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THE FICTION OF
GEORGE A. BIRMINGHAM
The Fiction of George A. Birmingham

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Dublin.

This thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university. It is entirely the work of the undersigned.

Therese Law

July 1966.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Note on references and abbreviations

Introduction

Part I  The themes are discovered in the early serious novels

Chapter 1  Biographical and historical background
Chapter 2  The themes of regeneration introduced in the first trilogy
Chapter 3  The themes of regeneration continued and reexamined

Part II  The themes continue; the patterns evolve in the early light novels

Chapter 4  The themes continue in characterizations
Chapter 5  Patterns of plot and characterization evolve
Chapter 6  Examination of satirical themes

Part III  The patterns continue in the later light novels

Chapter 7  The novels of transition
Chapter 8  The patterns are refined
Chapter 9  Themes of reconciliation

Appendix  The productions of Hannay's plays

Bibliography
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Since almost all of Hannay's novels have appeared in numerous editions, and some first editions are no longer available, it would be unhelpful to give page-references to the first editions. References are made in the text to chapters in the novels. The abbreviation PP is used throughout the notes for Hannay's autobiography, _Pleasant Places_. The abbreviations (TCD), (NL), and (NYPL) refer to the collections of Hannay papers in Trinity College, The National Library of Ireland, and the New York Public Library Theatre Collection respectively.
Introduction

George A. Birmingham (Canon James Owen Hannay) (1865-1950), is remembered chiefly as a comic novelist, the author of more than fifty light novels, most of which have some Irish background. His early serious novels are sometimes remembered for their just and exact analysis of early twentieth century political struggles and for the controversy that they aroused. But it is not generally understood that Hannay's light novels, particularly those written before 1914, continued that analysis through the medium of comic satire. Nor is it understood that those novels and their many successors demonstrated a serious critical point of view underlying a world of farcical happenings.

Hannay, who was a Christian clergyman with a strong ascetic interest, was essentially a moralist, and in his writing he applied a moralist's judgment to the world about him. In his early serious novels he examined two themes of moral regeneration: the role of the Anglo-Irish as the natural leaders of Ireland and the early Sinn Fein policy. In his early light novels he accepted the failure of regeneration, resolving the failure into patterns of comedy.
After World War I, as he moved away from Ireland in both his life and his writing, his conviction of the futility of all public affairs manifested itself in an amused detachment as he surveyed the follies of modern life. Hannay's later comic novels reflected his detachment, but they never fell into cynicism. As his deeply-rooted Christianity encompassed a reconciliation of the ascetic and the worldly elements in his nature, so did his comic art reconcile the critical and idealistic elements of his intelligence.
Between 1905 and 1910 Canon James Owen Hannay, who published fiction under the name of George A. Birmingham, wrote a series of five novels which established his reputation as a writer with understanding of Irish political and social problems. These novels did not achieve the popular success of his later light novels; they were imperfect and controversial; but they were well received by responsible critics for their sympathetic insight into Irish nationalism. His viewpoint was particularly welcome because it came from an unexpected quarter.

Hannay had come from a strong loyalist and Protestant tradition. By 1865, when Hannay was born in Belfast, the Act of Union had been in effect for over half a century, and in the North the political influence of the loyal Protestant middle class was at full strength. James Hannay had a clerical tradition on both sides of his family. His father, the Reverend Robert Hannay, was Vicar of Belfast, and his maternal grandfather, William Wynne, was the rector of Moira and an ardent Orangeman and unionist.

Hannay's earliest knowledge was of a society which held the Christian virtues in highest esteem and believed that these virtues would be found in the loyal Protestant
minority. He was bred in a climate of strong feeling which was characterized by antipathy to almost every manifestation of the nationalist cause, and although he later wrote with sympathy for certain aspects of nationalism and was for a time a member of the Executive Council of the Gaelic League, he was never a Nationalist in the ordinary political sense. He represented the turning-away from the Nationalist parliamentary party which is common to the whole literary and intellectual movement to which he belonged, and he shared its contempt for the self-seeking elements in Irish Nationalism, and its conviction that Irish aspirations were not to be realised by parliamentary action. He remained wholly contemptuous of the self-seeking elements in the Nationalist movement, especially in the Irish Parliamentary Party. But neither was he an Orangeman. He describes the influence of his background in his volume of reminiscences:

I was never an Orangeman and for a great part of my life have been in opposition to the political opinions held so firmly by my fellow Protestants of Northern Ireland, but the spirit of defiance and detestation of authority which inspired them has remained with me.

But it was in a well-ordered society that Hannay, the eldest of the four children of the vicar of St. Anne's
parish in Belfast, grew up. His cultural opportunities were as good as those of any young boy in that society. The theatre was frowned upon in the Belfast of those days, but he was allowed to attend the plays at the Belfast Theatre Royal. His father had a taste for literature; he read English poetry, Milton especially, and introduced his son to Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning. Young Hannay had access to contemporary work in The Cornhill, Macmillan's, Blackwood's and Longman's Magazine. What he did not find at home he borrowed from the public library in the old Linen Hall, reading the more recent poets. Like many developing writers, he was an enthusiastic and omnivorous reader.

His most enduring enthusiasm was for the novels of Sir Walter Scott. It remained with him to the end of his life. Those romantic historical novels, filled with incident, had a strong appeal for him; and his own first novels, which are discursive, crowded with incident, and are often based on historical events, show their influence.

Hannay spent his holidays at the house of his paternal grandfather, Ballylough, near Bushmills, on the north coast of County Antrim, and he remembers his grandfather as a man of retiring nature and literary tastes, a friend of the Irish novelist Charles Lever. It was this rugged northern country that Hannay knew and loved.
best. He learned to know it so intimately that he could use it as the setting for one of his most successful novels, *The Northern Iron*, and for the last and best of his later light novels, *Two Scamps*. He spent long days swimming and fishing in the offshore waters, or scrambling among the caves of the rocky cliffs. It was there too that he developed a taste for sailing which remained with him all his life and which he was later to develop on the waters of Clew Bay in Mayo, where he lived for twenty years as Rector of Westport. Many of his lighter novels reveal his love for sailing and yachting.

His earliest formal education was at English schools. At nine he was sent to a preparatory school at Temple Grove, East Sheen, Mortlake, and then on to Haileybury, leaving that school to return to day schools in Belfast, where he prepared mathematics for his entrance in 1885 to Trinity College, Dublin. His father had been at Trinity, and on his mother's side three of his direct ancestors.

Hannay speaks of his school and university career as undistinguished. His best subjects were English literature and classics, but his diversity of interests and failure to concentrate on a subject won him only a Junior Moderatorship, which is roughly equivalent to a second class honours degree. But he pursued his education
informally through his independent and catholic taste in reading. Then, too, he stored away the experience of school and university life, using it later in his work, particularly in his description of student life in his novel, *Hyacinth*, and in characterizations of public school boys in later stories.

Before he took his BA degree, he entered the Divinity School of the university. Hannay there came under the tutelage of Canon Wynne of St. Matthias's Church in Dublin, thus beginning his long association with that branch of the Wynne family. He was later to write the biography of Canon Wynne, later Bishop of Killaloe, who meanwhile had become his father-in-law. In 1889, shortly after his ordination, and after almost a year as curate of the country parish of Delgany, in Wicklow, Hannay married Ada Wynne, eldest daughter of Canon Wynne.

For almost four years the young Hannays lived among the country gentry of County Wicklow. His first attempt to write occurred there. The young Hannays were not very well off, and to earn money to pay a bill, he wrote a short story and sent it to the London magazine, *Temple Bar*, which published it. A London publisher who saw the story asked him for a novel, but despite that encouragement he did not complete one.

At that time Hannay felt he could not successfully combine novel writing with his duties as a clergyman, and
Mrs. Hannay agreed with him. But his creative intelligence needed an outlet, and he and his wife often spent the evenings in the Wicklow parish and in the following early years in Westport searching obscure theological sources, often using difficult German texts, although they had very little German between them, for information about the early Christian ascetics. It was painfully slow work, for he had little scholarly training in the subject. But with the encouragement of his wife and the help of other scholars, among them the English Benedictine Dom Butler, with whom he corresponded, he persevered until he completed a study of the early Desert Fathers called *The Spirit and Origin of Christian Monasticism*, which he delivered at Dublin University in 1901-2 as the Donellan Lectures, an endowed series given at Trinity each year. There was an additional endowment if the lectures were published, and, after many attempts to find a publisher, the work was accepted by Methuen in 1903.

Hannay's preoccupation with asceticism is significant because it is symptomatic of the idealistic cast of his nature. When his idealism conflicted with his severe intelligence, as it later did in his politics, that division inevitably forced him into an emotional withdrawal. But at that time the severely idealistic type of Christian life had appealed to the young Hannays, so much so that
they had considered giving up ordinary parish work for missionary life. They had received a call to the mission at Tristan Da Cunha, but considered the publication of the Donnellan lectures as a sign that they were to continue as they had begun in Irish parishes.

But their taste for a more adventurous life had led them from County Wicklow to County Mayo. When the Hannays were about to leave Delgany in 1891 after a difference of opinion with Hannay's superior in the parish, Canon Robinson, they had the choice of a number of parishes, among them a fashionable Dublin curacy and the parish of Westport. They knew that Dublin offered more opportunity for advancement and that Westport might prove to be a backwater, but they decided to take the latter.

Thus at the age of twenty-seven, Hannay became rector of a large parish in one of the poorest parts of Connaught. Ninety-five per cent of peasantry were Roman Catholic, extremely poor and extremely Irish. It was a decided change from the well-established society of the County Wicklow parish, where much of Hannay's work lay among the Anglo-Irish gentry. Nevertheless the Hannays were extremely happy for most of the twenty-one years they spent in Connaught.

Westport in County Mayo lies on the Atlantic seaboard in the most western part of Connaught, the poorest, most desolate, and also one of the most
beautiful parts of the country. The town is situated on island-dotted Clew Bay with legendary Croagh Patrick overlooking it from the south. Thackeray, an early visitor, was impressed enough to praise it as unusually beautiful.\(^5\) As "Ballymoy" its topography provided the background for many of Hannay's novels.

The town is an early example of town planning; it was designed by Castells in 1734. The wide straight streets run north, south, east, and west. A broad, tree-lined mall follows a canal to the gates of Westport House, seat of the Marquess of Sligo, who is one of the principal landlords of the countryside. His demense is open to the public, and paths run through it down to small settlements on the shores of the bay.

Extending into the harbour is an excellent stone pier, unused in Thackeray's time, and in Hannay's time, and unused today. Rows of tall empty warehouses line the harbour front. According to Thackeray they were not relics of a busy bygone era, but monuments of a commercial optimism which was never justified.\(^6\) Westport had never enjoyed the thriving commerce that Galway and Sligo remember. To Hannay, as to others, those buildings were both painful reminders of the poverty of the district and ironic records of past failures.
The people on the mainland and on the small islands scattered along the coast made a scanty living by fishing and farming the rocky soil of their patchwork fields. Much of the land was given over to graziers, a fact that engendered much bitterness. The four principal landlords of the district, Lords Lucan and Sligo, Sir Roger Palmer and Sir Robert Lynch, were not unrepresentative of their class and time.  

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the poor lived in circumstances differing little from those of two centuries earlier. Starvation was a possibility, and near-starvation an actuality for most of them. The people subsisted on a diet of tea, bread, and potatoes. They lived in insanitary cottages, ill-lit, and ill-heated. The picturesque roofs were not rain-resistant. The recent outrages of the eighties, which included arson, eviction, maiming, and murder, left a gulf of bitterness and hatred between the suffering and those who might have helped. But there was hope, for the majority were intelligent and courageous, and the government were aware that the people needed assistance.

Although the width of Ireland separated it from Dublin, Westport was often the center of national political activity. Michael Davitt, who knew from
personal experience what eviction meant, founded the Land League there in 1881, and Charles Stewart Parnell had made his famous and inflammatory speech supporting the League in Westport. William O'Brien, the Irish Parliamentary Party leader, lived in Mallow Cottage, just outside Westport. After the split in the Parliamentary Party, O'Brien spent more and more time in Westport and founded his United Irish League there in 1899.

By the time that the Hannays were living in Mayo, there had been attempts to ameliorate the condition of the people. The famine and the land wars, which had had such terrifying effects in Connaught, had drawn the attention of private charities as well as government relief agencies to that part of Ireland. During the famine, Quakers and Protestant English Missionary Societies had concentrated their efforts on Westport district. Some private individuals, including the Sligos, did much charitable work among their tenants.

Later in the century, the government concentrated relief measures in Mayo, an economically backward area. The government's Congested Districts Board, particularly, had carried out relief work by building fishing piers, distributing seed potatoes, and organizing cottage industries. In 1895 the Board bought Clare Island, sixteen miles from Westport in Clew Bay, for resettlement.
of local tenants.

But government relief programs, however well-intentioned, were administered after all by human beings. Some well-meaning officials were ignorant of local conditions. The neediest did not always get what they deserved: some in better situations were able to capitalize on government spending. The knotty land problem needed years to untangle. For example, in 1895 the C.D.B. had bought the land badly needed for resettlement from Lord Sligo's estate. In 1905 William O'Brien wrote that the purchase had still not been completed because of a question about the seaweed rights. For those with a sardonic humour, the picture had a tragicomic side, a side which almost but not quite obliterated the hopelessness of a life in which emigration was the only answer for many.

Although Hannay's flock was small, it was widely scattered and the parish was difficult to administer. His parishioners were for the most part local gentry who worshipped in the stone church at the gates of Lord Sligo's demense; but there were poorer parishioners living in outlying districts and on the islands to whom he had to minister, travelling on horseback, bicycle and boat. Often his responsibilities lay outside his parish duties; for example, he served on the board of Westport Workhouse and
administered other private and public charities. Thus Hannay grew to know the Irish of all classes, Catholic and Protestant.

The Hannays moved into the handsome Georgian rectory a short walk from the gates of Westport House. One or two people living in Westport today describe Hannay then as a tall handsome man, blue-eyed, with thick brown hair touched with a reddish gold. Photographs of the period reveal a handsome face, thoughtful, with a reserved expression. Although money was scarce, for Hannay’s stipend was insufficient to educate a growing family of four children, they enjoyed life in the beautiful countryside and kept a small boat. One of the Hannay’s keenest pleasures was to sail Clew Bay, bathing and visiting the numerous small islands which dotted the bay. It was these recreations which provided the background for his most popular novel, *Spanish Gold*, and for other later novels.

It was in Westport that Hannay began to write fiction. He found much material in his new environment. The town, Clew Bay, the countryside, the tiny settlements nearby, Achill Island, all provide the scenes for his novels. He was struck by the character of the Irish people about him, and his sympathy was aroused by their plight. In their history he saw a tradition and a cause to be
examined more closely than he had done before. In all he found the stuff of his novels.

On March 3, 1905, under the pseudonym of George A. Birmingham, Hannay's first novel, *The Seething Pot*, was published. Both the title and the pseudonym reveal something about his situation. Even without foreknowledge of the controversy his novels were to arouse, he thought it more tactful not to sign the work with the name of the Rector of Westport. The name he chose had no special significance; it was common enough among middle-class Anglo-Irish. Indeed, it was even more common in a variant form, a fact which accounts for the spelling *Bermingham* in some early notices. The title, which may have been suggested by Yeats's *Pot of Broth*, as well as the Biblical quotation, was a metaphor for contemporary Ireland.

Ireland was in a state of ferment. The long dominance of the Irish Parliamentary Party had not lasted ten years after the fall of Parnell. The party split in the years 1891-1900 engendered so much bitterness that factionalism not only weakened the party but seeped into other movements. New movements were springing up to supplant the old, new alliances were formed, and new policies inaugurated.

The nationalists, who saw Home Rule further away than ever, were drawn to a policy of Sinn Fein (We Ourselves).
English goods were to be boycotted and Irish manufacture fostered. Emigration was to be prevented and service in the British forces to be discouraged. Most important, the national cultural heritage was to be preserved. Moderates of all classes found some good in these ideas, notably in the encouragement of Irish manufacture and Irish culture. Those moderates included men like Standish O'Grady and T.W. Rolleston, who published and translated Gaelic literature, and MacNeill, O'Growney, and Douglas Hyde, who founded the Gaelic League in 1895. They hoped to unite Irishmen of all classes and political and religious beliefs in an appreciation of their Irish inheritance. The National Literary Theatre, founded by Yeats, Martyn, and Lady Gregory became a centre for Irish poets and dramatists and all those who involved themselves in the new national artistic renaissance.

In 1902 various liberals of all classes again attempted to solve the land question, and in 1903, an improved land bill, the Irish Land Purchase Act, was finally passed. Landlords and agitators tried to find common ground in political as well as economic questions. In 1899 the Irish parliamentarian William O'Brien had started a movement directed at land reform called the United Irish League, which was to embrace Irishmen of all classes, creeds, and politics. The correspondence of
O'Brien and Lord Dunraven, who with Shawe-Taylor and other enlightened landlords had founded the Irish Reform Association, exemplifies the difficulties of reconciliation. O'Brien could not retain the confidence of extremists in his party who would never compromise with any landlord; and within the party he was also fighting the suspicion of Healy and the lassitude of Dillon. He was unable to hold together all these elements long enough to deal with Dunraven, who was having his difficulties with his fellow landlords. The unionists, who had temporarily joined their ranks in the land crisis, turned away; there was even a threat of unionist devolution in 1903-04.

The Roman Catholic Church, which had intervened in the Parnell crisis, still felt the effects of that intervention: for better or worse she had earned the bitter enmity of many. As the power of the Irish Parliamentary Party waned, so did the political power of the parish priest, largely replaced by a more centralized authority composed of the Bishops working together. There were still questions regarding education and social legislation that the Church thought it her right to settle, but she was to play an increasingly conservative role in Irish politics.
Thus, although there was a new spirit beginning to emerge, it was hampered by old quarrels and old prejudice. In his first five novels Hannay tried to represent this new spirit and these ideas, movements, divisions, parties, and factions, struggling to emerge from a background of dissension and hopelessness into a new synthesis.
References

1. PP, p.6

2. For a pedigree of Hannay's Scottish paternal ancestors, see (TCD)Ph 93

3. PP, p.36


6. Ibid. Ch. XX


9. Ibid. p.364

10. William O'Brien Mss. 13478 - 13526

11. E.G. Miss Horniman in a letter to the All-Ireland Review Vol. 6, No. 51, 4 April 1906

12. Punch suggested that Birmingham and Yeats were joining forces on a new work, 'The Seething Pot of Broth.'

13. William O'Brien Mss. 13478- 13526
The prologue of *The Seething Pot* contains the key to the principal theme of the novel: the lost opportunities of the Anglo-Irish gentry. A Protestant gentleman, General Geoghegan, is condemned to hang for leading an armed insurrection of peasants in the south. The sentence is later commuted to transportation, but the judge's indictment represents the loyalist view toward a traitor to his class.

You are a member of a Church which has always inculcated loyalty upon her children as a sacred duty, and taught the sinfulness of rebellion.... You are a member of a class whose traditional boast it has been that they are England's garrison in this country.

The inverse of the same view is expounded by Desmond O'Hara, whom Sir Gerald Geoghegan, son of Geoghegan the rebel, meets on his way from Australia to Clogher in County Mayo where he has succeeded to the family estates.

You are an Irish gentleman, Sir Gerald, and therefore one of the natural leaders of the Irish people.... We're an aristocratic people, and we're loyal to our leaders.... Unfortunately, our gentry, our aristocracy, stand out and won't lead us, so we fall
back on priests and politicians. Leaders of one sort or another we must have, and we ought to have you and your class.

(CH. 1)

Both the judge and O'Hara share with Hannay the belief that the Anglo-Irish had a special responsibility as the natural leaders of Ireland. To what extent that belief was a delusion for young Gerald Geoghegan forms the plot of The Seething Pot.

Gerald's youthful idealism is fired by memories of his father and by O'Hara's ideas, but his first enthusiasm is cooled after his arrival in the West. He mistakes for a welcoming party a deputation meeting the local Nationalist hero, Michael McCarthy, who is returning from gaol. Gerald is cursed and threatened, and after a further castigation in a local Nationalist paper he turns from politics to the solace of local society, particularly Lord Clonfert and his daughter, Hester, with whom Gerald falls in love. But Gerald cannot remain indifferent to the plight of the unfortunate peasantry, and under the aegis of a Nationalist leader, John O'Neill, he offers an enlightened land scheme to his tenants. Guided by John O'Neill and thereby provoking ostracism of his own class, Gerald is forced further into Nationalist politics: he consents to stand for Parliament as O'Neill's candidate.
But the internal dissensions and the self-seeking elements in the party repel him, and he finds himself torn between his idealism and the squalid reality of Irish politics. After his marriage to Hester Carew, he faces the inevitable: retirement from the political struggle. Their idealism, which had never been more than a romanticized patriotism, is defeated by squabbles with the police on a public road, by the acrimony of party politics, and by the single-minded ruthlessness of John O'Neill. A famine occurs, and Gerald is drawn to the parish priest, Father Fahy, who is passionately concerned by the people's condition. O'Neill sees it only in the abstract - one more horror to be prevented by the success of his political efforts. Only such single-minded men can achieve their goal. Men of good will like Gerald and O'Hara, who see all sides, are defeated before they start. And even John O'Neill is defeated in the end by elements within his own party. The only nationalists to support him to the end are a fiery group of extremists led by Patrick O'Dwyer, who is suspected of being a member of a secret revolutionary group. O'Dwyer explains to Gerald that their alliance, even O'Neill's policy, if successful, is doomed. In Hyacinth, Hannay's second novel, we catch a glimpse of the Geoghegans at an exhibition of local industry:
Lady Geoghegan, grown pleasantly stout and cheerfully benignant..., rejoiced the eyes of beholders with a dress made of one of the convent tweeds. Sir Gerald followed her, awkward and unwilling. He had been dragged with difficulty from his books and the society of his children. (Ch. 22)

Thus has Gerald resolved his dilemma. But in a larger sense, Gerald's dilemma is the dilemma of his class. The landowning gentry had no role to play in a rapidly changing world, as had their ancestors, the Volunteers of 1782. To work with the Irish Parliamentary Party which supported land agitation was to work against the interests of their own class. And although some did not realize it, the landowning class was impotent at that time, doomed as it was by the breakdown of the class system and the rise of new democratic and socializing movements in the twentieth century.

Hannay's own belief in the special position of the Anglo-Irish derived partly from his heritage and partly from contemporary influences. His romantic imagination had been caught by the idea of an aristocratic leader of Ireland; his admiration for the Volunteers of 1782 is evinced in his pride in his ancestor, Owen Wynne, who had been a Volunteer in 1782 and had won Hannay's respect by refusing a Union peerage in 1800. Parnell, an Anglo-Irish gentleman,
who had boasted another such ancestor, had been dead for a decade and was beginning to evolve into the romantic figure of the lost leader.

It was not entirely a new conception: Smith O'Brien and other Young Irelanders had hoped to the end for support from the aristocracy. They had hoped in vain, and if members of the Irish Parliamentary Party had nursed similar hopes, they had disappeared by the time Parnell displaced Isaac Butt as leader of the Party. Parnell was an anomaly, a Protestant and aristocrat leading a party largely Roman Catholic and middle-class. William O'Brien, who himself had considered the question, quoted Parnell as declaring that "the only good things the Irish landlords have to show for themselves are their hounds and, perhaps, in the Roscommon county, their horses." But Hannay was beginning to meet men like Sir Horace Plunkett, founder of the Irish Agricultural organisation Society. Gentlemen like Plunkett, and others on the Recess Committee (1895) and the Childers Commission (1903) seemed to demonstrate a new spirit, and Hannay, along with men like Standish O'Grady, hoped that they would be capable of furnishing the new leaders Ireland so badly needed.

Desmond O'Hara, characterized in the novel as the editor of a weekly review, "The Critic," is clearly Standish O'Grady, and "The Critic" O'Grady's "All Ireland
"The Critic" is described as "the candid friend of the unfortunate class whom England in self-defence is being obliged to squeeze out of existence." The review "always returned ... to the subject of landlords, their prospects and duties, their sins and mistakes." In fact, the "All Ireland Review" from its inception exhorted landlords to their duty. As early as the twelfth issue O'Grady, writing in a continuing series of articles titled "The Great Enchantment" says "The Protestant Anglo-Irish aristocracy, which once owned all Ireland from the centre to the sea, is rotting from the land in the most dismal farce-tragedy of all time, without one brave deed, without one brave word." But, like Desmond O'Hara in his letter to "G.G." O'Grady could not present a very clear course of action to the gentlemen whose help he solicited. His advice to them was couched in minor projects: supporting domestic manufacture, learning Gaelic, etc. At best it was a sort of back-to-the-land movement in which O'Grady promised his young prospects all the concomitants of country life: healthful diet, a sturdy constitution, and a useful life.

In what surely must be one of the most unusual exchanges between author and critic, appended to a review of The Seething Pot in the "All Ireland Review", O'Grady writes,
I discovered myself boldly introduced in the flesh and also flagrantly misdrawn and misrepresented.... Then the queer representation of the physical man is not improved by an accompanying exaggeration of moral and intellectual force.6

And the following reply from Hannay was also printed:

"...I should like to assure you that the description of you is purely imaginary, and that no single item in the sketch of Desmond O'Hara, regarded as an individual, has any foundation whatever in fact. You will understand this because you know that I had not the honour and pleasure of your friendship at the time of writing the book, and therefore it was wholly impossible for me to attempt a description of you. "The Critic" in my novel is, of course, "All Ireland Review" of which I have read every number since the first. I brought it into my novel because it seemed to me the purest and most elevated force at work in the "Seething Pot" of our national life.... The description of the editor was a work of mere imagination. Desmond O'Hara is such a man as I, not knowing, conceived the Editor of A.I.R. might be.6

In an attempt to acquaint Gerald with the new intellectual movement, O'Hara introduces him in Dublin to representative members of the Irish Revival, and in that scene Hannay caricatured several contemporary figures. The young painter, Jim Tynan, is recognisable as Jack Yeats. His paintings as described are like those portraits of Irish types which Yeats exhibited in 1901,
and are also like the series of portrait illustrations which Yeats contributed to a collection of essays published later by Hannay. Tynan is described as a Catholic in the novel, and the religion of another figure, Donovan, is reversed: he speaks of himself as a Protestant in the novel whereas Edward Martyn, his original, was very much a Roman Catholic. That Donovan was meant to be Martyn is probably from his enthusiasm for Gaelic literature and from his scathing reference to a "collaboration" between himself and Dennis Browne on a play. About Dennis Browne himself there is no doubt. He is easily recognised as George Moore by his red hair, his titillation of the ladies by sexual innuendo, and Donovan-Martyn's reference to his writing "in the spirit of French decadent poets ..." He reappears later in the book as Gerald's landowning neighbour and unwelcome guest. He tells the story of the policemen, the cook, and the judgement of the omelet, and continues to be his own extraordinary self, i.e., George Moore. Moore was the largely absentee landlord of Moore Hall, near Westport in County Mayo. His agent, Tom Ruttledge, was a friend and sailing companion of Hannay.

Hannay's practice of introducing contemporary figures into his novels was to earn him a good deal of criticism,
particularly after the publication of his second novel, *Hyacinth*, in which he described contemporary institutions and events as well as persons. But it was a scene in *The Seething Pot* which brought him the most trouble - the enmity of the parish priest of Westport. Hannay always believed that the priest, a man of fiery temper, thought himself caricatured in the scene in which the local P.P. and League officials welcome Michael McCarthy.*11*

The celebration is described as a vulgar feast of boiled mutton, whiskey, and pseudo-champagne.

The most important personage - and true centre of the novel - is John O'Neill, to whom O'Hara introduces Gerald as a guide to the intricacies of Irish politics. Although this mysterious and dominating figure is an amalgam, the person he most closely resembles is Parnell. There is some likeness to the Irish Parliamentary Party leader, William O'Brien, who after 1900 spent more and more time at Mallow Cottage near Westport, where Hannay knew him. O'Neill is furnished with a devoted wife of impeccable origins and with a low seafront lodge very like Mallow Cottage, but in his autocratic manner, his tight control of party members, his single-minded political course, there is an indisputable portrait of Parnell. Even his speeches to Gerald reflect Parnell's
political philosophy. Parnell's central policy - and the policy of the Redmondites after him - is shrewdly grasped:

His [O'Neill's] life centred in the struggle which the Irish were making in the House of Commons. His mind was continually at work on the possibilities of bullying or cajoling one or other of the English parties. Everything was subordinated to the desire of obtaining a practically independent Irish Parliament. The Land Question, which seemed to bulk as large in Irish life, he regarded as of only second-rate importance. (Ch. 4)

Parnell's view of Irish landlords is mirrored in O'Neill's castigation:12

They are English at heart, and not Irish; therefore, like everything else that stands in the way of Irish nationality, they have got to go... Why could they not have understood twenty years ago that the English care nothing for them or their properties? If they had stood by their country, they would have been sitting to-day in an Irish Parliament helping to govern Ireland, instead of licking the boots of politicians in Westminster, who will go on betraying them to the end. (Ch. 9)

Parnell's struggle with the priests is demonstrated in the pivotal scene of the League meeting in which John O'Neill defeats Father Fahy; the priest is humiliated and goes crestfallen to his bishop for orders. The latter is anxious to know how O'Neill stands on a
question which concerns the church, "the admission of foreign order," for he knows - as the 19th Century Roman Catholic hierarchy discovered in the education question - that the party's backing is valuable in the Church's dealings with the government.

There are similarities in the personal portrait: John O'Neill is described as a gentleman sprung from an historic Irish family, a Protestant, lonely, cut off from his own society and avoiding the society of his followers in the House of Commons. He sits in a "listless attitude ... spoke rarely," and only "his face, especially his eyes, proclaimed a strength of character...." He is thoughtless, even autocratic, toward his followers, and "No member of the party possessed his confidence."

Whether Hannay fairly represents the personality of Parnell in his characterization is not discoverable, since even modern historians find him an enigma, but it is clear that Hannay's characterization is based upon the popular conception of Parnell. And so he remains an enigma in the novel. What motivates him (it is not lust for power nor love for Ireland), what his reactions to failure, what his relation to others, is impossible to tell. His relationship with his wife is mawkish and unreal. There is a hint of O'Neill's past; he himself refers to being picked up from the gutter by her and
living on her income, but the episode seems to exist out of the context of the novel.

Although the character of Parnell fascinated Hannay—as it fascinated his contemporaries—Hannay himself was not a Parnellite. Some of his ideas may have coincided with Parnellite doctrines, but Hannay was never a follower of either Parnell or the Irish Parliamentary Party. John O'Neill is not a sympathetic portrait but a romantic portrayal of an autocratic leader, not inconsistent with Hannay's conception of an Anglo-Irish saviour of Ireland. The figure continued to exercise Hannay's imagination, and he returned to it thirty years later in an unpublished play, Parnell.¹⁴

Hannay deals with the complex relations of the Roman Catholic Church with justice and insight. In a series of scenes, he shows the influence of the priests in the League, the uneasy alliance of the party and the priests, and the policy of the church in national questions. Father Fahy, the local priest, fears John O'Neill and works secretly against him. This meddling priest is charitably portrayed; although he struggles against O'Neill and is instrumental in his defeat, his primary concern is for his people, who are land-hungry and destitute. Although Gerald's agent, Mr. Godfrey, mistakes Father Fahy's motive, he realizes that priests are
inextricably tied to the peasantry. He says of the proposed scheme to help the tenants of Gerald's estate:

They [the tenants] won't be a pin better off for the change. The only person who will benefit will be Father Fahy .... He'll marry every one of his bankrupt harvestmen in the middle of six months to a fine healthy girl from off the mountains, and get a five-pound note for each ceremony. Then he'll have a nice little income coming in for the next fifteen years for christening babies at a pound a head, and a trifle extra for churching the mothers. I've been watching philanthropists and Government officials fiddling at these schemes for years back, and I never saw one of them yet good for anything but breeding paupers to pay priests.

(Ch. 10)

Thus speaks Mr. Godfrey, typical of a hardened view of a certain class. He resigns his agency rather than work for Gerald, an associate of the nationalists (through John O'Neill) whom he condemns as thieves and murderers. He has never forgotten the bad days of the land wars when his friends were murdered.

But Father Fahy, who has rejected Gerald's counter-proposal, explains to his bishop:

But if I had done nothing, the scheme would have been accepted by the League, and then my poor people would have lost the chance of getting a bit of land they could live on. You know, my lord, the well-off men and the shopkeepers would have snatched it all up.
And my poor people - oh, if you could see them! But, sure, you know as well as I do how very poor they are, and the way the boys and girls are going off, the very best of them. And who is to blame them? Look at the life they lead at home here on the bogs and in the cabins.

