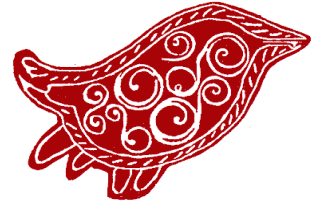


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# The William O'Brien Manuscripts in the Library of University College, Cork<sup>1</sup>

By PHILIP BULL

## I. INTRODUCTION

William O'Brien (1852-1928), journalist, writer and politician, was born at Mallow, county Cork, the son of a local attorney's clerk. He began his career as a journalist on the staff of the *Cork Daily Herald* and later worked for the *Freeman's Journal*. In 1881 he was invited by Parnell to edit the new nationalist weekly, *United Ireland*, a position he held until the split in the Irish Party in 1891. He was later to establish, to finance and greatly to contribute to three other newspapers; the weeklies *The Irish People* (1899-1903; 1905-1909) and the *Cork Accent* (January-June 1910) and the daily *Cork Free Press* (1910-1916). O'Brien was first elected to Parliament as the Member for Mallow in 1882 and represented intermittently a variety of Irish constituencies until 1895, when a bankruptcy action forced his resignation. In the General Election of 1900 he was elected for one of the Cork City constituencies and he continued to represent Cork City (with the exception of two brief intervals) until his withdrawal, with his supporters, from the Parliament at Westminster prior to the General Election of 1918. Under the leadership of Parnell and, after the split, within the anti-Parnellite party, O'Brien was one of the most ardent defenders of the idea of a united and tightly disciplined Irish party, and through his establishment in 1898 of the United Irish League he was largely responsible for the reunion of the party in 1900. In 1903, however, he quarrelled with the leadership of the party, and in particular with his long-standing friend and colleague John Dillon, and for the rest of his career remained bitterly opposed to the party's conduct of Irish affairs, establishing his own small party in the House of Commons after 1909.

As a writer O'Brien made a considerable contribution to the literature of his period. His two novels *When We Were Boys* (published in 1890) and *A Queen of Men* (1897) were widely read at the time, and the former remains a valuable portrait of Ireland in the time of the Fenians. In a series of four books—part history, part autobiography—O'Brien told the story of Irish politics during his lifetime. In chronological order (but not of publication) they were *Recollections* (1905), *Evening Memories* (1920), *An Olive Branch in Ireland and its History* (1910) and *The Irish Revolution and how it came about* (1923). His *Edmund Burke as an Irishman* (1924) was a reinterpretation of the career of that statesman in terms of his Irish background. In 1918 O'Brien published a small booklet entitled *The Downfall of Parliamentaryism, A retrospect for the Accounting Day*, an attempt to attribute responsibility for the events of the preceding two years. He was also a prolific writer of essays for various journals and published as pamphlets many of his speeches and articles.

<sup>1</sup> I wish to acknowledge with thanks the permission to consult these mss. granted to me by the Librarian, University College, Cork.

After his death in 1928 O'Brien's wife gave his papers and correspondence in part to the National Library of Ireland in Dublin and in part to the Library of University College, Cork. O'Brien's correspondence with several of the more important Irish figures of his time went to the National Library; this includes his correspondence with John Dillon, John Redmond, Michael Davitt, T. M. Healy and Lord Dunraven, as well as letters from various other people. In addition a number of letters, including some from the above people, and copies of letters written by O'Brien himself, were given by Mrs O'Brien to Michael MacDonagh for use in the writing of his biography of O'Brien;<sup>2</sup> these letters are now amongst the Michael MacDonagh Papers in the National Library.<sup>3</sup> The remainder of O'Brien's papers, together with many papers of her own, Mrs O'Brien deposited in the Library of University College, Cork, and it is this collection which forms the subject of this article. Because of the basis on which the manuscripts sent to the National Library were selected, the residue of the papers in Cork are most interesting for those periods when O'Brien had least dealings with the more widely known of his political colleagues and correspondents.

The collection had been stored until 1969 in a variety of alphabetical letter files and other miscellaneous boxes. Generally speaking the files of correspondence had been arranged by Mrs O'Brien in chronological order, but many letters were found out of their correct files and numbers of letters were amongst general papers in no way related to the correspondence. Many letters were undated, although every effort has now been made to date (even if only tentatively) any such letters. The physical condition of the papers is generally good, and very little damage had occurred to them over the years, with the exception that numbers of items dating from before 1890 show unmistakable evidence of the unsettled life O'Brien then lived. In fact O'Brien's marriage in 1890 is quite clearly marked in the improvement in both the condition and the order of his papers after that date. In particular, the collection in Cork, like that in Dublin, is extensively complemented with copies of the more important of O'Brien's own letters in the very legible hand of Mrs O'Brien.

