as *paid spies*, sent out by the Castle to entrap the unwary; though some of them still whispered in secret that Mitchel's condemnation was all a sham, and that a good place and pension awaited his service in the Colonies. The wide and rapid extension of the club organization seemed to have stricken them dumb. They either saw the possibility of success, which they now deny, and waited to join the strong party; or they thought it more effectual to conspire in silence with the English Government for the defeat of a movement they could no longer openly resist. At all events, silent they were for a few weeks, and their younger and more sanguine brethren had a clear field for some weeks previous to the attempted rising. *Now* I think that the older and the more astute of the catholic clergy did allow this latitude of action to the young priests whose feelings of humanity were not entirely driven out by the *esprit du corps*, in order that they might become indispensable to the party, while they had a certain means of detaching them from it when the time for action had arrived.

For certainly, had not the Young Ireland leaders calculated upon the active support of the clerical revolutionists to motivate the people they never would have adopted the course of action that they did.<sup>29</sup>

A truly remarkable feature of the attempted rising of July 1848 is the extent to which the leadership of the Irish Confederation placed its faith in the catholic clergy, relying on them to raise the population.

There was a second revolution in Paris at the end of June 1848. Archbishop Denis Auguste Affré was shot dead while crossing a barricade in an effort to negotiate a truce. According to Gavan Duffy this event influenced the fate of Ireland as decisively as the flight of Louis Philippe. When news of the Archbishop's death reached Ireland it caused the more sanguine members of the clergy and middle-class to seriously rethink their support for the Irish Confederation.<sup>30</sup>

In early July the government made an attempt to silence agitation. Charles Gavan Duffy, John Martin and Kevin Izod O'Doherty, proprietors of the *Nation* (Dublin), *Felon* (Dublin) and *Tribune* (Dublin) respectively were arrested and charged with publishing treasonable articles. Thomas Francis Meagher, Thomas D'Arcy McGee<sup>31</sup> and Michael Doheny (all leading members of the Irish Confederation) were also detained but granted bail.<sup>32</sup> In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony relates that:

Those [arrests] of Meagher in Waterford and Doheny in Cashel seemed to bring popular excitement to a climax. *Men asked how long were those arrests to be submitted to? When or where was resistance to commence?*

At this time it was resolved by the clubs of South Tipperary, (and I understood elsewhere) that no more arrests should be allowed to be made. That resistance was to be made *when and wherever such arrest was attempted.*<sup>33</sup>

As will be seen, arrests did take place (or at least were attempted) in Carrick on 17 July.

### Meeting on Sliabh na mBan, 16 July

Michael Doheny, born near Fethard, County Tipperary, had been called to the bar in 1838 and had gained experience and public reputation in Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association before associating himself with the *Nation* (Dublin).<sup>34</sup> On Sunday 9 July, Doheny visited Carrick in order to canvas support for a mass rally on Sliabh na mBan.<sup>35</sup> Coming from their strong gaelic backgrounds, O'Mahony and Doheny were keenly aware of the symbolic significance of holding a rally on this mountain. In the notes to his translation of Seathrún Céitinn's *Foras Feasa ar Eirinn* (1857) O'Mahony wrote that:

Finn [Mac Cumhail]'s seat upon this mountain [Sliabh na mBan], as well as upon the several mountain ranges in Ireland and Scotland, where places so called are found, probably received its name from the fact of that chief having being wont to make it his station, whilst his warriors were making their *battue* on the lowlands beneath.<sup>36</sup>

The mass rally was held on Sliabh na mBan the following Sunday, 16 July. According to Doheny over 50,000 people attended it. Meagher and Doheny addressed the rally.<sup>37</sup> On this day the Confederate clubmen assembled in military array some miles from Carrick and the entire country around was in a state of excitement. After the rally, Meagher and Doheny led a group of their supporters to Carrick and pointedly held another meeting there.<sup>38</sup> Constable Patrick Coughlan, stationed at Kilcash barracks on this day, wrote that:

The people then in large crowds went to the mountain. I saw Thomas O'Mahony (I think his Christian name is Thomas but he lives with his aunt Miss Jane Ryan at Mullough) leading a large

assemblage of people going to the meeting at the mountain. This was in the morning of the 16th about 12 o'clock. In the evening when the people were returning from the meeting, I saw him marching in front on the right of a section of threes walking together – of a large assemblage and body of men. They were arranged in military array three deep. O'Mahony was stationed where any man in charge of a military party would be placed.<sup>39</sup>

Constable Coughlan's account indicates that O'Mahony had a natural bent for military organization. John is mistaken for his elder brother Thomas Daniel (known as the 'Counsellor') who had died on 24 April 1843.<sup>40</sup> This suggests a resemblance between the brothers and also indicates that Thomas Daniel had made a strong impression as a public figure in the years before his death.

### Arrests in Carrick, 17 July

Early on the morning of Monday 17 July, a messenger from Carrick roused O'Mahony from his bed, calling upon him to arm his men and enter the town, for the arrests of clubmen had commenced. Those arrested included a Mr Maher, secretary of one of the Carrick clubs.<sup>41</sup> On this day an erroneous report spread that Fr Patrick Byrne had been arrested for sedition; the chapel-bell was set ringing and all the people of the town turned out, most of them with pikes.<sup>42</sup> Byrne subsequently wrote a letter, dated 19 July 1848, to the *Dublin Evening Post* outlining his role in the Confederate Clubs in Carrick or rather how he now wished that role to be perceived:

I am *not* a member of a Confederate Club — I have not assisted at their formation — but deeply concerned at the incalculable benefit a priest's presence would be to them, I was and will be, except prevented by my bishop, in the habit of visiting their rooms, and of affording my counsel, together with my approbation; and I tell you the advice I used to give, and will give, is this, in the first place, to pray to Heaven to bring Ireland triumphant out of the ordeal through which she is now passing, and, in the second place, above all things, not to tarnish their exertions in her cause by the violation of the rights of property or person. Because this has been my conduct, and of which I do not expect your approval, I have succeeded in controlling the people when no other person would be attended to; and most respectfully I appeal to my brethren in the ministry throughout the country to take all this proceeding into their serious consideration, and to see how happily ventuated my interference with the clubs. Oh! Impossible to conceive the vast amount of good the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland can now achieve for their stricken country.<sup>43</sup>

Byrne exercised real and effective control over the Carrick Confederate Clubs without being held accountable for his involvement therein.

The news of the arrests in Carrick spread through the surrounding districts. O'Mahony had his clubmen assembled and (presumably armed) they marched upon the town of Carrick. At its entrance they met Byrne, together with Richard O'Donnell, a solicitor, and James Feehan, a brewer.<sup>44</sup> While demonstrations were acceptable to Byrne and his henchmen, an armed band in the town was quite another matter. O'Mahony and his followers were told that the necessity for fighting was over for that day, as the magistrates had yielded the prisoners, terrified at the determined muster of the clubs. According to O'Mahony, Byrne stated that:

No more arrests of clubmen would be submitted to without fighting, not even of the humblest member, witness that day's proceedings; that the time was coming fast, that he would be with them himself; and he ended by saying '*My heart, my heart is panting for the day*' .... It was clearly understood amongst the clubmen, lay and clerical, that the signal for the rising should be the attempt of the

government to make political arrests. That the fight was to commence when and wherever such attempt was to be made. Father Byrne's declaration to the assembling clubs, on the morning of the proposed rescue, left no doubt upon the people of South Tipperary's mind on this head.<sup>45</sup>

O'Mahony's description of events shows the means by which Byrne and other priests contrived influential roles for themselves in the Irish Confederation.

### **Suspension Of The Habeas Corpus Act, 25 July**

On Thursday 20 July, Constable James Lawlor, stationed at Nine Mile House, observed that:

Upon that day I saw a large assemblage of people, about 100, at the chapel of Nine Mile House [i.e. Grangemockler].<sup>46</sup> At their head I observed a man named O'Mahony of Mullough, parish of Ballyneale. He unfurled a flag green white and orange. The crowd marched forward, then reformed and proceeded into a field. He was accompanied by Patrick Coghlan into the field. Pat Coghlan is President of a club having sedition and repeal principles at Grange Mockler.<sup>47</sup>

This is the first public (outdoor) unfurling of the tricolour on record that I am aware of. At a dinner given in April by the Dublin Trades Committee to the members of the delegation of the Irish Confederation who had been formally received by Alphonse de Lamartine in Paris, Meagher presented his hosts with a green, white and orange flag which he brought back from France. He explained that the white signified a lasting truce between the 'Orange and the Green'.<sup>48</sup>

On 20 July, the general assembling of deputies representing the Confederate Clubs appointed an executive council of five in Dublin, consisting of John Blake Dillon, Richard O'Gorman, Thomas Devin Reilly, Thomas Francis Meagher and Thomas D'Arcy McGee. At this time William Smith O'Brien was staying with an old friend, John Maher at Ballinkeelee, near Enniscorthy, County Wexford, of which Maher was the Deputy Lieutenant.<sup>49</sup> The Irish Confederation was taken unawares, on 22 July, when the British Prime Minister, Lord John Russell introduced a bill to suspend *Habeas Corpus* in Ireland until March 1849. The bill was passed, almost undebated, and enacted, three days later, on 25 July. Individuals could now be retained without any need to resort to the court.<sup>50</sup>

Some years later, O'Mahony outlined what he believed to have been the authorities plan of campaign in the summer of 1848:

Their tactics were therefore directed towards forcing us to unmask our batteries prematurely, and to expose our full strength to their view, so that, knowing the nature and extent of the threatened danger and seeing whence it comes, they may the more easily guard against it and baffle our plan of attack. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act enabled the British Government to attain this end, with full success, in the summer of 1848. It was a well-timed and effective expedient; but it can scarcely be said to have been an able one; because it was so obvious and so trite, that it seems inexplicable, under the circumstances, how, no one either foresaw it, or, having foreseen it, took no measures to counteract its effects. After little more than a week's experience of that measure, it was discovered that no hidden danger whatever to Saxon domination lay concealed beneath the noisy and threatening surface of the Club organization. When the bulletins, as they may be called, which were sent forth weekly from the head-quarters of the Confederation through the public press, had been suddenly stopped, the whole Club organisation fell asunder, and all who looked to that body for counsel and guidance were left in gasping bewilderment, like stranded fishes, left high and dry by the receding tide.<sup>51</sup>



The 'leadership' of the Irish Confederation displayed an extraordinary lack of foresight as revolutionaries or even as popular leaders.