(Ch. 11)

Gerald's agent, Mr. Godfrey, and the Church of Ireland clergyman, Canon Johnson, represent the intransigent elements in their class. They reject Gerald as soon as he associates himself with O'Neill. Godfrey sees Gerald as a traitor to his class, but to Canon Johnson there is another element: religion. To him Catholics are naturally and inevitably Nationalists. He says to Gerald:

You and I are on one side: I put in myself because the interests of Protestantism are bound up with those of the landlords. We are born on one side, put there by the Almighty, and we've got to fight our corner and keep our end up as long as we can.... They want to take your property, and they are gradually getting it.

and again, when speaking of O'Hara:

I believe he is one of that half-nationalist lot, like Dennis Browne. There's some excuse for Browne - he's a Roman Catholic; but how any man who's a Protestant and comes of a decent family, as I believe O'Hara does, can mix himself up with that set is more than I can understand.

(Ch. 4.)
To Canon Johnson a Protestant leader of a nationalist party, like John O'Neill, is totally incomprehensible. Hannay realizes very clearly the inflexible and categorising nature of religion in Ireland. Hester Carew says:

"I don't know how it is in other countries, but here you are born one thing or the other, Protestant or Roman Catholic, just as you are born a boy or a girl. You can't change."

(Ch. 7)

Hannay does not condemn Godfrey for his prejudice not the clerics for their partisanship. He lets each man speak for himself, revealing his ideas, his character, and his tradition. Hannay is trying to show the futility of believing that such men can ever come to terms, their inflexibility having been shaped by passionate hatred, civil war, and strife. But such characterizations explain the antagonism Hannay aroused, particularly among critics, who could not distinguish the portrayal of opinion from Hannay's own opinion.

Hannay's richest character, Desmond O'Hara, shows a comic inventiveness that was to flower in Hannay's later light novels. O'Hara is independent of the other characters and plot of the novel; he acts as a Celtic Chorus, commenting sometimes comically and sometimes seriously but always perceptively. When he is needed in
the plot, he performs: he introduces Gerald to contemporary Irish nationalism, and he makes the fatal introduction of Gerald to O'Neill. But his characterization — and the structure of the novel — suffers because he is not really of the novel.

A characterization which does appear in Hannay's later novels is that of the feckless Irish peer, in this case, Lord Clonfert. He is the first of a series that Hannay will continue to create as comic characters. In *The Seething Pot* the characterization is important because in it Hannay attempts to characterize Irishness. Lord Clogher finds it natural to say "God bless the work" to his tenants, whereas his half-English daughter and Gerald can never do so. Hannay believed — as others have done — that the Anglo-Irish even after only three hundred years were "more Irish than the Irish." But Clonfert, whose chief interest in life is to evade its problems, is as vehement as the agent Godfrey and other members of his class in rejecting O'Neill, the League, and agrarian agitation. He remembers the murders and outrages of the land wars and believes that any reform, such as Gerald's, particularly because it has been initiated by O'Neill, to be tarred with the same brush.

Lady Clonfert is a more vigorous conventional figure. She wants to improve the situation of the people,
and she finds much opportunity for improvement in her surroundings. She tries to encourage native industry but finds the peasantry awkward to deal with. In the exhibition of industries which she sponsors, Hannay has much scope for his satire in the well-intentioned ladies who patronize such affairs, the "sharp-featured young lady struggling to find the best places for display of convent-made lace," the bumbling Lord Clonfert, and the English cabinet minister not wholly at sea in Irish politics. Signs of Hannay's comic genius appear; although the targets are conventional ones, his satirical bent is already evident in the carefully observed and richly detailed scene. In Lady Clonfert's tent, anticipating the speech of the cabinet minister, "the men stamped their feet quite noiselessly on the damp grass, and the clapping of gloved hands died away in a faint flutter against the canvas." Hannay had first-hand experience of many such scenes, many such politicians, many such philanthropies.

It is important to understand - as many of Hannay's critics did not - that in these characterizations Hannay is reflecting not his own views, but the views of certain types as he understood them to be representative. And his characterizations are fair. But, unfortunately, in those portraits Hannay weakened the effectiveness of
his novel. The characters become mouthpieces for their views. His chief failure is Gerald Geoghegan, who is meant to be the hero of the book. First, he is overshadowed by the characterization of John O'Neill, a far more forceful figure. Second, Gerald's weakness is the central weakness of the novel. Hannay's attempt to portray a well-intentioned but essentially weak figure results in a diminishing of interest in him. The reader, with no real concern for Gerald, becomes fascinated by the vivid and just portrayal of various elements in a troubled nation. The work was unsuccessful as a novel, but Hannay showed great courage and insight in honestly describing contemporary Ireland.

The novel is given unity, however, by its point of view, which is that of an amused, detached, very intelligent observer. Only rarely, as for example in the portrait of the blustering Nationalist party hack, O'Rourke, does the author's distaste show. But at the same time that the tone, which is ironic, reinforces the detached point of view, it lessens the novel's impact. A reader cannot be affected by the dilemma of the hero when he is shown so very lucidly from the first the impossibility of the hero's position.

The Seething Pot is principally a novel of ideas; plot as well as characterization is subordinated to the theme. The failure of one Anglo-Irish gentleman,
Gerald Geoghegan, exemplified Hannay's belief in the failure of his class. Whether, in fact, a real Gerald would not have been able to compromise with the local nationalists, and whether, committed as he was, he might not have continued in his efforts at reform, are questions which Hannay neglects to ask, being concerned only with showing his failure. Although the "admission of the religious orders question" is an extremely ingenious device for manipulating a conflict between O'Neill, the church, the government, and the opposition - incidentally illuminating the realities of 19th Century Irish parliamentary politics - some of the incidents are far-fetched. It is likely that the local nationalists might have given a fighting chance to a new landlord with credentials such as Gerald's. The conflicts of interest are too rigidly drawn; there might have been more cooperation between the factions in the local League, their leader, and a benevolent landlord. But Hannay was primarily concerned with showing how that conflict of interests corresponded with the rigid structure of an inflexible society.

And Hannay's personal experience was teaching him just how inflexible that society was. As a member of the board of the Gaelic League he was suspect in his own
Protestant, middle-class society; as he became more embroiled in "nationalist" affairs, some of his neighbours and friends rejected him. They, like Sir Gerald's neighbours, could make no distinctions: all "nationalists" were traitors. And as a Protestant clergyman his position with Roman Catholic nationalists was equally equivocal.

Even in his first novel, Hannay had offered a just assessment of the rigidity of Irish public opinion, which inexorably followed class and religious lines. He continued to portray that rigidity in his later comic novels. Despite the bubbling in the Pot, the deep-seated jealousies and ancient grudges still found expression in contemporary Ireland. Ironically, Hannay, who understood them so clearly, himself suffered from them.

His pseudonym had not protected him as it had not protected the thinly-disguised figures in his novels. Within a year of the publication of The Seething Pot, the identity of the author was no longer a secret. It is doubtful whether Hannay had ever seriously hoped to preserve it in a country as small and gossip-ridden as Ireland.
Although he had earned less than fifty pounds in its first year from his first novel, Hannay was encouraged by its reception. In Ireland the novel was widely, and, for the most part, favourably reviewed. Because it dealt with current Irish questions, Hannay was asked to write articles and stories, to deliver lectures, and to give his views to journalists and others on Irish questions. He contributed a slight but ironic sketch on Connaught peasant life to the *All Ireland Review*, and "Fundamental Sociology", one of the best short pieces he ever wrote, appeared in *The Shanachie*, a short-lived periodical of the Irish Literary Revival. The story was featured over the contributions of W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, and it was announced to be "by the author of *The Seething Pot*." Hannay also wrote reviews, essays, and articles for the *Irish Times*, the *Daily Express* and other English and Irish periodicals.

He had begun to meet some eminent men: George Russell (AE), Standish O'Grady (whom he had read but never met) and Horace Plunkett. According to Margaret Digby's biography of Plunkett, his friendship with Hannay had started when Plunkett visited Westport Rectory on his early rounds in the cooperative movement. The Hannay's guest book contains Plunkett's signature, dated 1896.
Their friendship developed after the publication of The Seething Pot, when Hannay visited Plunkett in Dublin and at his house in Foxrock, meeting his circle and absorbing his ideas. They corresponded regularly. 20

Sir Horace Plunkett (knighted by Edward VII) was a member of the historic Meath family which Lord Dunsany heads. A man of great energy, he had administered the family estates during the illness of his brothers and the minority of his nephew, and, at the same time, had been one of the leaders of the Irish Land Conference of 1902. He had founded the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society which sought to promote agricultural cooperative societies and had travelled through the country, speaking at meetings, persuading farmers, and soliciting help from clergy and businessmen.

Hannay admired this enlightened aristocrat and reformer. He dedicated his fifth novel, The Bad Times, to him, a "heart too brave" and "soul too strong" struggling against the "spite of little men." Plunkett's influence on Hannay's thought is reflected in passages in Hyacinth which parallel ideas in Plunkett's Ireland and the New Century.

One of Hyacinth's friends has returned from the reception of his sister into a convent. He is bitter not only at the loss of his sister, but because of the
dowry of £600 which his father is obliged to pay:

"It takes a man a lifetime to make six hundred pounds in a country shop... then down come the nuns and sweep it away; and it's wasted. It ought to be invested in a local factory or in waterworks, or gasworks, or fifty other things that would benefit the town it's made in. Instead of which, off it goes to Munich for stained glass, or to Italy for a marble altar. Is it any wonder that Ireland is crying out with poverty?"

(Ch. 4)

In his chapter on "Church Building and Monastic Establishments" Plunkett criticizes "the multiplication... of costly and elaborate monastic and conventual institutions, involving in the aggregate what must be an enormous annual expenditure for maintenance, is difficult to reconcile with the known conditions of the country." Moreover, he adds in a footnote, "One of the unfortunate effects of this passion for building costly churches is the importation of quantities of foreign art-work in the shape of woodcarvings, stained glass, mosaics, and metal work."

Plunkett encountered violent criticism for some of his views: many found his strictures unacceptable because they seemed to be directed principally against the Roman Catholic Church - which had been doing most of the church-building - and Plunkett was a Protestant. In a
reply to his critics Plunkett wrote disappointedly in the Preface to the Popular Edition of his work, that "the discussion of Irish politics would not be free from acrimony." It was a truth which Hannay was shortly to discover for himself. Both men were honest when they wrote on controversial topics, but they were in a particularly sensitive position when they criticised the policies of the Roman Catholic Church.

Hannay's second novel was more realistic and yet more optimistic than his first. He abandoned the Anglo-Irish gentleman-hero for Hyacinth, a man of the people, a true Celt, intensely idealistic, with nothing but his Irishness to recommend him as the new man Ireland so desperately needed. But it was precisely that quality - Irishness - that gave Hannay his theme. A belief in the unique and enduring qualities of the Irishman underlies hope of a national regeneration. Hyacinth believes:

... Ireland was awakening out of a long sleep, was stretching her limbs in preparation for activity. He felt the quiver of a national strenuousness which was already shaking loose the knots of the old binding ropes of prejudice and cowardice.

(Ch. 8)

Hyacinth's father tells him of a mystic vision he has had of an Armageddon in which Ireland will be the
battlefield in a clash of horsemen who represent all the virtues of Ireland on one side and all the evil on the other. Hyacinth goes to bed trying to fix the meaning of his father's message. First he tries to identify the enemy. Is it Rome? The British Empire? He wearies of trying to puzzle out a solution. Such visions are not for him: "But for all his capacity for enthusiasm there was a strain of weakness in Hyacinth. More than once after the glories of Independent Ireland had been preached to him, he found himself suddenly cold and dejected, smitten by an east wind of common sense."

The vision of Hyacinth's father may be a metaphorical statement of the optimism that began to infuse some Irishmen at the turn of the century, who saw in the new policies of cooperation some hope that the old class and religious lines would be abandoned in a struggle for the salvation of the nation. The idea was sometimes expressed in terms of an old Celtic legend which foretold that the freeing of Ireland would come as a result of a great battle of horsemen and chariots.24

Hyacinth does not hope for an Armageddon, but he is inspired by an idealism which brings him into the fringes of the national movement in Dublin, and later he tries to salvage a dying native industry. Hyacinth fails as
General Geoghegan did, and for essentially the same reasons. He is repelled by the extreme actions of the nationalists to whom he is first drawn, and the realities of twentieth century Ireland, exemplified in this novel by Manchester commercialism, Robeen Convent, and Irish politics, are too much for him.

But there is hope for Hyacinth if he will come to understand Irishness. At the end of the novel, he returns from an unsatisfactory life as an English curate, and Father Moran, the parish priest of his native village, entreats him to return to work among his own people. Symbolically, his wife Marion is exhausted by the journey and lies sleeping, unable to encourage him. But in Hannay's third novel, Benedict Kavanagh, Hyacinth, Rector of the village, "strides across the sands of Carrowkeel." Ireland lies slumbering, exhausted, but she can be awakened by new men of a new spirit.

_Hyacinth_ begins with a gently satirical account of the efforts of English Protestant missionary societies to convert Roman Catholics in Connaught. Underlying Hannay's description is historical fact: during the famine of 1847 and its aftermath, English missioners, who were feeding the hungry population, sometimes mixed proselytism with charity and earned the epithet _Soupers._

Hannay's description is mildly ironical; well-meaning
English are fired by an ingenious zeal to establish mission schools, and the R.C. hierarchy, unwittingly aiding their efforts, drove their flock into those schools by their opposition to the government-established mission schools. Hannay's tone is perhaps the only civilized attitude it is possible to adopt; still, it represents a remarkably detached view on the part of a Church of Ireland clergymen. It is a pity that this novel, one of Hannay's strongest attempts at detachment, was to engender most violent acrimony.

The Hyacinth of the title is the son of one of the successes of the missionary attempts, the Rev. Aeneas Conneally, who, having taken orders in his adopted church, has returned to his native village of Carrowkeel to work among his neighbours. Hyacinth, destined to follow his father, is given a sketchy education by his father and the local parish priest, in which Irish, Greek, and the scriptures play equal parts, to prepare him for the Divinity School of Dublin University.

The parish priest, Father Moran, begins as a half-comic figure. He is not a gentleman: his waistcoat is stained, his trousers are baggy; he has a thick brogue. But his heart is sound: his love extends to all, Catholic and Protestant alike. He offers Hyacinth the Sinn Fein formula which will save Ireland: not men who will fight, but men who will work. He has evolved into a heroic
figure in *Benedict Kavanagh*, Hannay's next novel.

Father Moran's successor praises him:

...he kept the people to their Irish tongue and their Irish ways; ... he taught them to be sober, self-respecting, truthful.... For our people there is only one hope, and that is themselves, themselves alone.... he taught them the spirit which now makes them able to do things for themselves.

(Ch. 24)

In Dublin Hyacinth is alone, homesick, puzzled by the middle-class attitudes of his fellow students. He is repelled by their jingoism when the Boer War excites their patriotism. Hyacinth's Irishness is suspect: Dublin University has cut herself off from the mainstream of Irish thought. He turns to the Gaelic movement. To speak Irish - although he is fluent, some of his most enthusiastic fellow-members are not - makes him feel less homesick. Hannay, who had been a committee-members of the Gaelic League, is just but gently satirical when he describes the enthusiasm of the members.

Hyacinth moves further into a Nationalist circle when he meets Mary O'Dwyer and her friends. Although the figures of this movement are representative of the mixed types that the Nationalist movement actually did attract, they are three-dimensional figures; they are interwoven in the plot; and they do not, as in
The Seething Pot, exist only in caricatures. A few of the same characters reappear: Patrick O'Dwyer, O'Rourke, Jim Tynan, but they exist for the most part as shadowy figures offstage. New figures appear: most important, Albert Quinn and Augusta Goold, or Finola as she is called by her adoring followers.

The name Augusta Goold is borrowed from a rather eccentric lady whom Mrs. Hannay had described in her diary as "weird in the extreme," but the characterization was based on Maude Gonne. Her beauty, height, affectation of classical Irish dress, her support of the Boers at political meetings identify her as Maude Gonne; her stories of seasickness and a pet monkey are reflected in Maude Gonne's autobiography. There is even a reference to a M. Villeneuve, a Frenchman whom she "specially admired" and to whom Finola will send a small band of Irishmen who have volunteered to fight the British with the Boers. Hyacinth is dismayed to learn that they are not all idealists; one is a British Army deserter. They are captained by the engaging Albert Quinn, who bears an uneasy resemblance to John McBride. The resemblance is uneasy because Captain Quinn is an adventurer, forger, and scoundrelly soldier of fortune. It is impossible that Hannay should have known those people intimately, and so his quite valid characterizations reveal something
of the breadth and accuracy of Irish gossip. Perhaps Hannay did not realize the extent of its accuracy at first, until he was forced to preface his next novel with a statement that he was "sincerely sorry the description of my purely imaginary Captain Quinn [sic] should have seemed to cast a slur on the characters and motives of these young men [Irish volunteers for the Boers]."

What caused Hannay most trouble was the general identification of his Robeen Convent with the Providence Woollen Mills at Foxford, County Mayo, an institution started by an order of Roman Catholic nuns. Hyacinth, disillusioned with the Irish Brigade, takes a job as traveller for Captain Quinn's brother, who has a small woollen mill in the West. They face the competition of Manchester mills, and appeals to buy Irish manufacture mean little to Western gombeen men. Hyacinth is appalled by their hypocrisy, for the shopkeepers are usually vociferous patriots. But Quinn's mill is ruined finally by competition from Robeen Convent, which, paying near-starvation wages and subsidized by the government, is able to undersell him. In his statement prefacing Benedict Kavanagh, Hannay explains that the circumstances of Robeen may have been "too like those of Foxford factory."

But Hannay goes on to question public subsidy of a
business competing in the open market with private unsubsidized enterprise.

Whether it was wise of Hannay to portray contemporary personages and institutions in his novels is doubtful; although the practice added topical interest to his works, they won him a great deal of criticism from ordinary readers - as well as from partisans. He might have been moved partly from a sense of fun; it was agreeable to hit at such inflated targets as George Moore and Maude Gonne, who themselves spared few. At any rate, it was a practice that Hannay largely abandoned after Hyacinth. His later novels showed a growing power of characterization that relied less on models and were more than a simple presentation of viewpoints.

Hyacinth was an improvement upon The Seething Pot although again the novel suffers from the essential weakness of the hero. It marks an advance in Hannay's use of description; the idyllic scene of Hyacinth's first homecoming to Carrowkeel, the gentle home life of the Quinns, the squalor of the town of Ballymoy are more carefully and less conventionally detailed than any of Hannay's previous writing and attest to his growing powers of characterization. But motivation is still weak. Hyacinth's idealism is sufficiently rooted in his birth and upbringing; his nationalism is accounted
for by his heritage and his isolation in Dublin, but his rejections of nationalism, first in Finola's brigade and secondly after the failure of the mill, are not plausible, and, unfortunately, the plot turns on those rejections. Hyacinth's scene with Canon Beecher in which the clergyman's simple piety persuades Hyacinth from a course which may be unchristian is unconvincing. So too is old Aeneas Conneally's mysticism. The old man's simple goodness is convincing; his innocent joy in his son is touchingly conveyed; but his long prayers and his mystic visions leave the reader as untouched as they leave Hyacinth. No more moving are the spiritual experiences of the Mother Superior of Robeen Convent. Here the sophisticated nun rejoices at the success of the convent fete. But she stops and subjects herself to a reproachful self-examination.

These scenes of religious experience - one Catholic, one Protestant - are representative of a balance Hannay was striving for throughout the novel. He contrasts Maguire's castigation of the conventual system with Mary O'Dwyer's praise of it; each has a sister in the convent, but whereas Maguire sees only a greedy institution reaching for young girls and their dowries, Mary O'Dwyer sees them offering a haven of peace and joy. Hannay attempts a further balance:
It seemed to him [Hyacinth] that all religious were in league against Ireland. The Roman Catholic Church seized the scanty savings of one section of the people, and squandered them in buying German glass and Italian marble. Were the Protestants any better, when they spent £20,000 a year on Chinamen and negroes? The Roman Catholics took the best of their boys and girls to make priests and nuns of them. The Protestants were doing the same thing when they shipped off their young men and young women to spend their strength among savages. Both were robbing Ireland of what they needed most - money and vitality.

(Ch. 14)

That passage demonstrates Hannay's real desire to reach a dispassionate stand. In an earlier passage in The Seething Pot, the author reflects that

The Irish priests have schemed and lied, have blustered and bullied, have levied taxes beyond belief upon the poorest of the poor; but they have taught the people a religion which penetrates their lives, and which, in its essential features, is not far from the Spirit of Christ.... It remains for someone, a prophet, to see the good and evil, to know where each comes from and to divide them one from the other.

(Ch. 14)

Was Hannay that prophet? He met, at least, a prophet's fate. Reaction to Hannay's early novels can be divided into three categories; and the first, the politically disinterested, was the least vociferous. It is best exemplified in the reviews of Hyacinth and The Seething Pot in The Spectator, The Northern Whig,
and The Nation, all of which praised Hannay's just and knowledgeable description of contemporary Ireland. 30

The second reaction was less disinterested but also praised Hannay, usually because the reader saw something of his own ideas reflected in Hannay's. For example, Hannay received letters from as far away as America congratulating him for telling the truth about Ireland. 31

The third reaction was partisan and acrimonious. The nationalists attacked him for his criticism of their institutions. The local parish priest attacked him for personal reasons. His own class rejected him because they confused Hannay's nationalism with disloyalty. Even his membership of the Gaelic League made him suspect to some. Hannay's difficulty with his own class is reflected in the dilemma of the idealistic Hyacinth, who attacks the Church of Ireland for offering the people a church which is "in sentiment and sympathy ... English and not Irish." And in an interview with Dr. Henry, his mentor at Trinity College, Hyacinth is warned that "there is nothing more fatal to a man among the people with whom you and I are to live and work than the suspicion of being tainted with Nationalist ideas."

As a result of the controversy aroused by his novels, Hannay suffered severe personal attacks. The parish priest of Westport, Father Macdonald, "exposed" him in a series of articles and was supported by the local clergy and
newspapers in terms of outraged morality or laborious satire. The Westport Guardians assailed him in terms so strong as to seem an incitement to violence, which caused a question to be put in the House of Commons, and appealed in vain that he should be discharged from the post of workhouse chaplain. In spite of this he was re-elected to the executive committee of the Gaelic League, but a later clerical attack decided him not to stand in the election of 1907.

In a preface to his third novel, Benedict Kavanagh, Hannay quotes a friend's warning, "They will blast your Hyacinth by setting its roots in a Seething Pot." Hannay had discovered the truth of that warning, but undismayed, he continued his exploration of contemporary Ireland. In his third novel, Benedict Kavanagh, Hannay tried to answer some of the questions he had raised in Hyacinth.

In Benedict Kavanagh the ideals of the Gaelic League and Sinn Fein provide the hero with an answer to his search for the meaning of his life. Unlike Gerald Geoghegan and Hyacinth, Benedict is not at first aware of nationalist leanings; on the contrary, he is inculcated with Orangism by his earliest upbringing but a nebulous idealism makes him particularly sensitive to poetry. He despises the aimlessness and dreariness of middle class life. He finds meaning only after he is made aware of
his heritage; (his father had been a nationalist hero and follower of Parnell) and begins to reconcile his heritage with his Christian upbringing. The Gaelic League and one of its leaders, Father O'Meara, point the way to Benedict. But significantly Benedict grasps the ideal of Father O'Meara only after the death of his old guardian, Canon Hamilton.

Hannay's third novel is marked by two qualities: Hannay's growing power to describe the minutiae of Irish life and the development of his own philosophy of Irish life. Heretofore, his view was generalized and largely derivative; but in this novel, he begins to work out his own viewpoint.

The novel is also marked by a growing ability to characterize and an increasing mastery of technique. He developed his use of symbolism. In a scene which combines symbolism with realism, Benedict and Father O'Meara stand with their backs to an ancient ruined tower. The scene is set in a recognizable point on Clew Bay; the ruined tower still stands there. Father O'Meara warns Benedict against sentimentalizing over the Gaelic heritage which that tower represents. It is the courageous spirit and the vigour of those heroes of the past that Ireland needs. In his exhortation to work, Hannay is echoing the policies of Sinn Fein, but in his attack on romanticizing the Celtic
past, he strikes out independently at those who misuse their heritage. As Benedict watches, Father O'Meara joins Hyacinth, and the two clergymen stride together across the sands where the tide is fast turning, "each at his own pace, but they reach the further shore together."

Each represents the best of his class in Ireland, and their reconciliation is necessary. Their working together represents the only hope for Ireland. They are both "new men." Hyacinth is no more the Church of Ireland Unionist than Father O'Meara is the fiery political priest of the old days. And there is a need for enlightened landlords like Benedict to join them. For there is not much time; the tide is running fast for Ireland.

In Benedict Kavanagh Hannay's growing power to describe Irish society is revealed in his portraits of three societies: the Ascendancy milieu of Benedict's mother's Beauford relations; that of the Ulster Orangemen who follow his lovable old guardian, Canon Hamilton; and the provincial and Dublin societies of the genteel lower middle class society of clerks and students.

His portrait of Ascendancy society is highly romanticized; it reveals nothing of the squalor beneath the surface which Edith Somerville, for example, conveyed in her RM stories. There was no woodworm in the polished mahogany, no flea in the silk cushions of the houses
Hannay described. That superficiality exists in his description of great life even in his later light novels. Of all in that society Hannay is most convincing in suggesting the moral squalor of selfish, place-hunting Charles Beauford and the originality of eccentric Lord Telltown. The latter is a richly comic characterization because its effect depends upon the originality of his temperament and the contrariness of his behaviour. He is a continuation of Lord Clonfert in *The Seething Pot* although more highly particularized, and the forerunner of Hannay's feckless Irish peers, who appear regularly in the later light novels.

Hannay was more successful in his portrayal of the Orangemen of the North, particularly in the portrait of Benedict's gentle guardian, old Canon Hamilton. Throughout his life Hannay cherished an admiration, sometimes faintly satirical but always affectionate, for the hardy Ulster stock in which he himself was so firmly rooted. He relished their independent spirit, their dogged loyalty, their sturdy, hard-working lives as he never enjoyed the gentler and subtler Irishman of the West. The Northern religious and political aberrations in the form of Orangism and, later, Carson's Volunteers, he treated as comic, their energy and industriousness as admirable. Nevertheless, that static society cannot offer his hero
Benedict an answer to his restless idealism.

Benedict wanders through a wasteland of middle class provincial and Dublin lodging houses in the society of clerks and students. Hannay is most successful in conveying the pettiness and listlessness of life in a dull provincial town. The petty amusements, the rigid social and religious divisions dismay Benedict, and when his attendance at Gaelic League classes and an innocent flirtation with his landlady's Roman Catholic daughter defeat him, he leaves Ballymoy ready to throw himself in disgust into the dreariness of lower middle class Dublin life. Shabby, down-at-heel, barely scraping a living like those who inhabit them, those lodging houses persist in Dublin today, much as they were in Benedict's - or Hannay's - time. Bernard Shaw refers to the aridity of life as a Dublin clerk, and it was that life that Hannay described so convincingly in Benedict Kavanagh: the atmosphere of the digs with their meagre fires and meals, their capable landladies and their inefficient skivvies. The young men who inhabit them, clerks and professional apprentices and students, pursue their harmless pleasures, placing small bets, playing practical jokes, taking cheap seats at music halls, swaggering in public houses. Although that life offers nothing to Benedict, he drifts aimlessly through it, until he is
repelled by a squalid drinking party. Summoned to the deathbed of Canon Hamilton, Benedict realizes the emptiness of his life in Dublin. In a lyrical descriptive passage, Hannay describes the richness and fertility of the countryside through which Benedict passes, contrasting it by implication with the aridity and artificiality of Dublin. Benedict had suffered a squalid encounter with a Dublin barmaid just before this scene:

It was early in June, and the corncrakes were in the meadow persistently grinding out their love-talk. In the wood two cuckoos shouted joyfully. Beside the stream when he crossed it he saw the irises tall and yellow like spears. Their spiked foliage, reeds with ridged central veins, clustered in the shallower part of the water.... In the pasture land beyond the stream were well-grown lambs, woolly now, but still absurdly playful, teasing tired dams from whom they no longer looked for nourishment. A group of cows stood stiff-udderred before a gate, stretching their heads over it and lowing in a long smooth manner from time to time. Back from the path he walked were farmhouses, sheltered, mellow, from which there came a subdued noise of live things. A bee rushed toward him in homeward flight, and struck him on the cheek.

(Ch. 16)

The passage attests to Hannay's growing power to evoke atmosphere, a power which, if he had fully developed it, might have produced a writer of very great stature. But Hannay had not yet learned to integrate the elements
of his novels into a structural unity. He was still principally concerned with the views represented by the characters rather than the characters themselves. The novels remained primarily evocations of contemporary Ireland with contemporary personages, ideas, and conditions knowledgeably presented. His characterizations were sometimes original, there were flashes of comedy, the background was authentic, and the polemic spirit of the author sincere.

The opening of *Benedict Kavanagh* is reminiscent of a short story by Hannay called "The Child of Our Hope." Here a child is discovered in mysterious circumstances in a remote part of Connaught, with no father, and tended by a foreign woman. The child seems in his mysterious origins and physical luminosity a symbol of a new spirit. Benedict Kavanagh is found in somewhat similar circumstances; his father, a former Nationalist Member of Parliament, lies dying. Benedict is rescued by a deeply impressed clergyman, and, through a set of fortuitous circumstances, is brought to the house of his maternal grandmother. She believes that the child has been brought to her providentially as a chance to redeem her failure with his mother, her daughter. But the suggestion of a Messianic significance in "The Child of Our Hope" is not fully borne out in *Benedict Kavanagh*.
It is true that the novel carries Hannay's message of regeneration for Ireland, but it may be only speculative to see any further resemblance. However, it is worth noting that Hannay's prologues often contain the key to the theme of the novels. For example, the prologues of the two novels which examine the failure of the Anglo-Irish gentry offer the historical roots of that failure, and the short historical account of the Conneally family origins in Hyacinth sets the tone for the discussion of religion in Irish life which follows in the novel.

Hannay's first three novels can be considered to be a trilogy centered around one theme: the regeneration of Ireland. In the first novel Hannay declared the impossibility of the regeneration being effected by the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. The story of Sir Gerald Geoghegan's failure is Hannay's acknowledgement of the failure of that class. The fall of John O'Neill, which represented the fall of Parnell, had sealed their failure. In the next two novels a new note is struck. The resurgence of the nationalist spirit in organizations like the Gaelic League and Sinn Fein and the enlightenment of the middle classes must be the beginning of the regeneration of Ireland. That it must be a moral regeneration Hyacinth proves. The factionalism, bias,
self-interest, and moral obliquity that marred much of the nationalist movement are condemned in Hyacinth's moral revulsion. The novel encompasses a satirical examination of the warring elements within the nationalist movement. It also contains an implied castigation of illiberalism in clerical and educational attitudes. There is a hint of subjects that will be dealt with later farcically in the light novels: the cynical use made of government help. In Benedict Kavanagh Hannay offers the remedy: moral regeneration. Through his heritage Benedict represents two elements; through his mother, he represents the old Anglo-Irish aristocracy; through his father, the selfless elements in the Parliamentary Party. But the regeneration will have to come through the people; and Benedict is now classless. He represents the new man, an amalgam of the best elements in the old society. He will take his place as leader of the people to show them the way to the new resurgence. He joins Hyacinth, now reconciled and finding his place in the new work. The new work is the Sinn Fein formula: self-help, self-sacrifice, self-reliance.
Although the character of Gerald Geoghegan seems to be modelled on the Young Irelander, William Smith O'Brien, it is worth noting that there had been a young Protestant nationalist, Arthur Gerald Geoghegan, whose efforts in the Young Ireland movement had been largely confined to the writing of patriotic verse. Unlike the fictional Sir Gerald and the very real Smith O'Brien, he was not transported to Australia but continued in the Excise Department in the Civil Service and died in London in 1889. The "Kerryman Press, T. O'Sullivan (ed.). The Young Irelanders, PP. 411-2

1. W. O'Brien, 'The Lost Opportunities of the Irish Gentry.'
3. 24 March 1906
4. 18 March 1905
5. Hannay subsequently admitted that the novel was a roman a clef in a newspaper interview in America, Boston Evening Transcript, 13 Feb 1915, and in PP, p. 162
7. George Moore's account of the collaboration appears in Hail and Farewell. (London, Heinemann, 1925) Vol. I, Ch. 5
9. Ruttledge himself seems to have been an impressive man. Moore refers to him, "our mutual friend," in a letter to Hannay. (NL) 65
10. Father McDonald, administrator of the Westport parish, had been prosecuted for attacking a Bible-reader who had distributed tracts among some of the townspeople. Freemans Journal, 24 March 1905, in a report headed, "Proselytism in Westport."
13 F.S.L. Lyons. 'Parnell.' Dublin Historical Association, Irish History Series, No. 3, Dundalk, Dundalgan Press, 1965

14 Written in collaboration with Edward Knoblock, (TCD) 597 and MS 11

15 £34.7.3 less agent's commission. (TCD) 269

16 'The Upper and Nether Millstone,' 13 May 1905, p. 222-3

17 The Shanachie, An Irish Miscellany. Dublin, Maunsell, 1908


19 (TCD) Misc 14

20 e.g., (TCD) 193, 239, 251, 307, etc.