The whole collection has now been reorganized in more suitable boxes, the arrangement of which is explained in the appendix at the end of this article. The nature of the general correspondence in the collection—very few substantial groups of letters from particular individuals—pointed to a strictly chronological arrangement of the letters; this was particularly so of one of the intrinsically most interesting sections of the collection, the correspondence connected with the formation and development of the United Irish League, where any arrangement other than a chronological one would have destroyed much of the value of many of the letters. Such a chronological arrangement has of course placed a high premium on the provision of dates for all letters. In many cases—most notably the letters from O'Brien to his wife and those written by O'Brien's organizers throughout the country—this has necessitated the dating of long series of letters by means of information internal to the letters or the relationship between particular letters. In certain other cases where a letter was originally partially dated it has been possible to assume that its position in the collec-

<sup>2</sup> Michael MacDonagh, *The Life of William O'Brien, the Irish Nationalist: a biographical study of Irish Nationalism, constitutional and revolutionary*, London, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> For further details of the O'Brien mss., and mss. relevant to him, in the National Library of Ireland see R. J. Hayes (ed.), *Manuscript sources for the history of Irish civilization*, 11 vols., Boston, Mass. 1965; or for a more complete list the note on pp. 14-15 of the summary of this collection of papers in the library of University College, Cork.

tion has indicated the year in which it was written, other evidence being consistent. Other letters did, however, defy dating by any of these means, and these have been placed at the ends of boxes to which it seemed most likely they belonged. So large a proportion of the letters was undated that the possibility remains that errors in dating have occurred, but every effort was made to avoid such errors.

Although the greater part of this collection of papers consists of correspondence, there are many boxes of items which do not fall into this category. Some manuscripts and papers which were obviously enclosed with particular letters or were related to a particular exchange of correspondence have been kept amongst the relevant letters. Other documents, articles, pamphlets, notebooks and various miscellaneous items have been arranged in separate categories. All boxes have been designated with alphabetical letters, but only in certain boxes of correspondence have the folios as yet been numbered. A number of items of irregular shape or size have not been placed in boxes.

The present writer is currently engaged in the writing of a doctoral thesis on the reconstruction of the Irish parliamentary movement in the years after 1895, written with special reference to William O'Brien. This involves extensive use of the manuscripts in this collection which are concerned with the formation and growth of the United Irish League, the reunion of the Irish parliamentary party in 1900, the conduct of the affairs of the party between 1900 and 1903, the Land Conference of 1903 and its consequences, and O'Brien's alienation from the party after 1903. Needless to say, the summary which follows of the material contained in the collection has been influenced by these special interests.

## II. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE<sup>4</sup>

Letters sent to O'Brien by a wide range of political colleagues, friends and supporters form the major part of the Cork collection of his papers. In addition, copies of letters written by O'Brien (usually in the hand of Mrs O'Brien) are also contained in this section, which amounts in all to 26 boxes containing well over five thousand folios ranging in time from 1872 to 1928. Certain newspaper cuttings and other papers relating to, or enclosed with, or originally placed among correspondence have also been placed in these boxes in appropriate positions. For the reason already explained<sup>5</sup> the correspondence is generally with the less nationally important of O'Brien's colleagues, or with people of little political significance at all, although there are some important exceptions to this.

The correspondence for the period 1872 to 1890 is of a very scanty nature, in part because of O'Brien's youth and public insignificance for the earlier part of that period and in part because of the disrupted and disorganized life he led in the last decade of

<sup>4</sup> Boxes AA-AU. No citation will be made in the text of the article to boxes in which mss. mentioned are to be found, as such information is clearly indicated in the appendix at the end of the article.

<sup>5</sup> See above p. 130.

the period. The earliest letters include two from his brother on family affairs and a number in connection with his early journalistic and literary efforts. The first politically interesting letters are those connected with Parnell's invitation to O'Brien in July 1881 to become editor of *United Ireland*. A letter from James O'Kelly and a telegram from Egan both urge O'Brien to accept the invitation, but a letter, partially missing, from John Dillon, then in Kilmainham Jail, expresses opposition to the whole idea of starting a newspaper and unwillingness to be in any way identified with it insofar as it supports the policy of the parliamentary party on the Land Bill.<sup>6</sup> There is little more of interest until February 1886, when T. M. Healy, in two letters to O'Brien, expresses and explains his attitude to Parnell's attempt to force Captain O'Shea on the constituents of Galway. The remainder of the correspondence for 1886 and 1887, from a very wide range of individuals, includes many letters about the South Tyrone election and the Plan of Campaign.

