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The Life of William Bulfin 1863–1910

Thomas Harris

Submitted to University of Dublin

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

2011

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Summary

In examining the life of William Bulfin, this study relied on three major sources; Bulfin's journalistic writings, his literary works and his correspondence. These sources proved essential in exploring the evolution of his thought and endeavours at the important stages in his life.

Chapter 1 traces the formative influences of his early life in King's County. It presents the context of his decision to emigrate in terms of the well established links between Ireland and Argentina. His four years spent working on the ranches of the Pampas are explored in chapter 2. His experiences enriched his understanding of the Irish Argentine community and helped shape his identity as an Irishman.

His career as a young journalist is explored in chapter 3. He emerges as campaigner and social reformer. His journalistic writings indicate his understanding of the tensions, conflicts and vested interests that existed at local, national and international level. As an investigative journalist he proved to be combative, fearless and relentless in his campaigns for reforms.

Bulfin's growing sense of nationalism is explored in chapter 4. It is linked to early formative influences. The foundation of the Gaelic League was crucial to his sense of the Irish Ireland philosophy. He was influential in the founding of the Gaelic league in Argentina. Bulfin subscribed to the Sinn Féin movement and worked towards promoting it in Argentina. The year 1898 was the centenary of the 1798 Rebellion and he was influenced by the fervour and nationalistic spirit it stirred in Ireland and among the Irish Diaspora. As editor of the *Southern Cross*, he felt a sense of mission to define and defend the Irish community in Argentina. His disputes with the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald* sharpened his resolve to give a voice to the Irish community.

Bulfin's role as editor of the *Southern Cross* is detailed in Chapter 5. He addressed issues as diverse as poverty in Argentina, church and state and leadership at local, national and international level. His extensive coverage of the Boer War indicated his sympathies were with the Boers. Under his editorship the *Southern Cross* became more robust and combative. The publication of his *Tales of the Pampas* in 1900, a collection of short stories, was to provide encouragement for his literary ambitions.

His visit to Ireland in 1902 and 1904 provide the basis for his travel book *Rambles in Eirinn*. His observations about emigration, depopulation, communications, the land question, education, the Gaelic League and the Sinn Féin philosophy provide a personal overview of Ireland in the early years of the twentieth century. The world he depicted was essentially that seen through the eyes of a returned exile heightened by strong nationalist sentiments. As editor of the *Southern Cross*, Bulfin had already established himself as a prominent leader with the Irish community of Argentina. He was now being acknowledged in Ireland as a significant figure at this important stage in the development of the Gaelic league and the evolving philosophy of Sinn Féin.

Chapter 7 details Bulfin's visit to New York, his lectures there and his attempts to make contacts in the literary and publishing world. In Argentina overwork brought illness that seriously damaged his health. He received a papal award from the Vatican on behalf of his work as an editor in defending and promoting the Catholic Church. He was instrumental in the founding of a branch of Sinn Féin in Buenos Aires. His third visit to Ireland helped him to regain his health and he was rewarded with the publication of his *Rambles in Eirinn* in book form.

The final two years of Bulfin's life were crowded with endeavour and are described in chapter 8. In both Argentina and Ireland he was involved in a series of campaigns. These included the policy of the United States in relation to South America; the University question in Ireland and the future of the *Daily Sinn Féin* newspaper. His decision to settle in Ireland and the consequences of that decision are explored. His early death in 1910 leave questions about his life and legacy unanswered.

The conclusion evaluates his responses at the key stages in his life and presents an analysis of his overall legacy.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
HC	House of Commons
NLI	National Library of Ireland
SC	*Southern Cross*
TCDMS	Trinity College Dublin Manuscript Section
UCDA	University College Dublin Archives

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Patrick and Nancy Harris.

Introduction

'It will be better for Ireland when she builds less politicians and more patriots,' said William Bulfin in 1902 as he stood at the grave of William Rooney. [1] This terse, but passionate statement conveyed Bulfin's convictions in relation to patriotism and the world of politics. His admiration for Rooney was clear and he saw him as a self-sacrificing and genuine patriot. However, he remained sceptical about politicians and viewed them as self-serving and lacking in vision and idealism. Eight years later, Bulfin had died and on the 12 February 1910, *An Claidheamh Soluis* carried the following obituary:

> By the death of William Bulfin, Ireland has lost the leader it could least afford to spare....In Argentina he was a veritable tower of strength to the Irish exiles of every class....