22 Ibid.

23 Ireland in the New Century. Popular edition, John Murray, 1905

24 Yeats cited the legend in his note to the poem, 'The Valley of the Black Pig.'

25 Hannay does not specifically name the missionary society; most Christian Relief Societies were scrupulous in showing no preference in the distribution of relief on the grounds of religion. v. C. Woodham-Smith, The Great Hunger, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1962, p. 158

26 I owe this reference to Mr. R.B.D. French who found it in the diary Mrs. Hannay kept before her marriage.


28 By 1905 Maude Gonne's association with M. Millevoye, French Socialist leader had been established for more than ten years. E. Coxhead, Daughters of Erin, London, Secker & Warburg, 1965
Provincial papers (The Western People and The Mayo News) printed letters of protest from all over Ireland. Father Finlay wrote in defense of the convent.

(TCD) PC 2

The collection of Hannay MSS in the National Library of Ireland (NL) MSS. 8271 contains a letter of interest to students of modern American politics. A Bostonian writing to Hannay describes a local Irish-American politician, "the worst of his type," Fitzgerald. The reference is undoubtedly to "Honey Fitz" whose political acumen is thought to have been inherited by his grandson, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Hansard, p. 1433-4: 24 May 1906

(TCD) 251 (letter from Sir Horace Plunkett to Hannay)

G.B. Shaw, Prefaces 'Immaturity,' London, Paul Hamlyn, 1965

Minnie's Bishop and Other Stories of Ireland (1915)

It is tempting to relate the situation and Hannay's handling of it to a curious episode in his earlier life. In 1897 the sudden death of a cousin in circumstances which caused him much uneasiness made Hannay and his wife responsible for looking after a French woman who had shared his cousin's establishment. Hannay in the short story uses the name of the place where the death of his cousin occurred. See letters 17-35 and 37-46 in Hannay MSS. (TCD)
At the end of his third novel Hannay had arrived at an impasse. The dilemma of Hyacinth had called for a sequel, and Hannay had declared at least privately his intention of writing one, as letters from his friends testify. Benedict Kavanagh was that sequel and had offered a solution to the dilemma, but the novel had caught up with history, and no one knew what would be the outcome of the Sinn Fein policy that he advocated.

Hannay's next two novels demonstrate that Hannay recognised that impasse. In The Northern Iron, he attempted to resolve his difficulty by writing a straightforward historical novel. It is Stevensonian in its choice of hero, young Neal Ward, son of the Manse, an adventurous boy untroubled by the tortured consciences of Hannay's early heroes. He acts in a swiftly-moving adventure tale set against the background of the Rebellion of '98. And in his succeeding fifth novel Hannay continued in another vein; in The Bad Times Hannay again attempted the theme of his first novel: the impotence of the Anglo-Irish. He attempted to develop the theme more realistically and in greater detail, but the outcome for his new hero is
essentially the same as for his predecessor: disillusion and disaster.

The Northern Iron, which was published in November 1907, has since become a minor classic and has been translated into Irish. When the book was first published by Maunsell in Dublin, one Nationalist critic found in it an improvement in artistry which he attributed to its having an Irish publisher.

In his dedication of The Northern Iron to the Ulster antiquarian and nationalist, Francis Biggar, Hannay reveals that he wrote the novel after a holiday spent on the coast of Antrim, where he had also spent his boyhood holidays. Hannay recaptured the wild beauty of the region and something of boyhood innocence and enthusiasm in his novel. The background is impressionistic rather than detailed, chiefly because the scenes change very rapidly, but they seem authentic and convincing. Hannay's novel captures the hopeful spirit of the times, when men, armed only with pikes, or even pitchforks, challenged the British Army in an alliance of Catholic and Protestant dissenter.

Hannay had also said in his dedication, "I have made an attempt to stick strictly to the course of history and to exemplify the thought and opinions of those who took part in it." Historical figures such as Lord O'Neill,
General Clavering, James Hope, and the informer in the United Irishmen figure in the novel as minor characters; and the major characters, Lord Dunseveric, the Ward brothers, Neal Ward, and the Yeoman Captain Twinely, reflect genuine historical elements in the struggle: Lord Dunseveric is the best of the Anglo-Irish eighteenth century gentleman who formed the Irish Volunteers of 1782, the Wards represent the Presbyterians who conspired in the rebellion, and Captain Twinely is the bullying paramilitary man who allows his troopers to commit excesses.

Lord Dunseveric is Hannay's prototype of the Anglo-Irish: he has their traits; pride, courage, and generosity. He is caught up in the paradox of his position. He abhors the excesses of the yeomanry and is even willing to defy General Clavering to save Neal from being hanged as a rebel.

Dunseveric's opposite is Neal's uncle, Donald Ward. He too is proud, courageous, and dedicated. He is even fanatical in pursuing his course - rebellion. There is a transatlantic breeziness overlying his sober Ulster background; he has newly returned from fighting the American Revolution, and he brings a confidence to the struggle that the others lack. He is not as respectful as they of British military might. He is killed at the Battle of Antrim after very courageous action. It is
with him that Neal journeys through most of the book.

The boys, Maurice St. Clair (Dunseveric's son) and Neal Ward, look upon the war at first as adventure. Maurice is willing to betray his own side to rescue his friend Neal. Neal is only a boy who would rather fish in the caves of Rackle Roy than plot dark conspiracies. He pleads with the United Irishmen for the life of the informer, James Finlay, but they are implacable. He retires from the informer's trial and bursts into tears while the men are at their grim work.

Hannay skillfully shows through the boy's growing disillusion the disastrous issue of the rebellion. "There's blood enough shed today - Irish blood. There should be no more of it." gasps the dying Lord O'Neill. Jemmy Hope counsels Neal to return home after the battle. There were Irishmen on both sides who recognized that the abortive rebellion was another unsuccessful attempt to improve an impossible situation. The rebellion was bound to clamp British rule even more firmly on the Irish. The gains won by the Volunteers in 1782 were lost as the rebellion succeeded only in frightening the English cabinet so that it was easier for Pitt to force the Union on them.

"Shall I\textsuperscript{won} break the northern iron and the steel?" Hannay's respect for the sturdy Ulster Scots spirit is personified in the novel by Neal's father, Micah Ward.
Like Aeneas Conneally his political idealism is rooted in a semi-mystic religiosity. But his revolution ends in failure, and he is exiled to Scotland after the defeat of the United Irishmen. He represents an undying idealism which persists in Irish history. Other Ulster characters represent the democratic spirit of the rebellion: Peg MacIlrea, the innkeeper's servant who follows Neal to battle, Aeneas Moylin, a farmer, and James Hope, the gentle weaver, who was one of the leaders of the rebellion. Hannay's admiration for the northern spirit of independence and courage is evinced in very many of his novels: there is often a Northern character in them, even in the novels set in the West. They are usually farcical characterizations, but through the caricature of obstinacy and prejudice that Hannay usually offers, there is evidence of his admiration for their strength and endurance. And it is those qualities which shine through the characters in *The Northern Iron*.

The feminine characters of the novel are of minor importance. Una St. Clair, daughter of Lord Dunseveric, provides the romantic interest. She enters the novel only in the first and last chapters, as the tomboy companion of Maurice and Neal, and later as Neal's sweetheart. She is independent and high-spirited, and she almost suggests Hannay's later hoyden heroines,
when she swims into the cave at Rackle Roy to bring food to Neal who is hiding from the troops. But her characterization is almost irrelevant to the plot. When the story opens, Neal is on the point of declaring his love for her, but he is swept off to war before the difficulties that would arise from their difference in station need be resolved. After the failure of the rebellion Neal is spirited off to America with the connivance of the St. Clairs, where he inherits Donald Ward's comfortable business. At the end of the novel he returns to marry Una, but exile in America is still their only possible solution. The love interest gives an additional romantic flavour to the novel, but it is not an integral part of the plot.

Of even less importance is the St. Clairs' French aunt, but she does have some significance in the development of Hannay's characterizations. She is the first of Hannay's characterizations who is not Irish or British, and she is a failure. Her Frenchness has a second-hand air, and her coquettishness is embarrassingly unconvincing. Yet in her luxuriousness and cynicism she provides a contrast to the Northern character, even to those in Dunseveric House. When she confides to her maid her despair at the crudeness and dullness of Irish aristocratic life, she suggests something of the
effeteness of European aristocracy in contrast to the Irish. She also suggests another side to the French Revolution. In the Belfast scenes Hannay had included touches of French revolutionary sentiment; he meant to suggest its influence in the United Irishmen movement. The crowd signs *Ca Ira* in defiance of the British troops, and the revolutionaries meet at the inn of Felix Matier, who reads Voltaire. Madame Estelle de Tourneville is a refugee from the Terror. Her relations are sympathetic and civil to the Comtesse, but she charms nobody except Captain Twineley, the brutal captain of the Yeomanry. While his troops are searching the countryside around Dunseveric for Neal, she conspires with the St.Clairs to distract the captain. After Neal has successfully made his escape, the Comtesse turns on the besotted captain in disgust. He grovels at her rejection, but elicits little sympathy because the brutality of his character had been well established earlier in the book, in the scenes of the search of the meeting house and in the capture of Neal and the murder of Peg MacIlrea. Hannay's female characterizations had been up to now conventional and rather romantic heroines. The wives of Gerald Geoghegan and Hyacinth had shared their husband's romantic idealism, but their convictions are rooted in youthful sentiment and do not stand up to the
realities of party politics.

The young Belfast serving girl in Matier's inn is Hannay's most successful female characterization. She shares a Northern toughness with Hannah Macaulay, the Ward's housekeeper. Like Hannah, she successfully shields Neal from the brutal troops who are searching for him. She is fierce in defending him, and yet tender in caring for him. She follows him to battle, and, while escaping with him, is caught and brutally murdered. Her death is the most moving scene in the book. Hannay does not spare the cruelty of the troops who kill her and capture Neal. The pathos of the scene is all the more effective because her character has been so sympathetically established. Hannay's most convincing female characterizations were all high-spirited and independent women. When patterns of characterization began to evolve in the later novels, it will be seen that those traits are common to all of his most appealing heroines.

Despite the historical realism and swiftly-moving plot of The Northern Iron, the novel is not wholly a success. Hannay had allowed the fault of his first novel, in which a secondary character overshadowed the hero, to appear in this. Although the hero is young Neal Ward, other characters obtrude. Donald Ward, Neal's American uncle, absorbs the interest of the chapters which describe
the early flight from Dunseveric. He is newly arrived from America, full of vigour and bravura, and he easily dominates the scenes in which he appears. He is supplanted as Neal's mentor by James Hope, the gentle revolutionary, who leads Neal to the revolutionaries. Neal as an innocent young man caught up in an adventure is not a fully-realized character, but merely a character around whom the events of the plot move. Even his romance with Una St.Clair is overshadowed by his relationship with Peg MacIlrea.

The plot of the novel is reminiscent of Robert Louis Stevenson's tales of innocent young men caught up in adventure. Tension mounts through the plot as Neal and Donal Ward ride to Belfast to capture the informer who is betraying the United Irishmen in Antrim. The plot is made up of colourful incident: midnight alarms, a horseback journey, street brawls, the conspiracy in the graveyard, the escape from prison while the victorious officers drink upstairs, the flight from Dunseveric to America. Only the scenes between Captain Twinely and the Comtesse are anomalous. Hannay tries to establish the motive for the Comtesse's brutal rejection of Twinely. She has hated him ever since his men had captured her and Una while they were
watching the sack of the meeting house. But the
fierceness of her sudden attack on Twinely to contain a
physical revulsion. Twinely's surrender is too complete.
The whole scene is out of key with the tone of the rest
of the novel. Originally the incident was meant to be
part of Neal's escape plan, but instead it is a
distraction in the course of the plot.

In The Northern Iron Hannay had not abandoned
entirely his theme of the Anglo-Irish as leaders of the
nation. Implicit in the characterization of Lord
Dunseveric is the dilemma of his class. He had been an
enlightened eighteenth-century gentleman, "his time was
occupied with drilling Volunteers, passing Grand Jury
resolutions in support of the use of Irish manufactured
goods, and subsequently preparing schemes for the
internal development of Ireland." He recognizes the
justice of the revolutionaries' cause, but he also knows
that the rebellion will defeat the cause for which they
work. Frightened by the popular democratic nature of the
movement, the forces of reaction will grip Ireland even
more firmly. Dunseveric is loyal to his traditions; he
would never consider supporting the rebels although he
sympathizes with them. He reveals the arrogance of his
class in his treatment of Captain Twinely, whom he
considers to be not quite a gentleman. He orders his son to help Neal escape, although Neal is a prisoner of war. Hannay does not bring the novel any further in history than the failure of the Antrim revolt, but the future downward course of Irish history is plain in "this lost land" as Micah Ward describes Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century.

Hannay expanded his examination of the Anglo-Irish theme in his fifth novel, The Bad Times. The novel was a reversion to The Seething Pot not only in theme, but in structure of the plot, setting, characterization, and political background. Hannay's belief in the historical validity of the Anglo-Irish heritage is evinced in the construction of the novels. Both novels begin with a historical prologue in which the hero's ancestors give him a rebel's pedigree. In The Bad Times, Stephen Butler's grandfather scorns the Union and binds his descendants by a solemn oath to resist the laws of tyranny. After the Act of Union, he binds himself and his descendants to:

never ... yield obedience to laws made for this realm in England, except in so far as such laws are forced on me by power which I cannot resist; that never while life lasts will I pay loyalty to any government other than that proper, under its own constitution, to this kingdom of Ireland....

(Ch.1)
The wording of the oath reveals the Anglo-Irish preoccupation with a separate legislature; they wanted to regain the Irish parliament they had lost in 1800; they thought in terms of the 18th Century Kingdom of Ireland. Inevitably there would be other forces in Ireland which thought in more revolutionary terms. All of these movements and counter-movements are represented in the novel.

By tracing the Butlers' story, Hannay attempts a historical justification of the role of the 19th century Stephen Butler. His grandfather, old Stephen, is contrasted with his neighbour, De Lancy, who sells his vote in the Irish parliament for a peerage, just as the younger Stephen is contrasted in the novel with his neighbour Lord Daintree, the grandson of De Lancy. The Butlers represent those of the Anglo-Irish who were faithful to their responsibilities; the De Lancys, those who denied theirs. Stephen inherits the Butlers' moral code; and Lord Daintree, his ancestor's cynicism. Although his code eventually kills Stephen, the abandonment of the code has already destroyed the De Lancys. They are absentee landlords, rackrenters, and they return to their Irish estates as strangers.

Old Stephen Butler, who has escaped the corruption attending the Act of Union, returns home to his estates in Dhulough on the Connaught seaboard. He lives out his
life an embittered man, finding no opportunity to put his oath into action. And he is disappointed in his son, Antony, a sensitive boy, who has no taste for violence, and who spends his life wandering abroad. He is uneasily aware of the oath and its significance, but he does nothing until in Spain he meets a priest named O'Neill, a descendant of one of the Wild Geese, who had fled from Ireland after the Jacobite wars. The priest, who has developed an interest in Irish affairs, tells Antony of the Nation group and the new stirrings of nationalism in Ireland. Antony returns home, but he is in Ireland only long enough to meet Thomas Davis and to learn something of the Young Ireland movement, when the famine strikes. He expends most of his strength and his fortune alleviating the effects of the famine among his people. He dies, leaving a son, the Stephen of the novel, to be raised by his mother's Quaker relatives. Young Stephen is educated in England, but he, like his father, becomes aware of his heritage. While he is at Oxford, he is moved by a romantic sympathy for the Fenian movement, which is beginning to stir the Irish consciousness again. Stephen decides to return to Ireland. He tells Lord Daintree, "I mean to stay in Ireland. I want to know my people and see what can be done for them and the property."
The bulk of the novel describes the events leading to his growing disillusion and final destruction by the very ideals he cherishes. Stephen's story is one of ultimate failure. For a while he is satisfied to work in the Parliamentary Party. But disillusioned by its ineffectual role at Westminster, he joins first the extreme left wing of his party and then the party of Parliamentary obstructionists. Hannay does not examine Stephen's party associations in very much detail, but it is clear that he is first associated with the conservative party of Isaac Butt and then is gradually drawn into the vigorous factions of Biggar and Parnell. Nevertheless he finds his parliamentary role increasingly unsatisfactory as other forces begin to stir. His relations with his tenants, which had always been good, are blighted by the land wars, and in the end he is shot by mistake for his agent. Even his dying testimony cannot save an innocent political extremist who is condemned for his murder.

In addition to the similarities of theme, the characterization and plot structure of *The Seething Pot* are echoed in the later novel. Stephen Butler, like Gerald Geoghegan, is moved by an idealism which he finds difficult to put into practice and which dismays other members of his class. He is warned by his agent Manders and his neighbour Lord Daintree as Gerald Geoghegan
had been warned by Godfrey and Lord Clonfert. All four characterizations are used to portray the conservative viewpoint that they represent, but in the later novel, the characters are given further dimensions. Lord Daintree, particularly, in his cynical appreciation of the realities of Irish politics is a more weighty figure than half-comic Lord Clonfert, whose opinions had less philosophical background. When Stephen joins some members of his class in a parliamentary Home Rule movement, Daintree warns him:

"It's too late for that. It's possible that in your father's time the Irish gentry might have headed a national movement. The sense of nationality is extraordinarily strong among the Irish. They are like the Hungarians and the Poles in that respect. If the gentry of the last generation had played to the gallery, the Irish gallery, they might have taken a new lease of their privileges and property, a lease that would have run for a century. But they can't do it now. They've bullied the people and plundered them for too long.... There's a new spirit in the country now - a growing feeling of class hatred....This will be stronger for many a day to come than the feeling for nationality." (Ch.7)

When Daintree speaks of the new spirit, he is thinking of the spirit that inspired the Land League, which after 1881 prosecuted an increasingly effective defence of tenants' rights against landlords. When Manders describes the members of the new parliamentary movement
even more succinctly, he echoes Godfrey's warning to Gerald. Like other members of the squirearchy, he makes no distinctions between the various elements in the nationalist movement:

"D--d fools....Home Rule would simply mean handing the country over to a pack of priests and blackguards....No gentleman could live in it. I know the Irish. The only security we have for our lives and properties is the power of England....How can it be right for gentlemen and Protestants to go handling their own class to the tender mercies of Papist rebels?" (Ch.3)

Daintree's speech represents Hannay's view of the historical failure of the Anglo-Irish. It is a view implicit in The Seething Pot, The Northern Iron, and in this novel. It is stated very explicitly by Hannay, later, in his introduction to Sir Jonah Barrington's Recollections:

...It is the fashion to speak of the Act of Union as a political necessity. It is, at least, doubtful whether it was anything of the sort. Ireland might conceivably have continued, either for good or evil, to occupy the position which Hungary holds in the Austrian empire. It is commonplace to say that the Act of Union was passed by bribery....but it is doubtful whether the Irish gentry could have been purchased in sufficient numbers to pass the Act if they had not at the last moment lacked self-confidence. They were afraid of the rising tide of democratic ideas, and
sought security for themselves, a security, which, as the nineteenth century proved, was no real security at all...if they had trusted themselves and fought the battle of their own class in their own country, they might have survived, a dominant race in Ireland, as the Maygars are in Hungary.

Stephen Butler's failure, then, is historically inevitable. His class had missed their opportunity, and the events of history made it impossible for them to seize it again. Hannay's picture of the Land wars is severely pessimistic: "Neither then nor for many years afterward would any landlord in Connacht lead or guide the people. A violent, passionate class hated swept from the minds of the peasantry all feeling of loyalty to the aristocracy. The distinction between good landlords and bad was obliterated in people's minds."

Stephen's tenants reject him. His offer of reconciliation to Father O'Sullivan, the political priest, is curtly refused. The League is in the hands of men like Heverin, a powerful local publican, whose cheaply emotional patriotism hardly masks a greedy cunning. The peasantry become wholly committed to the Land League; they turn from their parish priest when he denounces the League from the altar, and they riot when the political priest is arrested. Stephen's heart is broken by the rapidly widening gulf between himself and
the people, long before the assassin's bullet touches him.

The minor characterizations represent elements in the struggle. The local squirearchy retreat into an iron conservatism: the agent Manders, the Special Magistrate Major Thorne, the Church of Ireland cleric, Dean Ponsonby, all believe Stephen to be irresponsible or mad. The two priests, are strongly contrasted: the coldly dedicated political curate, to whom is given a speech similar to Parnell's famous boycott speech; and old Father Staunton, a gentleman of the old school, a scholar, educated in France and Italy rather than Maynooth. He, too, is bewildered by the events which have moved beyond his experience, and goes into exile a broken man.

Outside the immediate struggle are three figures who are recurring types in Hannay's novels, and they are characterized more strongly in this novel; they are Lord Daintree, the cynical Anglo-Irish peer, Rafferty, the old Fenian, and the Rev. Eugene Hegarty. Lord Daintree's cynical and intelligent commentary on the people and events of the novel reflect a dispassionate view which is nearest to Hannay's own. His cynicism does not make him an attractive figure, however, and he provides a strong contrast to the idealistic Stephen.
He is an object lesson in the wages of sin; his sin
being the sin of his class, their separation from their
country; and their deserts, an increasing decadence.

Rafferty the Fenian represents Hannay's closest
approach to the true Irishman. He is a kind of noble
savage who recurs in Hannay's novels, even occasionally
in the light novels (e.g. Thomas O'Flaherty Pat in Spanish
Gold). Of Celtic stock and aristocratic appearance he
represents the pure Irishman, unmarked by the vices of
the other peasantry. He usually is withdrawn from the
rest of society, living on an island as simply as a
hermit. Sometimes he is a hedge schoolmaster, but usually
he has had a political history. It is the measure of
Hannay's dislike for the Land League that Rafferty is
contemptuous of the League. But by an ironic stroke, it
is his gun that is used as the murder weapon, and he
dies for the murder of Carrie Hegarty and Stephen.

Eugene Hegarty also stands outside the action of
the novel; he is a saintly clergyman, mystical; but his
function in the novel is slight. His role after the first
chapters seems to exist only in terms of his relations
with the other characters. His friendship with Father
Staunton illustrates the amicable relation that may exist
between the churches. But it is his marriage to Carrie
Hegarty that Hannay uses him most effectively.
Carrie Hegarty is an original characterization, one that Hannay had never before attempted, although she belongs to the provincial middle-class society which he described in *Benedict Kavanagh*. Vain, spoiled, selfish, she nevertheless conveys a sense of pathos in her attempts to coquette with Manders and Stephen. She is, in her pathetic unawareness, as touching as Francie Fitzpatrick, her sister under-the-skin in *The Real Charlotte*. Although she lacks Francie's sweetness, she is beautiful, and brings a radiance into the scenes in which she figures. But like Francie, too, she dies a sacrificial death. At a dinner party at Dhulough House, she and Stephen are shot by League assassins who are after Manders.

Hannay has paid more than usual attention to detail in her characterization, and his description of her dressing-table and her dress at the dinner party, conveys, precisely her pathetic attempts at gentility:

...Her arms were bare up to her shoulders. On one of them she wore a broad gold bracelet, a thing with a protruding hinge and an inefficient clasp. Round the other, for want of a second bracelet, she had bound a strip of light blue velvet, not unlike a garter in appearance, which was fastened with a buckle of shiny paste brilliants. She had a pair of white kid gloves, which she carried in her hand but did not put on, because, in spite of much rubbing with breadcrumbs, they looked better folded up.... (Ch.21)
The attraction of this vain, silly woman for her husband, an ascetic half-mystic is less convincing, but her beauty, which had first attracted him as the outward sign of a beautiful soul, wins her the admiration of the jovial Manders, who himself is an attractive figure.

*The Bad Times* was Hannay’s best early novel. Its characterizations were less superficial: even such minor figures as the guileful boatman Darcy and the passionate assassin Sheridan are convincingly described. Occasionally abandoning his narrative style for a dramatic presentation of character, Hannay allows his character to speak for himself. When Darcy suggests himself to Stephen as a substitute for Rafferty, he characterizes his own simplicity and cunning in a few lines. When Sheridan bursts out an appeal to Stephen, his passionate idealism is movingly evident in his speech.

Hannay’s early Irish novels have much in common. Each has a hero who asks himself, How can I best serve Ireland? In the first and last novels, the hero is a member of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, but in every case the hero is a Protestant, and his idealism is rooted in an inheritance. Can such an inheritance, as for example, of the Volunteers of 1782, be wasted? Hannay himself does not know how to answer the question.
The early series of novels were given a unity by their point of view, which is that of a detached, very intelligent observer. Only rarely, for example, in his portraits of party hacks and place-hunters, does Hannay's distaste show. But at the same time that the narrative tone, which is ironic, reinforces the detached point of view, it diminishes the impact of the novels. The reader is not greatly moved by the fall of the hero when he is shown clearly the irony of the hero's situation.

It is not difficult to see in the detached observer Hannay himself. The ability to see all sides of the question was a virtue rare in Irish writers, but Hannay possessed it. Unfortunately that virtue involved him in a series of paradoxes. In the first place, it was paradoxical that he in his class and time, should have possessed it. Secondly, the very ability to present the Irish question dispassionately involved him in unfair censure from the partisan. Third, since ironic detachment diminished the passionate intensity of his novels, the power of his novels suffered. Uniquely equipped with insight, intelligence, and knowledge of Ireland, he was unable to engender any passionate conviction although he roused much controversy.
His light novels were an attempt to resolve that last paradox. In comedy he found the medium for his gift, for his detachment, for his knowledge of Irish social life. Circumstances, too, played their part: the success of Spanish Gold demonstrated his ability and ensured him of an audience. He himself was tired of the old quarrels. He began to experiment in a new medium.
References

1  (TCD) 251

2  Iaeann an Tuaiscirt tr. Muiris O Cathin, Baile Atha Cliath, Oifig Diolta Foillseachain Rialtis, 1933

3  Edward Arnold had published his first three historical novels and Methuen his earlier non-fiction. Hannay published very many books, and his list of publishers is various; they include Nelson, Smith Elder, Hodder and Stoughton, Skeffington, and John Murray among others. But Methuen published all of his last twenty-five novels except one; in his later period Hannay had a regular contract with Methuen for a novel a year.

4  Jeremiah 15:12

5  Dublin, Talbot Press, 1917, p.xviii
In August 1908 Hannay published the first of his light novels, *Spanish Gold*. It was primarily meant to be an adventure tale, but it contained elements which, developed and strengthened in a series of succeeding light novels, gave Hannay a claim to be considered an Irish comic satirist. In fact, these early light novels contributed as much to the understanding of the complex elements in Irish life as did Hannay's early serious novels.

The preoccupation underlying these novels is the same that underlay the serious novels: the regeneration of Ireland. In the serious novels Hannay had developed that preoccupation into a theme - the lost opportunities of the Anglo-Irish to lead Ireland. A second theme had developed in the novels *Hyacinth* and *Benedict Kavanagh*: the power of regeneration lay in a moral resurgence shared by all classes. In the light novels the preoccupation is the same, but the failure of regeneration is accepted. There is no hope of regeneration, for the Irish problem is too complex and too deeply-rooted in the Irish nature. In giving us his picture of the Irish cosmos, Hannay is saying metaphorically: this is what we are, and no one can do anything to change us. It is not accidental that most of the plots of the light novels
are concerned with the effects of strangers on the world of Ballymoy. The strangers may be well-intentioned government officials, philanthropists, or simply visitors; but they make no real difference - in the end the Irish world remains the same. Hannay makes his comedy out of the confrontation of the stranger and the Irishman, the puzzlement, bewilderment and finally despair of the first; as he is defeated by guile, obstinacy, and idiosyncratic nature of the Irish. The irony lies in the fact that in defeating the stranger, the Irish acknowledge their own defeat. There is a second thread of comedy in the Irish attempt to gain something from the stranger's arrival - a gift from the gods.

In his serious novels Hannay had shown the historical inevitability of the failure of Irish self-determination. In his light novels he admitted the continuing failure. In these novels, however, he did not attempt to explain the reasons for that failure. He was content to examine its context. He wrote about the same world that he had described in his early novels, the world of the Connaught depressed areas at the turn of the century. The light novels, too, are set in Ballymoy, the "westernmost parish in Ireland" or in the neighbouring district. Ballymoy on May Bay is, as it was in the earlier novels, Westport on Clew Bay, County Mayo; and for Hannay it was a
microcosm of Ireland. He describes a character living
"...in Connacht, where Irishmen are more Irish than
they are anywhere else."1

Hannay believed in the concept of Irishness. He attempted to demonstrate it in his novels by contrasting it with the sturdy and obtuse English and with vigorous Americans. Irishness is a quality shared by all classes: the aristocracy who had become Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores, the middle classes, and the peasantry. But in the light novels the Anglo-Irish aristocracy no longer break their hearts over Ireland as did Stephen Butler and Gerald Geoghegan. Prefigured by Lord Daintree and Lord Clonfert, they have withdrawn into their rapidly dying world, drawing after them the remnants of their estates left to them by the land Acts. The Irish peasants have remained caricatures, although they are less shadowy figures than in the early novels, and their role is far more important. They are an integral part of that Irishness that Hannay wants to show in conflict with the world. But Hannay's most surprising success is in his middle class characters, for it is through them, the clergyman, doctors, and country squires - and in spite of their Protestantism - that Hannay best realizes the Irish characters. The most original of them is the Rev. J.J. Meldon.
In 1913 when Hannay was travelling on his first American tour on the occasion of the American production of his play, General John Regan, he told an American journalist who questioned him about the genesis of his most popular character,

Meldun [sic] ... just came as I started to write a perfectly stereotyped and serious Treasure Island story, only putting it on the West Coast of Ireland. Then Meldun gradually evolved of his own accord, and I thought he was a nice person, so I rewrote the first few chapters.

The "Treasure Island story" was Spanish Gold, Hannay's most popular novel, and "Meldum" was the Rev. Joseph John Meldon, B.A., T.C.D., curate of Ballymoy, hero of Spanish Gold and other light novels, and in the person of Dr. Lucius O'Grady, hero of General John Regan, The Search Party, and again, as Dr. Whitty, in The Adventures of Dr. Whitty.

The character of the Rev. J.J. (and his alter ego, Dr. O'Grady) was one of Hannay's most imaginative creations. His origins clearly lie in Hannay's first comic characterization, Desmond O'Hara, in The Seething Pot. Although Meldon lacks O'Hara's serious moral purpose, which is consonant with the theme of the earlier novel, the two share certain traits, garrulity, humour, detachment, impudence, a certain self-mockery, and, above all,
liveliness. And whereas those characteristics made
Desmond O'Hara slightly anomalous in the serious
historical novel, Hannay used them successfully to
integrate characterization, plot, and theme, when he
turned to farce in the light novels.

For example, J.J.'s most characteristic trait is
curiosity, tinctured by an Irish taste for indirection.
In the opening pages of *Spanish Gold* he is on his way to
visit his old friend, Major Kent. On the road he meets
the local publican, Doyle, who is accompanied by a stranger
whose identity and business in the locality arouse J.J.'s
curiosity. But he allows no hint of it to show in his
conversation with Doyle, who tells him that they have
just been out to the Major's place. Meldon replies:

"Oh have you? Wanting to buy the chestnut
filly? Take my advice and don't do it.
She wouldn't suit your work at all. She's
cut out for a polo pony, that one. You're
too fat to start polo, Doyle. It wouldn't
agree with you at your time of life. You
may take my word for that."

(Ch. 1)

Of course, Meldon does not believe that Doyle has
been buying a horse, nor does he imagine that Doyle would
take up polo, even if he had the figure for the sport.
But Hannay is identifying what he believes to be a
peculiarly Irish trait - an unwillingness to ask a direct
question. At the same time, he begins to establish Meldon's character: a man who prefers the tangential to the direct, whose lively curiosity and inventiveness will lead him on a treasure hunt for the fun of the thing.

The plot of the novel recounts the adventures of a hunt for the gold from a treasure ship of the Spanish Armada, wrecked hundreds of years ago off the West coast of Ireland. Such stories are still current in the West of Ireland, and in this case, Major Kent, Meldon's friend, has inherited papers which indicate that the treasure has been concealed on Inishgowlan, an island in Moy Bay, on which stands the town of Ballymoy, and which is plainly Clew Bay. Doyle's companion Langton is the agent of the dissolute heir of a local baronet, who is also seeking the buried treasure and wants a boat to sail to it. Meldon preserves the Major's boat for his own hunt and rents the unsuspecting Langton his own unseaworthy boat. Meldon and a reluctant Major Kent encounter many difficulties in addition to the rival treasure hunters: the obduracy of the local inhabitants, particularly one Thomas O'Flaherty Pat; the presence - when the utmost secrecy is required - of government officials bent on relief projects on the island. Meldon's inventiveness in meeting all these difficulties comprises all of the plot and most of the comedy of the book. Hannay is able to exploit Meldon's volubility for comic
effect in this scene with the Chief Secretary, who is trying to offer the Rev. J.J. a living:

"Mr. Meldon," said the Chief Secretary after the priest had left them, "I should like to say that I think you behaved uncommonly ---" "Oh, don't start that," said Meldon. "You wouldn't expect me to join in robbing old Thomas O'Flaherty Pat, would you...."

