The truth is, Ireland was doing very well, indeed.

1. more people could read and write than ever before
   FAR more.

2. The miserable pauperism was vanishing.
   The little farms, five acres and less in size, were vanishing.

   The huts with the dirt floors were giving way to houses with rooms,
   upstairs and down

A cultural awakening: The Irish Literary Renaissance

George Bernard Shaw

Oscar Wilde

William Butler Yeats
   NOT from the Catholic Ireland or landed gentry
   Protestant clergy brought him into being.
By 1910, Dublin was a literary capital of first-rank brilliancy in Europe.

Gaelic League – founded, 1893

Its aim: to “de-Anglicize Ireland”

Give a rebirth to the Irish language before it perished forever.

It was NOT aimed to create a revolution.

Certainly not a Catholic one.

They wanted ALL Irish united – Catholic and Protestant – around a common language, a common culture.

It would make an Ireland still under the Union Jack.

But cleansed of all the cheap and commonplace things... the English flavor.

Its chief founder was Douglas Hyde of county Roscommon.

A poet, who wrote his first poems in Irish.

And then went collecting Irish folk-poems and translating them into a very idiomatic English.

And in his essays, he tried to write in English, but leaving out every tense the Irish didn’t have in THEIR language.

But this was a long way from revolution.

Hyde didn’t think in terms of politics at all.
What’s also worth seeing is that the Irish revival didn’t go very far.

It appealed to townsmen, not to the folks in the countryside.

If it was building people into thinking as Irishmen, it didn’t do much good.

Or there was the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Its aim was to build up Irish sport.

Away with lawn tennis and polo and croquet and cricket – those effete and English field sports!

Ireland must build up hurley and Gaelic football.

And when Parnell died, two thousand hurley players marched at the funeral with draped sticks.

Sinn Fein movement

It means “ourselves.”

Arthur Griffith set it up.

Not for him the Irish Literary Revival.

He wanted Ireland cut loose from English politics ....

– no recruits for the English army!

– no welcoming Queen Victoria on a visit to Ireland!
– let the Irish M. P.’s walk out of Parliament, and never come back!

Let them make their own Parliament!

What made Unionism so much stronger, and stick together?

1. machine industry

   Export based linen and ship building industries
   There, early in 19th century first

   But later expanding, and all other aspects of Ulster’s economic life were put in tandem to these.

This did 3 things:
   a) separated Ulster further from the rest of Ireland

   ... even as to agriculture.
   In southern Ireland, commercial livestock farming was the way of things and for export ...

   They had gone, as the saying was, “from corn to horn.”

   But Ulster agriculture was to provide raw materials and food for the local industrial market.

   So Ulster never looked southward. Merseyside and Clydeside were more in common with them.¹

b) it created what Marxists would call a bourgeois hegemony.

In other words, long before the rest of Ireland, there’s a middle class and shopkeeper and small businessman control of affairs.

It’s a lot more urban, and that creates the kind of society they have.

So the dominant force to emerge came from Ulster’s cities, and it was Tories. They ran the urban working classes and landed elements, too.

Protestant working classes couldn’t afford to see the industries fail. Their bread was riding on it, after all.

Their interests and their employers were the same; especially because the employers could point to an enemy that really scared them, the barefoot Catholic peasants of the south.²

The linen industry was full of paternalists. The employed accepted their employers as political leaders.

This was all the more so, playing Catholic workers against Protestant ones, in competing for jobs.

Catholics were an unskilled working class, mostly. Protestants a skilled one.

In fact, as of 1901, of the skilled working class, just 7% were Catholic.

c) the economic and home rule crises came at the same time.

The hard times of the mid-1880s made workers docile. They were easier for employers, hard-right Protestants, to lead.

And their employers were adamant for Ulster unionism.

Home Rule, if it came, would mean Catholic control of the workingman.

Protestant control meant Protestants running the labor market and Protestants making the decisions for the state.

All of this means that Ulster Unionism was never split up by quarrels over class, and by labor politics.

It was a perfectly natural alliance of classes – no artificial creation.³

2. the character of Ulster unionist leadership.