He, himself, was presented not only as a man of patriotic fervour, but also as a potential leader. The obituaries of the time testified to Bulfin's reputation and stature in both Ireland and Argentina. In his relatively short life (1863-1910) he had endeavoured and achieved much.

William Bulfin was born in 1863, into the farming community of Derrinlough, Birr, King's County 1863. He was educated at a variety of schools, including the Galway Grammar School. In 1884, he joined the well established emigrant trail from the Irish midlands to Argentina. For four years he worked as a shepherd and foreman on the ranches of the Pampas. He married Annie O'Rourke, from Ballymore, Co.Westmeath and they had a family of five children. His career in journalism began in 1890 and he became a correspondent for the *Southern Cross*, a weekly newspaper for the Irish Catholic community of Argentina. Within a short a number of years he advanced to become the sub editor, and then the editor and, eventually, the proprietor of the newspaper. As journalist and editor he campaigned vigorously for reforms in relation to local, national and international issues. His editorship of the *Southern Cross* had strengthened the voice of the Irish community. As a journalist and editor he had promoted the welfare of the Irish community. In Argentina it was felt that he had played an important part in

[1] *Weekly Sinn Féin*, 5 Feb. 1910, p. 4.

reinforcing the identity and status of the Irish community there. Under his editorship the *Southern Cross*

became more robust and developed into a strong propaganda organ for the Catholic Church, the Gaelic League and the Sinn Féin movement. His return visits to Ireland consolidated his links with Douglas Hyde and Arthur Griffith. Already well established as an important spokesman for the Irish Argentine community, he was now being recognised as significant figure in Ireland at an important stage in the development of the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin. Bulfin had also achieved recognition as an author with the publication of *Tales of the Pampas* (1900)and *Rambles in Eirinn* (2007). As journalist and lecturer, he had campaigned for the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin in Argentina, New York and Ireland. However, he declined all offers of political office. His early and unexpected death in February, 1910 left many questions about his life and legacy unanswered.

The lives and experiences of Irish people who have emigrated to Argentina have received close attention from very few historians. In fact, the question of emigration to South America has not attracted the efforts of historians. Tim Pat Coogan observerd:

> Another problem which Ireland has not confronted or even acknowledged is that of its diaspora. The Irish worldwide are one of the globe's success stories, emerging from slum, swamp-draining, coal-mining, brawling and boozing illiteracy to literally the scents of the rose garden of the White House in the case of John F. Kennedy.[2]

William Bulfin, who left Ireland for Argentina in 1884, was to play a significant role in both Ireland and Argentina. When he died in February 1910, many claims were made in relation to his life and achievements. Thomas Murray claimed that Bulfin had the necessary leadership qualities that were needed to forge the people together, but that death had intervened and prevented this. In Ireland it was claimed that the Irish in Argentina had lost their leader and the Gaelic League one of its strongest promoters. Most of the tributes at the time were laudatory and there was little or no critical evaluation. During his life and in the years after his death he attracted considerable comment, but his name has now largely faded from memory. Very little has been written about his life and achievements to date and he remains an elusive figure. To date there has been certain work done on the Irish in Argentina, but much less on the life of William Bulfin. A certain amount

[2] Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2003), p. viv.

has been written to establish and explain the political, social and economic context in which he lived. However, no biography of Bulfin based on extensive research has been written.