In his report, dated 22 July 1848, the High Sheriff of County Tipperary, Richard Pennefather, wrote that:

Considerable excitement exists throughout the county in consequence of the establishment and organisation of Political Clubs in every parish of it under the direction of a body of demagogues having for their object, resistance to the authority of the Queen, the laws of the land, and the plunder of all descriptions of property.<sup>52</sup>

From the outset O'Brien had favoured an alliance with landowners and stubbornly refused to requisition private property for food supplies as his companions urged him to do. In fact, it was Thomas Clarke Luby's opinion that 'They could have had a good fight in Tipperary but for some mismanagement and Smith O'Brien's over-scrupulousness and nicety of honour in refusing to seize provisions before he had regularly established a provisional government'.<sup>53</sup>

On the evening of Saturday 22 July, Meagher and Dillon travelled from Dublin to meet O'Brien at Ballinkeele. Upon their arrival here, at 5 o'clock in the morning of Sunday 23 July, they informed O'Brien of the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*. He rejected both the idea of submitting to arrest and of flight. All three made their way by coach to Graiguenamanagh and thence to Kilkenny city, where they found the organization much weaker than they had been led to believe.<sup>54</sup>

On Monday 24 July, the travels of O'Brien, Meagher and Dillon resumed; travelling via Callan, they crossed the King's River entering Munster with the intention of placing themselves at the disposal of the insurrectionary forces – to lead them and be protected by them. At Callan they proclaimed their intention to rise and a party of Royal Irish Hussars stood by and, in Meagher's view, gave every sign of sympathy. The O'Brien party next proceeded, via Nine Mile House (where they stopped for lunch), towards Carrick-on-Suir. O'Brien did so because he had been informed in Kilkenny that there were the structures to defend them in the area around Carrick, which was the best organised in the country.<sup>55</sup> This was a direct result of O'Mahony's phenomenal capacity for leadership and organization — a well-recognised tradition in his family, which went back to the time of his grandfather, Tomás óg na bhForadh, (and probably much further). He had the same standing in his district of Kilbeheny, County Limerick.

### Meeting Of Confederate Leaders with O'Mahony, 24 July

In a letter to his friend Fr Patrick Lavelle, of Partry, County Mayo, in August 1862, John O'Mahony explained that:

When our national phalanx became severed into the rival factions of Old and Young Ireland, I took no part with either until the summer of 1848. When the Chiefs of the Young Irelanders took the field in Tipperary, I was the first to join them for their cause seemed to me to be right and opportune in the then desperate condition of the Irish people. It was also the course of action that my household traditions of 1798 had taught me to long for and expect as the climax of that agitation in which I had been nurtured and had grown up to manhood.<sup>56</sup>

It would appear, from the evidence available, that the pattern for O'Mahony's forebears was to be ready to supply leadership at any moment of crisis (such as in 1798 and the Tithe War) but to hold aloof from the daily fever of political agitation, which could be safely left to others.<sup>57</sup>

O'Mahony followed this pattern until the transportation of Mitchel in late May 1848. In fact all indications are that he could have been happy indefinitely in his life of gentleman-farmer with the leisure to pursue his scholarly interests. But the demands of the Famine had to be faced.

In his narrative of 1848 Meagher relates that within five miles of Carrick the O'Brien party pulled up at a crossroads to talk to some men digging in a field. 58 On hearing that a young catholic landholder (O'Mahony) who had done much to organize the local clubs, lived in the neighbourhood they asked to see him. One of the workers went to contact O'Mahony. Twenty minutes later the clatter of horses' hooves was heard. Meagher has left a memorable description of O'Mahony hastening to meet them:

On looking up the crossroads to our right, we saw a tall, robust, gallant-looking fellow, mounted on a strong black horse, coming at full speed, towards us. This was O'Mahony — one of the noblest young Irishmen it has been my pride to meet with during the course of my short public life. His square, broad frame, his frank, gay, fearless look; the warm forcible headlong earnestness of his manner; the quickness and elasticity of his movements; the rapid glances of his clear full eye; the proud bearing of his head; everything about him struck us with a brilliant and exciting effect, as he threw himself from his saddle and, tossing the bridle on his arm, hastened to meet and welcome us.

At a glance, we recognised in him a true leader for the generous, passionate, intrepid peasantry of the South. As we clasped his hand, the blood dashed in joy and triumph through our veins; for a moment, every sensation, approaching to disquietude or despondency, vanished from our minds; and in a dazzling trance of exultation, we became sensible, in his presence, of no emotions, save those of most joyous confidence.

Strange it is, the influence, which a man of a fine and soldiery appearance, flinging himself into a revolutionary movement, has upon the feelings of the most utter stranger. I had never seen O'Mahony previous to this interview; had heard of him but once before, and that in a very slight way indeed.<sup>59</sup>

O'Mahony grasped the significance of the situation — an attempt by the authorities to arrest O'Brien would provide the opportunity on which to challenge the government. It was characteristic of O'Mahony's style to be ready for the moment of action when it came. In doing so he was naturally following the family role of providing leadership.

O'Mahony gave details of his preparations and the state of insurrectionary feeling in the neighbourhood to O'Brien and his companions. In his narrative of 1848, Meagher wrote that 'He [O'Mahony] represented to us that the country all about Carrick, on towards Clonmel, and along the Suir on the Tipperary side, was thoroughly alive, and ready to take the field at once'.<sup>60</sup> As a natural field commander O'Mahony was in total control of the situation. While O'Brien recognised O'Mahony as exactly the one he needed to stage the insurrection, he declined to accept the armed escort, which O'Mahony offered to provide at short notice, before entering Carrick. Agreeing to summon him if a muster was needed, O'Brien proceeded to Carrick while O'Mahony went to complete his preparations.<sup>61</sup> Had O'Brien accepted O'Mahony's offer, it would have set the stage and the pattern of subsequent events might have been quite different.

### **O'Brien's Arrival In Carrick**

Impatient to know what was going on in Carrick, O'Mahony soon after rode into town where he relates that:

I found there the greatest excitement and enthusiasm. Some thousands of men thronged the streets, and among them all I saw no sign of going back on their former resolve. They were unarmed,

however, not yet knowing what their leaders wished them to do.<sup>62</sup>

O'Mahony's account is corroborated by Meagher who recollected later that the common people, who thronged the streets, received them with frenzied enthusiasm. In fact, Meagher acknowledged that 'It was the revolution if we had accepted it. Why it was not accepted, I fear I cannot with sufficient accuracy explain'.<sup>63</sup> There is no doubt that a real opportunity for staging a revolutionary insurrection existed in Carrick at this time. It was Gavan Duffy's opinion (and he was no incendiary) that:

Here [in Carrick], and not at Waterford on the arrest of Meagher, or at Dublin on the arrest of Mitchel, the best opportunity of striking an effective blow presented itself. Had Carrick been seized, it is probable that three counties would have risen within forty-eight hours; and that preparations for a rising would have begun over three provinces.<sup>64</sup>

It can be reasonably assumed that even a minor setback at this time for the government forces could have moved the insurgents of half a dozen counties to action.

Carrick was thronged with men waiting to be led, but panic seized the town worthies who now wished O'Brien and Meagher to leave. On being brought into the presence of the principal members of the Carrick Central Board, gathered together in the house of Dr John Purcell, O'Brien heard one man ask pointedly why it was that the leaders of the Irish Confederation should have come to Carrick of all places to start the rising. Was it because they had been rejected everywhere else? O'Brien told them that he came to Carrick, in preference to any other town, because the people there were better organised and armed than in most other places. He also explained that he did not wish to engage Carrick single-handedly against England, but asked from them six hundred men with guns, ammunition and means of self support to guard him and his companions while they raised the countryside.<sup>65</sup>

Having forced a passage through the crowd to the house of Dr Purcell (where O'Brien and the other leaders had stopped) O'Mahony found assembled here the principal Confederate Club leaders in Carrick including; Drs Purcell and O'Ryan, Joseph Rivers, James O'Donnell and a man with the surname of Cavanagh.<sup>66</sup> As O'Brien was explaining his reason for coming, O'Mahony made his entrance and made clear his invitation to O'Brien to provide adequate protection for him and his companions before morning. O'Mahony recalled later that although there was great excitement among the thousands of men in the streets outside:

There appeared nothing but doubt and dismay amongst these men [Confederate Club leaders in Carrick]. They seemed confounded at the magnitude of the step they were called on to take, and a very manifest desire to get Mr. O'Brien out of town appeared to sway the great majority of them.<sup>67</sup>

All present at that meeting finally agreed that the O'Brien party should remain in town that night; the country clubs around should be summoned to arms and any hostile attempt from the garrison was to be resisted. O'Mahony believed that none present could have been ignorant of their agreeing that O'Brien and his companions were to remain in Carrick. O'Brien and Meagher then addressed the impatient crowd in the street, who, according to O'Mahony, enthusiastically promised to die in their defence if necessary.<sup>68</sup> In his report, dated 1 August 1848, Constable Patrick Coughlan wrote that:

Upon this day 24th July last, when Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Meagher made seditious and inflammatory speeches in Carrick-on-Suir, I saw him [O'Mahony] put his head out of the window of the house Mr. O'Brien spoke from. I have no doubt he was aiding and abetting and constantly encouraging Mr. Smith O'Brien and Meagher in their seditious movements. I believe he is the leader of the club movements at Ballyneale.<sup>69</sup>

In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony tells us that as he mounted his horse to depart, he heard the noisy discussion break out once more. O'Mahony dismounted and returned and was given assurance that there would be no change in plan; O'Brien would stay. This exercise was repeated twice — O'Mahony leaving and having to return on hearing the noisy outbreak.<sup>70</sup> This incident more than anything else tells what a presence O'Mahony was: although the town worthies in Carrick later managed to persuade such seasoned public campaigners as O'Brien and Meagher to leave, they did not dare attempt to speak up in these terms in O'Mahony's presence. O'Mahony recalled later that:

One thing struck me as remarkable at this meeting was that Fr. Byrne was not to be found. The day after which his heart panted had not come. It was, however, principally composed of his creatures, — professional men, comfortable farmers and shop-keepers who would do nothing without his reverend sanction. Of some of them I heard or saw no more until their miraculous escapes to France or America were proclaimed in the public press. Some of them I know to have left the meeting that evening after I departed and never draw bridle until they put the sea between themselves and the enemy.<sup>71</sup>

Neither Dr Anthony O'Ryan, of Carrick, nor his brother James Francis, of Clonea Castle, County Waterford, attempted to flee the country at this time. These men, along with Dr John Purcell, of Carrick, and James O'Donnell, of Ballybo, would stand trial, at the Special Commission which opened in Clonmel, on 21 September 1848, accused of high treason.<sup>72</sup> In the *Tipperary Vindicator*, of 16 September 1848, it was reported that Joseph Rivers had safely arrived in France.<sup>73</sup>

### **Mustering of Clubs in South Tipperary**

After leaving Carrick, with the assurance that the O'Brien party was there to stay, O'Mahony went off to muster the country clubs of South Tipperary. Later that evening O'Brien and his companions left Carrick, after feeling a less than enthusiastic welcome from the town's club leaders, the majority of whom were of opinion that an attempt to hold Carrick would end in defeat. The O'Brien party headed for Cashel where they hoped they would get some encouragement from Michael Doherty.<sup>74</sup> A regiment, the 3rd Buffs, had been marched to Bessborough and Piltown, County Kilkenny, where three companies of infantry and two troops of dragoons, with a large party of police, were already stationed. Large reinforcements could be drawn from Waterford and Clonmel.<sup>75</sup>

At seven o'clock that evening, of 24 July, O'Mahony learned (via a messenger from Dr O'Ryan) of O'Brien's departure and that the clubmen were not to be brought into town. This placed O'Mahony in an embarrassing position (as he had already issued his muster call) not only with his own clubmen, but also with those distant clubs to whom he had sent messages. O'Mahony went to his own club notwithstanding, and found four hundred men assembled with about eighty guns, and a large number of pikes. The prior arrival of Fr Patrick Morrissey, parish priest of Ballyneale and Grangemockler, spared O'Mahony telling his clubmen the disheartening news. Morrissey sought to disperse them by promising that 'In a fortnight when the harvest is

ripe, I shall then perhaps lead you myself and I can do more with my little finger than all your chiefs backed by all your pikes'.<sup>76</sup> As it turned out the 'perhaps' was the crucial part of this promise. O'Mahony's followers steadfastly refused to be dispersed by Morrissey, but steadily waited for O'Mahony. This shows that for the community O'Mahony was the leader whose word alone would be obeyed.