The box containing the correspondence for the years 1888 and 1889 opens with a long, handwritten and undated manuscript by Mary Mandeville entitled "A Narrative of my husband's treatment at Tullamore, as stated by him to me on his return." There are many letters during these years, especially from English sympathisers, about O'Brien's several imprisonments and one from John Dillon during the latter's imprisonment in the summer of 1888 urging O'Brien to try to avoid further imprisonment. There are also a number of letters connected with the affairs of the tenants involved—or wishing to become involved—in the Plan of Campaign. This box of manuscripts, belonging to the height of the "Union of Hearts" period, also contains an avalanche of requests to O'Brien to speak at various Liberal functions in Great Britain. The flow of such invitations continues in the correspondence for 1890. In the letters for the first half of 1890 there are also numbers of letters from T. P. Gill about the completion and publication of *When We Were Boys*, about the relationship between O'Brien and Sophie Raffalovich, and about the affairs of *United Ireland*. The publication of *When We Were Boys* and O'Brien's marriage to Sophie Raffalovich provide the occasion for a number of other letters to O'Brien in the period April to June 1890. Little more of significance appears until December 1890 when M. M. Bodkin wrote a series of four letters to O'Brien on the situation created in Ireland by the O'Shea divorce case and about the position of *United Ireland* in the changed circumstances. A letter from Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, dated 26 December 1890, expresses the writer's opinion on the situation in Ireland and the future of the Liberal alliance, and in a letter dated 28 December, and written on behalf of himself, Harrington and Clancy, R. Barry O'Brien enunciates the Parnellite objections to the action of the majority in relation to Gladstone.

A number of undated letters apparently belonging to the period 1885 to 1890 are placed at the end of Box AA. There is little of real importance amongst these manuscripts, which consist principally of letters about the Plan of Campaign and a number of private letters from Eily Fitzgerald and Sister Mary Eustace.

The general correspondence for 1891 as well as a substantial number of undated letters for the period 1891 to 1893 is contained in Box AD. Approximately half the contents of this box consists of correspondence in January and early February of 1891 connected with O'Brien's attempt at Boulogne to reach a settlement with Parnell;

<sup>6</sup> 12 July [1881]. A substantial extract from this letter is published by O'Brien in *Recollections* (London 1905), pp. 304-5.

this is made up of over sixty letters and telegrams from, amongst others, M. M. Bodkin, T. P. Gill, T. C. Harrington, T. M. Healy, Parnell and Archbishop Croke. O'Brien's imprisonment after the failure of the Boulogne negotiations brought the flow of correspondence to an end, and it is resumed at a much smaller rate after his release in July. There are copies of two letters from O'Brien to E. Dwyer Gray and two letters from Gray to O'Brien in July and September concerning the change of allegiance by the *Freeman's Journal* from the Parnellite to the anti-Parnellite side. In October there are some letters about trouble on the Ponsonby estate and also a number of letters from the Rev. M. B. Kennedy of Midleton; and in November there are several letters about the rejection of O'Brien as President of the Cork Young Ireland Society and his replacement by John Redmond. The section of undated letters in this box contains little of importance.

The correspondence for the years 1892 to 1897 consists of a wide range of letters about political, agrarian and legal matters; the disordered nature of nationalist politics in these years is reflected in the absence of any general continuity of subjects discussed in the letters. There are a number of letters between 1892 and 1896 about the affairs of the Congested Districts Board, especially in relation to the Murrisk fishery scheme and the purchase of Clare Island, in both of which O'Brien had a special interest; they include letters from Bishop Patrick O'Donnell, W.L. Micks and the Rev. P. Molloy. In August 1892 there was an exchange of letters between O'Brien and Joseph Chamberlain about the latter's comments on the definition of imperial supremacy in a Home Rule scheme, and a number of letters from John Morley between 1892 and 1894 discuss various aspects of Irish administration. A number of letters and copies of letters in September 1894 by J. F. X. O'Brien, T. P. O'Connor, John Dillon and Thomas Addis Emmett are about the latter's visit to England to investigate the "Tweedmouth cheque" incident. O'Brien's resignation from Parliament in 1895—caused by the bankruptcy action against him—was the subject of letters between May and July 1895 from the Rev. R. Barrett of Cork, Tim McCarthy, Denny Lane, Thomas Crosbie and others; they include discussion of possible replacements for O'Brien as Member for Cork City. There were in this period numbers of letters from Fr. Barrett and Tim McCarthy about Cork politics; after 1897, when the latter launched the *Northern Star*, a nationalist weekly, his letters are about Belfast politics. In 1897 several other new subjects recur in letters: the Evicted Tenants' Furd in letters from Alfred Webb, David Sheehy and others; the '98 Centenary in letters from J. F. X. O'Brien, John O'Donnell and James Daly; and, in an increasing flow of letters from Tim Harrington, the '98 movement, party unity and Dublin local politics. Other correspondents between 1892 and 1897 include Archbishop Croke (especially about the troubles over the *Freeman's Journal* in 1892 and 1893), Charles Russell, Sir George Lewis and Valentine Kilbride (on legal matters, especially in connection with the bankruptcy action), T. P. O'Connor, M. M. Bodkin, Michael Davitt, Bishop Patrick O'Donnell, Justin McCarthy, J. F. X. O'Brien, the Rev. J. Clancy, Edward Blake, John O'Donnell and James Gilhooly.