They weren’t statesmen.

When Ulster became its own state, they hadn’t the mature political smarts and skills needed to run things.

The one thing that put them to the top was a single issue: keeping Ulster out of any Catholic government.

They never found a constructive alternative.

They were all Dr. No, and nothing beyond it.

No matter what you do or say, It makes no difference anyway – Whatever it is, I’m against it!

But this also meant that they had the one skill that conted:

They knew what buttons to push, to keep their followers

behind them.

From the first, they had NOT let Orangemen dominate them.

Orangemen were too divisive – too sectarian.

And many Unionists were much more liberally inclined.

So it took good leaders, ones who could knit together a cohesive movement. And this the Unionists had from the very start.

They built umbrella organizations, able to mobilize all the Unionist energies.\(^4\)

3. the siege mentality.

To build it, you need beseigers, and the Unionists had it.

Constant hostility from the south
And a fair amount of hostility from people in Great Britain, too.

Feeling you are at a disadvantage is a very good way to win cohesion.

Most leading politicians, even Conservatives, felt contempt for the Ulster Unionists, even when they used them.

Everybody knew that perfectly well.

Most Ulster Unionists felt that way about English politicians, too.

These men were blind.
They couldn’t even take care of their empire, closest

Who were the Irish Parliamentary party?

Later republicans would depict them as stodgy, buttoned up types, lairds and politicians whose gears had all worn smooth from years of maneuvers.

As a matter of fact, they could boast a pretty revolutionary lineage...

Fenianism

Land League membership

an honored place in Parnell’s good old cause.

Some spoke for the Irish who’d left home for a better chance overseas...

in Scotland
in London

A very few were purse-fat Protestants – owners of distilleries and high-pressure lawyers

Gaelic was in long, steady decline.

1800 – in Ireland’s five million people, 2 million spoke Irish
Only 1½ million spoke English alone.

The others spoke both.

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A century transformed that, making Ireland English-speaking.

By 1901, 85% of the people spoke only English.

You’d have to go to the farthest, remotest, poorest part of Ireland, the west coast, to find Gaelic-speakers ... and those who knew no English amounted to a measly 21,000.

English educational systems made the change.

Children speaking Irish had wooden gags put in their mouths.

They were mocked and shamed.

Brothers were encouraged to spy on their sisters.

Schoolkids wore a stick on a string round their necks.

Every time they used a Gaelic word, the parents would put a notch – a tally in it.

That’s why it’s called a tally-stick.

At week’s end, the schoolmaster counts up the notches and decides the proper punishment.

But the pressure for English came from everywhere.

Even the backers of independence movements – the Daniel O’Connells and the like – were for English, and made their people learn it.

You can’t fight the enemy without his weapons.

There were just two times when O’Connell delivered a speech in Irish
in his life – 

twice when he thought police spies were on hand.

.... because, of course, they couldn’t speak Irish.

The Famine wiped out a million Gaelic-speakers, perhaps.

And immigration, many more.

If you know that the only way the family can live is by sending some of the kids abroad, to send money home

(And that’s how it worked out)

you have to make ‘em fit to work in a New World.

You HAVE to teach them English.

The distinctions of Empire got clearer if you look at language, and not just in Ireland.

Australian speech – “Strine,” they call it – has a considerable Irish basis.

Think about the Irish song in The Quiet Man, “The Wild Colonial Boy.”

He isn’t an American colonial.

He’s an exile in Australia – “born in Castlemaine.”

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Australian language itself has words you can track to the Irish.

a sheila is a dame – and that probably came from the Irish

So do colloquialisms like to nick

to nobble

to peg out

to get a rise out of someone. 7

Australian Rules Football is based on Gaelic Football.

Its players then and since are Irish ancestry.

And when you talk of somebody as your “fair-haired boy,” meaning your favorite, it’s a literal translation from Irish Gaelic. 8

When a person says “must not,” as in “couldn’t” –

“He must not have notice the ‘No Trespassing’ sign.”

– it’s Irish. You won’t find it in England. 9

Yet in the early 20th century, Irish English became the language of a cultural renaissance...