O'Mahony had ties with faction leaders in the mountain districts of South Tipperary, South Kilkenny and Waterford — still Irish speaking in O'Mahony's time. The faction leaders in this region assumed the leadership of rural Confederate Clubs whose membership probably overlapped with the factions themselves.<sup>77</sup> Apart from his leadership qualities, O'Mahony could speak Irish, as well as English, and so was in perfect communication with all of his followers. In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony relates that on the evening of 24 July:

The Club leaders, or rather the Faction Chiefs, from the more distant parishes, came pouring in on me, asking why they had been called to arms, and why, having been so they were countermanded when already on their march? From the reports I then, and afterwards got, of the numbers collected on the different roads radiating round Carrick, and comparing them with what I saw myself of the two parishes mustered on the road that passed by my place, I have no doubt on my mind that between 7 and 8 o'clock on that night, there were 12,000 men (I made it at 15,000) on march for Carrick-on-Suir.<sup>78</sup>

There was every prospect of a serious outbreak in Carrick at this time, which would have constituted an armed assault on British rule in Ireland. O'Mahony's mustering of the manhood of the district provided enough men surely to commence the insurrection with such short notice. But O'Mahony was obliged to send his followers home and await events. This was a great and, as subsequent events proved, a fatal setback received at the very outset. The lesson of that day burned deeply into O'Mahony who tells us, in his narrative of 1848, that:

Many influential farmers who came out on that day never moved afterwards; either interfered with by the priests, or doubting the capacity of the leaders. They appeared terrified at the step they had taken, and expected to see the hangings and floggings of '98 recommenced.<sup>79</sup>

It was now half a century since 1798, but the imprint of the appalling brutalities that followed its failure was, no doubt, still vivid in people's minds.

The following morning, Tuesday 25 July, O'Mahony and Doheny, who had by this time joined him, made a circuit of some twenty miles in the area around Sliabh na mBan and found the preparations for insurrection still in progress and the men ready. O'Mahony tells us that 'Scarcely a house did we see that there was not a pike displayed, everywhere men were fitting them on handles or sharpening them on the door-flags'.<sup>80</sup> O'Mahony appointed the chapel of Ballyneale as the place of rendezvous and determined to act according to the intelligence, which he would receive, from O'Brien. On their return to O'Mahony's home at Mullough, O'Mahony and Doheny met Meagher who informed them that he was going to Waterford city, to bring up his club — some thousand strong — to join with O'Brien in Cashel. This club was pledged to follow Meagher at a moment's notice. O'Mahony accompanied Meagher across the Suir, to the Waterford side, to meet the transportation that would take him to Waterford city as already arranged by O'Mahony. Before parting O'Mahony promised to protect Meagher's clubmen in crossing the Suir with what forces he could collect. O'Mahony then re-crossed to the Tipperary side of the Suir and rode into Carrick. His return to Carrick was, he tells us, to see one or other

of Fr Byrne or Dr O’Ryan.<sup>81</sup>

After arriving in Carrick, O’Mahony learned from Dr O’Ryan, that all the local leaders in Carrick (including himself) were against the revolutionary movement as premature and ‘That Byrne would have nothing to do with it. — That it should be put off at least a fortnight until the harvest ripened. — That O’Brien must be mad’.<sup>82</sup> After leaving Dr O’Ryan O’Mahony met many of the artisans in Carrick who promised to be prepared for the next call to action. They could by no means comprehend why it was that O’Brien left on the previous evening, and asked why did he not appeal directly to the people.<sup>83</sup> All had direct access to O’Mahony, who ensured that his followers always got listened to.<sup>84</sup>

From now on O’Mahony was caught in the web of abused loyalties and the inept leadership of O’Brien. With the Confederate leadership now congregating in South Tipperary, their shortcomings came into clear focus: in fact, in the weeks and months that followed, it would become evident that the only word that counted was O’Mahony’s — and his orders alone were obeyed.

### Tactics of Government/Catholic Church

On Wednesday 26 July Meagher returned from Waterford city to arrive at O’Mahony’s home in Mullough alone. Meagher related that on coming to Waterford city the previous night, he had sent for the chief men of his club, and one Fr Patrick Tracy. They came to him; Tracy did not. On Meagher’s asking them to march, they said they could not do so without Tracy’s advice and consent. But it was too late at night to look for Tracy or to muster the other clubmen.<sup>85</sup> In his narrative of 1848 O’Mahony wrote that:

This Tracy, I afterwards understood, was the ‘Byrne’ of Waterford — *Primum Mobile* and chief advisor of the clubs, though not personally presiding over any club himself (Meagher does not seem to blame this man, I do, from the circumstance that his conduct on this first appeal to him was exactly the counter-part of Byrne’s.) I believe they had all received their instructions from headquarters shortly before. — Perhaps by the same post that brought the news of the suspension of the ‘Habeas Corpus,’ good tactics, if so, on the part of the government, and the heads of the Church, to break up the organization by means of those very men who had contributed much to spread it, and who in so doing had gained the entire confidence of the fighting portion of the people. Carrick men have told me, in excusing Fr. Byrne, that he had been forbidden by his superior, a few days previous, to meddle further in the matter. If so, he must also have got orders to allay the storm he had helped to raise. No man was in so good a position to do so.<sup>86</sup>

Byrne’s willingness ‘to allay the storm he had helped to raise’ is evident in his letter, of 19 July 1848, quoted earlier.

O’Mahony left Meagher, at the house of a prosperous farmer named Coghlan, of South Lodge, whose son, Patrick, presided over the Grangemockler Club, composed of 1,000 men. O’Mahony next met some of these clubmen who told him that they no longer trusted Coghlan as their president and that he was no longer to be counted on in an emergency. O’Mahony made arrangements with the local leaders from Grangemockler, Carrick and his own Ballyneale Club to make up a party of 300 men in total (100 from each district) to be ready at any call to support O’Brien. After returning to Coghlan’s farm, O’Mahony and Meagher agreed that to forestall an impending clerical excommunication they should muster the whole country around O’Brien on Sliabh na mBan, commencing with the well-armed men of the Carrick district. They also agreed that a proclamation should be at once issued, declaring Ireland a republic, and calling upon all

Irishmen to fight in her defence. Meagher wrote a letter to O'Brien urging these several points upon him. At midnight O'Mahony set out for Ballingarry (where O'Brien now was) with this letter. Before leaving, O'Mahony promised Meagher that he would be back at 8 o'clock the following morning.<sup>87</sup>

### **O'Mahony's Arrival in Ballingarry**

Following their departure from Carrick on the evening of Monday 24 July, O'Brien and Dillon had arrived in Cashel at 2 o'clock in the morning of Tuesday 25 July. They left Cashel with a new set of companions, Carlow born Patrick O'Donoghue, Dublin born James Cantwell and an employee of the Limerick and Waterford Railway Company from Kilkenny — James Stephens.<sup>88</sup> Later that day they travelled, via Killenaule, to Mullinahone. Fr Philip Fitzgerald, the parish priest of Ballingarry, wrote of one particular instance of O'Brien's over-scrupulousness in refusing to allow the insurgents to seize provisions at Mullinahone, on Tuesday 25 July:

Those who went to meet him [O'Brien] at Mullinahone remained the whole day in the streets without food or shelter. Some bread was distributed to them at his own expense, and they were told that in future they would have to procure provisions for themselves, as he had no means of doing so, and did not mean to offer violence to any one's person or property. This announcement gave a death-blow to the entire movement.<sup>89</sup>

O'Brien was categorically not a revolutionary leader; he was a constitutional politician who had been forced to place himself at the head of the attempted rising. Those who at first had been enthusiastic, on seeing O'Brien's ineffectual performance naturally became more cautious and determined not to involve themselves with him. This is evident in a letter, dated 29 July, from John Luther, the Mayor of Clonmel, to Dublin Castle, where he wrote that:

From all that I can learn, the leaders of the movement were informed at Mullinahone that their conduct was condemned by every sensible thinking man of the country and that Mr. W. S. O'Brien, was evidently disappointed on finding he was not welcome, or sustained by the sense of the country. It is thought he censures Mr. Doheny for leading him to think differently.<sup>90</sup>

In a postscript to this same letter, Luther wrote that:

Notwithstanding this hope expressed in the foregoing, as to the present failure of Messrs. O'Brien, Meagher, Doheny, and their associates, in creating an outbreak in this district, I think that the most prompt and vigorous measures should be taken by the government for their arrest, and that to allow them to linger in this part of the country, would afford them a serious opportunity of propagating their unhappy doctrines, amongst the peasantry, and would most probably be misinterpreted to the latter, as the result of weakness on the part of the executive.<sup>91</sup>

Events would prove that the authorities had nothing to fear from O'Brien or most of the other leading figures of the Irish Confederation.