A sharp change in both subject matter and correspondents occurs in the manuscripts from the beginning of 1898, when O'Brien launched the United Irish League; the five boxes which cover the years 1898 and 1899 contain manuscripts almost entirely concerned with the development and organization of the League. There are numbers of letters from Tim Harrington, E. Haviland Burke and John Fitzgibbon, three

of the prominent Parnellites who threw their weight behind the new League. There are many letters from John O'Donnell, James Lynam and Peter Regan, the most active of O'Brien's paid organizers. James Daly of Castlebar, John McInerney of Limerick, James O'Shee of Waterford, Conor O'Kelly of Claremorris, P. A. McHugh of Sligo and numbers of others kept O'Brien informed on the progress of the League in particular localities, and William and P. J. Doris of the *Mayo News* give interesting comments on events in Westport in the early weeks of the League's existence. There are several letters from Michael Davitt as President of the League<sup>7</sup> and from James O'Kelly as Vice-President. From the letters of this wide cross-section of Irish political activists can be drawn a quite detailed picture of the manner in which the United Irish League was spread across the country over these two years. The launching by O'Brien in September 1899 of a new weekly newspaper designed to provide a channel of communication for members and branches of the United Irish League also introduced a new and interesting source of information into his correspondence. Tim McCarthy, who had edited the *Northern Star* since October 1897, was now appointed by O'Brien to manage the new paper, *The Irish People*, and his regular letters to O'Brien are valuable not only for their information on the internal affairs of the League and the paper but also for the information he conveyed in them about current politics.

The early correspondence for the year 1900 continues with an emphasis on the further extension of the United Irish League and the attempts to make it a nationwide organization; but increasingly the problems associated with the reunion of the parliamentary party and the relationship to it of the League assume greater importance. With this change in emphasis there occurs also a change in the personnel of the correspondents: there are fewer letters from organizers and local leaders and more from national figures, who now recognize the fact of O'Brien's dominance in nationalist politics. In the early months of 1900 there are a number of letters from Tim McCarthy and E. Haviland Burke urging O'Brien to stand out for the rights of the League as against the parliamentarians. There is a series of very important letters arising out of a speech made by Redmond at Liverpool in which he appeared to denigrate the achievement and importance of the United Irish League; dated between 27 March and 6 April 1900, they include a copy of a long letter from O'Brien to Patrick Ford of the New York *Irish World* as well as letters from J. F. X. O'Brien, Edward Blake, James O'Kelly, A. Donelan and E. Haviland Burke and copies of letters from O'Brien to Edward Blake and James O'Kelly. Correspondence between April and June is increasingly concerned with the preparations for the National Convention held in the latter month; it includes an exchange of letters between Bishop Patrick O'Donnell and O'Brien over the latter's attempt to persuade Bishop O'Donnell to preside at the Convention. There are also letters about the Convention from J. F. X. O'Brien, A. Donelan, E. Haviland Burke, W. Abraham, John O'Donnell and Lawrence Ginnell. After June—and the formal adoption of the League as the national organization—the preparations for the General Election and the second National Convention for the year are the main subjects raised in letters; included are many letters about the envisaged exclusion of T. M. Healy from the party. Other correspondents during the year include Joseph Devlin of Belfast, David Moriarty of Killarney, John Redmond, T. P. O'Connor, John O'Donnell, Alfred Webb, J. J. Shee and the Rev. R. Barrett. There is in addition a regular flow of letters from Tim McCarthy

<sup>7</sup> But most of the letters from Davitt to O'Brien in this period are in the National Library of Ireland, mss 912-913.

at the *Irish People* office keeping O'Brien in touch with political events and gossip.