"It isn't simply about last night's work that I wanted to speak. The fact is that I've got something rather important to say to you, and I'm very glad of this opportunity of speaking privately."

"Is it the geological survey again?"

"No, no, not that."

"It can't be the tuberculosis business, or the national school. Surely to goodness old O'Flaherty hasn't raked up the Athelonia miserabilis?" [All these red herrings were stratagems devised by Meldon to confuse other characters and were unknown to the Chief Secretary.] "It's nothing of the sort. It's something quite different. Just before I left Dublin I had a letter from my friend Lord Cumberly."

"I don't know him," said Meldon. "Is he an Irish peer?" "No, he's an Englishman."

"That wouldn't prevent him being an Irish peer."

"Do listen to me," said Mr. Willoughby. "What I have to say to you is really rather important, and I can't get on with it if you keep interrupting me."

(Ch. 22)

J.J. is never at a loss for a reply, but the reply is always off-centre, and the exasperation it arouses in the Chief Secretary contrasted with the bland assurance of J.J. creates an incongruity which is the
basis of the comedy. This comic device also establishes the imperturbability and inventiveness of Meldon. And even more than that, this indirectness represented a typically Irish attitude. The Irish have been accused of evasiveness and hypocrisy, but their indirectness might be considered their defence against the outside world. It is to be noted that the Chief Secretary tries to prepare the way for his offer with a compliment, and begins the offer by referring to a letter from a friend.

Although Chief Secretary Willoughby is not a fool (he has been established as a shrewd, good-humoured government official, and the characterization does suggest Augustine Birrell, one of Ireland's most respected Chief Secretaries) he is no match for the Irish J. J. Meldon.

That Irish trait of indirection is not confined to Meldon. It is a manifestation of a native delicacy characteristic of many of the Irish characters. Here is an incident taken from The Inviolable Sanctuary. Frank Mannix, who has sprained his ankle disembarking from the Irish mailboat, has settled himself in a railway carriage. The attendants are sympathetic:
"It's my opinion," said the ticket collector, "that you'd get damages out of the steamboat company if you was to process them."

"There was a fellow I knew one time," said the ticket collector, "that got £200 out of this company, and he wasn't as bad as you, nor near it."

"I remember that well," said the attendant. "It was his elbow he dislocated, and him getting out at the wrong side of the carriage."

"He'd have got more," said the ticket collector. "He'd have got £500 instead of £200 if so be he'd have gone into the court; but that's what he couldn't do, by reason of the fact that he happened to be travelling without a ticket when the accident came on him."

He gazed thoughtfully out of the window as he spoke. "It might have been that," said the attendant, "which was the cause of his getting out at the wrong side of the carriage."

"He tried it," said the ticket collector, still looking straight in front of him, "because he hadn't a ticket."

No one spoke for a minute. The story of the fraudulent traveller who secured £200 in damages was an affecting one. At length the cook broke the silence.

"The young gentleman here," he said, "has his ticket right enough, surely."

"He may have," said the ticket collector. "I have," said Mannix, fumbling in his pocket. "It was it I wanted to see."

"Then why didn't you ask me for it?" said Mannix. "He wouldn't do the like," said the attendant, "and you maybe with a broken leg."

"I would not," said the ticket collector. "It would be a queer thing for me to be bothering you about a ticket, and me just after tying a bit of cord round as nasty a leg as even I seen."

"But when you wanted to see the ticket ---" said Mannix.

"I drew down the subject of tickets," said the collector, "the way you'd offer me a look at yours, if so be you had one; but as for asking you for it, and you in pain, it's what I wouldn't do."
There are travellers, cantankerous people, who complain that Irish railway officials are not civil. Perhaps English porters and guards may excel them in the plausible lip service which anticipates a tip. But in the Irishman there is a natural delicacy of feeling, which expresses itself in lofty kinds of courtesy. An Englishman, compelled by a sense of duty to see the ticket of a passenger, would have asked for it with callous bluntness. The Irishman, knowing that his victim was in pain, approached the subject of tickets obliquely, hinting, by means of anecdote of great interest, that people have from time to time been known to defraud railway companies.

(Ch.2.)

Hannay makes a delightfully humorous vignette of the scene, but he is saying something serious about the Irish character, (represented by the two railway attendants) and its impact on the stranger. (Frank Mannix is English). The puzzled stranger cannot understand why the conductor has not demanded his ticket directly - the natural thing to do. The second Irishman, the cook, has immediately comprehended the true point of the ticket collector's story of the fraudulent traveller. He too speaks with delicacy. He covers Frank's slowness to grasp the situation with a hint: "The young gentleman here... has his ticket..."

Exasperation and bewilderment are the reactions experienced by the stranger, confronted by the Irishman's volubility, imaginativeness, and indirection. And these
reactions illustrate an essential incongruity between the stranger and the Irishman. Further, these reactions are meant to be metaphorical illustrations of the reactions of a stranger to Ireland itself. For Hannay believed in the concept of Irishness, and that it manifested itself in certain qualities. He illustrated those qualities by his characterizations, using certain internal devices to do so. He made comedy of the confrontation of the stranger by those Irish characterizations, and these internal devices were certain of the tools of his comic technique.

Hannay never abandoned this first internal device but refined and adapted it in his later farces. When he evolved a new type of protagonist, the hoydenish schoolgirl, garrulity and the tangential or inconsequent reply - in this case a reference to a schoolmate or teacher unknown to the interlocutor - was used as one of the exasperating tricks of childhood. In here is Priscilla Lentaigne meeting her cousin Frank after he has sprained his ankle.
"You look wobbly," said Priscilla. "Can't you walk by yourself?"
I've met with an accident," said Frank.
"That's all right. I was afraid just at first that you might be the sort that collapsed altogether after being sea-sick. Some people do, you know, and they're never much good for anything. I'm glad you're not one of them. Accidents are different, of course. Nobody can ever be quite sure of not meeting an accident."

She glanced at the stain on the front of her dress as she spoke. It was the result of an accident.
"I've sprained my ankle," said Frank.
"It's my belief," said the guard, "that the young gentleman's leg is broke on him. That's what the ticket collector was after telling me at the junction anyway."
"Would you like me to cut off your sock?" said Priscilla. "The station-master's wife would lend me a pair of scissors. She's sure to have a pair. Almost everybody has."
"No, I wouldn't," said Frank. There had been trouble enough in getting the sock on over the damp table-napkin. He had no wish to have it taken off again unnecessarily.
"All right," said Priscilla; "I won't if you'd rather not, of course; but it's the proper thing to do for a sprained ankle. Sylvia Courtney told me so, and she attended a course of ambulance lectures last term, and learnt all about first aid on the battlefield. I wanted to go to those lectures frightfully, but Aunt Juliet wouldn't let me. Rather rot, I thought it at the time; but I saw afterwards that she couldn't possibly, on account of her principles."

(Ch.4 )

Priscilla's chatter continues, and Frank - and the reader - realizes that there is peculiar kind of logic in the quicksilver dartings of her mind. She is not as simple as she seems to be.
Although it is probable that some of the behaviour and traits of Hannay's schoolgirl heroines originated in his observation of his own two daughters, the Rev. J. J. Meldon was, as Hannay says, an entirely fortuitous creation. Because Meldon was a Church of Ireland clergyman in a remote Connaught parish, and because of a certain irreverence in his nature which echoed something in Hannay's own attitudes, the two may be confused. But it is possible to detect a slight condescension in Hannay's portrait of the curate. Hannay himself was Rector of Westport, a living awarded to him by the local magnate, the Marquess of Sligo, and he was Donellan lecturer and writer of studies of early Church History, with a rapidly growing reputation as a serious novelist and able critic of Irish affairs.

Meldon, on the other hand, recalls to some extent Hannay's portraits of divinity students in the TCD scenes of Hyacinth. Meldon lacks their philistinism; although he has a proper contempt for dusty learning, his Scriptural quotations are precise and appropriate. Although "No one ever gave him credit for being studious," the floor of his room is covered with books. But he is breezily contemptuous of form: "He was more at ease in a smoking room than a drawing room, and preferred a gun to a Sunday-school roll book. He cared
very little about his personal appearance, and considered that he paid sufficient respect to the virtue of cleanliness if he washed every morning. He was physically strong, played most games well, had been distinguished as an athlete in college, smoked black tobacco, and was engaged to be married." Thus the Rev. J.J. reflected the conventional view of Irishness, with his "free-and-easy manners, habitual unpunctuality, and incurable untidiness." He had rather an "Irish conception of the truth. He is rather middle-class: he cycles through the dusty Irish lanes, he is always short of money, he has an "old governor" who is a hard-working dispensary doctor and a "little girl" in Rathmines whom he hopes some day to marry. But he is by no means the typical curate. The reader knows that he would not hesitate to call his egg a bad egg. He was an original characterization, totally different from Hannay's earlier portraits of clergymen, who had been caricatured as ineffectual bumbler like Meldon's rector, who is in a "fine fizz" over the possible loss of a local baronet's subscription.

Hannay was free to add another dimension to the portrait when the Rev. J.J. Meldon metamorphoses into Dr. Lucius O'Grady, dispensary doctor of Ballymoy. Meldon had been short of money on his curate's stipend,
but O'Grady was hopelessly in debt to the local gombeen man and to Dublin usurers. It was true that he could not hope to pay them while his patients did not pay him, but that was little excuse, for

like most good-humoured and easy-going men, Dr. O'Grady lived beyond his income.... was not the kind of man who enjoys small economies, and he had certain expensive tastes. He liked to have a good horse between the shafts of a smart trap when he went his rounds. He liked to see the animal's coat glossy and the harness shining. He preferred good whiskey to bad, and smoked tobacco at 10s. 6d. a pound. He was particular about the cut of his clothes and had a fine taste in striped waistcoats. He also - quite privately - for in the West of Ireland no one would admit that he threw money away wantonly - bought a few books every year.

(Ch. 2)

Dr. O'Grady appears first in Hannay's second light novel, The Search Party, and reappears as Dr. O'Reilly, the hero of Hannay's play, Eleanor's Enterprise (in which he was recognized as "A Stage Meldon" by the theatre critic of the Irish Independent and of General John Regan. In fact, Meldon had been the hero of the latter play as Hannay originally wrote it. But the London producers decided that it would be unwise to make the mendacious clergyman the central figure of the farce, and Hannay easily substituted O'Grady.
He had already discovered the greater freedom allowed him in characterizing a doctor instead of a clergyman. Both have an irreverent - and typically Irish - attitude toward money; that is, they had come to terms with a life in which there was little chance of acquiring material satisfactions. O'Grady's is perhaps the more self-indulgent, however. He allowed himself a luxurious life and a somewhat irresponsible attitude toward paying his debts. That it is a typically Irish attitude is illustrated in The Search Party: when O'Grady disappears, the townspeople of Ballymoy take it as a matter of course that he has escaped to America to avoid paying his debts.

But despite the self-indulgence and dandyism of O'Grady and his change of profession, which gave Hannay a slightly wider latitude in characterisation, the two share the same recognisably Irish traits: imaginativeness, adventurousness, and irreverence. These traits are also shared by a paler edition of O'Grady, Dr. Whitty, who is the hero of a loosely-connected series of Meldon-like adventures published in The Adventures of Dr. Whitty (1913) and by the hoyden-heroinies who were to replace Meldon-O'Grady as the central figures in the light novels.

The qualities of irreverence, imaginativeness, and delicacy play an important part in the Irish concept of the truth. It is important to understand that when
Meldon assumes a disguise to throw rival treasure-hunters off the scent, he is not dissembling but employing a richness of imaginative invention. When O'Grady invites the Lord-Lieutenant to unveil a statue to a non-existent hero, he is not perpetrating a hoax, but merely displaying the proper Irish reverence for government authority. When Ballymoy citizens tell O'Grady's fiancée that he is dead rather than what they believe to be the unkind truth, that he has run away from her or from his debts, they are exercising a native delicacy of feeling. In Meldon and in other Irish characterizations, Hannay set loose the Irish imagination and Irish irreverence on the ordinary background of Irish life. And the resulting comedy was illuminating.

To achieve verbal comic effects, Hannay repeated certain internal devices. Upon closer examination those devices are seen to be successfully integrated with character and theme. They are, besides the tangential response already seen in the dialogue of Meldon and other Irish characters, the distortion of reported speech, the speech of conditioned response, the laconic rejoinder, and, closely related to the last, the anti-climactic statement and, finally, dialect. In all of these devices, including the laconic reply, the Irish characteristic of garrulity plays an important part.
The first device, the distortion of reported speech, was used as early as the short story, "Eleanor's Enterprise," and the play which was taken from it in 1911. The following passage is taken from the novel *Send For Doctor O'Grady* which was adapted in turn from the play. The Irish peasant Kerrigan is reporting Sybil Mainwaring's discovery of the Rathconnell Castle furnishings in his cabin:

"That's a queer dish, says she, "It's a mighty queer dish so it is. It's a damned queer dish," says she. "She didn't say that," said O'Grady. "If she didn't say it she meant it," said Kerrigan. "I don't know," says she. "Did ever I see the like of that dish only up at the Castle," says she."

"It's thieves and robbers you are, the whole of you," says she; "look at that now,... Are you thieves and robbers, or are you not?" says she. "We are," says I, thinking that was the best thing there was to say. "Damned thieves," says she. "Just that," says I, trying all I could to pacify her. "I don't believe a word of it," said O'Grady. "Miss Mainwaring wouldn't use language like that." "If she didn't," said Kerrigan, "she wanted to. And she would if she'd known how...." (Ch. 24)

The joke consists of Kerrigan's transposing Sybil's speech into his own Irish idiom, and again in adding an unlikely bit of profanity to it. The richness and strangeness of the Irish idiom put into the mouth of an educated Englishwoman results in a comic incongruity.
Another example of the use of the device occurs in *Lalage's Lovers*. The election agent, Titherington, a forceful man at any time, is indignantly reporting to his candidate the speech of Lalage at the election meeting:

"It began well," said Titherington. "It began infernally well. She stood up and, without by your leave or with your leave, said that all politicians were damned liars."
"Damned?"
"Well, bloody," said Titherington, with an air of a man who makes concessions.

(Ch. 12 )

Although Titherington's idiom would not vary from that of Lalage as much as Kerrigan's would vary from that of Sybil Mainwaring, the incongruity remains in the transference of his own strong emotion to Lalage's speech in the intemperate epithet. Like Kerrigan, he is sure that even if the lady didn't say it, she "meant it."

A second device, the speech of conditioned response, is more closely allied to characterization and theme. Hannay uses it in his portraits of men of preconceived ideas and strongly held doctrines, usually politicians. At any pretext, the patriot goes into a political oration: it is a response analogous to the Pavlovian dog responding to the stimulus of the dinner bell.
For example, the fiery nationalist, Thady Gallagher, in *General John Regan*, is asked to explain why there is no statue to the hero in Ballymoy. There is no statue because there was no hero, but he cannot say that. Instead he launches into a tirade:

"It's on account of the way we find ourselves in this country at the present time," he said. "It's not the hearts of the people that's at fault. There isn't one, not the poorest man among us, that wouldn't be willing to do honour to the memory of the great men of the past that died on the scaffold in defence of the liberty of the people. It's the cursed system of Castle Government and the tyranny of the landlords, and the way the people is driven off their farms by the rack-renting flunkeys of the rent office. How is the country to prosper and how is statues to be erected to them that deserve statues so long as the people isn't able to call their souls their own? But, glory be to God, it won't be for long! We have Home Rule as good as got, and when we have it -"

"The chops is fried,"

(Ch. 2)

The last statement, an interruption by Mary Ellen, the independent servant girl, is typical of another device, the laconic rejoinder. In that instance its full effect is anti-climactic: ordinary affairs intrude on the high-flown passion of politics. But in essence, the device is similar to one used by another of Hannay's Irish female characters, the little girl in *Spanish Gold*. 
Mary Kate. To all of Meldon's eager questioning, she gives laconic replies. Meldon begins:

"Tell me now," said Meldon, "did you do what I bid you?"
"I did," said Mary Kate.
"And have the gentlemen gone back to the yacht?"
"They're after going this minute."
"And where were they?"
"Beyond."
"Listen to me now, Mary Kate. I'm not going to spend the rest of the day dragging information out of you as if each word you say is a tooth that it hurts you to part with. Tell me now straight, and no more nonsense - where did they go?"

They were up beyond at my grandda's."
"At Thomas O'Flaherty Pat's! Were they talking to him?"
"They were not, then, for himself wasn't in it."
"What were they doing?"
"Looking at the Poll-na-phuca."
"At the what?"

(Ch. 10 )

In another passage, the exchange runs like this:

"Mary Kate," he Meldon began again after a pause.
"You're Michael O'Flaherty Tom's Mary Kate, aren't you?"
"I might then."
"What's the good of saying you might when you know you are? You can't get over me with that sort of talk. Do you see that?"
He held up between his finger and thumb Major Kent's second sixpence. Mary Kate grinned.
"Well, take a good look at it. Now, tell me this: Is Thomas O'Flaherty Pat your
"Is it me granda you mean?"
"It is. Is Thomas O'Flaherty Pat your granda?"
"He might," said Mary Kate. (Ch. 8)

Invariably there is a contrast between the volubility of the one speaker and the brief reply of the other. In each case the reply is made by someone in an inferior position - a child, a servant, - and in each case by an Irish peasant. Hannay was attempting to suggest something of the nature of the Irish who found an independent spirit and a non-committal air a useful defence against intruding questioners. Although Irishmen such as Patsy Devlin in The Search Party, Doyle in The Simpkins Plot, and Peter Walsh in The Invincible Sanctuary make use of it, the laconic rejoinder is used most characteristically by women: Mary Kate in Spanish Gold, Bridgy in The Search Party, Sabina in The Simpkins Plot, Onny Donovan in The Lost Tribes, and Mary Ellen in General John Regan. Its use is another manifestation of the independent spirit possessed by all of Hannay's feminine characters. Unable to order servants about as Priscilla does or to bully friends and relations as Lalage can, these Irish girls nevertheless avail themselves of a defensive tactic against the often unreasonable - to them - demands of their superiors. As an internal device, the laconic rejoinder
is an effective reversal of the conventional comic device, used, for example, in Molière's characterizations, when a frustrated master finds it impossible to stem the torrent of an impudent servant's speech.

In his use of Irish idiom and dialect Hannay is somewhat conventional. He does not attempt Gaelic, except for an occasional Ni Beurla Agam uttered by an Irish character to confuse an English-speaking intruder. However, it is possible to distinguish the Anglo-Irish from the Irish characters by the manner of the speech. Except for an occasional lapse - Major Kent in Spanish Gold does begin his sentence: "Cock the likes of that one up with...." - Hannay's middle-class characters, Major Kent, and the strangers and visitors to Ballymoy, whether from Dublin or England, speak the idiom of the educated English middle class. There is a trace of Irish flavour in their speech, but it is sprinkled with English public school epithets, bally, cad, surely (as opposed to the conventional Irish Sure or Sure'an), Good chap, Rot, a bit thick, the idiom of the Anglo-Irish classes educated in England or at Irish schools modelled on English public schools. The Irish peasant characters speak a sort of demotic Anglo-Irish, that is, they do not speak Gaelic, and yet the syntactical relationships in their sentences are not
purely English. Hannay does not sink to any Begorrahs, but he does make use of the conventionalized Gaelic idioms translated into English, in it for here or in the case; and the addition of at all at the end of a sentence. He also makes use of the Irish verb reversal as in the sentence: "It is not the first I'd be making" and the Irish affirmative by repetition: I am or I am not, I will or I will not, I might or I might not. It is or It is not, in place of the simple affirmative yes or no. The syntactical patterns are thus the conventional Irish patterns already familiar in the work of Synge and Lady Gregory, but with little of the originality or poetry of the former. Nevertheless there is a liveliness and flavour in the speech of Hannay's peasant Irish characters that set them apart from his Anglo-Irish characters. Only Meldon is, so to speak, bi-lingual. When he speaks to an Irish character, as in his conversations with Mary Kate quoted above, Irishisms creep in: "Tell me, now," "get over me," and "It is." When he talks to people of his own class, Major Kent or Chief Secretary Willoughby, his idiom is indistinguishable from theirs. Meldon represents something in his speech that is almost impossible to realize in characterization: a true amalgamation of all the elements that go to make up an Irishman.
Hannay’s use of American idiom is less happy. Two Americans figure in the early light novels: Horace P. Billing in General John Regan and Mrs. Sally May Dann in The Lost Tribes. The nationality of Billing is established at his entrance with the following request to the hotel-keeper, Doyle: "Say, are you the proprietor?" ... Can I register?" Then Billing remarks to Doyle "It occurs to me, that this town kind of cries out to be wakened up a bit! ... Where I come from, I'm reckoned to hustle quite considerable. I'd rather like to try if I could get a move on you folks."

Hannay has introduced several American slang expressions into the speech: say, register, kind of, reckoned, hustle, move on; and he has caught two common American solecisms: the verb wakened up and the substitution of the adjective for the adverb form; but his grip of the idiom is not sure. He has crowded in too many slang expressions; the resultant sentence rhythm is not American, and after using kind of in one sentence, he uses rather in the next; the first is an American usage but rather in that sense is not. Billing crowds in too many Americanisms in yet another speech: "I got bitten with the notion of speeding you up a bit, because I felt plumb sure that there wasn’s a live man in the place, nothing but a crowd of doddering hop-toads." Hannay combines the dialect of the frontier, 19th century Eastern commercial slang, and American
provincialisms in a mixture that can best be described as "Stage American." Similarly, Mrs. Sallie May Dann in The Lost Tribes in this speech: "...I wasn't twenty-five years married to Nathan P. Dunn without learning a thing or two. When he said he didn't want to go messing about the city in a chest protector I didn't speak another word. I just "phoned off to the doc" and told him to get ready his cough mixture...." Why Hannay or his publishers enclosed "Phoned off to the doc" in inverted commas is puzzling; although doc is an American slang contraction, phoned off to does not exist even in American slang; cough medicine not cough mixture, messing around not messing about, and married twenty-five years not twenty-five years married are the American idioms. Both Billing and Mrs. Dann have money and position, but their speech is not that of cultivated people. Hannay may have meant to suggest that Billing was a self-made man and Mrs. Dann a gushing provincial, but it is interesting to note that the latter characterization appeared in a novel published after Hannay's first visit to America in 1913. It is likely that he had not fully digested his impressions of American speech gained on that visit. And it is impossible to categorize the language of Mr. Otto Bernstein, the business partner of Mrs. Dann's late husband. Here he is
talking to Bobby Sebright about Mrs. Dann:

"The widow of my partner is one d---d fool... It is that which I meant, ... when I said d---d fool, and my poor friend he knew it. He knew the money would go-fly.... The money will go. My poor friend he said to me,'They may do anything with it.' He meant any fool thing, anything with any sense in it at all. 'It may be,' he said to me, 'that they will use my money to - 'I have forgot the word, but it meant to make better the state of his country, of Ireland.' "Regenerate?"

"That is it. There is much sadness in the thought. My friend he did feel the sadness of it. His money that he made, he and I together in the past time, it will be used by fools to make better, to regenerate, the state of Ireland, so my poor friend did say to me."

(Ch. 1 )

"Mr. Otto Bernstein disappears from the story at this point." But he does not disappear from Hannay's gallery of characters, for it is likely that Bernstein was Hannay's first attempt to portray a Jew. In his groping for the abstract term, in his repetition of the subject, and in the unusual placement of the verb, there seems to be an attempt to imitate the syntactical structure of the Yiddish (American German-Jewish) or Central European dialect. Unfortunately the result is entirely factitious. In Bernstein's name as well as his concern for the proper use of money, there are hints of Hannay's later characterizations of Jews.
American characterizations continued to appear in Hannay's light novels, but their language never evolves into American. Despite his acquaintance with American visitors to Ireland, and later, his own visits to America and his multiplying family connections, Hannay never quite succeeded in reproducing American speech. But since Hannay's Irish and English readers were unlikely to be expert in American English and since the dialogue was used as a verbal comic device and only one kind of stroke in portraits that were essentially caricature, this did not much matter. What does matter is that in his American characterizations Hannay provided a racy contrast to stock Irish and Anglo-Irish characterizations. Their speech established the Americans as different and alive, and they introduced a note of exoticism which was refreshing. To an ordinary reader of Hannay's novels, their speech might seem comic and original.

In his characterizations of hoydens, Hannay depends largely upon malapropisms and schoolgirl slang for his comic devices. "...we hadn't got any ecclesiastical preferments to sell, and we hadn't any money to buy them, so we couldn't have simonied even if we'd wanted to," says Lalage Beresford, defending herself against a charge of simony. She speaks of hols, rec, comp, and Jun Soph Ord as if they were part
of the common coin of English conversation. Her essays and letters home are full of allusions to people and activities supposedly unintelligible to the informed reader. But these devices are rather hackneyed schoolgirl slang; Lalage's letters might be read fondly by a parent (as a matter of fact, they probably were; there is reason to suppose that Hannay was quoting his own daughter's letters), but they are rather repetitious and wearisome to the ordinary reader and not very comic. Hannay's heroines were not very witty or very charming; their chief effect lay in the effect of their audacity and authoritarian nature on their contemporaries.
References

1 The Rev Theophilus Mervyn in The Lost Tribes
2 Stanley Went in the Pittsburg Leader Nov 23 1913
3 Dublin 12.12.11
4 See Correspondence between Hannay and Golding Bright, esp. letter from Bright dated London, 18.1.13 Hannay Mas (TCD). The playscript used in the New York production of November 1913, which was one of the earliest typed versions, clearly shows the name of the character Meldon crossed out and O'Grady substituted. (NYPL)
5 See Appendix, reference 2.
6 Ibid.
7 See Visitors Book kept by Hannays at Westport, (TCD) Misc 14
8 Hannay visited America in 1913 and 1915
9 Hannay's sons went to live in America, joining a cousin's business. Hannay's son Robert died in Dallas, Texas in March 1965. See 'Deaths' in Trinity; an annual record published by Trinity College Dublin; Michaelmas 1965, No. 17
10 PP, p. 167. Hannay quotes a letter from his daughter Althea which is a paraphrase of Lalage's first letter sent from school
In Hannay's second light novel the characterizations and plot patterns had become apparent, and they recurred consistently, with some slight variation, through all of the early light novels and plays. The plot pattern runs like this: at some stimulus (it might be anything - the discovery of documents relating to buried treasure, but most often, the arrival of strangers in the neighbourhood) the hero (Meldon-0'Grady) formulates a grandiose plan (the treasure must be sought, the stranger somehow be made to serve local interests). He must carry through his plan over the immediate objections of the other characters, who represent the voice of reason. He meets every objection or difficulty with fantastic explanation or by improvising further outrageous schemes. He is never at a loss, and carries all before him, arousing awe and admiration as he successfully executes his plan - which does not work out as expected, but to a satisfactory conclusion nevertheless.

All of the earliest light novels follow that pattern, even when the agent Meldon-0'Grady is changed into a hoyden-heroine. A second variation occurs when the action is described from the point of view of a narrator who observes but takes little or no part in the
action. But these three patterns all contain one element, the arrival of strangers in a remote Connaught town. Meldon-O'Grady immediately sees that something - if it is only excitement - can be gained from the stranger's visit. In The Search Party the impecunious Dr. O'Grady sees the chance to repair his finances by attending the injured servant of the mysterious Mr. Red, a farcical anarchist, brewing plots in the "dilapidated gentleman's" dower house that he has rented from the local peer. Undismayed by imprisonment by the fanatical Red, O'Grady is concerned to remain a prisoner long enough to earn a hundred pounds, and he meets the incursions of the other prisoners, Patsy Devlin, the rascally local blacksmith, and a party of touring English M.P.s, with persuasive good humour. His attempts to reconcile Devlin and to pacify the bewildered M.P.s are sustained long enough to afford some richly comic scenes between the oddly asserted prisoners, but his imprisonment is finally ended by a search party organized by his strong-minded English fiancee, Miss Maud Adeline Blow, and joined by the ladies of the parliamentarians.

In The Simpkins Plot Meldon plots to marry off a stranger, suspected of being a murderess, to rid the town of Simpkins, a local nuisance. In The Major's Niece
Meldon sees in the imminent arrival of Major Kent's Australian niece a chance to make the most of a proposed visit from the Lord-Lieutenant and wring from him some piece of patronage for the town. Similarly, in General John Regan Meldon (later O'Grady) uses the arrival of an American on pilgrimage to the birthplace of a local hero (non-existent) as a pretext to lure the Lord-Lieutenant to Ballymoy, where he can be more easily solicited for patronage. In The Lost Tribes another American, this time a philanthropically-minded widow, conceives the theory that the natives of the little Irish village of Druminawona are descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Her plans to enliven the village by performing a medieval miracle play there forces a defensive alliance between the local Catholic and Protestant clerics. In The Inviolable Sanctuary a young Irish girl pretends to see spies in a pair of runaway lovers who are hiding in the islands of Moy Bay.

The last two novels demonstrate the variations in plot patterns; in The Inviolable Sanctuary the Meldon figure has been replaced by the hoyden-heroine, and in The Lost Tribes, there is a sharper reversal; the plot depends upon the efforts of the local inhabitants to frustrate the schemes of the stranger. But in all of them exists the element of a stranger impinging on the lives
of the local inhabitants. Only in Lalage's Lovers is the device of the stimulating stranger omitted; in that novel the hoyden-heroine acts as a catalyst in a series of satirical episodes.

To furnish tension in the plots there are major obstacles which must be overcome. In Spanish Gold Meldon must contend with the rival treasure-seekers and with strangers who get in the way of the hunt. In The Search Party Dr. O'Grady's fiancee is a formidable obstacle to the doctor's plan to remain hidden in lucrative imprisonment. The Major's niece is not the fashionable young debutante who will charm the Lord-Lieutenant into dispensing patronage, but a hoydenish schoolgirl who disrupts the placid life of the town. In General John Regan the townspeople and the Lord-Lieutenant are both reluctant to attend a ceremony celebrating a hero who never existed, thus providing a double thread of difficulties for O'Grady to meet. Even Priscilla's efforts at spy-catching are discouraged by local poteen makers who want to keep their still inviolable. These obstacles provide the hero with the chief stimulus to his imagination. He improvises a new plan or explanation at every twist of the plot, and the breathless speed with which he deals with even the most formidable obstacle ensures a swiftly-moving story.
Essentially each novel is a conventional farce. The elements of logic outraged, exaggeration, caricature, and trick ending emerge in each novel. The comic villany of Sir Giles Buckley and Mr. Red are exaggerated, the possibility of the citizens of Ballymoy obtaining patronage through a single visitation of the Lord-Lieutenant is exaggerated; the plan to rid the town of an obnoxious estate agent by marrying him to a husband prisoner is outrageous. Coincidence plays a major part in The Simpkins Plot; it is possible that a daring lady novelist might be mistaken for a woman acquitted of murdering her husband, but that Sir Gilbert Hawkesby, visiting Ballymoy, is both uncle of the novelist and judge at the trial of the murderess stretches the elastic laws of coincidence too far. But all comes right although the plot is resolved by an unexpected means, sometimes by a deus ex machina like Mr. Billing who rescues the statue committee with a cheque for £500. The Major's niece achieves a success with the Lord-Lieutenant despite her youth; and the lady novelist does rid the town of the obnoxious Simpkins: he will leave town in chagrin when she marries Major Kent.

There is a distinct evolution in form to be seen seen in Hannay's early light novels. The first two, Spanish Gold and The Search Party have strong farcical
elements, but they originated as straightforward adventure stories. The first is a tale of buried treasure, and the second a tale of capture and imprisonment by a "mad emperor" as O'Grady himself describes him. Hannay says that he began the first novel as a story to amuse his children and it seems likely from the plot of the second that it had a similar origin, although the farcical subplot of Miss Blow's search seen displaces the original "imprisonment" plot. Even The Major's Niece and The Inviolable Sanctuary may be read as school stories, with childhood adventures, sailing, picnicking, playing truant, furnishing much of the incident. Lalage's Lovers contains description of school and university life that would please younger as well as older readers. But in all these novels the farcical elements are strongest. They emerge most consistently in The Simpkins Plot, The Lost Tribes, and General John Regan.

The most successful of all the novels as farce is The Simpkins Plot to which the use of the double coincidence gives the classical economy of plot. It has, as well, the most economical presentation of any of Hannay's novels. Hannay was essentially a narrative rather than a dramatic writer, but almost all of The Simpkins Plot is recounted through dialogue. Hannay's discursiveness often made him
a tedious narrator, but he abandons most of his usual narrative digressions in this novel. Even the dialogue is crisp and pointed. Compare the exchange between Major Kent and Meldon reported on page 147 with the exchange from General John Regan copied on page 138.