A number of works have charted the course of the Irish in Argentina. Biographies of Admiral Browne and Ambrose O'Higgins have established their achievements and also

paid tribute to the contribution of the Irish in Argentina over a long period. Thomas Murray, the Irish–Argentine historian, outlined the growth and development of the Irish community in his *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* and highlighted their contribution to their adopted country.[3] His account is partial, but does give a realistic picture of his subject. His observations about Bulfin are confined to certain aspects of his life and are not detailed. He noted Bulfin's skills as a writer in depicting life on the Pampas and concluded 'that no other writer had managed as well as Bulfin to portray camplife.' In examining the development of the Irish community, he concluded rightly that an effective leader was their most urgent need in terms of future progress. He felt the Bulfin had the necessary leadership qualities that would have enabled him to lead his people, but that death had intervened and prevented his progress. Murray highlighted the tensions that existed between the *Southern Cross* and the *Standard* newspaper. One of the main sources of tension was that the Mulhall brothers, proprietors and editors of the *Standard*, were oriented towards England and their paper was biased in this regard. However, the *Southern Cross* was the organ of the Irish Catholic community in Argentina and under Bulfin's editorship it became more robust and relations with the *Standard* deteriorated.

In his survey of the immigrants, *El aporte de los Irlandes a la formacion de la nacion Argentina*, Eduardo Coghlan presented a very clear picture of the situation in terms of statistics. This statistical information helps to place Bulfin and other immigrants in context. Also his *Andazas de un Irlandes en el Campo Porteno, 1854-1864* provide important information about the Irish community who lived in the camp.[4]

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[3] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* (1st Ed., Buenos Aires, 1921), *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2003), p. viv.

[4] Eduardo A. Coghlan, *Andanzas de un Irlandes en el Campo Porteno, 1854-1864*, Tradducion de Ingles (Argentina, 1981)

Patrick McKenna's study 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and settlement in Argentina' serves as practical guide to the different stages and evolution of the Irish community.[5] It focused on the key figures and events that shaped the destiny of the community. It deserves particular mention for its detailed examination into the origin, development and impact of the Irish road to Argentina. His account of the social, economic and political conditions that prevailed in both Ireland and Argentina at the time enables us to place Bulfin's story in a meaningful context. It helps to throw light on his decision to emigrate and how his life was to unfold in Argentina.

His analysis of how links were forged between Ireland and Argentina revealed the nature of key roles of Father Fahy and Thomas Armstrong. McKenna noted that neither Father Fahy nor Thomas Armstrong had groomed a successor to take over after them. The question of leadership remained a crucial problem for the Irish community. Bulfin saw it as central and it was to become a recurring theme in his writings. McKenna's study is valuable in that it also examined the role of newspapers, particularly the *Southern Cross* and the *Standard*, in the lives of the Irish community. It noted the role of the *Southern Cross* newspaper, its editors and overall mission.

Edmundo Murray's comparative approach enabled him to explore the different responses and experiences of Irish immigrants in relation to their writings. In his study of their writings in *Becoming Gauchos irlandes; diasporic models in Irish-Argentine literature* he compares and contrasts the accounts of John Brabazon, Kathleen Nevin and William Bulfin.[6] He noted the different experiences and how each writer presented his observations. Bulfin, he felt, was inclined to convey the positive qualities of the Irish community in his short stories. He argued that Bulfin favoured an acceptance and respect for the culture of the gauchos, unlike the other two writers. Bulfin, he recorded, captured in an authentic way the customs, traditions and speech patterns of the Irish community who lived on the Pampas. In his second study of the Irish community *Devenir Irlandes* Murray caught the reminiscences of the Irish in relation to the homeland

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[5] Patrick McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and settlement in Argentina' (M.A. thesis, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1984)

[6] Edmundo Murray, *Becoming Gauchos Ingleses: diasporic models in Irish-Argentine Literature* (Palo Alto, 2009)

and Argentina.[7] This is a valuable record of how the Irish, in their letters home, viewed their new life as exiles in Argentina and can be linked to the stories contained in the memoirs. Murray's website is an important and up to date record of the unfolding world of the Irish in Argentina.[8]

A recent study of the Irish community in Argentina by Helen Kelly, *'Irish Ingleses', The Irish Immigrant Experience in Argentina 1840-1920*, explored how the Irish were gradually assimilated into the general Argentine community.[9] Kelly outlined the attempts by Bulfin to offset this gradual process and explained the reasons for his failure. Bulfin campaigned vigorously to alert the Irish to hold to their national identity against the prevailing forces of the time. Kelly, also, posed the question of Bulfin's potential as future
leader and concluded that his preference for journalism prevented him playing an active political role. However, it is worth noting that his writings indicate an aversion and distrust of the political world. This would, therefore, have been another reason for declining offers of a political office.