The years 1901 to 1904 bring a drastic reduction in the volume of letters received by O'Brien, although this impression is exaggerated by the fact that a greater part of O'Brien's correspondence after 1900 is in the National Library; for example, virtually all his correspondence with John Redmond is in Dublin. The correspondence for 1901 is especially slight, mainly because of O'Brien's prolonged illness and eventual voyage to Australia and New Zealand for rest. What correspondence there is for 1901 is mainly concerned with a fairly disparate array of subjects and the letters come from a wide variety of writers. There are several letters from the Rev. R. Barrett about the affairs of the party in Cork City, the constituency then represented in Parliament by O'Brien. A number of letters and telegrams received by O'Brien during his visit to Melbourne and Sydney are included in the letters for December 1901, and from the early part of 1902 there are a number of letters sent by Tim McCarthy to O'Brien on the journey home, bringing him up to date with events in Ireland; these letters include discussion and disagreement about the action taken on the De Freyne estate during O'Brien's absence. On his way back to Ireland O'Brien had an audience of the Pope and papers and letters in connection with this are amongst his correspondence. Several letters from John Redmond about party affairs were also sent to O'Brien on his way home, and other correspondents include Bishop Patrick O'Donnell (about the Congested Districts Board and the Education Bill), T. P. O'Connor, M. M. Bodkin, John O'Donnell, Alfred Webb, A. Donelan and Lawrence Ginnell. After September 1902 there are a number of letters from John Shawe-Taylor in connection with his proposals for a conference on the land question and a number of other letters and papers connected with the conference which eventually met at the end of the year, including letters from Tim Harrington and several drafts and copies of the conference report.

The Land Conference, and more especially the preparations for the passing of the Land Bill arising from it, are the subject of much of the correspondence for the first half of 1903. There are also numbers of letters in this period from Tim McCarthy, John Shawe-Taylor and the Rev. J. Clancy. In September and October 1903 there are exchanges of letters between O'Brien and Horace Plunkett, Douglas Hyde, T. W. Russell, Justin McCarthy, George Crosbie, Lord Mayo and Lord Monteagle about the new conciliation policy being adopted by O'Brien and *The Irish People*. Between November 1903 and February 1904 O'Brien's controversial resignation from all the public positions he held is the subject of the most important correspondence; included are copies of several lengthy letters by O'Brien explaining and justifying his action. There is little of significance for the rest of 1904, with the exception of an exchange of letters in August between O'Brien and Stephen O'Mara in connection with the latter's attempt to find a basis for reconciliation between O'Brien and the party; in the same month there are a number of other letters concerned with O'Brien's return to Parliament and the relationship between him and other Irish members.

The five boxes of general correspondence covering the period from 1905 until the end of O'Brien's public career in 1918 contain many individual items of interest, but the unity of subject which generally marked the correspondence of the preceding seven years is absent—a reflection, no doubt, of the extent to which O'Brien had passed into a political wilderness. Certain interests recur in letters throughout these years: the university question, and especially correspondence with Bertram Windle and Sir Anthony MacDonnell about the future of Queen's College, Cork; the Land



Question, and especially the fight against Birrell's Land Bill in 1908; the evicted tenants, and the reconvening of the Land Conference in 1906 to consider the problem. There are many letters about the stand O'Brien had taken politically, and about the political situation in Ireland in general; there are numbers of letters about the crisis caused in the party in 1907 by the revolt of Sir Thomas Esmonde, Joseph Dolan and James O'Mara against the leadership of the party. Letters from John Herlihy, who managed *The Irish People* for O'Brien between 1905 and 1909, served a similar purpose to those from Tim McCarthy prior to 1904 in conveying information and hearsay to O'Brien. National and party unity are frequently raised in correspondence between 1905 and 1908, and the attempts in 1905 and 1907 by the Crosbies of the *Cork Examiner* to bring O'Brien and Redmond together are recorded in detail in letters between those involved. There are also a number of letters connected with the attempt of the Kerry County Council in the second half of 1907 to make use of the university question as a basis for reconciliation between all political groups in Ireland.