O'Grady's qualification, "properly draped, of course," is intelligible enough to any audience without the succeeding explanation, which only underlines the irony unnecessarily. Hannay's satirical shafts are well aimed, but suffer from being explained. Even in General John Regan, which was first written as a play, the dialogue might be more succinct.

Hannay's discursiveness took other forms. In establishing a scene, he often allowed himself a sort of conditioned response. For example, a chance to describe a gentleman's house evoked a brief homily on the extravagance of eighteenth century building. The appearance of a policeman signalled an attack on the methods of recruiting and assigning the Royal Irish Constabulary. The same points were made: the eighteenth century gentleman impoverished his heirs by squandering fortunes on beautiful houses. The government added to the people's contempt for law by assigning policemen to any district other than their native one. Of course, these points were very much a part of Hannay's satire, but the
regularity with which they appear might tire anyone who read more than one of Hannay's novels.

Then, too, because Hannay introduces a few of his characters into more than one of his novels, there is some repetition in establishing the characters. The description of Major Kent's pedigree and household is taken almost verbatim from *Spanish Gold* and repeated in *The Major's Niece* and *Inisheeny*. Only the unique J.J. grows larger with every appearance: he leaves Ballymoy, marries, fathers a daughter, and comes back to Ballymoy for his holidays, reporting on his new life in a North of England parish. Many of the characterizations of the Irish peasants reappear in novel after novel, sometimes under the same name as Doyle, the publican, or more often as the same characterization under a different name, as Mary Ellen, Sabina, or Onny, the slatternly servant girl.

As patterns in plot structure become discernible in Hannay's light novels, there also emerges a pattern in the major characterization. The principal characters include the protagonists, Meldon, O'Grady, and their foils, whose prototype is Major Kent. Midway in the early light novels there is a variation in the pattern. Meldon-O'Grady disappears as the chief actor, and his role is taken over by a woman, usually a hoydenish girl. The role of the foil
is assumed by the narrator. That variation begins in The Major's Niece, which is an amalgam of all the patterns, for in that novel all three elements exist: Meldon as the chief actor; his foil, Major Kent, and Meldon's stimulator, the hoydenish visiting niece Marjorie. The pattern is fully developed, however, in Lalage's Lovers and continues in later light novels such as Good Conduct, Laura's Bishop, and The Search for Susie. There is a second variation in pattern, in which the chief actor is still feminine, but the story is narrated in the third person, usually from the point of view of the foil. In this variation the hoyden sometimes becomes an adult, but she retains her liveliness and single-mindedness. The first novels to use that pattern are The Inviolable Sanctuary and The Lost Tribes, and many of the later light novels repeated it.

The hoyden heroine who was to recur in Hannay's light novels is foreshadowed in The Northern Iron in which the most appealing figure is the tomboyish Peg MacIlrea. Hannay had always tried to portray lively women. Even his one-dimensional heroines of the early serious novels had a certain independence of spirit, although it was conventionally directed. The characterization of the little Irish girl Mary Kate in Spanish Cold demonstrates something of Hannay's admiration for feminine spirit,
humour, and strong will. The character of Marjorie in *The Major's Niece* is the first portrait of the hoyden as a child, and she controls a good deal of the action, although Meldon is still the chief figure. Although the plot of the novel is based on a case of mistaken identity, the character of Marjorie early assumes a major importance, and one-third way through the book, the comedy is directly related to her adventures. The original plot is resurrected only at the rather contrived conclusion; the Lord-Lieutenant is as charmed by the young hoyden as he would have been by the fashionable young woman Meldon had hoped for.

The characterization of Marjorie comprises most of the traits that Hannay's hoyden-heroines possessed. Not a well-behaved young girl by conventional Edwardian standards, she nevertheless charms the adult members of her circle. Her escapades include racing her uncle's polo pony, and running away with his boat, provisioning it first from his larder. Haughty with her companion, Paudeen the yard-boy, she reveals a good heart when she defends him against punishment. Priscilla Lentaigne is also fond of sailing and nearly drowns her cousin Frank Mannix on one sailing expedition. Much of the comedy of *The Inviolable Sanctuary* lies in the contrast between the self-satisfied English public school prefect Frank and his irreverent Irish cousin.
Frank gradually unbends enough to enjoy himself at Priscilla's picnics, where etiquette counts as little as rules of diet. Hannay hits off very well the strange menus favoured by children: a pound and a half of peppermint creams as *hors d'oeuvre* followed by a jaggedly gaping tin of Californian peaches and two packets of dried soup make up one meal. But Priscilla is a wise child; she is resigned to her Aunt Juliet's enthusiasms — for Christian Science, for "teetotality", for "uric acid." She knows that these enthusiasms are the mysterious things that separate fifteen years from adulthood. She can always escape into the real way of natural beauty, sailing among the islands that dot Moy Bay; or into imaginary adventure, chasing "spies" who are only runaway lovers, sheltering among poteen makers on the islands.

Hannay's most ambitious characterization of hoyden-heroine in any of the light novels early or late, is Lalage Beresford in *Lalage's Lovers*.

In the course of the novel she grows from childhood to young womanhood. She is the only child of a country parson, a widower, who takes refuge from the problem of Lalage and the problems of life in reading Horace. Lalage appears first as an untameable tomboy, tormenting a series of governesses, until she is sent to school in Dublin. Neither school nor University life
Lalage Beresford combines two of Hannay's female characterizations, the hoyden-heroine and the strong-minded woman. Hannay was never to fully abandon the former, and he was to use the latter more and more frequently in his later light novels. Through all these characterizations some of Hannay's personal admiration for the lively type of woman shows through. Undoubtedly there was an element of parental pride in his admiration, for it is likely that the behaviour if not the character of these heroines was based to some extent on his observations of his own two lively daughters. For example, in his autobiography he describes his daughters sailing in Clew Bay\(^2\). His adventuresome hoydens sail fearlessly through the island-dotted Moy Bay. His account of his daughter Althea's reaction to Alexandra College is
similar to the reaction of Lalage at her first taste of the school. 3

There must have been something in Hannay's nature which responded to forceful women and which caused him to characterize them more successfully than any other kind of woman. Even in his early serious novels, the forceful ladies, usually wives of retiring peers, are more convincing than his romantic heroines. They had been used as comic relief, to form a strong contrast with their weak husbands, but they were a type that recurred in almost all of Hannay's novels. Even his female servants were strong-minded: independent like the Northern Hannah Macaulay in The Northern Iron and Mrs. McCann in Eleanor's Enterprise or stubborn like the Western Irish maidservants, Doyle's Mary Ellen in General John Regan. Hannay admired a spirited woman, although she may have been willful, spoiled, or even tiresome.

There is a passage in The Simpkins Plot in which two of the characters, one a novelist, discuss the possibility of putting Meldon into a book. The novelist says:
"I should like to."
"Do. Tell the whole story of his bribing the cook to poison me, and I'll buy two hundred copies straight away. I've always wanted to be put into a novel, and I should like to go down in posterity side by side with Meldon."
"I wish I could."
"There's no difficulty that I can see. He'll do equally well for a hero or a villain."
"I'm afraid all the other characters would look like fools. That's the difficulty."
"They would, . . . I'm very much afraid they would. . . ."

(Ch. 20)

The principal character to "go down in posterity side by side with Meldon" is, of course, Major Kent. He appears first in Spanish Gold, is omitted in The Search Party where his role is shared by Lord Manton and Mr. Goddard, the inspector of police, reappears in The Simpkins Plot, and after that rarely fails to appear at the side of Meldon-O'Grady. But he by no means seems a fool. Originally his function in the novels may have been to act as a foil to Meldon, but he early asserts himself as a character in his own right, and his characterization comes to have a deeper significance.

The characterization of Major Kent had three primary functions. First of all, his character provides a contrast to Meldon's, highlighting all of his friend's originality. Correct in his habits, he dresses for dinner, is invariably punctual, appreciates good
food, wine, and order. Conventional in his life, he has inherited a small property in the West of Ireland, raises polo ponies, sails a trim little yacht, and takes his turn on the local bench as a J.P. He is calm, reasonable, upright, just - the personification of everything that is expected of the Anglo-Irish middle class. The outrageousness of Meldon's character - also middle class but incontestably Irish - contrasts violently with his. Perhaps some clue to the contrast can be found in the fact that Kent, whose family has lived in Ireland for three generations, has retained the virtues of his English ancestry. Meldon, despite his Protestantism and undeclared origins, is the apotheosis of Irishness.

Second, Major Kent's reactions to Meldon's actions provide the tension which explodes into comedy. Constantly he is confronted with situations which violate his principles. To meet the exigencies of Meldon's plots, he must sail his yacht into dangerously shallow waters, entertain an unknown niece expensively, marry a novelist, or appear as a representative of the dignity of the law at a ceremony which celebrates a hoax against constituted authority. Yet, allowing himself only an occasional satirical comment, he risks danger and disgrace as he trails in Meldon's wake. His conventional reactions to Meldon's activities - amazement, horrified disapproval,
grudging acquiesence, irony - provide the contrast which illuminates Meldon's audacious originality.

Third, Major Kent represents an attitude which comes to be more and more significant as it begins to resemble Hannay's own point of view towards Irish life. The attitude is essentially one of helplessness, and it is one which only a strong sense of comedy makes supportable. The posture to be adopted to express that point of view is therefore amused detachment. Major Kent is helpless in the face of Meldon's world. Hannay was becoming more and more hopeless in a rapidly changing Ireland. Limited as he was by his convictions and by the traditions of his class, Hannay could not accept the Ireland that confronted him. He postponed, and perhaps never made, the ultimate rejection. But he began a withdrawal into laughter that the comic novels symbolized and the characterization of Major Kent personified.

Major Kent is not the only representative of that spirit of withdrawal. In the earlier serious novels and in The Search Party and Eleanor's Enterprise it had been expressed in the characterizations of the "withdrawing" Irish peers who viewed the scene with a clear eye but with detachment. Originally they were designed for comic effect, as their struggles to evade entanglement in Irish affairs were contrasted with the enthusiasm of
their strong-minded wives. And it was no accident that these peers, too, were Anglo-Irish. Hannay had used them in the early novels to demonstrate the theme that the impotence of the Irish peers was the result of their own neglect of their opportunities. In the light novels, too, he used them for comic effect, as they shrink, like Lord Manton in *The Search Party*, from any involvement: he "never sits on the bench from one year's end to another..." although he is a magistrate. These peers are portrayed as lazy men, fond of retiring to a quiet corner, out of the way of servants and wives, but their malaise springs from something more than self-indulgence. It is not that they are stupid men, either, for they are shrewd observers of the scene. When Lord Manton does take action, as he does in recommending Patsy Devlin for the sinecure of Inspector of Sheep Dipping, it is with the cynical knowledge that his recommendation will surely lose Devlin the post. Devlin is a rascal, and Lord Manton takes the course that will paradoxically frustrate one piece of political jobbery. Only occasionally are the Irish peers made out to be fools, and then they are men who do mix themselves in Irish affairs, like Lord Telltown in *Benedict Kavanagh* and Lord Thermanby in *Lalage's Lovers*. But they too are ineffectual: Lord Telltown
occupies himself with harmless religious fanaticism and Lord Thormanby with unsuccessful parliamentary candidates.

In the later light novels, the functions of the Major Kent figure are often assumed by the narrator. Sometimes he appears as a peer, or as a country parson, a bishop, or a higher civil servant. He is first and most successfully realized as the narrator in Lalage's Lovers.

In that novel more than in any other, the narrator is intimately connected with the events of the story. From the start he secretly sympathizes with the struggles of Lalage against the conformity which a series of governessesses would impose on her. He receives her letters from school in which she satirizes the pomposity of her teachers. He is a guarantor to the Anti-Tommyrot Society which she institutes when she is at college, and is threatened with legal action when her Anti-Tommyrot Gazette libels eighteen bishops. He imperils his chances of winning a parliamentary seat when Lalage makes speeches on behalf of her "Association for the Suppression of Public Lying" at his election meetings. He suffers with her friends and relations when she interferes with the election of a local bishop. Nevertheless all through these events he remains an amused but detached observer. He is honest and intelligent enough to applaud her attacks on cant and
hypocrisy, but he remains detached from the action. Only
at the end of the novel does he - unlike any other of
Hannay's narrators - take a decisive action. He removes
Lalage from the scene by marrying her.

The scene in which the narrator proposes marriage to
Lalage is the only convincing love scene that Hannay ever
wrote, and it deserves closer examination. The narrator
is stimulated to propose to Lalage only after he learns
that the archdeacon has already proposed to her. He is
as incoherent in his proposal as she is in accepting him,
and their lovemaking remains verbal throughout the scene.
The scene is entirely in key with the tone of the novel;
humorous, ironic and charming. But it is significant that
the only other successful love scene written by Hannay
was one in which embarrassment and unease play an important
part. In Benedict Kavanagh there is a scene of
stumbling flirtation between the inexperienced Benedict
and his landlady's shallow and flirtatious daughter. The
young boy flounders through his attempt to kiss the girl
who has led him on. The girl is embarrassed and
frightened by the boy's attempt. Hannay's purpose in
both scenes is satirical comedy, although the satire in
Lalage's Lovers is milder. But it is demonstrable of
Hannay's art that early he was unable - and later did
not care to - portray any sexual passion. In his early
serious novels the love scenes are mawkish and unreal. He rarely attempted them, for they were not an integral part of the plot, but the few necessary scenes of courtship are romantically stylized and unconvincing.

Why Hannay failed to convey sexual passion is perhaps related to something in his nature that rejected any kind of passionate feeling. Even when he tried to convey political or spiritual passion in the early serious novels, his art failed him. When he made the best use of his art, as in the early light novels, the difficulty disappeared, for in its essence, farce is opposed to the representation of any passion.

It is not obvious that Hannay himself suffered from any sexual taboos, although he did possess the conventional verbal discretion of his generation. His dislike of literary smut was evident in his condemnatory portrait of George Moore (caricatured as the novelist Dennis Brownein The Seething Pot) titillating literary ladies with risque conversation. He was able to make satirical comedy out of the traditionally puritanical Irish attitude to sex in art. In General John Regan O'Grady reassures the committee:

"A good, life-sized statue - properly draped, of course, so as not to interfere with what's called the distinctive purity of the Irish race - is an ornament to any town."
He parodies the verbal delicacy of the Irish in a passage from the same work: O'Grady reassures the priest about the character of General John Regan:

"...I never heard or read a single word against his character as a religious man. He may have been a little ---" Dr. O'Grady winked slowly. "You know the kind of thing I mean, Father McCormack, when he was young. Most military men are, more or less. I expect that the Major could tell us some queer stories about the sort of thing that goes on ---" "No, I couldn't," said the Major. "In garrison towns," said Dr. O'Grady persuasively, "Come now, Major, I'm not asking you to give yourself away, but you could ---" "No, I couldn't," said the Major firmly. "What you mean is that you wouldn't," said Dr. O'Grady. "Not while Father McCormack is listening to you, anyhow. And you may take my word for it that the old General was just the same. He may have been a bit of a lad in his early days ---". "I wouldn't mind that if it was twice as much, so long ---" "But he'd never have said anything really disrespectful in the presence of a clergyman of any denomination. Whatever his faults were --- and he had faults, of course --- he wasn't that kind of man...." "If I have your word for that," said Father McCormack, "I'm satisfied." "I'm not a rich man," said Dr. O'Grady. "I can't afford to lose money but I'll pay down £50 to any man who proves anything bad about the General. And when I say bad I don't mean things like ---" "I understand you," said Father McCormack. "I mean, said Dr. O'Grady, "atheism of a blatant kind, or circulating immoral literature ---Sunday papers, for instance--- or wanting to turn the priests out of schools, or not paying his dues---" "I understand you," said Father McCormack.

(Ch. 6)
In addition, that passage shows Hannay's unerring aim when he satirizes the cant which marred the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. Much of what worried Father McCormack, for example, "immoral literature" to be found chiefly in English Sunday papers, is preached against to-day. Hannay was equally competent in satirizing the cant preached in the Church of Ireland, as a closer examination of Lalage's Lovers will show.
References

1 Stanley Went in *The Pittsburgh Leader* 23 Nov 1913

2 *PP*, p. 99

Lalage's Lovers has more substance than any of the other light novels, except for Spanish Gold and The Lost Tribes. More carefully detailed characterization and the inclusion of more incident give the book weight. And Hannay attempts a more penetrating satire of hypocrisy and cant in public life. He does not attempt to weave the major characters, Lalage and the narrator, into a conventional love story, although their relationship, which does end in marriage, gives the novel its structure. Around that centre are arranged the episodes and minor characterizations which afford Hannay the opportunity for satire.

The chief targets of Hannay's satire in this novel are clerical and political institutions. The clergy of the Church of Ireland are satirized through two minor characters, the Archdeacon and Canon Beresford, father of Lalage, who represent two recurring types of clerics. The first is usually an archdeacon, rural dean, or in some similar minor ecclesiastical office, a bumbling ineffectual in a world in which his role is rapidly losing its importance. The archdeacon's busy self-importance is established very economically in this interchange: The
narrator meets him in Dublin. "Up for a holiday?" he asks. "No, said the Archdeacon, I have eight meetings to attend to-day." Even more ineffectual but fully aware of his importance is Canon Beresford. He is the first of a line of clerics who will appear often in the later novels and who is most fully realized in the Reverend Theophilus Mervyn in The Lost Tribes. Canon Beresford shrinks from any involvement as quickly as he retires to Northern Scotland when the adventures of Lalage threaten his peace. His resignation is summed up in a favourite quotation of Epictetus, when he commends to the narrator: "Is a little of your oil spilt, or a little wine stolen? Then say to yourself: For so much peace is bought. This is the price of tranquility...."

It is no accident that his favourite Latin tags are from Horace, and that he names his daughter Lalage, for that elegiac and urbane poet suggests his temperament precisely. He thanks the gods for survival.

Episcopal pronouncements come in for their share of satire. Hannay's method is as simple as his heroine's. Lalage achieved a devastating effect by reprinting speeches of bishops in her Anti-Tommy-Rot Gazette, "picking out for her pillory all the most characteristically episcopal utterances for the last two years." Hannay furnished speeches so very authentic that if the readers can no longer ascribe them to certain bishops, they can,
at least, be identified with certain churches. For example, the bishops who inveigh against coeducation in infant schools and the inclusion of Ivanhoe in the secondary school syllabus certainly belong to the church of Father McCormack; and the jingoistic archbishop who preached a sermon on Empire Day represented an element in Hannay's own church. Even the Presbyterians do not escape, for they are represented in a Moderator who wrangles for his rights of precedence at Dublin Castle. It must have taken considerable courage for Hannay to satirize the bishops of any church, but the accuracy of his aim is undeniable. He catches the puritanical and small-minded spirit which so afflicts the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the narrow patriotism and sycophacy of the Irish church.

The narrator unwillingly is involved in a parliamentary election. His mother and uncle arrange his candidature in an Ulster constituency. They engage an agent, Titherington, to conduct the campaign, and he soon initiates the neophyte into the intricacies of politics. He teaches his candidate the difference between "pledging yourself" and "giving them to understand that you pledge yourself." His masterly summing up of the candidate's prospects does not take into account the intervention of Lalage's "Association for the Suppression of Public Lying." In fact, he had initially welcomed
the help of Lalage and her Association because he thought it would be a good idea if the rival candidates were made "to smell hell by a few militant suffragettes."

He cannot be persuaded that The A.S.P.L. is not a Women's Suffrage Society. "It must be," he insists, "S stands for suffrage, doesn't it?"

After the intervention of Lalage and her Association has resulted in the election of O'Donoghue, the Nationalist candidate, his summing up is even more masterly: the defeated narrator receives a letter of explanation:

O'Donoghue's supporters, being inferior in education and general intelligence to mine, were less likely to be affected by new and heretical doctrines such as Lalage's. A certain amount of mental activity is required in order to go wrong. Also Lalage's professed admiration for truth made its strongest appeal to my supporters, because O'Donoghue's friends were naturally addicted to lying, and loved falsehood for its own sake. My side was, in fact, beaten - I have noticed that this is the case in many elections - because it was intellectually and morally the better side.

(Ch. 17)

In Titherington there is more than a hint of that Northern obstinacy which Hannay repeatedly caricatured, but Titherington is more than a stereotyped Ulsterman. He is the most fully developed comic character in this novel, and his scenes with the narrator provide excellent satiric comedy.
It is notable that Lalage's Lovers is the only one of Hannay's early Irish novels in which he confines himself to characterizing the middle class; no Irish peasant characters appear. Consequently there are fewer stereotyped characterizations, and Hannay seems to examine more closely the comic possibilities of his characters. The minor characters appear with some regularity and are not called onstage merely as the exigencies of a conversation require, as so often happens in the farces. Although the plot is episodic and lacks tension, it is interwoven with a variety of incidents which have a comic quality of their own. There is a bridge game in which the narrator, an indifferent player at best, is trapped into playing with irascible experts, while he meditates on the effects that Lalage's plots may have on his career. During the election all of the candidates come down with influenza, and the usually gentle narrator, irascible from too much nursing, must hear of the campaign from a worried Titherington, who consoles himself for the havoc wreaked by Lalage at the election meetings with champagne smuggled into the sickroom.

In The Lost Tribes, too, much of the satiric comedy is directed at ecclesiastical authority. The principal figures, the Reverend Theophilus Mervyn and Father Roche, the parish priest, must consider the effects of Mrs. Dann's
"miracle play" not only on the town but on their bishops. How will their Lordships respond to something as novel as a play? Father Roche, especially, knows that, "It's not what we're accustomed to in these parts."

Mr. Mervyn agrees, "It's a novelty, a complete novelty, and, I must say, very objectionable from every point of view."

He also knows, although he does not say it aloud, that,

...Such a thing was open to every possible objection. It might set people thinking on religious subjects, which is dangerous. It might, since the subject of it was likely to be more or less biblical, lead to irreverent intimacy with matters better left to the Church. Father Roche would appreciate these risks at once.

(Ch. 6)

In that interchange Hannay is depicting more than the authoritarian nature of the relation between parish clergy and their bishops, and more than the ironbound conservatism of the hierarchy, particularly the Roman Catholic bishops. He is describing the modus vivendi which both churches in the nineteenth century had worked out. It was superficially a peaceable relation, but essentially stultifying, for it depended upon the acquiescence of one party to the control of the people by the other. When Mervyn had been told originally of the plan for the play by Mrs. Dann, "I'm afraid," he said, "that you won't be able to do anything unless the parish priest approves
of the plan. You don't understand this country, but - "

Mervyn does understand the country, and he knows the power of the Roman Catholic clergy in a small town. Hannay had suggested that power earlier in the light novels, as for example, in *The Simpkins Plot*, these lines show:

"The place is changed," said Major Kent; changed for the worse. You'd hardly know it. ... Doyle is suffering ... like everybody else." "New priest?" "No. Father Morony's alive still." (Ch. 3)

But because Father Roche is one of the major characters in the novel, Hannay gives us in *The Lost Tribes* more details than usual of the relationship between Catholic priest and parishioner. Father Roche is the stereotyped bullying priest. He carries a stick with which he threatens to beat an unruly member of his flock. His stentorian tones guarantee that he does not have to ask twice for his Easter dues. He publicly reproves a local shopkeeper for trying to cheat a customer. He orders a marriage between the not unwilling James Casey and Onny Donovan. On another occasion he manages the obstinate Onny whom Mervyn dares not to command, although she is his servant. "It took a priest to do it," said Father Roche, "and it will always take a priest to put the fear of God into girls like her. Don't I know them?"
These authoritarian priests rule cowed and hypocritical souls, who resort to guile to evade them. Onny, caught in mischief, runs to her bed and pretends to have been asleep. Father Roche exclaims:

"I've as much respect as any man living for the Protestant clergy. But is there a minister in Ireland could have got Onny Donovan out of her bed the way I did?" In all probability there is not. Even an archdeacon would have failed. Mr. Mervyn admitted the fact. What he wanted to say - what he felt would be an effective retort was that if any other Church in Christendom had educated Onny Donovan, her father and mother, her grandfather and grandmother, her ancestors for a dozen generations, she would not have gone to bed in her clothes. But Mr. Mervyn had not the spirit of the true lover of controversy.

(Ch. 16)

But despite his energetic dealings with his parishioners, Father Roche, too, prefers the status quo. "Restless activity made him uncomfortable. At the back of his mind there was an idea that almost everything in the world was better if it were left alone. Little good ever came of trying to do new things or to move old things from their accustomed places. It would be pleasant, of course, to be an archdeacon, but honour may be purchased at too high a price."

Much the same spirit motivates Mervyn, more so than is usual in Hannay's portraits of retiring clerics, although he bears a familial resemblance to them.
It is notable that all of Hannay's Protestant clerics, with the exception of a few busybodies, who generally have achieved minor ecclesiastical office, are retiring country parsons, shrinking from involvement in worldly affairs. They have become so nullified that they shrink even from personal relations, as Canon Beresford shirks the duties of fatherhood. When these clerics are not bachelors, they are usually widowers. Retirement, withdrawal, reserve, these are consistently their attitudes. Mr. Mervyn shares them. His favourite walk guarantees him at least eight hours respite from the problems of home and his parish of Druminawona. Symbolically he walks along a road, built as a Districts Board project, that leads nowhere. Even when he is stirred to act, his action is futile. When he feels threatened by Father Roche's suggestion that he marry Mrs. Dann, he visits the episcopal palace in search of support. But his bishop is characteristically absent.

In *The Lost Tribes* Hannay attacks the "clerical apartheid" practiced by both churches. The two clergymen, allied against Mrs. Dann's scheme, find it necessary to visit each other's houses. Father Roche welcomes Mr. Mervyn to his presbytery with the ceremony due a rare visitor. But he visits Mervyn's rectory
with trepidation:

In going to the rectory he was doing what he knew to be wrong. In Ireland the clergy of the two leading Churches see as little of each other as possible. They meet, because they must, on committees, and they are members of the same deputation when there is any reasonable chance of getting money out of a new and innocent Chief Secretary. But they do not dine in each other's houses.

(Ch. 15)

Hannay knew that religious differences were often subordinated as a matter of policy, and that the government encouraged amicable relations between the churches. In "The Deputation" Dr. Whitty and Michael Geraghty discuss plans for the reception of the Lord-Lieutenant:

"Father Henaghan we'll have, of course.... Then I'll go on to the Rev. Mr. Jackson.... What impresses a Chief Secretary more than anything else is a union of creeds for a common good object. When he sees Father Henaghan and Mr. Jackson standing hand-in-hand in front of his motorcar he'll be prepared to give us a lighthouse if we want it, let alone a paltry pier."

But the old prejudices endure. Although the townspeople may make common cause in defrauding the government, their views remain fixed: To Major Kent Father McCormack remarks generously of General John
Regan, I wouldn't mind if he was a Protestant.... There's worse things than Protestants, and I'm not saying that just because I'm talking to you." "He's a good man, so he is; if he is a Protestant," says Doyle of the Rev. J.J. The Protestant view of their Catholic brethren is never openly expressed in the light novels, but it can be inferred, perhaps, from that fact itself. The Anglo-Irish Protestant minority, seeing much of their former strength slipping away, tread warily. They have accepted with resignation their role. They still sit on the bench, serve on committees, but they realize where the real power lies.

Nevertheless, one of the most charming elements in *Spanish Gold* is the relationship between J.J. and Father Mulcrone. Their dinner on the Chief Secretary's yacht is a feast of amiability: they dine heartily, tell jokes, and cap each other's stories. Their friendship is genuine, not assumed for the Chief Secretary's benefit. But neither is a typical clergyman, and it is hinted that Father Mulcrone has not been a success. Although he is not young, he is still only a curate, and he does not expect to be a parish priest. He is gentle and humorous - and perhaps too reasonable - to gain preferment in the church.
The Government provides another source of targets for Hannay's satire. The government in these novels is the government of the Kingdom of Ireland, with laws enacted at Westminster and administered from Dublin Castle. But, in fact, in these novels the government stood for a vast, well-meaning, blundering power whose offers of help came too little and too late. That help manifested itself in the West of Ireland chiefly in relief works controlled for the most part by the Congested Districts Board. By direction of the Board, piers and roads were built, large estates broken into small holdings, tenants in poor districts resettled on better land, native industry encouraged, in short, any plan which might ameliorate conditions in the depressed areas. In addition, the Dublin government were constantly directing special relief projects: distributing seed potatoes or introducing new breeds of livestock. A certain measure of local self-government had evolved with the institution of Urban District Councils. They had power to influence local appointments, dispensaries doctors, agricultural officers, and vocational teachers. To administer these schemes there was a constant stream of government officials, and parliamentary members, together with philanthropists, journalists, and ordinary tourists, descending on Connaught. Hannay satirized that amazing
proliferation of bureaucracy in such passages as these. Dr. Whitty suggests that Thady Glynn sell a pair of useless anchors to "the government."

"Is it the Lord-Lieutenant?"
"When I say the government, I mean the Board."
"What Board?"
"Any Board....There's the Prisons Board, the Agricultural Board, the National Board of Education....But I'd begin with the Congested Districts Board....They're a good Board... engaged in every kind of miscellaneous work."

(Ch. 9)

At a hilarious dinner party in Spanish Gold the audacious J.J. is able to convince his host Higginbotham, who really is a government official engaged in resettling the islanders, that he has been engaged to find a site for a new school, that Major Kent is making a geological survey of the island, and that another visitor to the islands is conducting an anti-tuberculosis campaign - all on behalf of government boards. He tries to pass himself off to a native of the island as a naturalist and to a rival treasure-seeker as a government health inspector. And the Chief Secretary is actually visiting the islands. The incidents are farcically exaggerated; even the simple Higginbotham's credulity is strained; but the satire is there all the same: in the picture of government relief projects over-running
Hannay had already subjected these efforts to satire in the early serious novels. His comic sketches of visiting officialdom, the Right Honourable Mr. Chesney encouraging native manufacture at a local fair, and the egregious Sir John Harrison proposing that Achill Island be transformed into a zoological paradise as a tourist attraction appear in *The Seething Pot*. In *Hyacinth* he had attacked paternalism in the government's attempt to foster native industry at Robeen Convent.

But his satirical view of the government relief measures is even more fully realized in the early light novels. There are continual references in them to public works that are useless, wasteful, redundant, or constructed simply as a special piece of patronage. Piers are built for non-existent fishing fleets or on unsuitable sites. The "long, dilapidated quay" in *The Invincible Sanctuary* is visited only "occasionally by small coasting steamers....and brigantines or topsail schooners, which have felt their way from distant English parts round a wildly inhospitable stretch of coast...." Dr. Whitty suggests to the Government engineer down from Dublin that they take a swim from the new Ballymoy pier. "That's about all this pier will ever be used for," said Mr. Eccles. "His eye was fixed on a
jagged reef of rocks which lay plainly visible about twenty yards seaward of the end of the pier, a horrible menace to a boat approaching it in any but the calmest weather."

The matter-of-fact acceptance of bureaucratic waste is echoed in this passage from *Spanish Gold*. J.J. and Major Kent speculate about the appearance of a new building on the remote island of Inishgowlan:

"They couldn't be building a railway on the island, could they?"
"No, they couldn't. Who'd build a railway on an island a mile long?"
"The government could," said Meldon, "if the fancy struck them. But it's more likely to be a pier."
"It can't be a pier. They built a pier only three years ago...."
"That wouldn't stop them building another...."

(Ch. 4)

The plots of the novels often turn on the fact that the Lord-Lieutenant or another powerful official can dispense patronage at will. Both sides understand that it is patronage that is being asked for, that need has little to do with it. In *General John Regan O'Grady* persuades Doyle that there is something to be made out of the Lord-Lieutenant's visit:
"do you think he'd refuse us a simple pier when we asked for it?"
"I don't know but he would. Hasn't the Government built two piers here already? Is it likely they've build a third?"
"These two piers were built years and years ago...One of them is more than ten years old this minute, and they were both built by the last government. The present Lord-Lieutenant has probably never so much as heard of them."

(Ch. 7)

Naturally developing out of that understanding is the attitude expressed so succinctly by Doyle in *The Major's Niece*. Told of the proposed visit of the Lord-Lieutenant to Ballymoy, he says, "...there might be money in it, and shouldn't Ballymoy get its share of what's going as well as another place?" Dr. Whitty warns Michael Geraghty, "I am not thinking of the poor. I'm going to run this pier scheme through because, when there's money going, we may as well get our whack of it here in Ballintra as let it be grabbed by some other place.... What's in your mind is the profit you'll make out of the job yourself."