On Wednesday 26 July, O'Brien and his companions departed from Mullinahone for their first visit to Ballingarry.<sup>92</sup> O'Mahony arrived in that town at 2.30 in the morning of Thursday 27 July and made the following observations regarding the preparations being made for insurrection in Ballingarry:

Countrymen came into town. They might number about 400 good men, among whom were a pretty fair scattering of guns. By the way — that district was pretty well provided with guns, and had been famed as one of the most lawless in Tipperary. But the absence of anything at all like a good pike showed me that the Young Ireland teachings had borne no fruit amongst them. In fact Mr. O'Brien could not have chosen a much worse place. Strangers up to that to the action and resolves of the party, they could not well understand what it was about, nor, I believe, did anyone else. Not one in the hundreds of those thousands assembled had ever seen O'Brien's face before, or that of any one of the companions then with him.... Nothing was doing that ought to be done, and the great men that the country looked up to for light and guidance seemed themselves completely at fault, and stunned by the magnitude of their attempt. Destroying the country's hopes, and making a farce of its struggle by their — yes, it must come out — *absolute imbecility*.<sup>93</sup>

It is clear from the above that O'Mahony placed far more blame upon the inept 'leadership' of the Irish Confederation than on the unpreparedness of the Ballingarry men. O'Mahony's account, of the unsuitability of Ballingarry as the place in which to commence the rising, is corroborated by the recollections of the parish priest of that town, Fr Philip Fitzgerald, who wrote that:

The people were too much occupied with farming business and the colleries, to have much time to devote to political subjects, in which they took less interest than others. Some, who read newspapers or visited the neighbouring towns, had some idea of the distracted state of the country; but the great body of the people seldom thought of it, and least of all did they imagine that the commencement of the outbreak would be amongst themselves.<sup>94</sup>

It was on this visit to Ballingarry that O'Mahony first met the person who was to become the chief executive of the I.R.B. — James Stephens. On this occasion also O'Mahony met, another new arrival, the Liverpool-based Monaghan man — Terence Bellew McManus who had abandoned his position in a very successful shipping agency in Liverpool to join O'Brien's attempted rising. Before O'Mahony departed from Ballingarry for Nine Mile House, at three o'clock in the afternoon of Thursday 27 July, O'Brien agreed to his proposal — to muster the whole country around him (O'Brien) on Slievenamon. It was arranged that O'Mahony and Meagher would meet O'Brien that evening with 300 men as he entered the gorge of the mountains at Nine Mile House.<sup>95</sup>

Upon arriving at Nine Mile House O'Mahony sent for the local leaders, of the Grangemockler club, who had promised to have a party of 100 men to protect O'Brien, ready at his call. O'Mahony could only meet one of them (whom he does not name) who told him that the parish priest of Ballyneale, Fr Patrick Morrissey, and his curate Fr Richard Comerford, had been from house to house through the parish on that day and had told the people not to stir without their especial orders. When O'Mahony asked the local leader at once to get him the 100 men that had been promised the previous evening, he replied that he could not get a man without Morrissey's permission. Believing this to be a lie O'Mahony, clearly exasperated, told him that 'He and Morrissey might go to the devil; gave him a cut of my whip in the face as a souvenir and rode off'.<sup>96</sup> Like his grandfather, Tomás óg na bhForadh, before him, O'Mahony used the whip against those who would insult him (with a falsehood in John's case) whether it be an Earl of Kingston or a priest's agent.

O'Mahony next proceeded to Coghlan's farm, at South Lodge, and found that Meagher had left some hours before, accompanied by Patrick Coghlan and Maurice Richard Leyne for Fr John



Kenyon's residence at Templeberry far to the north of the county.<sup>97</sup> In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony wrote that:

The priest his [Coghlan's] brother told me that he [Meagher] fancied I had fallen into the enemy's hands from my long stay in Ballingarry. I suspect though, that old Coghlan and his wife did all they could to get rid of him and make him believe himself unsafe in their house. I don't know that the young men were very reliable either.<sup>98</sup>

O'Mahony had been counting on the promise that there were 100 men, from the Grangemockler Club, whom he wished to send off immediately to meet O'Brien. This was the beginning of the undermining of O'Mahony's system of communication and couriers and, it would appear that, this undermining was effected by Coghlan. The latter's activities later in the summer would tend to confirm O'Mahony's judgement.

After leaving word at Mullough for his own clubmen to assemble, O'Mahony entered the outskirts of Carrick at about six o'clock in the evening of Thursday 27 July. One of the local leaders here, a Patrick O'Donnell (who had promised 100 men the day before) said that not a man could be had without Fr Patrick Byrne's permission. This was, O'Mahony believed, another lie, but he could not see the men personally as it was too late. Following this second disappointment, O'Mahony proceeded to his home at Mullough where he met Michael Doheny and Thomas Devin Reilly, another new arrival. After O'Mahony gave them the news of the proceedings at Ballingarry, Devin Reilly's words were that 'O'Brien ought to be shot!' All three agreed that O'Brien's course of action, or lack thereof, would have to be dealt with at whatever cost. They decided to go to meet O'Brien, who was due to have arrived at Nine Mile House by this time, as quickly as possible. Upon O'Mahony and the others' arrival at Nine Mile House, they found that O'Brien having come within a mile of the village, and not meeting anyone from O'Mahony, had sent for a car to return (as O'Mahony thought) to Ballingarry, some hours previously.<sup>99</sup> In fact the O'Brien party spent the night at Killenaule.<sup>100</sup> O'Mahony's analysis of the consequence of these events was as follows:

Now, O'Brien's not coming to meet us at all hazards — Meagher's departure from where I had left him [Coghlan's farm] — the several disappointments I had met with in my hasty calls upon the people, were all serious blows to our movement. I afterwards found out that had we met with O'Brien on Sliabh na mBan, a most respectable force could not have failed us next day, notwithstanding the countermanding of the priests. Had I time to devote myself to my own vicinity, and keep up the spirit of my personal adherents, no priest could have kept the máss of them away. Unfortunately, in my flying visits to the localities about Carrick, I was compelled to leave my directions with the most prominent men in each — the village 'Buddochs' who, being the class from which the priests sprung, were most obnoxious to their influence. The mere *working men* were ready and always willing.<sup>101</sup>

O'Mahony was a genuine egalitarian. It is evident, throughout his writings, that he had a very high opinion of the 'working men'. In speaking of the 'village Buddochs', O'Mahony probably included the 'gombeen men'. From the late nineteenth century this term was used to describe shopkeepers and other traders who extended credit to local farmers.

The men of Grangemockler guarded O'Mahony, Doheny and Devin Reilly at Nine Mile House during the night. Before sleeping O'Mahony entered into arrangements for mustering the parish and dispensing with the 'buck-farmers' and club leaders altogether whom he believed 'had shown themselves to be mere puppets in the hands of the priests'.<sup>102</sup> O'Mahony believed

that:

Had, however, the priests directly told the people to give up the idea of fighting altogether, they would not be listened to, for many of them were the same men that had been the first to tell their flocks to arm and organize; and some had told them explicitly, and others had led them to believe, that they would themselves lead them. These latter pious trumpeters of revolution — when it was far off — now shrank from it when it was actually upon them. They hit upon an admirable device to avoid the performance of the duties they had assumed — ‘Leaders mad to begin so soon - The crops, growing so luxuriantly, not yet ripe.’ Told the people to ‘wait a *fortnight* until they had come in, and then the fight under more able leaders!’ Everywhere, this demand of a fortnight’s delay met us in the trail of some priest, or priest’s emissary.<sup>103</sup>

The priests, unable to oppose the nationalist spirit directly, used the subtle tactic of claiming that the insurrection was premature — that it should be put off until the harvest had been brought in. When the time came to take the field, they either refused to assist or actively opposed the attempts to mobilize the people for action.

O’Mahony was far more aware of the capacity of the rural masses for revolutionary insurrection than was O’Brien, who had little contact with ordinary rural people and would not now entrust himself to them. In his narrative of 1848 O’Mahony came to the conclusion that:

O’Brien, ignorant, I believe, of the real nature of the Irish peasant, seemed to despair when forsaken by the clerical revolutionists. Had he felt himself strong in their support, and found a *monster meeting* of armed men around him, he might, possibly, have acted otherwise. Seemingly rejected by the majority of the country, he did not, perhaps, feel himself *authorized* to adopt any decided step. Acting entirely on the defensive, he lost precious time and committed the more ardent of his supporters by meaningless armed meetings, his drillings, from which they were nightly dismissed to their unguarded homes, liable to be led thence without being able to make any struggle, to the prison, the gibbet, or the whipping-post.<sup>104</sup>

O’Brien very quickly had become a serious and unmanageable liability because he did not do anything that the situation demanded of him.

Early in the afternoon of Thursday 27 July, O’Brien and his companions travelled from Ballingarry, via Mullinahone, and (as already noted) came within one mile of Nine Mile House. They next proceeded to Killenaule where they spent the night at a hotel.<sup>105</sup> On the morning of Friday 28 July, a significant incident occurred at Killenaule. A party of dragoons was seen approaching the town. It was assumed that they had come to arrest O’Brien and barricades were thrown up in their path. The troop consisted of forty-five cavalrymen of the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, under a Captain Longmore. When they halted before the first barricade Stephens presented a rifle at Longmore, and Dillon asked if he had a warrant for O’Brien’s arrest. On giving an assurance that he had no intention of trying to arrest O’Brien, the barricades were lifted and Longmore and his dragoons were allowed through and out of the town. After this incident, O’Brien and his companions took leave of Killenaule and proceeded to Ballingarry for the second time that week.<sup>106</sup> The decision not to fight at Killenaule may have been influenced by the friendly glances of the party of Royal Irish Hussars with the insurgents, three days before, in Callan, West Kilkenny.

In his narrative of 1848 O’Mahony commented on the lost opportunity at Killenaule:

This was the morning when the troop was stopped, when my friend Stephens so distinguished himself, and, perhaps, had the fate of the struggle at the end of his rifle, had he been allowed to fire. The insurgents would have been blooded at least, and ever after have, perhaps, better taste for like game.<sup>107</sup>

Many years later, in December 1865, Stephens had the 'fate of the struggle' in his hands but failed to give the word for a rising.