After 1908 the correspondence in the Cork collection of O'Brien manuscripts is both sparse and of little consequence. There are, however, some letters of value. Some interesting correspondence arose from the so-called "Baton" Convention of February 1909, and the correspondence with Sinn Fein sympathisers on the one hand and moderate landlords on the other show the extent to which O'Brien was struggling throughout these years to find some new expression of Irish nationalism. There are a number of letters written in the period immediately after the Easter Rising in 1916, including correspondence with Lloyd George between May and July of that year during the attempt to negotiate a settlement in Ireland. Many of the letters after 1916 are about various attempts, such as the formation of the Irish Nation League, to establish a new basis of constitutional action outside the parliamentary party. There are also a number of letters concerning the Mansion House Conference against conscription in 1918.

The final two boxes of general correspondence are for the period of O'Brien's retirement from public life. There is interesting material of a retrospective nature in these later letters, as well as correspondence with the publishers of O'Brien's various books. There are letters from Michael MacDonagh about the biography of O'Brien being written by him, and, in letters to Mac Donagh and to St John Ervine, O'Brien makes some interesting points about the events connected with the fall of Parnell in 1890. Included among the people who sent letters to O'Brien during his last ten years were Lawrence Casey, Arthur Lynch, the Rev. Thomas Dawson, the Rev. J. Clancy, T. P. Gill and Monsignor William Barry.

### III. LETTERS OF O'BRIEN TO HIS WIFE<sup>8</sup>

The letters of O'Brien to his wife, Sophie, begin with two undated letters in French from O'Brien to Sophie's mother, Mme Marie Raffalovich, in late 1889 or early 1890. Between February and June 1890 there was a constant exchange of letters between O'Brien and Sophie which came to an end with their marriage in the latter month. These letters from O'Brien, as well as being letters of courtship and containing plans for their wedding, also provide a certain amount of information about political events

<sup>8</sup> Boxes BA-BI.

in Ireland, especially in relation to the Plan of Campaign.<sup>9</sup> After their marriage there are relatively few letters until O'Brien was sent to Galway Jail on 13 February 1891. During his six months imprisonment he was able to smuggle out occasional letters to his wife, usually on very small pieces of paper. The originals of these letters, together with a few associated letters to Sophie from intermediaries, are in this collection, but in any case most of them have been published by Mrs O'Brien in her *Golden Memories*. The remaining letters written by O'Brien to his wife were written at various times during their married life when they were temporarily separated from each other, usually by O'Brien's absence on political business or Sophie's absence in Paris with her family. On such occasions there was generally a daily exchange of letters between them. Very few of Sophie's letters to O'Brien appear to have survived, but those from O'Brien are virtually intact in the Cork collection of his papers and in addition there are copies of many of them, in Mrs O'Brien's hand, in the National Library in Dublin.<sup>10</sup>

Letters from O'Brien to his wife in May, June, September, October, November and December of 1892 and in January of 1893 are mainly concerned with various meetings of the leaders of the anti-Parnellite party, often about the strategy to be adopted in election struggles with the Parnellites, with problems within the party, especially the quarrels with Healy, and with the nationalist newspaper controversies of the period. The most comprehensive set of letters from O'Brien are those written while his wife was helping nurse her dying father in Paris between March and October 1893. Over the six month period which covered the debates on the Second Home Rule Bill O'Brien recorded daily events in his letters, with only a few brief interludes when he crossed to Paris for a weekend or his wife returned to London for a few days. As well as accounts of the actual debates and the private negotiations between the Irish Party and the Government, the letters discuss many other topics of public interest, including the struggle with Healy which was reaching its peak during these months, the legal proceedings against O'Brien which were eventually to lead to his being declared a bankrupt in 1895, and the attempts to have the Paris Funds released for the benefit of the evicted tenants. Mrs O'Brien was again in Paris in February and March 1894, so that O'Brien's letters give an insight into the reaction of the Irish leaders to the resignation of Gladstone and his replacement by Rosebery; these letters also contain information about the affairs of the Irish Party in general and about the efforts of P. A. Chance to recover the debt he claimed was owed him by O'Brien. Letters for the period 7 to 18 August 1894 contain information about the party's struggle with Healy and its dealings with Rosebery. Groups of letters in February, March, May, June and July 1895 discuss events within the party and the proceedings brought against O'Brien by Chance. The Land Bill, troubles within the party (both financial and personal), and arrangements for meetings in Ireland are the principal subjects in a series of letters in April 1896. There are also groups of letters in July 1896 and March 1897, but there is little of interest in them; there are only isolated letters for the rest of 1897 and for 1898, except for a group of letters of little interest in June of 1898.

<sup>9</sup> Many of these letters from O'Brien to Sophie have been published by Mrs O'Brien in *Golden Memories, The Love Letters and the Prison Letters of William O'Brien*, Dublin, 1929. The other half of this correspondence—the letters from Sophie to O'Brien—are also in the Cork collection in Box BJ.