When Doyle refers to Ballymoy's "share" he means his own profit. He says on another occasion, "If it is a good-sized pier and if the engineer they sent down to inspect the work wasn't too smart, altogether I might clear £100." Michael Geraghty "spent an evening working out sums on a sheet of paper, and came to the conclusion that he ought
to clear £200 at least out of quite a small pier, and might make much more if the inspector who passed his work turned out to be a fool." Gombeen men like Doyle and Geraghty will profit by these schemes, and perhaps a little of the patronage will trickle down to the poor in the form of jobs and money coming into the town.

Their cynicism is echoed by the acceptance of the middle-class who understand the situation. Mr. Eccles, the government inspector, knows that the pier is useless. Dr. Whitty knows that the poor will make very little from it. Colonel Beresford agrees to serve on the deputation for the pier because "If a man's fool enough to build a pier in a place like this, get it if you can, by all means." But they maintain their isolation by insisting on form. Mr. Eccles refuses to pass the pier when he finds that it is "twenty-seven feet short of the length stated in our specification." Colonel Beresford refuses to serve on the deputation with Thady Glynn, "that blackguard." The wives of the Resident Magistrate and District Inspector of Police in General John Regan quarrel over their rights of precedence at the unveiling ceremony. Others, like Major Kent, are disillusioned. When spending an evening listening to Higginbotham's plans for Inishgowlan, he "yawned without an attempt to hide the fact that he was bored. He had no taste whatever for philanthropy, and
hated what he called government meddling." Only a "simple-hearted, innocent kind of man," as Father Mulcrone characterizes Higginbotham, can believe in the success of the government efforts. When he describes the operations of the Congested Districts Board on Inishgowlan and elsewhere, Higginbotham "waxed enthusiastic over the social and material regeneration of the islanders; he spoke with pitying contempt of their original way of living."

What Hannay's own view was of the government attempts for the "social and material regeneration" of the Irish is implied in two passages from Spanish Gold. When J.J. and Major Kent first arrive at Inishgowlan, they see the "cabins of the people, little whitewashed buildings, thatched with half-rotten straw. On the roofs of many of them long grass grew.... Apart from the other habitations stood Higginbotham's egregious iron hut; the very type of a hideous utilitarian, utterly self-sufficient civilization thrust in upon a picturesque dilapidation. It gave the island an air of half-comic vulgarity...."

Again, when Higginbotham is describing his plans for the island, "he displayed with great pride a picture, curiously wanting in perspective, of a whole row of singularly ugly houses perched along the western ridge of the island."

Hannay's phrase, curiously wanting in perspective, is significant of his belief that these government relief
attempts took little account of the true nature of the Irish difficulty. The government seemed to have little appreciation of the historical background of the Irish problem, and seemed to act with even less consideration of present realities. Superimposing relief measures on a civilization already degenerating was futile. Hannay declares that view metaphorically when he depicts each useless relief project. The Board’s roads and piers are always useless; the Board’s fowl always die of pest, the election of a local official is always a piece of jobbery. Of course, not every government project was, in fact, useless, and Hannay knew that. But in the end these projects could make very little difference to the Irish social and economic structures; the country’s need had gone beyond such measures.

In these early light novels Hannay had begun to accept the failure of the ideals which he had offered in the serious novels. The principles of the Gaelic League and the early Sinn Fein had failed to accomplish the moral regeneration of the country. Recent contemporary government policy had been a stopgap at best. Through an unexpected success in a new genre Hannay had found that he had a fresh medium for his examination of Irish life. There had been elements of comic satire present in his earliest novels,
and now he found comedy his most appropriate medium.
Because he used it in the form of farce, there is an
element of exaggeration in the books, particularly in the
characterization. When his characters were original, like
J.J., the characters remain lively, although the more
conventional characterizations become caricatures. But their
authenticity is undeniable.

In the Summer of 1905 John Millington Synge,
accompanied by the painter Jack B.Yeats, toured the West on
an assignment for the Manchester Guardian. He was to write
a series of articles on the life of the people in the
Congested Districts, and Jack Yeats was to illustrate them. ¹
After he had returned to Dublin, Synge wrote to a friend: ²

There are sides of all that western
life, the groggy-patriot-publican-general
shopman who is married to the priest's
half-sister and is second cousin once
removed of the dispensary doctor, that
are horrible and awful. This is the
type that is running the present United
Irish League anti-grazing campaign while
they're swindling the people themselves
in a dozen ways and then buying out
their holdings and packing off whole
families to America.
The subject is too big to go into
here, but at best it's beastly. All
that side of the matter of course I left
untouched in my stuff.
It was precisely these "sides of all that western life," that Hannay described in his novels. The groggy-patriot-publican-general-shopman who repelled Synge was a recurring character in them. He had appeared early in the serious novels as the publican Walsh in The Seething Pot, Dowling in Hyacinth (his wife is the archbishop's niece) and Neverin in The Bad Times. These characters had been only background figures, but they represented elements which were deeply entwined in Irish national life. They are liars, cheats, above all, selfish. They make use of patriotic organizations and the "League"; and they use tenants' disputes with the landlords for their own ends. Dowling had been content to sell British goods in his shop; masquerading as a patriot, he had attacked a trade rival for importing labour. Neverin in The Bad Times had reneged on his alliance with the League and had tried to make terms privately with the police when his own livestock was threatened.

Hannay had satirized the type in the serious novels, and he continued his satire in the light novels. But his method of attack was different. The gombeen man becomes a prototype for all that was guileful in the Irish peasant. He appears most often - in Spanish Gold, The Major's Niece, The Simpkins Plot, and General John Regan - as Doyle, the publican. He becomes Jimmy O'Loughlin
in *The Search Party*, but appears again under his own name in most of Hannay's later novels set in the West of Ireland. Although his predecessors in the light novels were contemptible, he is now not without charm in his own and everyone else's bland acceptance of his roguery. And because he is pitted against the impersonal forces of authority, he engenders a natural sympathy. It is that confrontation between the native and the foreigner - and essentially the government, whether seated in Westminster or Dublin - was foreign to the traditions and conditions which had bred such men as Doyle - which is the essence of Hannay's comedy. Against the pompousness of authority, Doyle has become an anti-hero. And because of his Irishness he stands for the Irish response to the intruding world.
References

1 Synge refused to publish a collection of the pieces. Later Hannay wrote a series of character studies, illustrated by Yeats, *Irishman All*, which probably had its origin in Synge's refusal. For an account of Synge's articles, see D. Greene and E. M. Stephens, *J. M. Synge*, p. 120.

2 To Stephen McKenna, July 13, 1905, quoted in above, p. 120.
The group of four novels published by Hannay between 1912 and 1920 may be considered transitional, because they mark the return of his work to the contemporary context. In these novels, *The Red Hand of Ulster, Goassamer, Up the Rebels, and Inisheeny*, Hannay abandons the timeless world of Ballymoy and allows the events of the present to intrude. Even *Inisheeny*, which is set in the Ballymoy-like village of Carrigahooly and whose plot returns to the tranquil scenes of *The Inviolable Sanctuary*, shows the influence of the revolutionary changes that were occurring in Ireland in the second decade of the century.

Hannay himself had left Westport. The situation there, never very comfortable with those of his co-religionists who decried his association with Nationalist movements nor with the Roman Catholics, was rapidly worsening; and the increasing financial independence his novels were bringing him made it easier to decide to leave the place which had formed such an important background to his life and to his work. He journeyed first to London, for the first production of *General John Regan*, and then to America for the New York production. It is possible that Hannay's trip to America had had some influence on *The Lost Tribes* (1914), but because it belongs in tone, construction, and theme to the early Ballymoy group, it is not classified with the transitional novels. Hannay's experience of America must have
contributed to the characterization of Mrs. Dann and to her speech; but the novel is a satire directed principally at Irish ecclesiastical targets, and its plot follows the familiar arrival-of-stranger-stimulus pattern of the earlier light novels.

Another novel, *The Red Hand of Ulster*, published earlier in 1912, had followed the familiar pattern; a stranger initiates a series of happenings; the happenings are recounted by a narrator who himself maintains an attitude of detachment. But these happenings are based on the events of contemporary history; new attitudes and relationships replace the static postures of the characters in the Ballymoy novels.

When Hannay travelled to London, early in 1912, to arrange with the literary agent Golding Bright details of the production of General John Regan, he stopped with a cousin, Blanche Roberts, who was married to Colonel Crompton Roberts of the Grenadier Guards. Thus Hannay was in an especially good position to hear much of the speculation that centred around the Ulster Home Rule crisis. In 1912 the third Home Rule Bill had been introduced and, since the opposition of the House of Lords had been virtually nullified by the Parliament Act of 1911, there seemed a good chance that Ireland would have Home Rule by 1914. But the Protestant population of Ulster, under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson, had as early as 1910 formed themselves into the Irish Unionist Party, whose declared policy was opposition to Home Rule. English Conservative Party members had
quickly rallied to support them. In the spring of 1912, when
the Home Rule Bill was before the Commons, everyone in London was
asking excitedly one question: How far will Ulster go in opposing
the measure?

In The Red Hand of Ulster, published in July 1912, Hannay
suggested what the answer would be. The novel was, in fact, pro-
phetic in both meanings of the word. Although it is a farcical
account of the Ulster threat to rebel against the British Government
if Home Rule were passed, it conveys Hannay's very strong warning that
the Ulster loyalists were determined to fight, if necessary, to remain
an integral part of the kingdom. Hannay's respect for Northern
obstinacy and courage had been marked in such early novels as Benedict
Kavanagh and The Northern Iron, and in minor characterizations in
the early light novels. Hannay had never under-estimated the effect
of those qualities in Irish politics, as the scenes of the Orange
meeting in Benedict Kavanagh and of the County Down election in
Lalage's Lovers, testify. Although the scenes are meant to be comic,
they reveal a very real appreciation of the seriousness with which the
Northerner considers politics. And the account in The Northern Iron
of the 1798 Rising in Ulster exemplified the strength with which he put
that seriousness into practice.

Hannay was also correct in his estimate of Northern intransigence
in 1912, and later events proved him so. One incident in his novel
is built round a gun-running expedition: a private yacht lands a cargo
of guns for the use of the Ulster Volunteer movement. In fact, arms were landed by sea by a party of Ulstermen in 1912 at Larne and elsewhere. Another incident describes a para-military show of strength by the Volunteers; they gather in a "Unionist demonstration", "review", or "March Past" - the names are variously chosen to please the Ulster leaders, the English politicians, and the advocates of compromise - to declare their defiance of "the present Government to drive us out of the British Empire, which we had taken a great deal of trouble in times past to build up." In September 1912, 200,000 Ulstermen acted out Hannay's scene: at a great meeting at Balmoral Show Grounds they swore in a Solemn Covenant that they, "the men of Ulster, loyal subjects of King George V" would, "stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children the cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, ....using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland......"²

The structure of the novel follows the patterns of the earlier light novels. The events of the plot are set in motion by a stranger, an American millionaire, Joseph Peterson Conroy, who wonders, "Is there any one thing left in this rotten old world....that's worth doing?" Fomenting revolution offers him a chance for excitement, and revolution in Ireland is particularly exciting to the descendent of a "broken peasant, the victim of evil fate and gross injustice, (who)
had left Ireland in an emigrant ship... with an unquenchable hatred of England in his heart. That hate... had lived on in his son, had broken out again in a grandson." The fact that the revolution offered that grandson was a revolution of Loyalists, traditional enemies of the broken emigrant, underlines the essential paradox of the novel. Conroy will support any party against his enemy England; the Nationalists, with Home Rule almost a certainty, are now loyal; only Ulster stands against the hated enemy.

Ironies and paradox, both major and minor, abound in the novel. First, there is the major paradox that the Ulster Unionists are so loyal that they will bear arms against the Crown in order to maintain their link with it. There is the Dublin Nationalist Diarmuid O'Donovan, editor of the seditious Loyalist paper, who supports Ulster's fight in his disgust with his own Nationalist party: "They... have accepted a Home Rule Bill which deprives us of the most elementary rights of freemen... have licked the boots of English liberals... said 'thank you' for any gnawed bones they liked to fling..." There are the ironies of the "Battle of Belfast"; challenged by the armed Ulster rebels, the English army have orders to fight by shooting over the enemies' heads; the only damage inflicted by the British Fleet in shelling the city is inflicted on the statue of Queen Victoria, angering the Belfast rebels by this insult to the symbol of their loyalty. Then there is the crowning absurdity: the successful Loyalists dictate their terms to
England: "...you English clear out of Ireland altogether...and leave us to manage Ireland ourselves....We won't have it (Home Rule) at any price."

Underlying these ironies, which Hannay hardly needed to invent, so logically did they follow the basic paradox of the historical reality, is Hannay's conviction that the course of Irish politics had become more and more sterile. It is a truth which he emphasizes in his characterizations of the two major politicians in the novel Babberly and Clithering. In his mastery of the crowds at political meetings, Babberly suggests the powerful leadership of Sir Edward Carson; in his political acumen, the subtlety of Bonar Law; Clithering, an English non-conformist stocking manufacturer turned political diplomatist, may be modelled after Bonar Law or F.E. Smith, or merely after any of the type of busy, self-assured politician with a Victorian heritage of "enlightened" morality. Both men think of themselves as reasonable men of affairs with a firm grasp of the realities. Babberly, the leader of the Unionists, has always wanted to fight, "...but it was always on the distinct understanding - that it would never come to that". Sir Samuel Clithering, emissary of the British Cabinet, begins confidently enough; he will quell the rebellion with unarmed police. "Strict orders have been given - batons ought to be quite sufficient. We must avoid all risks of bloodshed." But he is reduced to pleading for a truce, when the "realities" of warfare intrude in the form of a single casualty.
In contrast to these two leaders stand the leaders of the rebels, whose passionate involvement leads them into action rather than away from it. They are McNiece, Cahoon, and the Dean, representing the intellectual, practical, and spiritual elements in the movement. Their qualities are comically exaggerated: McNiece, a dour fellow of Trinity College, who suspends a dinner party while he harangues the guests on the seventeen theories of St. Patrick; the Dean, who is "honorary Grand Chaplain to the Black Preceptory of the Orange Order," and who is "tall, cadaverous, rugged, and can open his eyes so wide that the whites of them show all around the irises"; and Cahoon, whose final judgment on all the problems of life is "That's all well enough in its way, but it won't do in Belfast. We're business men." But despite their absurdity, these men are men of action, a quality that Hannay admires, for there is a liveliness and good humour that pervades the whole novel, despite its ironic tone.

As in Lalage's Lovers, Hannay is writing of a milieu with which he is particularly sympathetic, and there is a variety of incident and characterization that surpasses the stereotyped patterns of the other light novels. Among the minor but memorable characterizations are Crossan, who is not afraid to stand up to his employer who has been mouthing Unionist sentiments, "It would be well if your lordship and others like you were more in earnest"; McConkey, foreman of the Green Loaney Scutching Mill, who has saved
more than £500 to buy a machine gun, a "bonny wee thing";
Colonel Malcomson, retired, who is dead sick of politics and
speech-making" and wants to have "a slap at the damned rebels,"
i.e. the Home Rulers.

It is impossible not to feel Hannay's real sympathy with
the spirit of these men, if not necessarily with their cause -
for Hannay had declared himself at least a moderate home ruler in
1913. In a series of interviews with American journalists in the
autumn of 1913, and again in 1915, Hannay is described as a "home
ruler" in at least two reports, and states his own case in another,

"Yes...I am a home ruler. But, unlike many
others, I do not believe in pressing the
matter too hard just now. I do not think
the present bill is as good as one we might
get later....I do not, however, share the
terror of those Irishmen who assert that home
rule means that the Catholics will rise to
sudden and tyrannical power....That is the
cry chiefly in such places as Belfast, where
the Protestants are strongest." 4

And he does not under-estimate the Northern problem; in one inter-
view he is reported as believing that "North-east Ulster will arm
itself for resistance against a Dublin Parliament". 5 Again, he is
quoted as saying:

"I believed from the very first that Ulster was
in absolutely dead earnest, and I believe so
now. Of course if the English Government
likes to bring up horse, foot, and artillery,
it can wipe them off the face of the earth and
they will simply stand up and be shot at. But
I can't conceive of any government doing that..." 6
To Hannay, as to some others, it seemed that the Unionist movement had brought a new excitement into the stalemate of Irish politics, and action at last was replacing the empty oratory and internecine warfare of the post-Parnell era. Now a brisk Northern wind was blowing, and Hannay knew something of its force.

One novel, *Gossamer*, (1915), was published between Hannay's satire on the Ulster political movement and his satirical farce, *Up the Rebels*, which described an episode in the Nationalist movement for independence. Although the plot of *Gossamer* is not based directly on either movement and there is only an indirect reference in it to the cataclysmic war that was shaking the world in 1915, the novel shows signs of the changes which were occurring in Hannay's life and in the world about him. *Gossamer* is set on a transatlantic liner, and in New York and London. Those scenes reflect Hannay's own travels to London and his voyage to America. The novel itself is a failure, based as it was on an idea which Hannay did not fully exploit. Briefly, he tried to illustrate through a set of unlikely relationships between people encountering each other on a transatlantic liner—the thesis that the world of international finance was like a gossamer web which spread its delicate strands all over the globe. After describing one of the spinners of the web, a shallowly characterized international financier named Ascher, and a journey in which the narrator embarks for South America, guided principally by introductions from Ascher to local merchants and bankers, Hannay abandons that theme and devotes himself
to characterizing the principal Irish figures in the novel. They are the narrator, an embittered Anglo-Irishman; and the German brothers, Michael, journalist and M.P., and Tim, an idealistic inventor.

The characterization of the narrator, Sir James Digby, is significant for two reasons: first, it is Hannay's first attempt to portray an Anglo-Irish gentleman who has been affected by the social and economic reforms of the twentieth century. He has sold his estate to his tenants as a consequence of the Land Acts, and he is the first of Hannay's Anglo-Irish gentlemen to appear without the background of his estates. Second, a new note of nihilism has crept into the characterization of the narrator, replacing the attitude of amused withdrawal which had been characteristic of Hannay's earlier portraits of the Anglo-Irish. It is useful to compare Sir James with his immediate predecessor, Lord Kilmore of Errigal, the narrator of The Red Hand of Ulster. Lord Kilmore ironically is writing a history of Irish rebellions, but he is completely detached from any of the passions which excite the participants in the Ulster rebellion. Even when he is called upon to act the part of a responsible leader in Unionist politics, he cannot summon up any enthusiasm. Nor can his friend, Lord Moyne, who is equally detached, although he is meant by Hannay to represent the self-seeking Tory landlords who encouraged the Ulster movement for the preservation of their own property and privilege. Both
Kilmore and Moyne represent the old pattern of Hannay's withdrawing Irish peer; but although they prefer to play a detached role in Irish politics, they never doubt their nationality. They are Irish - of a minority by class and by religion - but Irish nevertheless, as Irish as was Lord Clonfert in The Seething Pot.

Sir James Digby is not sure of his identity, although he is a baronet whose family has owned for three centuries a small estate in County Cork. He describes himself thus:

I happen to belong to that unfortunate class of Irishmen whom neither German nor anyone else will recognise as being Irish at all. No definition of the Irish people has yet been framed which would include me,... My religion consists chiefly of a dislike of the Roman Catholic Church, and an instinctive distrust of the priests of all churches. My father was an active Unionist, but I have no political opinions of any sort. I am therefore cut off by both religion and politics from taking part in Irish affairs. On the other hand, I cannot manage to feel myself an Englishman. Even now, though I have fought in their army...I am not one of them.

In another passage the nihilism implicit in such a position is re-emphasized. Repeating his assertion that he has no political affiliations, Digby adds:

...but I hate that to which German belongs. If I were attached to a party and German's friends joined it in a body, I should leave it at once. My opinion, so far as I have any opinion, is that what Ireland wants is to be left alone. But if the Irish Nationalist party were to adopt a policy of deliberately doing nothing and preventing other people from doing anything, I should not support it. I should then search about for something revolutionary and try to insist on carrying it out. Nothing would induce me to be on
the same side as Gorman and his friends.  
Such is the nature of an Irish gentleman.

Even his decision to return to his regiment when World War I threatens, is simply a reflex action. He says "...I don't know what my real reason is. It's not patriotism. I haven't any country to be patriotic about. It's not any silly belief in liberty or democracy...I just have to." The decision which seemed so very straightforward to Digby represented a very difficult one to many Irish nationalists in 1914. Under the leadership of John Redmond the Irish Parliamentary Party had decided to support the English Government during the war in exchange for Home Rule when victory had been secured. Other nationalists did not agree, however, and, as Hannay says in his autobiography, "Ireland...was sharply divided, more sharply and deeply than ever before." 6

Not until the novels written at the time of World War II was such a negativist attitude as Digby's apparent in any of Hannay's characters, although the type of the withdrawing narrator continued to appear in the later light novels. It is interesting to speculate why Hannay allowed the element of nihilism into the characterization and whether it was entirely unconscious. Gossamer was first published in October 1915, after Hannay had returned from his second trip to America in the spring of 1915. Perhaps the bitterness of his return to a politically divided Ireland with its "sharp severance of relationships which had been pleasant and intimate" 7 had seeped
into the novel, although it would be a simplification to say that Digby's attitude represented Hannay's own. Still, it is fair to say that Hannay's growing disillusionment contributed to the pessimistic tone of the novel.

Other characters in the novel show a departure from earlier types. It is true that Hannay had described Nationalist politicians before, but Michael German is a new and more carefully detailed type. Unlike the bullying O'Rourke of the earliest serious novels, or the gombeen man-politician of the early light novels, he is intelligent and urbane, and his candour - as evident in his attacks on priests as it is in his condemnation of landlords - has a compelling charm. He is a member of parliament who follows the Redmond policy of cooperation with England for the duration of World War I. He is sanguine about the success of the policy although Digby warns him that the Ulster problem remains unsolved. But he remains unmoved; his temperament differs as much from that of the old party hack as does his policies. He and Digby discuss the crisis of decision in 1914; Digby says:

"Crisis'... How that word brings it all back to me. Are we still going through a crisis? Fancy the word surviving. "It's about the only part of the old political system which does survive. The rest's gone, hopelessly."

(Ch. 19)

Although Michael German was a character strong enough for Hannay to retain in a subsequent novel, *The Island Mystery*, in which he plays a
Meldon-like role, he and Digby are the only successful characterizations in *Gossamer*. German's brother, Tim, who represents the dreaming Celtic side of the Irish character, never comes to life, although Hannay attempts to centre part of the plot around him. It is the plan of the practical Michael German that the financier Ascher shall back his brother's invention of a new kind of cash register machine, or rather declare his intention of backing it; for with his understanding of the mysteries of the world of finance German knows that their fortunes will be made not because the machine is a success but because Ascher is known to be behind it. When the scheme fails, Tim is undismayed, and he goes on to other inventions without any real interest in their commercial possibilities. When war comes, his idealism takes the form of joining the Flying Corps.

The foreign Aschers presented Hannay with difficulties, and he is even less successful in bringing them to life. Ascher, as Hannay presents him, is an alien, living in England, presumably intended as a Jew, and Hannay makes him a very tame international financier indeed. His wife, to whom he is very deeply attached, is a woman of artistic sensibilities, who controls her husband in all but his ultimate decision: whether to return to his native Germany or face the embarrassments of staying in England at the beginning of the war. Mrs. Ascher pleads that the ties of patriotism and honour are only cobweb threads - they are the "gossamer" of the title to her - but
Ascher remains faithful to his duty as a banker and decides to stay in England to guide his bank through the difficult period of a war.

But despite the total failure of plot - or of all three plots - and the partial failure in characterization, Gossamer marks an important step in the evolution of Hannay's fiction. For the first time, he stepped outside the world of Ireland for his theme and his major characterizations and tried to bring them into focus in his art. He was unsuccessful, and the novel was a failure. The only memorable elements in it are the Irish elements, Digby, Michael Gorman, and their relationships to a changing Ireland. But the world that Hannay was presenting was a larger world than the world of Ireland. The characters who peopled that world were of a larger scale and stood in new postures.

Hannay's war service interrupted the steady flow of his novels, and it was not until after the war that he published another novel, The Island Mystery (1918) and then another, in 1919, Up The Rebels. The first was an inconsequent farce, which combined elements from its two predecessors. In it, an American millionaire in London, Donovan, a character similar to Conroy in The Red Hand of Ulster, is anxious to amuse himself and please his daughter by buying her a mythical Balkan crown. Michael Gorman of Gossamer reappears to play the role of Donovan's mentor, but he remains an attenuated figure.
Hannay was merely keeping the pot boiling, and the book had little relevance to the momentous changes that were occurring in Hannay's world and which were to be indirectly reflected in his work. However, Up the Rebels, an account of an unsuccessful Nationalist rebellion, did reflect the changes that had come about in Ireland during his absence.

Hannay had heard of the Easter Rebellion of 1916 while he was serving as a chaplain with the British Army in France. News of the insurrection and of subsequent irregularities had filtered through to him chiefly through his family who had remained living in Ireland, in a house at Killiney, a suburb of Dublin. But he had a chance to observe the new movement at first hand when he returned to Ireland in 1918 to take a parish at Carnalway in County Kildare.

What actually was Hannay's attitude to the new changes in Ireland? By examining his actions, his statements, and his writing, it is possible to form some conclusion. First, Hannay had had no difficulty in making up his mind where his duty lay in the decision which faced most Irishmen in 1914. As soon as he had returned from his second American trip in 1915, he had applied for a commission as chaplain. He says, "It soon became evident that these extreme Nationalists hoped for an English defeat and a German victory... To me it seemed perfectly clear that England was right and Nationalist Ireland wrong. I had no doubt or hesitation..." And yet
he did not consider that he had abandoned his position as a Nationalist. After the war he returned to Ireland to live, and as late as 1920 he could still describe himself as in favour of Home Rule, although he was, as he had been in 1913, especially perspicacious about the Ulster problem. In a letter to Lord Montagle, dated St. Patrick's Day, 1920, he explained his opinion of Sir Horace Plunkett's plan for an "Irish Dominion League", which Montagle was supporting:

I think that Dominion Home Rule is probably the most desirable constitution for Ireland; but I think that the present time is singularly unsuited for trying any constitutional experiments. We, like the inhabitants of every other country in Europe, are passing through a torrent of crime, such crime as seems invariably to follow a great war. Until we are through it constitutional change seems to me singularly unwise.

I see no prospect of achieving any sort of unity by means of Plunkett's Constitutional Assembly Plan. As I understand it Ulster and Sinn Fein are expected to negotiate in the Assembly on the understanding that the decision of the majority will pass into law. I think that either of the two parties would be foolish to agree to negotiate this way with ropes around their necks. I feel tolerably certain that neither one nor the other of them will agree to do it.....

In addition to containing Mannay's acute appraisal of the Ulster-Nationalist deadlock, the letter reveals Mannay's view of the changes brought about in Ireland after 1916 by the extremist Nationalist movement and the consequent efforts of the British government to subdue it. These changes took the form of military skirmishes, usurpation
of civil and military authority by Nationalists, and terrorism and reprisals on both sides. To Hannay they seemed "a torrent of crime", which indeed they often were; but to others they seemed, at least in retrospect, to be part of a war of independence, fought often by guerilla tactics, and often against an indeterminate enemy. The words, Sinn Fein, had come to have a very different meaning since the days of Griffith's original policy; now they stood for a revolutionary organization whose activities began to touch Hannay's life.

Even in the peaceful countryside of County Kildare, among the Anglo-Irish of the Pale and the squirearchy whose principal devotion was to the horse, the activities of Sinn Fein were beginning to be felt. Hannay experienced the atmosphere of mistrust and horror which pervaded the land, although he says he was not personally molested. In fact, he was appointed, together with the local parish priest, to be one of the justices in the new Republican courts being established by the revolutionaries. The establishment of such courts, says another Irishman of Hannay's class, Sir Christopher Lynch-Robinson, was one of the first signs of the change in Government that was coming over the country. A Resident Magistrate in nearby County Louth at the time that Hannay was in Carnalway, he later wrote, "I think the first thing I noticed was a sudden falling off in the civil cases in my courts, and it gradually came to me that Sinn Feiners had started courts of their own to settle disputes among
the people." But Hannay played no role, judicial or otherwise, in the formation of the new state. His parish, never very large, was steadily shrinking, and he decided to leave. He says that the unjustified terrorization of one of his servants finally led him to make the decision, but there is no doubt that the revolution he felt at the whole atmosphere of the times contributed to his decision. Then, too, he had left Ireland before and had lived intermittently in Dublin in the years 1914 to 1918. He had made two trips to America in 1913 and 1915, had lived in 1914 near Beaulieu in Hampshire, had taken a brief cure in Brittany, and had served in France. But this departure from Kildare was to mark Hannay's major break with Ireland, for he never again lived there, and returned only for holidays and visits.

Although Hannay never entirely abandoned Irish scenes and Irish characters in his later light novels, the two Irish novels written while he last lived in Ireland were Up The Rebels and Inisheeny. Up The Rebels can be compared to The Red Hand of Ulster because it is a comic satire based on historical incidents. Inisheeny is set in the old pattern of the earlier Ballymoy light novels; its plot is very like a rewriting of The Inviolable Sanctuary, but it contains references to Sinn Fein government and the new Labour Party.

According to historians, the British attempt to impose conscription on Ireland in 1918 stimulated the militant members of the Republican organization to new outbreaks of violence. Ireland had
been in an uneasy state since 1716, and both the Republicans
and the government maintained elaborate intelligence systems
designed to discover the plans of the enemy. When the rebels
learned of the plans for conscription, street meetings were held,
and insurgent bands roamed Dublin and the countryside, to harass
the police and British military units. 16

Hannay based the plot of Up The Rebels around those historical facts. A young Dublin woman, Mona Conolly, daughter
of an important government administrator Sir Ulick, belongs to a
band of Irish Volunteers. Their activities are restricted to
intelligence, propaganda, street meetings, and military parades
until they learn through one of their members, who is also Sir
Ulick's secretary, that conscription is imminent. The scene shifts
from Dublin to the countryside, where the rebels take over the
village of Dunalley, declare their republic, and defy the British
army. Only when they learn that they have been misinformed about
the plans for conscription and that they are surrounded by superior
military forces, do they agree to come to terms. The story ends
with Mona chastened, Sir Ulick returning to Dublin Castle - with
his secretary - and the rebellion temporarily in abeyance. But the
characters - and Hannay - know that this is not the end of the story,
that it is merely a dress rehearsal for the tragedy which is shortly
to be enacted.
That knowledge may account for the pessimistic tone of the novel. The incidents of the novel, which are worked out in terms of conventional farce, and the characters, who represent genuine elements in the struggle, lack the gaiety of the Ulster satire. The earliest scene at the Dublin street meeting characterizes Mona and the Volunteer leader Alfred Patterson (whose English-sounding name and physical description suggest Arthur Griffith) as passionately sincere idealists; but the hungry ragged crowd who applaud them are little moved:

Unless Kathaleen ni Houlihan, whoever she was, could produce food for empty bellies and reduce the price of whisky—England's fault certainly, the outrageous price of whisky—she meant little to them. What they wanted was food, and cheap drink, or more wages, or, better still, the loot of shops, such as had fallen to them in the early days of the insurrection of 1916. (Ch. 1)

The meeting becomes a farcical rout when the audience compares the richly dressed person with the half-naked urchin she clasps as a symbol of Irish distress, and the ribald crowd are easily persuaded to disperse by the police. Almost as easily the rebellion in Dunolley ends; the council of war in the court house disintegrates when they learn that they have been misinformed about conscription and that they are surrounded by a superior military force.

The characterizations of the rebels also offer a clue to Hannay's feeling. They are not entirely sympathetic: Mona, Patterson, and young Peter Maillia, the poet son of the Dunolley publican-gombeen man, are genuinely idealistic, but their movement attracts zealots
like the fanatical Father Roche, fools with few scruples like
Sir Ulick's secretary, Eibhlin O'Murchada, and the cowardly Bettany, who has come to Ireland to evade conscription. The Dublin crowds and the Dunalley villagers alike have little real interest in the struggle; their attitude is best represented by old O'Maillia, who, like his predecessor Doyle, does not allow patriotism to stand in the way of self-interest.

The Anglo-Irish gentry, with the exception of the romantic Mona, stand aloof, and face with resignation the debacle they know is coming. Her amiable cousin, Tom Bryan, invalided home from France, is uninterested in politics; he and his comrades have fought bravely and want the warrior's deserts, peace and the company of pretty girls. His mother tells her niece, "I'd be a Sinn Feiner tomorrow....The way this country is governed is enough to make a rebel of any one."