### Conference at Boulagh Common, 28 July

On Friday, 28 July, O'Mahony, Doheny and Devin Reilly left Nine Mile House for Killenaulé in search of O'Brien. Upon reaching Killenaulé they found that the O'Brien party had left some time before. O'Mahony and the others next made their way to Ballingarry where they finally found O'Brien and his companions.<sup>108</sup>

Meagher soon arrived from Fr John Kenyon's place in Templederry bringing discouraging accounts from that quarter. Kenyon, a leading member of the Irish Confederation, had promised to call out twenty parishes, but when the time for action arrived he was unwilling to lead his parishioners into, what he believed to be, a hopeless struggle. The bishop of Killaloe, Dr Patrick Kennedy, had suspended Kenyon in May. He was reinstated in June after promising to withdraw from the Irish Confederation.<sup>109</sup> O'Mahony wrote later that:

Fr. Kenyon held the same opinion of our proceedings as his reverend confreres. I did not blame him, for I was disgusted myself, and so were most I spoke to. Father Kenyon though, should have known, nay, he must have known, that it was in his power to turn the scale in our favour. That he and his fellows keeping aloof from O'Brien, as if he had been plague-struck might have been *the cause* of our mistakes.... Meagher's account of Kenyon was, if I remember rightly, most unfavourable to that gentleman, and *then* placed him, in my opinion, in the same category with Byrne, Tracy and the numerous others whose *esprit du corps* was too strong for their feelings as patriots, and their duty as honest and consistent men.<sup>110</sup>

O'Mahony met Kenyon for the first time, twelve years later, in Dublin.<sup>111</sup>

Shortly after his arrival at Ballingarry, Meagher, reflecting the views of all those involved, remonstrated with O'Brien upon the hopeless drift of his activity. O'Brien decided to hold a conference at once and hear all their opinions. They therewith proceeded towards Boulagh Common, two miles north of Ballingarry.<sup>112</sup> This was the centre of a colliery district from which O'Brien hoped for support from the miners. Those present at this conference, along with O'Brien and O'Mahony, were the following; Michael Doheny (Fethard), Thomas Francis Meagher (Waterford), James Stephens (Kilkenny), John Blake Dillon (Ballaghaderin), Terence Bellew McManus (Monaghan), Patrick O'Donoghue (Carlow), Maurice Richard Leyne (Tralee), Thomas Devin Reilly (Monaghan), James Cantwell (Dublin), John Kavanagh (Dublin),<sup>113</sup> J. D. Wright (Mullinahone)<sup>114</sup> and David Power Conyngham (Crohane). Conyngham later became a journalist and author in New York.<sup>115</sup>

O'Mahony was the person most suited to be the field-commander of the insurgents in 1848. He had consistently tried to salvage the situation after what he saw as the crucial mistake made by O'Brien in leaving Carrick the previous Monday of 24 July. The whole game plan was clear in O'Mahony's mind since that fateful day — to protect O'Brien and defy any attempt to arrest him — and he never deviated from it. O'Mahony still deferred to O'Brien, who was well known as a national figure — there was no questioning O'Brien's credentials as an elected representative

and as the overall political leader. In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony tells us that:

The fortnight's delay, first mentioned by the Young Ireland priests, and now the unanimous cry of the people, was mentioned at our council [at Boulagh Common] and its practicability discussed under existing circumstances. Some suggested that O'Brien should go home [Cahirmoyle, County Limerick] and raise his own neighbourhood while we kept the spirit alive and the agitation hot in Tipperary. We offered to provide him with an escort and see him to his home through the mountains. Reilly, Doheny, myself and some others, considered that he was better anywhere than in that side of the country, where he was positively ruining, if he had not ruined, the cause, and where his reputation for capability was then completely used up. One week had sufficed for this.

I suggested, as this delay of a fortnight was generally believed in by the people, and as the people believed the priests who said they would be with them at that time, that we should accept that delay and conceal ourselves from arrest until then. That we should each take some district where we were well known, re-organize our adherents, hold nightly private meetings, and, by keeping the garrisons in their present dread of attack, prevent them from stirring from their quarters in their pursuit of us. This could be done by false alarms, fires on the hills, blowing of horns and ringing of chapel bells. That we should establish a secure mode of communication, and trusted envoys to pass from one man's district to that of another. There were at that time thousands of devoted men willing to join us if they knew where to find us. That, thirty miles off, people knew no more of our proceedings and whereabouts than if we had sunk into the earth. At Carrick even, but twenty odd miles distant, our friends were imposed on by all kinds of lies. Instead of remaining in my district to keep up the people's hope and courage, and counteract the machinations of the priests and *repentant club leaders*; (men who could not be so useful should have had my present duties) I was compelled to ride post from one quarter to another, carrying dispatches for leaders whom I could not find on my return to where I had left them.

O'Brien refused to leave where he was, said he trusted fully in the people of his present district, and was sufficiently well pleased with how they had protected him up to then. He would not leave them. That he would, and he thought he could hold that district for a fortnight, until the priests' stipulated time had elapsed. He approved of our taking separate districts, and establishing a wider organization and more certain communication with each other and with him.

At my desire, he [O'Brien] forthwith assigned me to the district south of the Gaultie Mountains, extending from Caher and Clogheen, in Tipperary, to Kilworth, Glanworth and Kildorery — including Mitchelstown — in Cork, Galbally and Kilfinnane in Limerick. In this district my family influence had once been very great. My own acts, though not much noised out of our mountains, had not tended to lessen it. My communications I had kept up with its most worthy men, though the hurry of the '48 agitation prevented me from extending the organization. A name does much in Ireland, and along the Gaulties none could compete with mine. My father, and brother had tried its strength with the priests there some years before in political contests and put them down. I could do it too.<sup>16</sup>

Meagher I thought most popular in Waterford and the vale of the Suir. I was to put him in communication with my trusted men round Carrick. Meagher was to keep up, through them, communication with his own men in Waterford, and his ardent admirers in County Kilkenny. The garrisons of Carrick or Waterford would not stir much while he hung threateningly around them, altering his quarters from the Commerach to Sliab na mBan, and making his headquarters at my house at Mullough. His position was directly south of O'Brien. Doheny was to take his position on the west side of Sliab-na-mBan, threaten the garrison of Clonmel, and get up communication with the men of Cashel, Fethard, and Caher, where he would touch on my district.

Dillon took for a choice to raise the country round Athlone, the garrison of which he had some hope of taking. Another gentleman, whose name I forget was assigned to the Thurles district. The other gentlemen present, having no local influence in the South, agreed to divide themselves between the leaders: Stephens and McManus chose to stay with O'Brien, Leyne and O'Donoghue

went with Meagher – Devin Reilly with Doheny. The Council broke up. Several gentlemen — Dillon, Meagher and O'Brien, addressed the crowd of colliers outside — now pretty numerous, and we set off to our several destinations.

So ended that famous Council, on which I dwell rather minutely because I had so much to do in urging what turned out unfortunate in the end.<sup>117</sup> It was then too late to carry it out, especially as O'Brien was obstinate in keeping the field openly, and persevering in his strange course of action.<sup>118</sup>

It is significant that O'Mahony was the only man present at the conference whose influence extended over three counties. O'Brien had no influence over the people. After so much delay already in bringing the issue to close quarters, the only hope of rallying the countryside lay in the news of an outstanding success. If O'Brien had taken O'Mahony's advice and gone home, the outcome may have been very different to that which transpired.

After the conference at Boulagh Common had finished, Meagher, Leyne and O'Donoghue travelled with O'Mahony, as he had to install them at their post in his home, at Mullough, before going to the Galtees. O'Mahony and his companions had travelled a short distance when they were met by some armed men, on their way to join O'Brien. Among these were two young gentlemen, Francis O'Ryan of Cashel (very likely a relation of O'Mahony) and O'Mahony's brother-in-law, James Mandeville of Ballycurkeen.<sup>119</sup> After parting from O'Mahony, O'Ryan and Mandeville continued in the direction of Ballingarry where it would appear that they met Doheny and accompanied him to his post on the western side of Slievenamon. O'Mahony brought Meagher, Leyne and O'Donoghue to the house of a farmer, Patrick O'Hanrahan of Tinlough, and then went home to institute a 'trust guard' for Meagher's protection, while he (O'Mahony) would organize the men of the Galtees and the barony of Condons and Clangibbon.<sup>120</sup>

The next day, Saturday 29 July, O'Mahony visited Carrick and all the neighbouring parishes; he found men everywhere willing to defend, obey and co-operate with Meagher and made arrangements to put them in communication with him the following day. That night O'Mahony met Meagher and his companions, at the table-land of Grangemockler; word came that O'Brien had gained a victory near Ballingarry. The account was not very clear and they decided to ascertain the truth immediately. Thereupon O'Mahony galloped off in the direction of Ballingarry at midnight. Upon reaching Mullinahone he found that most of the young men there had gone out to assist O'Brien. O'Mahony at once gave directions to erect barricades and destroy the neighbouring bridges. As a natural field commander, he knew that it was essential to impede the advance of the military and police to the scene of action. Having ascertained that O'Brien was safe for the present, with reinforcements arriving from all sides, O'Mahony left Mullinahone promising those he met there that his side of the country would be up in arms the next day, and that the enemy would not cross the hills against them unless they had first beaten his forces. Upon arriving home at Mullough the following morning, Sunday 30 July, O'Mahony was met by McManus who had disastrous news.<sup>121</sup> After a week of drift following his evacuation of Carrick, O'Brien's attempted rising had ended with his defeat by a party of constabulary taking refuge at the Widow Mrs McCormack's house at Farrenrory. This sequence of events is amply covered in other accounts and will not be dealt with here.<sup>122</sup>

From the first mistake made by O'Brien on the previous Monday, of 24 July, in leaving Carrick, O'Mahony had been in favour of taking a position on the easily defended plateau — the table-land of Grangemockler and Castle John (three miles across by six or seven long), where he could guarantee O'Brien's safety and have a rallying-point for the insurgents. By this means,

O'Mahony sought to put an end to the insurgents 'wandering, like scattered sheep, through the land' which was a consequence of O'Brien's behaviour.<sup>123</sup> O'Mahony was aware of the parallel between their situation (in late July 1848) and that of 23 July 1798, when the insurgents in Tipperary held their uprising at CarraigmoCLEAR (just above Grangemockler) on the north-eastern slopes of Sliabh na mBan. At the end of verse one of a contemporary song, the plight of the leaderless '98 men is explained:

Níor tháinig ár Major i dtús an lae chughainn,  
Is ní rabhamar féinig i gcóir ná i gceart,  
Ach mar a sheolfaí tréada de bha gan aoire  
Ar thaobh na gréine de Shliabh na mBan.<sup>124</sup>

### Open Condemnation by Catholic Church

In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony recalled the events that occurred on the morning after the fiasco at Farrenrory:

It was on this day [Sunday 30 July] that the Catholic Clergy came out openly and strongly against us. Almost every chapel in the neighbourhood resounded with their denunciations of us. O'Brien was proclaimed a 'Castle Agent!' in Moincoin, a village in the county Kilkenny, on the way from Carrick to Waterford. The Bishop of Kilkenny [Ossory] denounced him and his adherents and instructed all his priests to do so too. He was generally obeyed. *Having waited through the week and worked in silence against us* watching the turn of events, they now dared to strike at us openly, either boldly lying like the Moincoin man, or by sly insinuations of folly or incapacity, and recklessness of man's lives. The former course was generally adopted by our steadfast opponents, the latter by the men who had been our friends and inciters even till the time of action. It was then thought dangerous to take written notes or I would be more minute in giving individual instances and naming the men; but the fact is notorious and undeniable, that all along the Vale of the Suir — in the counties of Waterford, Tipperary and Kilkenny, and north to Sliabh-na-mBan and the Welsh Mountains, [South Kilkenny] Thurles and Kilkenny, we were put under the ban of the Church.<sup>125</sup>

O'Brien and his lieutenants would place much of the blame for the failure of the attempted rising on clerical abstention and opposition.<sup>126</sup>

At mass that morning, Sunday 30 July, in Ballyneale, O'Mahony heard Fr Morrissey caution the people against allowing any strangers into their houses:

'They were spies and emissaries of the government. He would advise their being denounced to the authorities. They were seeking to entrap the people to their destruction'. This was said in so cautious a manner that it might be applicable either to O'Brien and his followers or to the detectives. I went round after mass. Told the people that Father Morrissey had advised them basely and falsely, and desired them to protect and entertain all strangers to the best of their ability, though there were numerous detectives out seeking for a prey. Still there were hundreds of club men from Dublin and other places who had come out looking for their chiefs, and who could not return because they had shown themselves there. It was better to run the chance of meeting the odd detective than of having one of these men delivered up to their enemies.<sup>127</sup>

The clergy's presence was the bane of the 1848 rising, so much so that O'Mahony made sure that they would have no role in Fenianism.