J. M. Synge

Sean O’Casey

James Joyce

William Butler Yeats

It’s English, but it’s English with a roll of the poetical, the mythical, all blarney and glow.

The speech has a flavor.\(^\text{10}\)

Australian English was more puzzling. It’s a little like Australian mammals – the separation means that as English evolved, Australian didn’t ...

a lot of the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) - and 19\(^{\text{th}}\)-century regional words from Cornwall and the Midlands and Ireland, that vanished there, lived on.

*larrikin*, for instance, meaning a mischievous youngster\(^\text{11}\)

*fossick* – to search without any system to it is Cornish Cornish miners brought it through.

*tucker* – for food (remember Friar Tuck, the fat guy? same root, same origin)\(^\text{12}\)

Much stronger was the clearest sign that most convicts came from the cities.

Australian accents are very much Cockney accents.

(Except that they keep the h on words.

That’s because the Irish immigrants had enough h’s to


go around and so did the Scots and East Anglians).

I becomes oi.

Ay becomes ahee (“may” becoming “mahee.”)

Cockney also explained why Australians were such tremendous swearers, with a lot more “bloodys” not to mention nastier things thrown in.¹³

But it was also an overt rebellion against upper class English – so called Standard English, which was being taught in the 19th century, too late to be imported with the immigrants.

It’s just one more way Australians showed what they thought of authority – including the authority of the schoolmaster.

You don’t talk correct English.

Anybody who does that is talking “lah di dah.”

It’s a sign that you may even be – dare I say it? – a “poofter.”¹⁴

And that peer pressure is in the schools to this day.

One Brit: “The vowel sounds are rolled round in the mouth before utterance and when uttered remind one not infrequently of a cat’s miaow or nocturnal caterwauling.”

That’s one reason why you find Australian women and girls talked then and now Standard English ...

Cultivated Australian, they call it.


And boys and men, showing mateship and manly independence, tend to Broad Australian.¹⁵

But a lot more of it came from the Aborigines.
place-names especially

*Billabong* for a waterhole

*Jumbuck* for a sheep

“*budgie*” for a parakeet is short for *budgerigar* (meaning parrot)

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It ain’t no English derivation that gives names like

Parramatta
And Illawarra, and Wollooomooloo,
Nadowra, Woogarora, Bulkomatta,
Tomah, Toog-gabbie, Mittagong, Meroo;
Buckobble, Cumleroy, and coolangatta,
The Warragumby, Bargo, Burradoo;
Cookbundoon, Carrabaiga, Wingecarribee,
The Wollondilly, Yurumbon, Bugarribbee.

– all names that a poet put together in 1824, because they rhymed.17

The word walkabout came from Aborigines, too.

The strain of Strine wasn’t getting weaker, turn of the century. It was stronger.

One token came out in 1895 – the one bit of Australian song that people are likeliest to know, the poet of “Banjo” Paterson, and the unofficial anthem of Australia:

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled,
“Who’ll come a waltzing Matilda with me?”

Waltzing Matilda,
Waltzing Matilda
Who’ll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?”

Down came a *jumbuck* to drink at the *billabong*;
Up jumped the *swagman* and grabbed him with glee.
And he sang as he shoved that *jumbuck* in his *tucker-bag*,
“You’ll come a waltzing *Matilda* with me.
Waltzing *Matilda*,
Waltzing *Matilda*,
You’ll come a-waltzing *Matilda* with me.”

*(A matilda is a knapsack).*

Some of it came from American. The parties in 1901 were not Whigs and Tories.

They were Federalists and State-righers.

The parliament for the dominion had a House and a Senate.

(Only the states kept their names like legislative assembly or legislative council)

They didn’t talk of the constituency of a politician

They talked of the electorate – much more American.

Americans talk of swinging voters; British talk of floating ones, to this day.

Australians prefer swinging.

In our own day, a book came out called Let Stalk Strine.
(Let’s Talk Australian).

“Emma chisit” – how much is it?

“Aorta” – “they ought to”

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“Numb butter” – nothing but a – 19