Mrs. Bryan is the first in a new pattern of feminine character that will evolve in the later light novels. She has roots in Hennessy's early characterizations of vigorous strong-minded women like Lady Clonfert, Lady Kilbarron, and Miss Blow. If she were not so very devoted to her horses, she might take the country in hand successfully. Unfortunately other members of her class will not. Her neighbour, Lord Athowen, whose son has won a V.C. in France, faces the inevitable changes with the only weapons left to his class - humour and good manners. Her brother, Sir Ulick, early in the novel has said, "I don't govern Ireland. Nobody governs Ireland. Nobody
has or ever will." He repeats his view at the end of the novel:

It's my job - not to govern Ireland...My job is just to keep things going somehow so that they'll last out our time. It's a make-shift business, and sometimes I think I'm at the last possible shift and that the crash is bound to come. But we struggle on. Somehow or other we've pulled through to the present. It's not a pleasant life at all. I don't like lying and dodging....I'd rather run straight, but the other's my job. I was brought up to it and I'm not fit for anything else. And somebody has to do it, you know. What you object to...is the inside of practical politics. It's no use blaming me for what that is, or complaining that my hands smell when I'm kept all my time stopping leaks in sewers. (Ch. 24)

That speech represents both the apologia of enlightened and frustrated officialdom and Hannay's pessimistic view of public affairs. He had begun the novel with a metaphor, likening the defects of the social system to the choking of a sewer. When the drains are blocked, offensive wastes seep into everyday life. When the slum districts occasionally spill their miserable inhabitants into public view, "our governors, the sanitary engineers of the state, content themselves with stopping gully holes and vents." Hannay's earlier satirical view of government has by now hardened into a conviction of the futility of public affairs. In the early light Ballymoy novels Hannay had stated that belief in terms of government attempts to solve the Irish problem. Now he was to universalize that thesis in a long series of comic novels, written outside Ireland. Their settings varied - and sometimes they were still set in Ireland - but their theme was the same. It is expressed by Hannay in these words from his autobiography: "Public business ought never to be taken
It is always comic and should be treated as a joke. Inisheeny set the comic tone for the later light novels. It is set in the West of Ireland; it is an idyllic tale of sailing through sunny days among the islands of the Bay, of island poteen-makers defending their bogs against exploring Celtic scholars, of a young English schoolboy, and a charming young woman, the daughter of the Celtic scholar, who carries off the local Inspector of Police, a better prize than her father's crannog. It is similar in characterization and scene to the earlier novels, but there is internal evidence that the scene has undergone some changes. It is Sinn Fein, a curiously puritanical government, rather than the police, who threaten to prosecute the poteen makers. Mrs. Maher, proprietress of the "Imperial" Hotel, and a Doyle in skirts, expresses her opinion in a "detached and slightly bored tone," of current events, "It's a pity, now...to be shooting the police the way they are. But, of course, it's hard to blame the boys that does it with the way things are going at the present time." The Rector of Carrigahooly, who is the narrator, sympathizes with his friend Patterson, the District Inspector of Police, for, "Nowadays, landlords being nearly an extinct species, the police afford almost the only big game shooting in Ireland, and we are a sporting people." It is no wonder that Patterson suspects the newly arrived Celtic scholar and his daughter
of being Sinn Feiners, determined to land arms on the islands.

He has made a study of revolutions and knows professors - "the Intelligentsia, quite the most dangerous class in the community... Look at the French Revolution. Look at Russia today." He is also "deeply suspicious of anything Celtic." And the professor's daughter confirms his view, "She's good-looking enough... But lots of those revolutionary women are...". But it is surprising that Patterson decides to keep a lobster-basket full of illicit poteen, which he had been presented with accidentally by Poacher Quin, chief of the poteen smugglers. Not one of Hannay's earlier police inspectors would have broken the law as flagrantly, but the atmosphere of the times is contagious; and he reflects, "I can't help feeling... that the police in Ireland have a right to some little indulgence. Here we are, potted like woodcock... It's rather hard if we can't get a drop of drink now and then to keep our spirits up." Only the Rector sees any irony in the situation:

Up to the present the Sinn Fein, de facto, Government of Ireland has not taken any steps to put a stop to our trade in illicit whisky. But I expect soon to hear of the arrest of Patterson. The Inisheen distillery will certainly not be allowed to go on with its manufacture, for we Irish are honourable men. We are at war with England, but we refuse to take an unfair advantage of our enemy by cutting off one of their supplies of revenue. I want to know how Patterson means to act when he is arrested by the officers of the Irish Republic for robbing the English Treasury, and afterwards rescued by Poacher Quin and a party of Flanagans... (Ch. 11)
The irony which pervades the situations in all of these transitional novels is more than the irony of the earlier light novels where it was used chiefly to strengthen the satiric cast of the comedian. Here the irony exists in situations which parallel historical fact. More and more Hannay is becoming convinced of the paradoxical nature of human affairs, and more and more, his novels begin to reflect that view.
REFERENCES.

1. PP, p. 172

2. Quoted in N. Mansergh, p. 96 (NYPL).


5. Interview with A. St. John Brenon, Oct. 23, 1913 (NYPL).


7. PP, p. 221.

8. Ibid. p. 222

9. Ibid. p. 235

10. Ibid. p. 221-22

11. (TCD) No. 586


13. The document from the Republicans summoning Hanney to his appointment is lodged in TCD, No. 587.


15. PP, p. 246-7-8.


17. PP, p. 149.
After Hannay for the second time had left an Irish parish to go abroad, he began a series of moves which did not end until his death in 1950. Although he returned to Ireland on visits, he never reestablished himself there. He lived for short periods in France, Germany, and Hungary, but he spent most of his later years in England. He did not give up his church work, but continued to take parishes up to the end. When he died he was vicar of Holy Trinity, Kensington Gore, London. He was longest in a country parish, however; from 1924 to 1934 he was Rector of Mells, near Frome in Somerset.

Since Hannay always wrote about what he saw around him, these moves are reflected in his later novels. He wrote a series of books with Balkan settings, and another larger group set in the English countryside. One or two others are set partly in France, and many were still set in Ireland. But these novels did not form cohesive series, as his early Irish novels had done. Sometimes Hannay sets the scene of a novel in one of these countries, and in another later novel he might make use of the setting again. A character from one novel would reappear in another. In certain novels Irish backgrounds and characters reappear, but Hannay never again recreated in his later light novels a world of independent space and time, as he had done in the early light farces.

Hannay never abandoned the patterns of plot and characterization that he had established in the early light novels; he continued to write comedy, and even in one or two anomalous works, like *Goodly Pearls* and *Bindon Parva*, the
comic elements persist. To satirical farce he added two other forms, the detective story and the adventure tale. But even in these new genres, the old patterns survive; the plot construction is technically more impressive, and the characterizations are refined and developed; and essentially the later light novels are a logical development of the earlier works.

That logical development found expression in certain patterns which evolved in the later light novels. They had been established in the early novels, but in the later works they were both confirmed and refined. Principally those patterns lay in the characterizations, especially of two types: the withdrawn masculine and the strong feminine characters. Each of these two types was further divided; there were variations within the subdivisions; but altogether there was a consistency in them that represented a point of view. By examining the patterns of characterization and comparing them, it is possible to determine what that point of view was.

The withdrawn masculine characters continued to appear in two usual roles: the withdrawn narrator and the withdrawn minor figure, usually a peer. Each of the two types had broadened to include a greater variety of character than was evident in the earlier novels. The narrator is often a country parson, as in Wild Justice or The Piccadilly Lady. He may be a don, as in Over the Border, a diplomat as in Goodly Pearls, an editor as in Good Conduct, an architect as in Bindon Farva, an engineer as in Two Scamps, or a higher civil servant as in The Search for Susie. But whatever his profession, he is a gentleman: urbane, with comfortable tastes, knowledgeable about food and wine, a clubman, and a guest at great houses.

The greater sophistication of these characters reflected a widening in Hannay's own experience. From the
early days of the political sensation of his first novels, Hannay had been accustomed to mixing with cultivated people, and now, particularly during his tenure at Mells, which was in the gift of the influential Horner family, his circle of acquaintance expanded considerably. The Horners had been members of the group known as the "Souls" and had entertained the intellectual as well as the social leaders of their day. The family, particularly Lady Horner, made Hannay very welcome in their circle. Inevitably that circle and the life of an English country parish began to appear with some frequency in Hannay's writing. Mells, and Somerset country parishes like it, appear as Bindon Parva, Queen's Cleveley, and Champflower Canonicorum. The golden tenor of life in a big establishment before World War II is reflected in such novels as Fed Up, The Silver-Gilt Standard, Goodly Pearls, and Fidgets.

One type of inhabitant of the great houses provided Hannay with a successor to the withdrawing Irish peer of the early novels. He is best exemplified in Lord Eppington, father of Lady Edith Beauchamp, the heroine of Fed Up and The Silver-Gilt Standard. He is not the narrator of the story, nor does he even look on with amusement. He retires to bed with "sciatica," when anything threatens to disturb his non-eventful days. Here he is responding to an economist who has promised to expound the theory of the gold standard to him:

"Do. I say do. I'm always asking why there are no sovereigns. Kind of you to explain. Something to do with the gold standard, of course. But what? I say what?"

"The theory of the position of gold as a medium of exchange "

"Not a sovereign to be had anywhere," said Lord Eppington. "Used to be plenty. None now. That's what I want to know. Why none now? My dear fellow, do explain. Why none?"
It all becomes too much for Lord Eppington:

"Sciatica," he said. "Sudden attack. Violent. Must get to bed at once. Must push on and get to bed. Bed, and stay there. Only thing to do." (Ch.IV)

In reproducing Lord Eppington's speech, Hannay is characterizing the peer. The speech is peppered with what's in rather a 'U' way; it is full of the prejudices of his class; in other conversations there are the conventional references to "damned socialists" and "Whitechapel Jews." But more than that, Lord Eppington's speech, which coincidentally resembles the later Hemingway's "injun talk," reflects the peer's difficulty in threading his way through the complexities of abstract thought. The reiteration of monosyllables helps him to retain an idea.

Other masculine characters also have difficulty in dealing with facts in any but a literal way. In Wild Justice Colonel Devenish, who is investigating a particularly brutal murder, questions the narrator, a retiring country parson, about local geography:

"Where does the road lead to?" It was of Benton that Devenish asked that question.

"To the village," said Benton, "and afterwards through the village to Loton."

"If you went in the other direction," I said, "you would get to Winstock. After that you'd come to Leyminster, and then, if you went far enough, to Bath."

"In the end," said Devenish, "I daresay you'd get to London, unless you took a wrong turn." (Ch.V)

In Appeasement the local magnate, Sir Philip Challoner, protests to the Rector of Champflower Canonicorum:

"That hymn which was sung today," he said. "Do you think it is entirely suitable for public worship? I am thinking of those lines: 'God made them high and lowly/ And ordered their estate.'"

"But He did, didn't He?" said the Rector.

"Who did?"

"God," said the Rector. (Ch.I)
The Rector is also learned enough to quote frequently from the classics and the English poets. Like Canon Beresford in Lalage's Lovers, like many other of Hannay's characters, "he delighted in tags of verse."

These men usually lead quiet lives, dabbling occasionally in scholarship. The narrator in Wild Justice has "an unpublished, indeed uncompleted MS. of a history of the origins of Celtic monasticism." Laura's Bishop is an authority on ancient heresies. Canon Sylvestre in Found Money has written a paper on Ogham Stones for the local antiquarian society. But it is noteworthy that the pattern of withdrawal persists even here; these scholarly pursuits have little relevance to contemporary or even worldly affairs.

Like Hannay's earlier withdrawing characters, these retiring men are usually bachelors. But now there is a new dimension added to their celibacy. They suffer a sort of physical awkwardness in their relations with others, even with young women with whom their relationships are incontestibly platonic. Quite often they are the receivers of caresses from these high-spirited and affectionate young women, but their responses leave something to be desired. When Laura gratefully kisses the Bishop, upsetting a pile of carefully arranged notes, he finds it "not unpleasant to be kissed by a girl like Laura, but it will take some time to rearrange these notes." And "...pleasant as Laura is, she comes in a good second to an intelligent heretic, dead and gone for more than a thousand years." Mrs. Halliday in Elizabeth and the Archdeacon says she would like to kiss the Archdeacon Simon Craven, whom she intends to marry, "...but he wouldn't let me ... I know him.... He'd be frightfully shocked if I kissed him." Nor is it mere clerical decorum that is responsible for these inhibitions. The civil servant narrator in The Search for Susie finds the most difficult feat of endurance in wartime London is the enforced intimacy with
strangers in air-raid shelters. As a guest at Susie's wedding, he finds her kisses "rather damp embraces." Sir Edward Chatterly in *Poor Sir Edward* is not accustomed even to familial embraces, "holding that affection could be shown without slobbering over each other's cheeks."

Providing a strong contrast to these masculine characters are Hannay's feminine characters. They, too, are continuations of patterns established in the earlier novels, and they also develop and are refined as Hannay's experience in the world outside Ireland added to his knowledge of women. And like the masculine characters, the feminine characters of the later light novels are of two types established in the earlier works: the strong-minded woman and the hoyden-heroine. But there, in that consistency of pattern, their resemblance to Hannay's masculine characters ends. Their natures are dissimilar, and their function in Hannay's art is totally different.

For example, there is no single instance in any of Hannay's novels, with the possible exception of Mrs. Ascher in *Gossamer*, of a woman who withdraws from the world and is content to be merely an onlooker. Even Mrs. Ascher is scarcely an exception, for her scorn for mundane affairs is based on a sense of values which places art, particularly music and sculpture, above everything else. And her domination of her husband is complete except on one occasion.

Nor is the eponymous Grand Duchess, the heroine of the novel of that name and of *The Gun-Rumours*, in any way retiring. When she secludes herself in a convent, she is merely seeking a manageable size of kingdom to rule, and in a convent finds sufficient scope for her autocratic will. The convent of the Hagia Sophrosyne bears more than a superficial resemblance to Austras of Somerville and Ross in the iron discipline with which it is administered, the benevolent treatment of
its inmates, and not least in the nature of its ruler. The hoyden ladies in *Golden Apple, Lieutenant Commander,* and *Over the Border* may be uninterested in politics, or rather, like Mrs. Bryan in *Up the Rebels,* have little time left for them after the important business of running comfortable establishments and managing racing stables.

Neither have the hoyden-heroines of the later novels learned discretion, whether they appear in their undeveloped form like Virginia Tempest in *Good Conduct* and Daphne Dare in *Daphne’s Fishing,* or in more highly developed form like Susie in *The Search for Susie,* and the young Anglo-Irishwomen, Molly Considine in *Poor Sir Edward,* Lady Peggy Temperley in *Golden Apple* and Molly Devenish in *The Piccadilly Lady.* The schoolgirl heroines of the first two novels do not seem to have progressed beyond the age of Lalage Beresford, and they have nothing like Lalage’s success. Perhaps that is because they do not have her scope for reform. Virginia has only a mild English philanthropist, Sir Isaac Wool, to manage; but Daphne, who finds a quarrel about fishing rights to occupy herself with during a stay in the West of Ireland, does manage to bribe an Irish judge. But despite the inconsequence of their efforts and the resulting inconsequence of the novels in which they appear, it is clear that Hannay’s hoydens have lost none of their intensity and force of character.

As they develop in the later novels, however, these hoydens find more scope, and they have a genuine charm that some readers may have thought their predecessors lacked. They are more tolerant and less overbearing in their relations with others. They abandon the preoccupations of school, take jobs, marry, and even have children. They charm not only their lovers but their relations and friends,
usually benignant old gentlemen. They are lively and adventurous. Susie is a secret service heroine, Molly Considine a very brave wartime ambulance driver, Molly Devenish is a plucky and humorous widow and Lady Peggy an excellent horsewoman and - most courageously - the bride of a socialist politician.

These masterful young women show a decided advance in Hannay's power of characterization, and again, that advance is due to his widening social experience in England. There is far more than one feminine character who successfully suggests the charm and ease of the life of the rich in the decades before World War I. And Lord Eppington's daughter, Lady Edith Beauchamp, the heroine of Fed Up and The Silver-Gilt Standard, is the most characteristic of them. She was "a lady with a strong sense of duty, a high feeling of patriotism, and an acute political intelligence." When Lady Edith allows those virtues full rein, she wins a parliamentary election as the Socialist candidate. But it is not only her political ability that is demonstrated in the novels. She manages her husband, father, friends, politicians, and even a sensitive artist, with easy grace. Her establishment at Melcombe Court is smoothly run; her husband, Charles Beauchamp, enjoys looking at the picture the breakfast table presents:

The silver dishes arranged in a row on a well-polished 'sluggards' friend' appealed to his aesthetic faculty. The tall coffee pot of Georgian silver seemed to him a satisfying and beautiful thing. The dark green milk jug, a slight mist of heat rising from it, was an important addition to the balance of the picture. It pleased him, standing with his hands in his jacket pockets, to survey a cold ham, the gash in it revealing rich pink meat below the fat, and
beside it a cold pie.... This was what breakfast at Melcombe Court ought to look like, did look like, and always, so he hoped, would look like while the world endured. (Ch. I)

That pleasant world did not, in fact, endure; although Hannay's heroines, as a type, did. When those luxurious breakfasts at English country houses came to an end with World War II, Hannay's novels reflected the change. The scenes of the novels were often set in blitzed London; and even to the few country houses that struggled on like the Manor House at Champflower Canoniciorum, the war brought evacuees, refugees from the London bombings, the duties of the Home Guard, and, to the luxurious breakfast table, rationing. But Hannay's heroines were in their element. They drove ambulances, joined the Women's Services, firewatched, and failing all else, knitted "fearsome garments for the forces."

The masculine characters in the novels dealing with the war, notably The Search for Susie, Poor Sir Edward, and Good Intentions, are not so happily occupied. They are higher civil servants, and Hannay uses their difficulties with bureaucratic red tape to demonstrate a pronouncement he once made when speaking of Government administration. "Public business ought never to be taken seriously. It is always comic and should be treated as a joke." The public business dealt with by the narrator of The Search for Susie is the care of the alien refugees in England. But he is unable to find one alien lady, even when the English intelligence service asks for her; and he offers this excuse:

The card index, with a short life history entered on each victim's card, had been passed on to the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Home Security, the Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Public Health and, of course, the Ministry of Information. Each
Ministry - probably each member of each Ministry - did his duty as our civil servants always do. Our cards were studied one by one, and everybody who could do so added something to the dossier of the - should I say victim or patient? - anyhow, to the internee to whom the card belonged. The whole index was sent back to us by each Ministry and by us forwarded to the next on the list. The result was that, so Melbury told me, the cards were soon completely filled up and strips of paper had to be pasted on to them to hold what were rapidly becoming biographies. (Ch. 12)

In the useless proliferation of Ministries there is more than a little resemblance to Dr. Whitty's listing to Thady Glynn of "the Boards." 

The narrator of Over the Border has been enjoying a pleasant sojourn in Belfast on a government mission. When he is notified that he will be recalled to London, he is worried. He explains his hesitation:

I was troubled by the fear that my recall was due to the fact that I had been a failure in Belfast. I never understood clearly what I was supposed to be doing there, but I had at least been so far faithful to my trust that I had never spoken about my work, or given anyone the slightest hint of what it was like. If silence is the first duty of a servant of the Government, I had nothing on my conscience. Indeed even had I been inclined to indiscretion I could not have told what I did not know. (Ch. 20)

Perhaps he is unduly worried, for the last time he had been sent for, his superior Fenwick explains, "...nobody can find out who sent for you and why." Fenwick's chief worry is to get his subordinate placed again somewhere "before it gets out - and these newspaper men discover the most unexpected things - they'll pelt us with it, official muddle, who gives the orders. That kind of thing. Probably some ass will ask a question in Parliament...."

In addition to the targets of muddle and red tape, Hannay hits out at the old boy network that operates even
In wartime: Fenwick can promise his subordinate a flight to Belfast instead of a tiresome sea journey:

"Oh, I'll fix that up for you. They won't want to let you, but the thing can be done by anyone who knows how to go about it. There's a fellow I know in the Ministry of Transport. I suppose they're the people who settle these things. If not, he'll put me on the proper man. That very fellow who does transport was asking me the other day about that filly Hesperides. I couldn't tell him much then, but I can give him a straight tip now. He can't do less after that than fix you up with an aeroplane."

"How you sporting men rally round each other," I said, "in the service of your country." (Ch. 10)

Ministries are not always so obliging to one another. The proliferation of government agencies engenders an inter-ministry rivalry. "Poor" Sir Edward Chatterley's Ministry of Co-ordination lags far behind the much more wily Sir Marmaduke's Ministry of the Unification of War Effort in the matter of dealing with a bad smell pervading their offices in Whitehall. The inevitable happens: there is a game of political "Last Post" played at Westminster. Someone else is given his ministry, and Sir Edward philosophically accepts a peerage.

Sir Edward's philosophical resignation is typical of the attitude of detachment found in all of Hannay's male characters, whether they are wartime officials or retiring country gentlemen. In their habits of thinking, in their pursuits, in their way of life, and finally, in contrast with the feminine characters, Hannay's masculine characters demonstrate that they have withdrawn, to a very great extent, from the busy, active world of affairs. More than that, Hannay had created a world in which women were stronger - or more active - than men. Women might be misguided, less intelligent, narrow, but they are energetic and active. It is not too much to say that Hannay - at
least subconsciously - felt in that triumph of the feminine something of the degeneration of worldly affairs. It is important to make one distinction, however. Hannay was not saying that the world was degenerating because women played a more active role than men, but rather that the masculine withdrawal, leaving to women the active role, was symptomatic of the disorder of a world from which all intelligent men had detached themselves.

Hannay's view that the world was suffering a steady degeneration grew more and more apparent in the course of the novels. In the early serious novels, he had examined the themes of regeneration in Ireland; in the early light novels he had examined, through the medium of comedy, the failure of that regeneration. In the later light novels, as he moved outside Ireland, he accepted the unreality of all human efforts. At that point Hannay's pessimistic point of view had hardened into a philosophical conviction that the affairs of the world - especially in government and politics - were degenerating. That conviction originated in three factors. First, it derived partly from Hannay's understanding of the course of 19th and 20th century history, with its social revolution, two world wars, and the hideousness of the totalitarian states. Second, it was influenced by the particular history of modern Ireland, to which he had strong emotional ties. Finally, his conviction sprang partly from his own nature. Essentially Hannay was a moralist, with a strong ascetic bias. It is significant that his earliest intellectual interest centred on the ascetic ideal. One of his earliest works had been a scholarly study of the eremitic spirit, and it is apparent that it was the subject, not scholarship itself, that attracted Hannay to the work. It is likely that he found in those early Christian saints something of the detached spirit that was sympathetic to his nature.
References

1. PP., p. 149
2. Cf. p. 153
Hannay was throughout his life a parochial clergyman. He continued his parish work through all the time he was writing his novels. Even when he was ostensibly retired at Dinard, after leaving Carnalway, he had started a small chapel at a nearby village. But Hannay did not rest long, even in semi-retirement, and when the Church asked for his services, he responded easily. He made an adventurous beginning, taking temporary appointments in Berlin and in Budapest as chaplain to the English Legations in those cities. But in Hungary his primary assignment was to restart the English church, whose parishioners had been scattered during the war.¹

When Hannay arrived in Hungary in 1922, he already had two links with the country. He had already written a novel with a Balkan background, The Island Mystery (1918). As a result of this stay he wrote others with Balkan backgrounds, King Tommy, The Grand Duchess, The Gun-Runners. Balkan characters and settings appear later in other novels such as Goodly Pearls, Angel's Adventure, and in The Runaways, published in 1928. The other link with Hungary was political. To most Irishmen of Hannay's generation, Hungary recalled Arthur Griffith's famous pamphlet, "The Resurrection of Hungary," which introduced the Sinn Fein policy. But the post-war Hungary which Hannay found bore little resemblance to the young nation whose policy of political self-determination Griffith had held up as a model for Ireland. The effects of the war were still apparent in poverty, inflation, overcrowding, and hunger.
Life was difficult in Budapest. Although the Hannays had Legation resources to fall back on, they did not live in a diplomatic enclave, but rather uncomfortably in crowded apartments. Upon the successful conclusion of his mission, Hannay looked for something very different from his Budapest assignment. He found a parish very different from anything in his experience – a small English country parish near an ancient Manor House - Mells.

When Hannay left Ireland he left not only many of his personal ties of friendship and affection, but he also left the institution which he had served so faithfully for thirty years. He says of that severance:

My departure from Carnalway severed, finally... my connection with the Church of Ireland into which I had been baptized, in which I was ordained. From then on my work was to be done in the freer, wider atmosphere of the Church of England. A friend of mine once likened the Church of Ireland to the "little sister" in the song of Solomon who had no breasts....¹ I love the Church of Ireland... and yet I would not go back to her service now. I think the bonds with which she has tied herself would give me spiritual cramp.²

Hannay does not offer any further comment on the Church of Ireland, with which his relations had been on occasion strained.³ Nor does he say specifically what that "freer, wider atmosphere of the Church of England" was, or what it possessed that its "little sister" lacked. But an examination of two of Hannay's novels, written in 1924 and 1925, soon after Hannay had taken up his parish at Mells, will discover something of what Hannay felt about the church he adopted, and by implication, about the church of his birth.

The first of these books, Bindon Parva, is not really a novel but a collection of short tales; yet the book has unity and a theme, derived from the tales themselves and
from the structure to which they are rather loosely connected. Both the tales and the structure have separate significances, relating them to Hannay's attitudes on such questions as the transcendency of the Christian church, Anglo-Catholicism, and asceticism. The tales move in time from medieval England through the Reformation and the Puritan Revolution to the present. The most significant character in the book is both an Anglo-Catholic and an ascetic. A closer look at the structure and contents of the book will demonstrate something of what Hannay thought of those questions.

Bindon Harva is the name of a small West of England parish whose Vicar, the unworldly Simon Maturin, engages an architect, the narrator of the book, to uncover some recently discovered medieval murals, thought to be representations of the seven deadly sins and their antagonistic virtues. To entertain his guest, the clergyman recounts the histories of his predecessors, the Vicars of Bindon Harva. These stories about English clerics make up the tales; each tale is called by the name of its subject, and each tale points a moral usually associated with the subject of the mural on which the architect is working. For example, after he has uncovered the mural luxuria, Maturin recounts to him "Hugh Freyne", a tale of moral laxity in which a fallen-away priest, the vicar and first squire of the parish, figures as a miserable sinner. As the architect listens to the stories, he soon notices that Maturin has an impossibly accurate grasp of the stories and that he often speaks of the figures in the tales as if he knew them intimately. The architect, who has followed Maturin in the early mornings to the church where the austere cleric celebrates a seemingly solitary Mass, comes to understand that Maturin is not alone in the church and
that a ghostly congregation come to their devotions to be re-absolved and renewed by their spiritual director. The architect knows that he has met a formidable phenomenon, but cannot decide its validity. He rejects the explanation of psychic atmosphere, and leaves the question unanswered.

But the spiritualist element, which is used to establish Maturin's mysticism, is not the chief theme of the work, which is, in fact, charity. In each of the tales, which illustrate one of the vices or virtues, the principal figure must answer an appeal to charity. Ambrose Miller must decide whether to put charity above rubrics; Hugh Freyne, whether to raise it above his priesthood; Jeremy Bayle, whether to make it more important than duty; Raoul Bruneau, whether it is possible to put it before just retribution.

And the entire work is a plea for that particular form of charity which is called today ecumenism. In fact, one of the stories, "Raoul Bruneau," recounts an early example of Christian ecumenism when an 18th century French refugee becomes vicar of Bindon Parva. "The French priest was a Roman Catholic, and it seems strange to us that he could or would hold office in the English Church. But at that time the division between the Anglican and Roman Churches was not so acute as it is now or was a century earlier." All the tales taken together form a historical continuum of Christianity in England. For the incumbent of Bindon Parva might be priest or parson, but the parish and its church endure, and the Christian spirit endures with them.

It is not difficult to see that Hannay has been impressed by the historical tradition of the Church of England in which he now found himself. That tradition seemed to him to allow a more liberal interpretation of ritual and dogma than he had been used to. Yet it is important to remember that Hannay himself had always had a
sympathetic understanding of the historical traditions of the church. And he had never had a narrow conception of ritual. In an early novel, The Bad Times, there is a scene in which Anthony Butler, attending Mass at Amiens, experiences a strong wave of religious emotion which causes him to remember the solemn oath he had sworn as a child in the church of Dhuough. "Though a Protestant by baptism and education...he felt as he bowed before the Host that Christ Jesus was beside him, around him, within him."

Anglo-Catholicism and asceticism are linked in the character of the Rev. Maurice O'Donnell in Hannay's second Wells novel, Goodly Pearls. The story is cast in the familiar mould of Hannay's farces; a sympathetic but detached narrator, Sir Stafford Nye, recently retired from a diplomatic post in the Balkans, observes the impact of a new Anglo-Catholic curate upon his brother's quiet country parish. The contrast between the curate's asceticism and Nye's quiet sybaritism is even more marked because O'Donnell is also a Socialist. Hannay says in his preface to Goodly Pearls that he is writing about

...the search for something good which seems to me the most striking thing in English life today. England is uneasily seeking two things, which perhaps are only one—religion and justice.

In the search for one she is moving toward Catholicism; for the other, towards what is vaguely called Socialism. She may be going the wrong way in either case, or both. It is not my business to form an opinion about that. What does seem to be my business as a story-writer is to recognise in our Anglo-Catholics the two most spiritually active forces of our time.

Hannay does not write very convincingly of O'Donnell's socialism, which seems to be principally a matter of introducing scruffy young reformers into the conservative English village of Queen's Cleveley to be laughed at by the inhabitants. The plan to replace the
insanitary old thatched cottages with new houses is indignantly rejected by the villagers when they learn that the rents will also be "improved." But this farcical subplot has little to do with the main theme of the novel. Nor does Hannay penetrate the mystique of Anglo-Catholicism beyond an appreciative description of its liturgy. But he does succeed in portraying the young man's earnest asceticism. There is an idealism burning in the young O'Donnell which is reminiscent of Hannay's early Irish heroes. And like them, O'Donnell "is saved from being a saint." He marries a bright young Balkan hoyden, and faces a future of "quiet life in the Rectory and steady well-doing and children growing up."

In his preface to Goodly Pearls Hannay recalls that once before he had given a novel "a name taken from the Bible and meant to be descriptive." Like *The Seething Pot*, *Goodly Pearls* is the story of an idealist's failure. Hannay uses metaphor to represent the conflict between idealistic and practical Christianity, and because the symbol he uses is one which preoccupies him in other works, it is worth examining. Sir Stafford and O'Donnell stand looking at the church tower. Sir Stafford speaks:

"Look at it...that's religion, built up block after block of solid hewn stone by men who knew that the foundations of any enduring thing must rest on the earth. What are you going to do with it? Do you think that you can alter it with these new-fangled ideas of yours?"

"Religion is not built up on earth. It comes down from heaven."

"You can't build a tower like that downwards."

"I saw the Holy City," he said, "coming down from God out of heaven."

"Exactly. And I saw the tower built up on plain English ground." (Ch. XI)
"The new-fangled ideas," as Sir Stafford refers to O'Donnell's Anglo-Catholic practices, can be reconciled with reality after all. Sir Stafford calls O'Donnell to look at the tower once more:

"You talked about the New Jerusalem — the tower isn't exactly a city, but it's the same kind of thing — of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven.... That colour! Look at the detached pinnacles and the ties which bind them to the corners of the tower. Look at the lattice work. Purple!... Where does all that come from? The colour and the shining? ... Where does the glory come from? Not from the old builders. They didn't paint the stones."

"It comes from the sun in heaven," said O'Donnell. "The Father of Lights." (Ch. XV)

In several of Hannay's English novels, among them Bindon Harrow, The Smuggler's Cave, and Fidgets, the church tower reappears, although never again is it of such significance. But it is there, towering over the English landscape, a symbol of the successful reconciliation that the Church of England had achieved among its disparate elements. That it had a personal significance for Hannay is evident from his descriptions of it in his autobiography, where he quotes the passages from Goodly Pearls as one attempt to read the tower's message, "something more moving and more intimate than the fabled riddle of the Sphinx." 4

The message of the tower may have had an even deeper meaning for Hannay, as it was a symbol of the reconciliation of two elements, the ascetic and worldly. Those two elements existed side by side in Hannay's own nature. Hannay had early in his career been attracted to the ascetic ideal, as his studies of the early Christian monastics demonstrated. He had even contemplated a missionary's life as a contemporary form of withdrawal from the world. But circumstances and his own nature had ruled
against it, and he had continued to live very much in the world. His interest in Irish problems and his writing had demonstrated that his idealism could be reconciled with his worldly interests. That it was possible to fuse the two elements in his nature, to remain very much a Christian moralist while yet absorbing as much as he needed to feed his art, was Hannay's triumph. He was helped to that triumph by his life as a parish clergyman, with the tower of his church brooding over him as a symbol of his victory.

And yet there remained one victory to be won. Although Hannay lived and wrote in England for the rest of his life, Irish themes continue to appear in his novels. In those written during the 1920's and 1930's the bitterness of the Irish "troubles" seeps in. Since Hannay had left the country, Ireland had endured a guerilla war with England, a bloody civil war, and all the ills attending the formation of a new state.