At 10 o'clock that evening O'Mahony, accompanied by McManus, arrived at the farm of

Patrick O'Hanrahan of Tinlough, where Meagher and his companions were. Michael Cavanagh of Cappoquin, who had arrived in Carrick that day, joined them.<sup>128</sup> He assisted O'Mahony in drawing the attention of suspected government agents away from Meagher, O'Donoghue, Leyne and McManus thus keeping them temporarily out of harm's way. Before parting, Meagher and his companions promised to leave word with O'Hanrahan for O'Mahony, where to find them the next day.<sup>129</sup>

In his narrative of 1848, Patrick O'Donoghue relates the details of their movements at this time:

Immediately after the arrival of McManus and Mahony, P [atrick] J [oseph] Barry<sup>128</sup>, Secretary of the Grattan Club and Grey [Philip Gray], Secretary of the Swift Club, arrived. We suspected these men to be spys [sic] and, having given them directions to return to Dublin to manage the clubs and informed them that we were going to Carrick-on-Suir, we parted [from] them and doubled across the summit of the mountain [Sliabh na mBan] and arrived at the other side at 3 o'clock on Monday the 31st July. We spent this day on the south side of the mountain near Doheny but did not see him. On Monday night Meagher, Leyne, Manus and myself started for Keeper Mountain, a distance of about twenty miles. We travelled thro' Fethard, Holy Cross and arrived at Clonoulty on Tuesday the 1st August. We called here at Mr. Mahony's repeal warden<sup>129</sup> who told us he had 200 men ready.<sup>132</sup>

This O'Mahony family were probably of the same family as Kickham's mother and, in fact, according to family tradition, Kickham spent most of his early life at Laffina, in the parish of Clonoulty.

One week had now passed since that fateful day on which O'Brien and his companions had arrived in Carrick. On the morning of Monday 31 July, O'Mahony found a large crowd at his door:

Some were stupid and amazed at the pitiful termination of our hopes. Others — the greater number — enraged and indignant, longing to wipe out the disgrace [of Farrenrory]. To the latter, the most numerous party, who now thought themselves under the same ban as their leader, I promised to find out Meagher, to lead them, relying upon the last evening's agreement. I visited Carrick, the [Ahenny] Slate Quarries, and part of the counties of Waterford and Kilkenny, and found the same spirit still alive everywhere. The people demanded Meagher, Dillon and O'Gorman to lead them. I promised to find the former for them. *O'Brien's name I found completely useless.* It would no longer do to conjure with. Not one reliable man, however, believed the contest over.<sup>133</sup>

Contemporary magistrates' reports, in early September, corroborate O'Mahony's assessment that considerable revolutionary spirit remained.<sup>134</sup> As already mentioned, Meagher and his companions had promised to leave word with the farmer, Patrick O'Hanrahan, for O'Mahony, where to find them the next day. O'Mahony went to look for them but discovered that they were gone, no one knew whither.<sup>135</sup> O'Mahony and Meagher would not meet again until O'Mahony's arrival in New York city in January 1854.

On the evening of 31 August, O'Mahony received word from Carrick that the military were to visit him that night and consequently he left home after supper. O'Mahony had not gone more than 200 yards on the road when he met Doheny and Francis O'Ryan, of Cashel, coming to him from the western direction. O'Mahony brought them to the house of a farmer named Kiely, who lived near at hand, to spend the night and sent a messenger to his own home at Mullough to obtain some refreshments for them. The messenger not returning, O'Mahony sent another who

did not return either. Unknown to O'Mahony his messengers had been arrested. O'Mahony deemed it necessary that someone, who was not a marked man, should be at his home in Mullough to receive those who might come with dispatches from Meagher and the other scattered leaders, so as to communicate them to him. O'Ryan volunteered to go and install himself in O'Mahony's home and was promptly arrested.<sup>136</sup>

In his report, dated 1 August, R.D. Coulson, the resident magistrate at Carrick-on-Suir, relates what occurred at Mullough on that evening, of 31 July:

I proceeded at eleven o'clock with 100 of the 3rd Buffs 212 Dragoons (having about 40 constabulary a quarter of a mile in advance) to search the homes of O'Mahony, Jackson<sup>135</sup> and Coghlan. In the latter nothing was found. In the former (which in fact is a Miss Jane Ryan's, he [O'Mahony] being her nephew) we discovered a man with a wounded thumb evidently recently received and on examining his shot there was a perforation through both sides of it and similar to that of a bull.<sup>136</sup> Hé was arrested saying he had hurt his thumb with a stone. We then searched the house and found quantities of bullets, gunpowder, the apparent staff of a pike broken caps which we seized. It were concealed under beds. As we were searching (I should mention O'Mahony was absent) the police arrested a young man named Francis O'Ryan of Cashel. He was on the road close to the house stating that he lodged there and had come from Cashel. He had a dirk and two flasks of powder on his person and caps and had evidently just come from some club meeting. He gave so unsatisfactory an account of himself that I detained him and have remanded him for further questioning until Friday next. He had in his possession a licence for arms granted at Cashel in 1847. There is no doubt he is one of the most active and leading of them, and an intimate friend of Doheny with whom he was seen in close association upon the day when Doheny made an inflammatory speech in this town [Carrick].<sup>139</sup>

O'Mahony and Doheny were not long asleep, at Kiely's house, when the maidservants roused them up and told them that O'Mahony's house at Mullough had been surrounded and the men in it arrested. This included both O'Ryan and the messengers who had been captured, having fallen into a trap by an ambushing party of constables placed around the house.<sup>140</sup>

The following morning, Tuesday 1 August, O'Mahony and Doheny breakfasted at a farmhouse owned by the Quinlan family in neighbouring Ballinderry.<sup>141</sup> O'Mahony then sent Doheny across the Suir into the Comeragh Mountains, in County Waterford, under the guidance of a Carrick boatman, named Drohan, who left him in the care of a farmer, named Power, a faction leader styled 'Dick-na-Gowa' head of the famous 'Gows.' This faction leader was probably Power of Graigavalla, Rathgormack.<sup>142</sup> In his *Felon's Track* (1849) Doheny has left an account of O'Mahony during this period:

Never lived a man of more sanguine hope or intense patriotism. All the vigour of his gigantic intellect, aided by the endurance of great physical strength was tasked to the uttermost in attempting to rouse the broken energies of the country. He generally spent his nights in interviews with the chief men of the surrounding districts, while his duty by day was to communicate the result to us, and secure a place of safety for the ensuing night.<sup>143</sup>

Doheny's reference to O'Mahony's 'great physical strength' is consistent with the description in the *Tipperary Vindicator*, of 16 September 1848, of O'Mahony as 'a very powerful young fellow – full of life and activity'.<sup>144</sup> He stood six feet two inches high.<sup>145</sup>

That evening, Tuesday 1 August, O'Mahony found Stephens, at his home, in Mullough, sitting at tea with his aunts. Stephens had remained with O'Brien and McManus after the



conference at Boulagh Common on 28 July. Expecting a visit from the authorities that night, O'Mahony and Stephens stayed at the house of O'Mahony's ploughman at Mullough – just a few fields from O'Mahony's home. The following morning, Wednesday 2 August, as they returned to O'Mahony's home for breakfast they saw the house – now within a few hundred yards – surrounded by police and military. O'Mahony and Stephens succeeded in evading their enemies and breakfasted at Quinlans in neighbouring Ballinderry – the same house where O'Mahony and Doheny had breakfasted the previous morning.<sup>146</sup>

After breakfast O'Mahony, Stephens and young Quinlan<sup>147</sup> crossed the Suir into County Waterford and went in search of Doheny and, not finding him that day, they slept that night in a shooting lodge in the Comeragh Mountains. The following day, Thursday 3 August, they found Doheny. O'Mahony promised to meet Doheny and Stephens on the next day. With his mind made up to some course of decisive action; he then left them together on the Waterford side, and re-crossed the Suir into Tipperary. O'Mahony still hoped to hear from some of the scattered leaders of the Irish Confederation and tells us, in his narrative of 1848, that 'I determined to stay at home; defy but avoid, the authorities and await the course of events. I could not believe the rest of Ireland dead, and my quarter so full of life still'.<sup>148</sup> Within weeks of the fiasco at Farrenrory, a much more determined insurrection would take place under O'Mahony's leadership.

Some isolated manoeuvres had been carried out in various parts of Ireland, in July 1848, on the initiative of a few individuals who hoped for news from the South to give coherence to their movements. After the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, Richard O'Gorman had gone to County Limerick where he established an insurgent encampment in the hills above Abbeyfeale.<sup>149</sup> He delayed making a serious effort in Limerick, until O'Brien's rising gave the lead; O'Gorman escaped to the United States soon after hearing of its collapse.<sup>150</sup> Philip Gray, the secretary of the Swift Club in Dublin, together with Patrick James Smyth and Thomas Clarke Luby (both Dublin born) made an abortive attempt to spread the rising in Counties Meath and Dublin. Their plans came to nothing after the fiasco at Farrenrory.<sup>151</sup> Thomas D'Arcy Magee established communications with the agrarian secret societies in Sligo and Leitrim (Ribbonmen and Molly Maguires) who promised 2,000 men if the South rose. In early September he escaped to the United States.<sup>152</sup>

### **Final Conference, Coolnamuck Wood (4-6 August)**

O'Mahony met Doheny, Stephens, and some three or four Carrick men, for a three-day conference in Coolnamuck wood, County Waterford, which lasted from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 August.<sup>153</sup> The Carrick men wanted Meagher and would not follow Doheny whom O'Mahony offered as their leader. In his narrative of 1848, O'Mahony makes clear that at this conference:

I refused the leadership point-blank. I did not know the ramifications of the party, and I hated politics. My ambition was to act as a partisan. My name and person were too little known and would have not *retentissement* through the country. Influential men, having a position to lose, would demand — 'Who is this?'<sup>154</sup>

O'Mahony was not a major public figure and, notwithstanding his influence in the counties of Munster, he was not known nationally – and as he said he 'hated politics'. O'Mahony did not wish to have any role in political activity; he wanted to 'act as a partisan' – to engage in guerrilla warfare. In fact, O'Mahony would prove himself a capable field commander in such warfare before the summer was out.