<sup>10</sup> Mss. 4213-4217, Sophie O'Brien, *Recollections of a Long Life*, 5 vols., 1929.

The letters from O'Brien to his wife in 1899 include substantial groups of letters written in May, June, July, August, September and October; these are mainly concerned with his work in connection with the development of the United Irish League and the establishment in Dublin of his newspaper, *The Irish People*. A long series of letters between 30 August and 20 September are mainly about the launching of the paper and about discussions O'Brien had with other political leaders on the Irish political situation. Other letters for the year give details of various public meetings, the state of League finances, the Mulranny forgery case (against Sergeant Sullivan of the R.I.C.), and interviews with various political leaders, especially Harrington.

O'Brien did not have further occasion to write any significant number of letters to his wife until June 1903, although there are several isolated items for 1900 and 1902. Letters between 23 June and 6 July 1903 describe in some detail the negotiations and manoeuvres needed in order to secure the passage of the Land Bill through Parliament; O'Brien mentions discussions with George Wyndham, the landlords, and members of the Irish party. By 16 September 1905, when the next series of letters begin, O'Brien had become alienated from the rest of the party and his letters indicate the unhappiness he felt at this state of affairs; these letters also deal with various aspects of his fight against the policy of the party, especially in relation to the campaign being conducted against John O'Donnell, the restarting of *The Irish People*, and his discussions with Tim Harrington and Lord Dunraven. Depression remains the main characteristic of O'Brien's letters to his wife in February 1906 in which he describes the opening events of the new session of Parliament, makes attacks on the policy and attitude of the party leadership, and comments on discussions with Asquith, Lord Rossmore and others. Similarly the letters written between 11 and 18 July 1906 describe events in Parliament, make attacks on the policy of the party, especially with respect to the Dudley Commission, and refer to the legal case being brought by O'Brien against the *Freeman's Journal*.

The Irish Universities Bill is the main subject of the letters written by O'Brien between 12 and 17 June 1908 and in them he discusses the attitude of the Irish Bishops and others towards the Bill; in his letters for December of the same year Birrell's Land Bill and its progress through Parliament is the main topic. There are no further letters until 1911 and the Home Rule and constitutional crises are the main subjects in three series of letters in February, August and November of that year. In letters in May 1912 O'Brien complains of the frustrations of working with his parliamentary colleagues, especially Healy. Progress of the Home Rule Bill, the Marconi affair, the Welsh Church Bill and the financial straits of the *Cork Free Press* are the principal topics of his letters in January and June of 1913. An assortment of letters in June 1915, March, May and June 1917 and February, April and May 1918 gives O'Brien's opinion on various events of those periods, including the calling by Lloyd George of the Irish Convention in 1917 and the conscription crisis of 1918.

The only other letters written by O'Brien to his wife were in the month of May in each of the years 1923, 1925, 1926 and 1927, when Sophie O'Brien was visiting Paris and O'Brien himself was in London. There is little of political significance in these letters, as O'Brien had by this time completely retired from public life, but there are many reflections and comments on Irish politics, changes in London and old political colleagues and friends.

#### IV. MISCELLANEOUS<sup>11</sup>

Twenty-two boxes of manuscripts and other papers in the Cork collection of O'Brien's papers are not covered by the categories of general correspondence or letters from O'Brien to his wife. Folios in these boxes have not as yet been numbered, nor have they been very systematically organized. The main character of the contents of these boxes can be judged from the appendix at the end of this article. They consist principally of letters received by Mrs O'Brien from various people, letters written by Mrs O'Brien to William O'Brien, miscellaneous correspondence of Mme Marie Raffalovich, the original manuscripts of O'Brien's books and of some of his articles, copies of speeches, notebooks (many in shorthand), newspaper cuttings and many of the other odds and ends normally accumulated in the course of a long public career.

#### APPENDIX

##### *Arrangement of the O'Brien Mss., Cork*

The numbers following the alphabetical letters for each box indicate the number of folios in the box. Where no such numerals appear the folios have not yet been numbered.