Many of the incidents relating to Ireland in Hannay's later novels refer to these ills. There is more than one reference to the burning and looting of the "Big House." Mrs. Considine, the sister of "Poor Sir Edward," had watched "ardent patriots" burn down her mansion in Ballycree, County Cork:

"Imagine it, my dear, sitting on the lawn in the middle of the night with my poor baby in my arms, watching the house burn and expecting every minute that my husband would be shot, and Molly, a girl of seven years old, shouting to everyone to get her pony out of the stable, just as if it mattered whether the pony was burned or not when everything else was."

Even Major Kent has lost his Shannon property, Coolarrigan Castle, burnt "one dark night in the middle of October... with the best of intentions and the loftiest motives."

But the Major, being a simple man, cannot understand "how
the cause of Irish independence would be advanced by the
destruction of Coolarrigan Castle." But being also a
philosophical man, he accepts the explanation of the
Irregular who routs him out of his bed:

"What are you trying to do, Michael? What are
you at? What's the matter of it all?"

"The meaning of it is this. Things has been the
way they are long enough and it's time for us to
be yous and for yous to be us."

As for Mrs. Considine, escape to England is the best
solution for the Major, although he is persuaded to go
back to Ireland once again to look for his only Irish
legacy, a pair of silver candlesticks that he had hidden
in the Shannon River on the night his house was destroyed.
Probably only the inimitable J.J. could have prevailed
upon the Major to return to Coolarrigan, but in The Major's
Candlesticks (1929) Hannay reunites the two friends upon
another search for buried treasure - this time for Shannon
silver.

Curiously enough the two novels in which J.J.
reappears, The Major's Candlesticks and A Sea Battle (1948),
introduce Germans in Ireland. Their portraits are unsympathetic:
they are overbearing, coarse, and crooked. Hannay makes
much comedy out of the contrast between the "efficient"
Germans and the careless Irish, particularly in the first
novel, in which the Germans are engineers engaged in
building an important dam in the Shannon River. (Hannay
was describing the "Shannon Scheme": in 1926 the Irish
government accepted the tender of the German engineering
firm of Siemens to harness the waters of the Shannon.)
Many stories are still told locally of the impact of Ireland
on the Germans. The Germans in A Sea Battle are even less
sympathetic characters: they are Nazi war criminals fleeing
to the West of Ireland to escape judgement after the war.
Although they are efficient enough to have hired a "public
relations" men, they are no match for J.J., who soon sends them on their way to justice. Again Hannay is reporting events accurately: a few Nazi criminals sought asylum in neutral Ireland after the war. Although Hannay does not show very much of his distaste for these types of men, it is perhaps significant that he pits them against J.J. It is as if he brought out his biggest guns to deal with a hated enemy.

Hannay's last novel, sent to his publishers posthumously, is also a return to earlier friends, the friends Hannay loved best. Two Scamps (1950) is set first in postwar London but for the most part in Duneagan, a little settlement on the North coast of County Antrim. The characters, too, are a return to old themes. One of the scamps, Dick Murphy, is reminiscent of Hannay's own adventurous younger brother, who had, "at one time or another, seen most places, including the inside of a Madagascar jail." Dick Murphy, too, has travelled the world, has escaped from a native jail, and now has returned to his native place, the parish of his brother, the Rev. Tom Murphy. He has not abandoned his adventurous ways, however, and in an alliance with a young Welsh couple, brother and sister, successfully engages in smuggling spirits from France into a remote Ulster island. The smugglers then sell their wares to discreet Englishmen who are fond of a good vintage or a liqueur brandy and do not ask embarrassing questions about the origins of their drink. In Two Scamps Hannay has successfully caught the spirit of affluence and laissez-faire of postwar Britain, and in a sense this novel is a coming to terms with the new postwar society with its changing values and new attitudes. For the scamps - and their hoyden partner - are charming and entirely sympathetic.
But perhaps the book's greatest success is the evocation of the atmosphere of the remote Antrim fishing village; it has not changed much since The Northern Iron nor since Hannay's own boyhood. It is now, as it was then, of all places - most pleasant.
References

1 PP, 257-8

2 Ibid, p.250

3 Mr. R.B.D French discusses one occasion on which Hannay differed with his co-religionists on a matter of public policy in his article, 'J.O.Hannay and the Gaelic League.' I am indebted to Mr. French for letting me see his article while it was still in proof.

4 PP, pp. 287-9
Hannay records in his autobiography and in an interview given to an American journalist that he had once written a play at the request of a Haileybury schoolfellow, Herbert Trench, manager of the Haymarket Theatre, London. The play, *Eleanor's Enterprise*, never achieved an English production, but it was published as a short story in the *Pall Mall Magazine* and then produced in Dublin, in December, 1911, by the Independent Theatre Company of Count Casimir Markievicz, with the Countess Markievicz in the leading role.

Although no copy of the playscript seems to have survived in the Hannay MSS., it is possible to tell something about the plot from a comparison of the Dublin newspaper notices of the play with the *Pall Mall* story and with the novel Hannay later turned it into. Eleanor Maxwell (Eleanor Brooks in the short story) a recent graduate of Girton, comes to visit her uncle and aunt, Lord and Lady Kilcarron, in the West of Ireland. She is eager to put into practice some of the theories of social work she has learned in London slums. Bribed by her uncle, an Irish peasant, Kerrigan, allows Eleanor to live with his family in order to study them. The long-suffering family suffers Eleanor's efforts just long enough for Eleanor to learn that the
experiment is "controlled" and that her uncle, with the connivance of
the local doctor, has been sending down from his castle comforts in
the form of game pies and clean bedding. She flees in anger, but is
reconciled by Dr. O'Reilly, who has been an amused spectator of the
farce. He also supplies a romantic interest, for the farce ends with
the promise of further scope for Eleanor's enterprise: marriage to an
Irishman.

In the play and the short story Hannay seemed bent only on making
the most of a good story; its effect depends mostly upon the twist of
the plot; the characters are merely clockwork figures making their way
through the twists of a mechanical farce. Eleanor is a conventional
figure; determined to get close to the people, her first reaction is to
wash them; and she is appalled when she discovers their thievery, as she
supposes is the source of her linen and food.

Her uncle, Lord Kilbarron, is one of Hannay's Irish peers, a
successor to Lord Clonfert, determined to avoid activity as much as
possible, although married to it in the form of vigorous Lady Kilbarron,
who objects to her niece's determination to mix with the people. The
unconventionality of Eleanor's behaviour worries her most, and she appeals
to a local archdeacon to persuade Eleanor to forego her enterprise. In
the later novel, the character of the archdeacon disappears, and the
conflict between Eleanor and her aunt is broadened. Lady Rathconnell
(as she is called in the novel) warns her, "Associating on equal terms
with the lower orders is always a mistake. It's worse. In the present condition of society it's actually wicked. I hate the lower orders."

Eleanor (now called Sybil Mainwaring, fresh from Girton and a London season) wants to study "the character and the psychology of the Irish people."

Lord Rathconnell and Dr. O'Grady, talking over her intention wonder whether that means politics or "poetry about fairies and that sort of thing... [they] had a vague idea that she wanted to read Mr. Yeats's poetry...."

In the play and short story, Dr. O'Reilly is only a bystander; in the novel, written after the Rev. J.J. Meldon had been metamorphosed into Dr. Lucius O'Grady, the doctor plays a stronger role, manipulating the others, arranging Sybil's stay with the peasant Kerrigan family, persuading Lady Rathconnell to accept her niece's experiment as an "inoculation" against more outrageous schemes. The romantic interest, always a minor element in Hannay's farce, is given more credibility because Dr. O'Grady is shown to be attracted to Sybil from the beginning, but the romance plays no more important part in the total effect than in any other of Hannay's farces, or indeed in any farce. A man of superhuman energy and a satirical humour, Dr. O'Grady bribes Kerrigan to accept Sybil, literally preparing the Kerrigan cottage for her by whitewashing the rooms, setting up her bed, and provisioning the Kerrigan larder from Rathconnell Castle. To secure the latter, he must pacify the servants who are unwilling accomplices, and he manages to hoodwink the only one who is not bribable, Mrs. McCann, an obdurate Northerner, by a stratagem, keeping her in bed to make the most
of an insurance policy for the sake of her employer and the doctor himself.

Thus had Hannay skilfully wound subplots about his principal plot, cramming in enough ideas and characterizations to ensure a rich and swiftly moving farce. He managed to include hits at favourite targets, the withdrawal of the Irish aristocrat, the intransigence of the strong-minded woman, the obstinacy of the Northerner, the cunning of the Irish peasant. And he included some new targets: he gently hints at the silliness of some of the more sentimental followers of the Celtic romanticists.

But even in its earlier version, the plot was strong enough to win appreciation from Dublin critics and audiences. Eleanor’s Enterprise together with a one-act curtain-raiser, "Self-Sacrifice", opened at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, on Monday, December 11, 1911. The play was advertised as being written by "George A. Birmingham," and it played to crowded houses. Joseph Holloway, the Dublin playgoer and amateur critic, who rarely missed a dramatic performance, or indeed any noteworthy event in Dublin, recorded in his diary that he had seen Douglas Hyde and Francis Sheehy Skeffington in the audience. The audience did not include the author, however, and Count Markievicz accepted the curtain calls and thanked the audience in his name.

If anyone in the audience had noticed a parallel in the story of the heroine and the actress who played her, no one commented on it. Countess Markievicz, too, went down from the Big House to succour the Irish poor.
Born Constance Gore-Booth, eldest child of a still-prosperous Anglo-Irish family of Lissadell, County Sligo, she had always been engrossed in amateur theatricals. Some unkind Dubliners asserted that her life was one long series of them. She had tried painting, studying at Julien's atelier in Paris, where she met the Polish Count Casimir Markievicz and married him. With a stepson and one daughter, she settled back into Dublin society only to reject it in favour of a more unconventional role. Her marriage was not successful, but the Markievicz's pursued separate careers amicably, and at one time co-operated in a theatrical company performing patriotic propaganda plays. It was that Independent Theatre Company which performed Hannay's play.

Later the patriotism of the Countess was to take more violent form.

"That woman's days were spent/ In ignorant good-will,/ Her nights in argument..."* Although disapproving of Griffith's pacifist policies, by 1909 she was on the council of Sinn Fein, and in 1913 she worked tirelessly in the General Strike, organizing soup kitchens and milk depots, without which many of the Dublin poor would have starved. In the Easter Rebellion of 1916 she was commissioned and fought in skirmishes at St. Stephen's Green and the Royal College of Surgeons. Captured and condemned with the other rebels, she was spared only because she was a woman.

But even in 1911 her reputation was somewhat equivocal, particularly because of her association with Larkin and Connolly.
asked Hannay for a play, he gave them Eleanor's Enterprise. He confesses his doubts when he realized that the Countess would be playing one scene in his play in nightclothes. He worried whether her unconventionality would emerge in her choice of dress — or undress — and that proposed costume was the subject of a correspondence between himself and Madame de Markievicz. He adds that he wondered what puzzled officialdom made of those letters when the Countess's effects were impounded after her arrest in 1916.5

The applause of the audience was, for the most part, echoed by the critical notices. "Jacques" in the Irish Independent (12.12.11) begins by repeating a story which he attributes to gossip that the author had offered the play to the Abbey, which had rejected it. He compared the Abbey's rejection of the play — if it had happened — to the rejection of Shaw's John Bull's Other Island. The reviewers of the Irish Times (12.12.11, p.274) and the Evening Mail also compared the play to Shaw's play. Both critics noted the similarity of Dr. O'Reilly to the Rev. J.J. Meldon. The reviewer in the Irish Independent headed his notice "A stage Meldon" and described Dr. O'Reilly as "a young man, red-haired and with a bristly red moustache," and with other than physical characteristics of the Rev. J.J. He praised the dialogue which he found "direct, fresh, and natural." He also praised the staging, particularly the introduction of a live donkey. The critic of The Evening Mail, who had praised the author's "mild and gentle sense of humour," identified one of Hannay's stylistic faults when he
criticized Hannay's discursiveness: the speeches are too long for dramatic effect. His review, which is altogether the most severe of the Dublin notices, stated that the acting of J. Connolly and Helena Moloney was exceptionally good, but that "Mme. Markievicz hardly got across the footlights." The critic of the Evening Herald, too, noted that the actors except Moloney spoke too quickly and indistinctly. 6 Of the cast, one of whom seemed to be an American, (P. Quill who played O'Reilly) Helena Moloney probably had most training and presence. She had a minor reputation as an actress. She was well-known in Dublin as Maude Gonne's lieutenant, and she had introduced the Countess Markievicz to Inghinidhe na hÉireann, the quasi-revolutionary women's organization. 7

The play was counted a local success, and went on to Belfast, but it did not reach London. 8 However, just at that time Hannay was approached by two London theatrical men, who separately came to the conclusion that he might be able to write a play that displayed the same comic genius as they found in the novels. While Mrs. Hannay went up to Dublin to see Eleanor's Enterprise, Hannay remained in Westport. He states that he used the time to write a new play for which he had been asked by two London agents. 9

Hannay says further that he wrote General John Regan during those few days and sent it off to Golding Bright, a London agent, who placed it immediately with Sir Charles Hawtrey, a prominent London actor-manager. He had first offered Bright Eleanor's Enterprise and then had sent on the second play when Bright had rejected the first. 10
But, in fact, the play must have existed earlier in some form—possibly as a short story—because in the collection of Hannay Papers in the National Library of Ireland there is a letter from Lady Gregory at Coole Park to Hannay in which she tells him:

I return the story with many thanks it is very amusing—of course you did not work out the idea so [as] seriously as I did, it is a fine one and goes deep.11

The letter dated 10 Dec., but the year is omitted. Since Lady Gregory says in a note to a later edition of her play that she had written it in 190912 it is probable that Hannay had written his play in some form before December 1911. He may have considered submitting it to Lady Gregory for an Abbey production, and this would account for the suggestion in two of the Dublin newspaper reviews of Eleanor's Enterprise, that Hannay had had his play refused by the Abbey.

The "idea" which Lady Gregory writes of to Hannay is also the one to which she refers in her notes to "The Image."

I owe an acknowledgement as well as many thanks to A.E., who gave me the use of an idea that had come to him for a play which he had thought of carrying out. It was about a man who collected money in a country town for a monument to one Michael McCarthy Ward, I forget on what grounds. The money is collected, the collector disappears, and then only is it found that Michael McCarthy Ward had never existed at all....13

George Russell (A.E) had given both Lady Gregory and Hannay an idea for
a play: on it Lady Gregory had based "The Image," and Hannay General John Regan. Both plays concerned a scheme for raising a statue to an imaginary personage in a small Irish town. Both writers used the plot to illustrate the nature of the Irish, but their plays, as Lady Gregory implies, are very different. "The Image" emphasizes the dreaming nature of the Irish peasant, the "myth-making of the Irish character." Hannay constructed a farce around the same characteristic of the Irishman, but he saw that characteristic as something very different, an ability to delude oneself and others into grandiose and profitable schemes. Greed and cunning play their parts in the schemes, but the imaginative nature of the Irishman, who will plot for the fun of it, is not lost sight of. In representing that element of the Irish character, Hannay approached Lady Gregory's "myth-making peasant" more closely than she thought.

And although Lady Gregory used internal devices for her farces often directly derived from Molière, it was, in this case at least, Hannay's dramatic formulation of AE's idea that came closest to classical farce. There are several parallels: the bally and cheeky servants; the irrepressible rogue-hero, the Gods (Government officials biding their time in Dublin Castle), ready to release thunderbolts or beneficent grants, and even the deus ex machina in the last act: Mr. Billing descending from his motorcar brandishing the cheque for £500 which will make everything right.

Hannay developed the idea into a three-act farce. The collector of the
money to raise a statue is an American, Horace P. Billing, who hits on that device to stir up the "godforsaken" town of Ballymoy. The local dispensary doctor, Lucius O'Grady, who is really the Rev. J.J. Meldon, undergone a change of profession, is only too ready to abet him. Billings offers a sum of five hundred pounds if the townspeople will match it for the raising of a statue to General John Regan, "legendary hero of Bolivia." He then disappears, leaving O'Grady in charge.

The major part of the action is taken up by O'Grady's attempts to find a statue - undeterred by the fact that neither he nor anyone in the supposed birthplace, Ballymoy, has ever heard of the General - and to invite the chief political figure of Ireland, the Lord-Lieutenant - to unveil it. All must be done immediately and without spending any money. He must conciliate the local nationalist, reconcile the wives of the local officials, reassure the local clergy, bribe the town's gombeen man, and deceive a suspicious Dublin Castle.

Here Hannay excels: in a swiftly-moving series of plot and sub-plot, he manages to combine the various motivations, interests, and cross-currents of small town life. And Ballymoy is merely a microcosm of Irish society. The local hotel-keeper and gombeen man, Doyle, is motivated by cupidity: O'Grady persuades him that on the visit of the Lord-Lieutenant they need spend no money. Billing's contribution will pay for the statue and the ceremony, and the townspeople of Ballymoy will gain the opportunity of
soliciting "works" when the Lord-Lieutenant comes to unveil the statue. A pier or something else — it does not matter what — will result in money coming into the town — with a good part finding its way into Doyle's pocket.

The fears of Thaddeus Gallagher, editor of the Connaught Eagle and rabid nationalist, must be allayed: a certain tune will not be played at the reception for the Lord-Lieutenant. O'Grady's attempts to substitute Rule Britannia for the anthem and teach it to the town band in the face of Gollagher's surly suspicions is only one of the delicious subplots. Doyle is kept successfully on a string by ordering the statue from his nephew, a mortuary sculptor in Dublin, who happens to have on hand a statue that will do for the General. The statue, in fact, represents a Dublin merchant whose heirs refused to pay for it. O'Grady must next settle questions of precedence with the wives of the Resident Magistrate and of the District Inspector of Police. His diplomatic handling of the ladies equals his adroit handling of the parish priest who fears that the liberator of Bolivia may have been tainted with atheistic doctrine. Mannay demonstrates the traditional mistrust of the Irish Roman Catholic clergy for any revolutionary movement that might be touched by free-masonry or anti-clericalism. Even the Lord Lieutenant is not too much for him; when his Lord Lieutenant's aide-de-camp arrives from Dublin Castle to remonstrate with the villagers of Ballymoy for inviting an exalted personage to unveil a statue to a non-existent hero, O'Grady skilfully leads Lord Alfred to stand in for the absent
Lord-Lieutenant and brings off his ceremony after all. Billing (this deus descending from his motor) arrives in time to enjoy the final joke and to make all well by repaying the villagers.

The characterization of Billing — and therefore the direction of the plot — varied in the several productions. One American journalist noted that

One curious feature deserves notice. In New York the American is so acted that he is plainly always aware that the Irish are playing a game to deceive him, and he is always laughing behind his hand. In London, it was so acted that it was obvious that the natives had "got his goat" — we lapse into the idiom again — and had suddenly snatched the whip from him.

Now, Hannay never intended the part to be acted in either way! He intended — so we are credibly informed — that the American, after inventing General John Regan should have been flabbergasted at being shown his birthplace and the natives, meanwhile, should have been on the anxious seat — just as much as ever. In other words, there exists in the real comedy a double thread of cross-purposes which neither the English nor the American production has brought out.

There were other changes in the New York production of the play — minor ones, such as changes in Billing's speech to accord with American idiom. For example, when Doyle and Colligher inform Billing that there is no statue of General John Regan in Ballymoy, Billing's reply in the English production is, "You amaze me, gentlemen." In the New York typescript the lines are changed to, "Well, what do you know about that?" Again, Billing explains
to Golligher, "...I'm engaged, gentlemen, in writing the first complete life of the soldier-statesman...." In the New York production: "You see, boys, I'm engaged in writing...."

Also, probably to Hannay's dismay, for they were not in his original script and they were some of the terms he often satirized as "stage Irish," a few "Begorrahs" were added to the dialogue. Although the handwriting is not Hannay's, the change may have originated with him, for, although the substitution of "You see, Boys," and the syntactical change in the lines, do make them more idiomatic, they still have a strong English flavour, particularly in the use of the verb engage.

The playscript in the New York Public Library is probably a piecemeal copy of Hannay's earliest versions, because in some lines in Act II the hero's name Meldon is crossed out and O'Grady substituted. In Hannay's original play the character was the Rev. J.J. Meldon of Spanish Gold. It was only in the first London production, and at the suggestion of Hawtrey and Golding Bright that Hannay changed the hero to O'Grady when he accepted the play. Bright wrote to Hannay praising the play, adding that he thought he has achieved something of a record, because three different managements had read the play in less than a week and all are wax in its praise. He goes on:
All three (Haymarket Management, Cyril Maude, and Charles Hawtrey) seem to agree on one point, that it was a mistake for J.J. to be a clergyman, and that it will go against the play. Hawtrey's suggestion, the only one I have put to me, is that you should make him a poor Country squire and that he should have a motive in doing what he does, and that his motive for instance should be to make £100, out of which to buy a horse that can win a steeplechase. I do not know whether you would think anything of the suggestion, or whether your fancy could suggest any alternative.  

Hannay did have an alternative: Dr. Lucius O'Grady, dispensary doctor and hero of the novels which succeeded Spanish Gold. Although he followed a different profession, he had many of the most engaging qualities of his predecessor, temerity, humour, and inventiveness; and, like the Rev. J.J., he was chronically short of money. Thus, Hannay did make something, too, of Golding Bright's second suggestion.

In Boyle's lines at O'Grady's first appearance in the play.

It's a pity now about the doctor. I've a liking for him, so I have, though it's mortal hard to get a penny out of him. It's upwards of thirty pounds he owes me this minute.

Hannay provides a motivation for O'Grady's plotting: if O'Grady can wring some patronage from the Lord-Lieutenant for the town of Ballymoy, Doyle will be sure to profit from it and consequently will not press Dr. O'Grady.
The history of the London production of General John Regan is fully documented by a series of letters and telegrams from Golding Bright in London to Hannay in Westport. Until the Hannays went over to London shortly before the opening, Bright corresponded assiduously with Hannay, informing him not only of terms but of plans for the production. Hannay also received a series of telegrams from a disgruntled Cyril Maude, who insisted that he, and not Hawtrey, should have the play and accused Golding Bright of unfairness to him in the matter. It is clear from his letters to Hannay that Golding Bright did urge him to give the play to Hawtrey, and he was not chary of offering other advice to Hannay. For example, when George Tyler was bidding for the American rights, Bright advised Hannay to keep the play from Arnold Daly who, he said, "will be quite miscast." In connection with that point, it is ironical to note one American critic's opinion that "The performance at the Hudson Theatre (New York) is, on the whole, better than the one in London. Arnold Daly plays the part of the doctor, a part created by Charles Hawtrey, who was quite miscast."

General John Regan had an unusual record of productions. They included its first London production, a successful American tour, a production in Westport which turned into that particularly Irish occasion, a theatre riot, and a production during World War I at a British prisoner-of-war camp in Germany.

The original production by Charles Hawtrey opened at the Apollo Theatre, London, on January 9, 1913, with Charles Hawtrey in the leading
role of Doctor Lucius O'Grady, and the famous Irish players, W.G. Fay
and Cathleen Nesbitt as Thady Colligher and Mary Ellen. It ran for
176 performances, was taken off during a rather poor summer season, but
was revived ten days later to run until September, making 275 performances
in all. The Hannays went over to give final advice about the production,
and Mrs. Hannay brought with her some clothing bought from Westport
inhabitants to guarantee authentic costumes for the production.

Even before the London opening, the American rights had been
secured by George C. Tyler, a prominent American producer, who presented
the play in New York with Arnold Daly in the Hewtry role, in November
1913. W.G. Fay again appeared as Colligher, and Maire O'Neill replaced
Cathleen Nesbitt, as Mary Ellen. The reviews were largely favourable
but one reviewer hinted that there was difficulty between Daly and the
Management. At any rate, the play ended its run in New York in
and was not seen again in America until Tyler revived it in 1927 as a
vehicle for the celebrated Shakesperian actor, A.E. Southern. It was
first revived in Boston and went on to Rochester and Pittsburgh, earning
generally good reviews, although one critic pointed out that A.E. Southern
completely miscast as Dr. O'Grady, playing the role as a village squire.
The powerful American theatre critic, Mr. George Jean Nathan, champion
of another Irish dramatist, Sean O'Casey, had been one of those who had
suggested the revival to Mr. Tyler.

The play was revived again briefly in Greenwich Village, New York in
1930 by a group known as the "Irish Theatre," but the critics condemned
the play as unworthy although they thought the play still original and witty. Other minor American productions included some by little theatre and summer stock companies: the Jewett Players, Boston, December 31, 1917 at the Copley Theatre and at a summer theatre in Long Island.

The play has since had a second London production at the Criterion Theatre on April 23, 1930, with Fred O'Donovan playing O'Grady. The play has been made into a film, has been broadcast by Radio Eireann, and has had other minor productions, including an unusual one during World War I at Ruhleben Prison Camp in Germany. Hannay's son who was a prisoner there obtained the script from Dublin, and General John Regan was produced as a camp entertainment. But probably no production was as exciting as the one given on February 4, 1914, in Westport, County Mayo.

General John Regan was produced in the Westport Town Hall by an English touring company, Payne Seddon's company, which included Irish actors, the present-day Abbey actor, M.J. Dolan, among them. Local eyewitness accounts, including that of Abbey playwright Frank Carney, who was a boy in Westport at that time, agree that the actors got the worst of a riot which interrupted the performance. Crowds had begun to collect soon after the players arrived in their hotel, which is situated on the town square or principal town intersection, across from the Town Hall. Curiously enough, there stands in the centre of the square the chief public monument of Westport, a statue of a Major Glendenning, an unpopular land agent of former times, who, according to popular legend, had arranged
for the statue to be erected to himself.

The performance, which began in the evening, with an audience consisting of townspeople, was halted several times by boos and cat-calls, until finally the disorderly audience boiled onto the stage to attack the actors. M.J. Dolan recalls that he suffered some of the worst of the action, for he was attacked with one of the chief props, the statue of General John Regan. Fortunately the statue had been constructed of a light substance, and he did not suffer serious injury. The townspeople showed their animosity mostly toward the actors of the company, and they carried it on to the hotel where the actors had been hurried for safekeeping. Crowds collected outside the hotel, booing and threatening until the company decamped early the next morning. The local District Inspector of Police evidently was unlucky enough to suffer injury, for he subsequently sued for compensation of £1000 for serious injuries received on the occasion of the riots.21

Twenty young men who had been charged with being participants in the riots were later tried at the Summer Assizes at Castlebar, and the evidence of the police at their trial establishes some facts about the origins of the riot. That the riot was organised and not spontaneous seems evident from the evidence of District Inspector Neylon, who testified that "in consequence of information received" he took thirteen policemen with him to the hall on the night of the opening. He further testified that when the play began about sixty people at the back of the Hall began to groan and stamp their feet, and continued this during the
first act. In the second act, a performer, who represented "Father McCormack," came forward, and the crowd at the back rushed up, stormed the stage, and assaulted the actors. . . .

A report in the Irish Independent shortly after the riot took place quoted a correspondent as saying that during the performance "someone said, 'Now, boys,' and there was a rush for the stage." The police tried to keep the crowd back, and a baton charge actually took place within the hall. The light was turned off, chairs were thrown, stones commenced to pour through the windows, and it was not until the parish priest arrived that the tension was relaxed." The report goes on to describe the reception of the play as mixed in Clonmel and Kilkenny, hostile in Galway and Castlebar, and favourable in Ennis and Sligo.

Mannay himself had resigned his living in 1913 and was in Glasgow at the time of the Westport production. He was quoted in one news story as saying that the events in Westport "were a complete mystery to me." He recalled that for the first production in London, the townspeople, who had very willingly sold their clothing to costume the London actors, had great fun in identifying their clothes in newspaper photographs of the production. They had attended and seemed to enjoy his account of the production when he gave a public lecture on the play in Westport Town Hall. In another interview Mannay is quoted as coming to the conclusion that "...the hostility was organized, though why objection to the play should have been taken is still obscure." When asked if Westport was supposed to be represented in the play, Canon Mannay said it was not and . . . that no person
in Westport had been portrayed as a character. The priest who is one of the characters was represented as a "charming, simple-minded, dear old man, and it was nonsense to say that he intended to show the priest as a hypocrite."  

From these reports it is fairly clear that the resentment of the townspeople was not entirely spontaneous and that it was directed principally at the characterization of the parish priest in the play, Father McCormack. He is portrayed reasonably enough as rather simple, but the scene to which the townspeople evidently objected is one in which he is described as drinking in a public house. In Act III Doyle persuades a flustered and worried Father McCormack into his public house in the following passage:

**Doyle:** Listen to me now, Father, I have a bottle of good stuff - the best - mind you, in my room behind the bar. It's what I wouldn't offer to everyone.

**Father McC.:** Thank you, Doyle, thank you, but I never - not at this hour.

**Doyle:** It's worried to death you are, Father, and half a glass of it - 

What with Dr. O'Grady not being here and the children's frocks going wrong on you, and that fellow Golligher - It's in my own room I have it, behind the bar, and there's never anybody goes in there only myself. It isn't as if I was asking you to taste it in public, for that's what I know well you wouldn't do...

(interrupted by Golligher)

Do you go on now, Father. You'll find the bottle in the cupboard behind the door and it's not locked. It'll do you good so it will.

(Doyle then goes to Golligher and Kerrigan disposes of him by persuading him to go in for a drink. He then turns to the Major)
Doyle: I have Father McCormack drinking whiskey in the room behind the bar and I have Thady Golligher and Kerrigan drinking porter in the bar, and if I can't keep them at it there'll be murder done or worse.

In the play's script of the New York production from which that passage was copied, the passage is crossed out and another passage inserted, in which Doyle lured the priest into the bar by using a newspaper as bait. Other possibly offensive lines are deleted as for example, his reply to Golligher: "Excommunicate him? I like Protestants as well as another."

By eliminating the drinking invitation, a perceptive piece of observation about Irish life is lost. Doyle understands the graduations of Irish society; the priest is offered spirits, to be drunk in private, Golligher is entitled only to porter in the public bar. The priest is safely hidden in a private room.

But the American producer of the play, perhaps with the memory of the Playboy riots still fresh, or perhaps merely because of the puritanism of the American stage, was wiser than Mr. Payne Seddon's company. Whether the audience reacted straightforwardly to the scene is doubtful in the light of the police evidence. But even if it was incited to riot by some enemy of Hannay, it is obvious that the scene furnished them with a pretext.

The Hannays had left Westport before the production ever came there. Hannay had accepted an offer of a lecture tour in the United States to coincide with the production of his play in New York.
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2. The story was first printed in the magazine, London, June, 1911, later reprinted in a collection of Hannay's short stories, Minnie's Bishop and Other Stories of Ireland, and then expanded into the novel, Send for Doctor O'Grady.


4. W.B.Yeats, "Easter 1916."

5. PP, pp. 170-1.

6. This reviewer begins by comparing Hannay's play to Boucicault's "The Shaghrain," and cites similarities in the names of characters in both plays as evidence that Hannay derived his play from the earlier one.

7. E. Coxhead, p. 86.

8. Sir Charles Hawthre in 1923 planned to produce a later version of the play, Send for Doctor O'Grady. Hawthre died six weeks after the play opened at the Criterion Theatre, London, and the play came off. PP, 269-70.

9. PP, p. 172

10. (TCD) 445, 451-3

11. (NL) 24


13. Ibid.

14. Unidentified newspaper cutting (NYPL).

15. (TCD) 454.

16. (TCD) 458-60.

17. (TCD) 493.

18. The Globe and Commercial Advertiser (NYPL) N.D.
19. New York Evening World 11 Nov 1913
20. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 1 Nov 1927
21. Irish Times 21 July 1914
22. Ibid.
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Synopsis:

I Manuscript Sources

II Printed Sources

I Primary Sources

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   (Canon James Owen Hannay)

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2 Secondary Sources: books, periodicals and pamphlets

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   Hannay's daughter, Miss Althea Hannay, in 1954, to the
   College. A collection of family papers, photographs,
   letters, files of cuttings, including reviews and notes
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   him. Many are unpublished. The collection includes some
   manuscripts, including the unpublished play, Parnell. It
   has been arranged and catalogued by Mr. R.B.D. French, and
   is kept in the Manuscripts Room of the Library.
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2 Hannay Manuscripts, National Library of Ireland, Mss.3271.
   A collection of papers acquired by the Library in 1959,
   containing letters to Hannay, dated from 1908 to 1910. A
   catalogue of these papers is appended to the catalogue in
   Trinity College.

3 Hannay File, New York Public Library Theatre Collection,
   Lincoln Center, New York City, NCOF. A collection of
   cuttings of reviews of the American productions of Hannay's
   play, and newspaper articles and reviews written during his
   visits to America. The collection also contains an amended
   copy of the original General John Regan script.


6 Joseph Holloway, Diaries in the National Library of Ireland, Mss.1812. A series of journals kept by a Dubliner, the architect of the Abbey Theatre, containing much miscellaneous information about Dublin personages, theatre performances, and other events. Entries for December 1911 relate to Hannay's first play.

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