O'Mahony was not made for politics just as O'Brien was not made to be a revolutionary. It was crucial for O'Mahony to retain the perception that he was not looking for high office in order to keep the trust that had been reposed in him. In a letter published in the *Irish People* (New York), dated 19 May 1861, O'Mahony explained that:

The popularity of our Young Ireland chiefs was of a different character [to O'Mahony's]. It was far more extended. The reading public knew and admired them almost everywhere throughout Ireland. Their talents had gained them a wide renown; but they had not, as far as I could learn, any large number of the peasantry of any particular district who were personally attached to them by ties of blood and old association. On the other hand, no one knew me at any great distance from my native place.<sup>155</sup>

O'Mahony had an inherited sense of responsibility for others who would get involved in the insurrection because he was in it. This remained a consistent feature of O'Mahony.

At the conference in Coolnamuck wood, Doheny wanted O'Mahony to go with him and try to escape. O'Mahony recalled later 'No! I did not give up yet — was not yet apparently compromised — would keep the kettle of public excitement boiling, and wait for my chance to strike a decisive blow'.<sup>156</sup> O'Mahony showed determination and caution: he was the last to give up, but refused to commit his men to open revolt without a fighting chance of success. Doheny asked could O'Mahony keep himself and Stephens safe. O'Mahony did not recommend that they stay, as they were more compromised than he himself was but, if they chose to stay, he promised to watch over their safety like his own. They chose to go. Under these circumstances O'Mahony parted with Doheny and Stephens, at three o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday 13 August. O'Mahony regretted their parting soon afterwards and tells us, in his narrative of 1848, that 'I would that we had not [parted]. I felt their want many a long day afterwards. With me they would have remained safe in the same locality, and defied their enemies from guarded and well-watched retreats'.<sup>157</sup> Not one of those who placed themselves in O'Mahony's hands, including Doheny and Stephens — were ever captured.

#### **Aftermath: Arrests of Confederate Leaders**

Following the fiasco at Farrenrory, on 29 July 1848, Dillon made his way to County Galway, eluded the authorities on the island of Inishmaan, before escaping to New York.<sup>158</sup> Where O'Brien went is not known. He remained at large for a week and is said to have lived with the humblest folk. Finally, on 5 August, O'Brien was captured on the platform of Thurles railway station. He was heading for Cahirmoyle, County Limerick, to take leave of his family, with the intention of immediately afterwards surrendering to the government.<sup>159</sup> Meagher, O'Donoghue and Leyne were arrested, on the night of Saturday 12 August, by a party of five police constables on the road between Clonoulty and Holy Cross, County Tipperary. They had spent ten days wandering about this area sleeping in farmer's houses, haylofts and bogs.<sup>160</sup> On 30 August, McManus (who had parted with Meagher and the others on Wednesday 2 August) was arrested on board an emigrant ship in Cork harbour bound for America.<sup>161</sup>

In a letter published in the *Irish People* (New York), dated 19 May 1861, O'Mahony explained the underlying reasons why he believed that O'Brien's campaign ended the way that it did:

I have myself felt always convinced that it was only the leaders of the Irish people that were defeated on the occasion I have just mentioned [July 1848]. The people themselves I never considered as beaten; for, as I can prove, they were not fairly tested. This I hold to be true, not merely with

reference to the whole Irish people, but also with reference to the peasantry around Ballingarry. Nowhere did they get even a chance of a stand up fight with their foes. There had been no previous organization amongst them, whereby they could have borne up for a day against the slightest reverse at their first uprising. No means of intercommunication had been provided for, except through the public press. When this failed, the whole club machinery became paralysed and utterly useless. At the first start of the insurrectionary movement in South Tipperary, enthusiasm and devotedness and a blind trust in their chiefs were all the people had in their favour, and of these feelings no proper use was made. Instead of leading the excited masses to some decided course of action, their patience was exhausted and their spirits were depressed by a series of defensive manoeuvres that would have been scarcely practicable with an army of veterans. Hence, I am one of those who have always protested against the assertion that the Irish people were defeated in 1848... I am of opinion that if the leaders had come to me in the vale of the Suir, after the reverse in the first collision with the enemy, instead of fleeing to the four winds of heaven, I could then have placed them not alone in a position to resist any immediate attempt against their persons, but could have given them a force sufficient to retrieve their disasters, if made good use of. Instead of this I was left alone in the field, and, after having for many weeks, kept up the spirits of the men around me, I found that the cause had been given up as lost everywhere except in my immediate locality, and that I had to think and act for myself as best I could, amid an unorganized and impatient multitude.<sup>162</sup>

Largely due to O'Mahony's family connections and his own personality a very real opportunity existed for an aristocratic-led (consisting of aristocratic Young Irelanders, well to do upper middle class plus some liberal gentry) and proletariat-driven (consisting of farm labourers, small farmers and artisans) revolutionary insurrection in the late summer/early autumn of 1848: a combination perhaps unique in Ireland's history – or indeed of European history. If O'Brien had taken O'Mahony's advice at any time it would have salvaged the situation for the insurgents.

In his letter to Fr Patrick Lavelle, in August 1862, John O'Mahony wrote that:

Some may think it *insane* to love Ireland better than the advancement of any temporal interests. This, however, is a hereditary and inveterate malady of which I can never be cured. Perhaps the strongest instance of it that I exhibited in my lifetime was when I left my quiet home by the Suir in 1848, to join gentlemen with whom I had no previous acquaintance – of whose resources I was ignorant – in an attempted revolution. By that act I brought ruin and death upon those I loved dearest in the world. That, indeed, was — in the opinion of the world-wise, though not in mine — an act of insanity.<sup>163</sup>

O'Mahony could not have predicted the arrival of O'Brien and his lieutenants in Carrick in July 1848 or assessed their lack of readiness for a rising or have had any sense of their incompetence for the job at hand. It typified O'Mahony's leadership and caution to have everything ready on his side before he turned out to meet O'Brien. What almost happened in Carrick at this time indicated that O'Mahony had prepared his ground well.

## Conclusion

O'Mahony's perception of his role was to follow the family tradition of providing leadership in a time of crisis but the daily grind of political agitation did not attract him. In July 1848 O'Mahony gave up everything because of the burden of responsibility that he felt to the community. The events of that hectic week (one of the most dramatic weeks in Irish history), beginning on Monday 24 July 1848, and the lessons learned therefrom were to burn deeply into

O'Mahony and would mould much of his conviction regarding any future national movement; in particular, the necessity for the total exclusion of the catholic clergy from any influence. To ensure this it was necessary to break the machine that O'Connell had built up — of having priests embedded in every political organization. The complete separation of church and state would become a fundamental principle of the Fenian movement of which O'Mahony was the chief embodiment.

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## Notes

- 1 Robert Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (London, 1973), pp. 267-8 (hereafter cited as Kee, *The Green Flag*); Gary Owens, 'Popular Mobilisation and the Rising of 1848: the Clubs of the Irish Confederation' in *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland*, edited by Laurence M. Geary (Dublin, 2001) p.58 (hereafter cited as Owens, 'Popular Mobilisation').
- 2 Richard Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist: William Smith O'Brien 1803-1864* (Dublin and Darlington, 1998), p.266 (hereafter cited as Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist*).
- 3 Charles Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History, 1845-49* (London, 1883), pp. 173-80 (hereafter cited as Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*); *My Life in Two Hemispheres* vol. I (London, 1898, 2 vols.), pp. 248-56 (hereafter cited as Duffy, *My Life in Two Hemispheres*); Robert Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien and the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 204-08 (hereafter cited as Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien*).
- 4 Confederate Clubs are sometimes referred to as Repeal Clubs, in contemporary documents, which may point to an overlapping in membership and/or attempts at reconciliation as 'United Repealers' as in Kilkenny and Cork.
- 5 Transcript of letter from James W. O'Cavanagh to John O'Mahony, 5 Apr. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/1635).
- 6 Maurice Agulhon, *The Republican Experiment 1848-1852* (Cambridge, 1983), p.108; Peter Jones, *The 1848 Revolutions*, (Essex, 1981), pp.1-4 (hereafter cited as Jones, *The 1848 Revolutions*).
- 7 Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp.538-9.
- 8 Meagher's father, a wealthy Waterford merchant, was an M.P and a prominent supporter of Daniel O'Connell.
- 9 Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien*, pp.214-24; Denis Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848* (Cork, 1949), p.13, 60 (hereafter cited as Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*); Michael Doheny, *The Felon's Track*, (New York, 1884) pp. 74-7 (hereafter cited as Doheny, *Felon's Track*).
- 10 Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp.561-9; Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, p.167.
- 11 O'Gorman's father, a wealthy Dublin merchant, had been a prominent supporter of O'Connell in the Catholic Association.
- 12 Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien*, pp.228-32; Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, pp. 65, 193; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp. 129-30.
- 13 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 196-200, 608-9; Brendan Ó Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon, Young Irelander* (Dublin, 1990), p.74 (hereafter cited as Ó Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon*).
- 14 *Personal Narrative of my Connection with the Attempted Rising of 1848* by John O'Mahony (N.L.I., MS 868), p.1 (hereafter cited as O'Mahony's narrative of 1848).
- 15 John O'Mahony, 'Fenianism as it Was' in *Irish People* (New York), 14 Dec. 1867.
- 16 Luby, the son of an Anglican clergyman, was educated at Trinity College. He contributed to the *Nation* (Dublin) and became a prominent member of the Irish Confederation.
- 17 Thomas Clarke Luby, 'Personal Reminiscences of Colonel John O'Mahony' in *Irish World*, New York, 3 Mar. 1877 (hereafter cited as Luby, 'Personal Reminiscences').