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AA.	General Correspondence, 1872-1887, and some undated, 1885-1890
AB.	General Correspondence, 1888-1889
AC.	General Correspondence, 1890
AD.	General Correspondence, 1891, and some undated, 1891-1893
AE.I-151.	General Correspondence, 1892-1893
AF.I-153.	General Correspondence, 1894
AG.I-134.	General Correspondence, 1895-1896
AH.I-124.	General Correspondence, 1897
AIA.I-229.	General Correspondence, Jan-Sept 1898
AIB.I-270.	General Correspondence, Oct-Dec 1898
AJA.I-268.	General Correspondence, Jan-April 1899
AJB.I-144.	General Correspondence, May-July 1899
AJC.I-221.	General Correspondence, Aug-Dec 1899
AKA.I-293.	General Correspondence, Jan-March 1900
AKB.I-162.	General Correspondence, April-May 1900
AKC.I-301.	General Correspondence, June-Dec 1900
AL.I-132	General Correspondence, 1901
AM.I-319.	General Correspondence, 1902
AN.01-237.	General Correspondence, 1903-1904
AO.I-355.	General Correspondence, 1905-1906
AP.I-246.	General Correspondence, 1907
AQ.I-171.	General Correspondence, 1908

<sup>11</sup> Boxes AV-AZ and BJ-BZ.

- AR.I-143. General Correspondence, 1909-1912
- AS.I-243. General Correspondence, 1913-1918
- AT.I-295. General Correspondence, 1919-1925
- AU.I-213. General Correspondence, 1926-1928
- AV. Miscellaneous papers, notes, newspaper cuttings and visiting cards.
- AW. Miscellaneous exercise books containing notes, copies of newspaper reports of speeches, etc. Bound volume of poems by O'Brien entitled "Reprints"
- AX. A number of notebooks, mainly written in shorthand, and a box of papers labelled "Notes, 1896."
- AY. Letters of sympathy to Sophie O'Brien on the occasion of O'Brien's death, February-March 1928.
- AZ. Letters written by various people to Sophie O'Brien (née Raffalovich) from 1889 onwards. Includes several letters relating to the presentation of the O'Brien Mss. to University College, Cork and correspondence with Michael MacDonagh, mainly about the biography of O'Brien.
- BA.I-201. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien (née Raffalovich), together with a few related letters from other people, 1890-1891.
- BB.I-141. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, 1892-May 1893
- BC.I-140. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, June-Oct 1893
- BD.I-131. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, 1894-1895
- BE.I-93. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, 1896-1898
- BF.I-94. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, 1899
- BG.I-93. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, 1900-1906
- BH.I-85. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, 1908-1912
- BI.I-113. Letters of O'Brien to Sophie O'Brien, 1913-1927
- BJ. Letters from Sophie Raffalovich (later O'Brien) to William O'Brien, November 1889-June 1890.
- BK. Miscellaneous correspondence of Mme Marie Raffalovich, including several letters from William O'Brien, 1888-1889. These mss. are generally in French.
- BL. Original mss. of *A Queen of Men* and of a number of articles and speeches.
- BM. Original mss. of *When We Were Boys* and of "Parnell Split."
- BN. Original mss. of *Recollections* and *An Olive Branch in Ireland and its History*.
- BO. Original ms. of *Evening Memories*.
- BP. Original mss. of *The Irish Revolution and how it came about* and *Edmund Burke as an Irishman*. Also some letters to O'Brien supplying him with information about Burke.
- BQ. Miscellaneous newspaper cuttings.
- BR. Miscellaneous photographs and maps. Membership cards, etc., for the All-for-Ireland League. A wooden model of a "Plank Bed" made by Pat O'Brien in Tullamore, 1891.
- BS. Household accounts and general business papers of Sophie O'Brien.
- BT. Journals containing articles by William O'Brien and other copies of articles by William O'Brien, 1888-1917.
- BU. Pamphlets by William O'Brien and pamphlets containing speeches by William O'Brien and others.

- BV. Proofs and copies of Hansard and other official papers, copies of journals containing articles by various people, and copies of articles by Sophie O'Brien
- BW. Bound ms. copies of *It is Thyself* (2 volumes) by André Raffalovich and *Souvenir de Cork* by Sophie O'Brien. Both works in French.
- BX. Two bound and several unbound addresses presented to William O'Brien.
- BY. Several bound addresses etc. presented to William O'Brien.
- BZ. A bound address presented to William O'Brien by his brother pressmen, 24 December 1881.

The following items are not contained in the above series of boxes :

Small box containing plaque of O'Brien's head and a number of medals.

A folder of photographs.

Addresses presented to O'Brien, including one in Welsh.

Address presented to Sophie O'Brien on the occasion of her marriage.

Book of signatures of the women of Ireland presented to Sophie O'Brien on the occasion of her marriage.

A number of photographic reproductions published as supplements to the *Cork Free Press*.