- 18 O'Mahony's narrative, pp. 1, 17.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p.1.
- 20 William Nolan, 'The Irish Confederation in the County Tipperary' in *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1998), p.16 (hereafter cited as Nolan, 'The Irish Confederation').
- 21 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.14; *Catholic Directory* (Dublin, 1848), p.325.
- 22 Owens, 'Popular Mobilisation', p.58.
- 23 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.1.
- 24 O'Mahony, Dr O'Ryan and Rivers shared common intellectual interests. All three became members of the Celtic Society shortly after its foundation in 1845: Celtic Society correspondence, 1845-54 (N.L.I., MS 8010).
- 25 Nolan, 'The Irish Confederation', pp.8-16.
- 26 Jones, *The 1848 Revolutions*, p.3.
- 27 Letter from Fr Patrick Byrne, dated 21 Apr. 1848, to the *Dublin Evening Post* reprinted in the *Nation* (Dublin), 29 Apr. 1848.
- 28 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.2.
- 29 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.1.
- 30 Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, p.619.
- 31 D'Arcy McGee, born in Carlingford, County Louth, was a leader-writer in the *Nation* (Dublin).
- 32 Ó Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon*, pp.76-7.
- 33 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.2.
- 34 Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, p.13, 60; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp. 74-7.
- 35 Report of R.D. Coulson, R.M. Carrick-on-Suir, 1 Aug. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/2613).
- 36 *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn. the History of Ireland, from the Earliest Period to the English Invasion, by the Reverend Geoffrey Keating, D.D.* Translated from the original Gaelic and annotated by John O'Mahony (New York, 1857), p.344.
- 37 Doheny, *Felon's Track*, p.155.
- 38 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, pp.2, 17.
- 39 Information of Constable Patrick Coughlan, 1 Aug. 1848 (N.A.I, Outrages Papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary 27/2613).
- 40 *Tipperary Free Press* (Clonmel), 29 Apr. 1843.
- 41 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.2.
- 42 *Waterford Chronicle*, 17 July 1848; *Dublin Evening Post*, 18 July 1848; 'A personal narrative of 1848' by Thomas Francis Meagher, in *Meagher of the Sword*, edited by Arthur Griffith (Dublin, 1916), pp.221 (hereafter cited as Meagher 'A Personal Narrative of 1848').
- 43 Letter from Fr Patrick Byrne, dated 19 July 1848 to the editor of the *Dublin Evening Post*, 20 July 1848.
- 44 Feehan was a relative of O'Mahony's on his mother's side.
- 45 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.2.
- 46 Constable Lawlor is referring to the chapel at Grangemockler as there is none in Nine Mile House (located within a mile of Grangemockler).
- 47 Information of Constable James Lawlor, 1 Aug. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/2613).
- 48 Kee, *The Green Flag*, p.265.
- 49 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp.693-6; 'Patrick O'Donoghue's Narrative of the 1848 Rising' in *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1998), p.39.
- 50 Ó Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon*, p.78.
- 51 'To thirty – one very impatient correspondents - somewhere' by John O'Mahony in the *Phoenix* (New York), 10 Feb. 1860.
- 52 Report of Richard Pennefather, High Sheriff of County Tipperary, 22 July 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/1289).
- 53 Luby's personal reminiscences in the *Irish World* (New York) 3 Mar. 1877.

- 54 Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, pp. 243-5; Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien*, pp.246-54; Ó Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon*, pp.79-81.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 John O'Mahony to Fr Patrick Lavelle, printed in the *Irishman* (Dublin), 16 Aug. 1862.
- 57 Diarmuid Ó Mathúna 'The Vision and Sacrifice of John O'Mahony' in *Iris Mhuintir Mathúna* (1978), p.30.
- 58 This would appear to be the junction of the road leading to Mullough and the church at Ballyneale.
- 59 Meagher, 'A Personal Narrative of 1848,' pp.224-5.
- 60 Ibid., pp.226-7.
- 61 Ibid; O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.3.
- 62 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.3.
- 63 Meagher, 'A Personal Narrative of 1848,' p.228.
- 64 Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 653.
- 65 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.3; Meagher 'A Personal Narrative of 1848', p. 229-31.
- 66 This is probably the same James O'Cavanagh who wrote the letter to O'Mahony, of 5 April 1848, quoted earlier.
- 67 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.3.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Information of Patrick Coughlan, constable at Kilcash, 1 Aug. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/2613).
- 70 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.3.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 *Tipperary Vindicator* (Nenagh), 27 Sept. 1848; Report of Constable Harrington, Rathgormack, 12 Sept. 1848 (Outrage papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/1898); Report of R.D. Coulson, R.M., Carrick-on-Suir, 13 Sept. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/1898).
- 73 *Tipperary Vindicator* (Nenagh), 16 Sept. 1848.
- 74 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.3; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, p.164-5.
- 75 Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, p.651.
- 76 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.4; *Catholic Directory* (Dublin, 1848), p. 325.
- 77 Brendan Kiely, *The Waterford Rebels of 1849* (Dublin, 1999), p.9 (hereafter cited as Kiely, *Waterford Rebels of 1849*); Owens, 'Popular Mobilisation', p.58.
- 78 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.4.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Ibid; see also Doheny, *Felon's Track*, p. 166.
- 81 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.5-7; Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Thomas Francis Meagher* (New York, 1892), p.278 (hereafter cited as Cavanagh, *Memoirs*).
- 82 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.5.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 This tradition, of the gaelic chief, is clearly delineated in an tAthair Peadar Ó Laoghaire's *An Cleasaidhe* (1913).
- 85 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.5; Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, pp.275-6.
- 86 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.5.
- 87 Ibid., p.7; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, p.173.
- 88 Father P. Fitzgerald, *Personal Recollections of the Insurrection at Ballingarry* (Dublin, 1862), pp. 13-17 (hereafter cited as Fitzgerald, *Personal Recollections*); Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp.96-7.
- 89 Fitzgerald, *Personal Recollections*, pp.13-14.
- 90 Report of John Luther, mayor of Clonmel, 29 July 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, 27/1366)
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Fitzgerald, *Personal Recollections*, pp.13-17; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp.96-7.
- 93 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.7.
- 94 Fitzgerald, *Personal Recollections*, p.15, *Catholic Directory* (Dublin, 1848), p. 314.

- 95 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.8.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Maurice Richard Leyne, from Tralee, County Kerry, was a relative of Daniel O'Connell and a contributor to the *Nation* (Dublin).
- 98 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.8.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 Fitzgerald, *Personal Recollections*, pp.13-17, Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp. 174-5.
- 101 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.9.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Ibid.
- 104 Ibid., p.10.
- 105 Fitzgerald, *Personal Recollections*, pp.13-17; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp.174-6.
- 106 Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp.175-6; Terence Bellew McManus's narrative of 1848 printed in Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, p.312.
- 107 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.10.
- 108 Ibid.
- 109 Donal A. Kerr, 'A Nation of Beggars'? *Priests, People and Politics in Famine Ireland 1846-1852* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 14, 153; Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, pp. 115, 257-9; Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, (London, 1962), p.354.
- 110 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.10.
- 111 Luby, 'Reminiscences' in the *Irish World* (New York), 14 Apr. 1877.
- 112 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848.
- 113 Kavanagh was busy establishing himself in the coal trade in Harold's Cross, Dublin, in 1848.
- 114 Wright was at this time a Trinity College student and afterwards a lawyer in the United States.
- 115 Michael Fitzgerald 'From Ballingarry to Fredericksburg: David Power Conyngham (1825-1883)' in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1988, pp.192-9.
- 116 John O'Mahony would certainly have included his family's leadership role in the anti-tithe campaign of the 1830s in the 'political contests' mentioned above. See Brian J. Sayers, 'The O'Mahonys of Kilbeheny and the Tithe War' in *The O'Mahony Journal* (2002), pp. 3-16.
- 117 Throughout his writings O'Mahony never omits mentioning what he perceives as mistakes made on his part.
- 118 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, pp. 11-12.
- 119 John Mandeville, the fourth son of James Mandeville and Jane Maria (née O'Mahony), would play a prominent role as a local leader in the Land War of the 1880s.
- 120 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848 pp.11-15.
- 121 Ibid., p.13.
- 122 See Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*; Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist*; Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien*.
- 123 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.13.
- 124 Our Major did not turn up as morning broke,/ And we were not ourselves properly prepared there,/ As might be driven a flock of cattle, without shepherd,/ On the sunny side of Sliabh na mBan': Terry Moylan (ed.), *The Age of Revolution in the Irish Song Tradition 1776-1815* (Dublin, 2000), p.76.
- 125 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.14.
- 126 Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, p.234.
- 127 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, pp.13-14.
- 128 Cavanagh would later become O'Mahony's secretary in the Fenian Brotherhood.
- 129 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, pp. 13-14.
- 130 Barry, a Cork barrister, was later unmasked as a government informer.
- 131 In October 1842 Repeal wardens were recruited as O'Connell's police force in order to keep law and order at his mass meetings.
- 132 'Patrick O'Donoghue's Narrative of the 1848 Rising' in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1998, p.41. (hereafter cited as O'Donoghue's narrative of 1848).

- 133 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.15.
- 134 Report of R.D. Coulson, R.M. Carrick-on-Suir, 9 Sept. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/1870); Report of William Ryan, R.M. Clonmel, 11 Sept. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, Co. Tipperary, 27/1863).
- 135 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.14.
- 136 Ibid., p.15.
- 137 No further information has surfaced about this person.
- 138 This would appear to a reference to the hole made by the placing of a ring through a bull's nose.
- 139 Report of R.D. Coulson, R.M. Carrick-on-Suir, 1 Aug. 1848 (N.A.I., Outrages Papers, 1848, 27/2613). Doheny had made 'an inflammatory speech' in Carrick one week prior to the rally on Sliabh na mBan and again directly after it. Coulson could be referring above to either of these occasions.
- 140 Ibid; O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, pp.15-16.
- 141 Doheny, *Felon's Track*, p.186
- 142 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, pp.15-16; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp.201-2; Brendan Kiely, *Waterford Rebels of 1849*, p.29.
- 143 Doheny, *Felon's Track*, p.208.
- 144 *Tipperary Vindicator* (Nenagh), 16 Sept. 1848.
- 145 *Irish World* (New York), 17 Mar. 1877.
- 146 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.16.
- 147 This was probably Robert Quinlan, treasurer of the Kilcash Confederate club, or his brother, David, secretary of the club. They were nephews to Coghlan of South Lodge.
- 148 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.16.
- 149 This was the same region that John O'Mahony's uncle and namesake had organized the United Irishmen in 1798.
- 150 Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, p. 65; Kiely, *Waterford Rebels of 1849*, p.58; Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien*, pp.221, 267.
- 151 Duffy, *Four Years of Irish history*, pp.667, 678.
- 152 Thomas D'Arcy Magee's narrative of 1848 printed in Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp.289-97.
- 153 Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp. 208-9.
- 154 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.17.
- 155 Letter written by O'Mahony, dated 19 May 1861, printed in the *Irish People* (New York) 14 Dec. 1867.
- 156 O'Mahony's narrative of 1848, p.17.
- 157 Ibid; Doheny, *Felon's Track*, pp.208-9.
- 158 Ó Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon*, pp.92-9; John Savage, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs* (New York, 1868), p.347.
- 159 *Tipperary Vindicator* (Nenagh), 9 Aug. 1848; Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist*, pp. 275-6.
- 160 O'Donoghue's narrative of 1848, p.42.
- 161 Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, p.270.
- 162 Letter written by O'Mahony, dated 19 May 1861, printed in the *Irish People* (New York) 14 Dec. 1867.
- 163 Letter from John O'Mahoney to Fr Patrick Lavelle, printed in the *Irishman* (Dublin), 16 Aug. 1862.