In her essay 'The Cultural Nationalism of William Bulfin', Maureen Murphy examined the major influences that led to Bulfin becoming a disciple of the Gaelic League and the Sinn Féin movement.[10] Her analysis led to the speculation that Bulfin, if had he lived, would have played a key role in the unfolding political events in Ireland in the years after his death. Given his reluctance to play an active political role during his lifetime, it would be difficult to make such a forecast in relation to future events. The author, Benedict Kiely, in his account 'Man of the Pampas', celebrated Bulfin as a raconteur, adventurer and gifted writer.[11] Kiely was struck by his open spirit and his capacity to engage with people. Patrick Callan, in his essay 'Rambles in Eirinn', explored the convictions that led Bulfin to make his comments on the state of Ireland in the early years of the twentieth century.[12] He concluded that Bulfin was clearly a representative figure in the Irish Ireland movement and that his philosophy was grounded in the

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[7] Edmundo Murray, *Devenir Irlandes* (Buenos Aires, 2004)
[8] Irish Migration Studies in Latin America, http://www.irishargentine.org , edited by Edmundo Murray (2003)
[9] Helen Kelly, *'Irish Ingleses', The Irish Immigrant Experience in Argentina 1840-1920* (Dublin, 2009), pp 179-88.
[10] Maureen Murphy, 'The Cultural Nationalism of William Bulfin' in Janis and Richard Landraville (eds), *John Quinn, Selected Irish Writers from his Library* (USA, 2001) pp 45-69.
[11] Benedict Kiely, 'Man From the Pampas' in *Capuchin Annual* (1948), pp 428-436.
[12] Patrick Callan, 'Rambles in Eirinn', *Studies* Vol lxxi No 284 (Winter 1982), pp 391-398.

Gaelic League and Sinn Féin movement. Again the question of Bulfin as possible leader was posed and Callan felt that, had he lived, he would have been a likely leader of Sinn Féin.

The core of this study will draw on three major sources: Bulfin's journalistic writings, his literary writings and his correspondence. Bulfin's journalistic writings are most valuable materials for understanding his range of concerns and interests. Bulfin was a prolific journalist and in the course of twenty years from 1890 to his death in 1910 he wrote over one thousand articles for the *Southern Cross* newspaper (Buenos Aires).[13] These articles and editorials demonstrate the evolution of his thinking on a wide variety of social, economic and political issues over two decades. The records of the *Southern Cross* are the most important source in this regard, highlighting his impact as editor and journalist. These records provide abundant evidence of his career as journalist and editor. Articles, editorials, sketches, interviews and reports written by Bulfin reveal his priorities, aims and vision in relation to both Argentina and Ireland. The full records of this newspaper are now available at the National Library of Ireland.

Bulfin also wrote for a number of newspapers in Ireland and the United States of America. In Ireland his articles appeared in the *United Irishman*, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, *Sinn Féin Weekly* and *Sinn Féin Daily*. In America his articles were published in the *Gaelic American* (New York) and the *Pilot* (Boston). His readership extended to places as far apart as Argentina, Ireland and the USA. Three of the major English language newspapers in Argentina, *the Standard* (Buenos Aires), *Buenos Aires Herald* (Buenos Aires) and the *Review of the River Plate* (Buenos Aires) presented their very different views on local, national and international affairs. The two Argentine newspapers, the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald* are important sources as they help us to place Bulfin's views in the greater context of the issues of the time. Both papers challenged Bulfin and argued from a different standpoint to his in relation to Argentine, Irish and international affairs. The records of these newspapers provide clear evidence that Bulfin's views were being challenged in Argentina.[14]

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[13] *Southern Cross* 1876- , National Library of Ireland (NLI)

[14] *Standard* (Buenos Aires), *Buenos Aires Herald* (Buenos Aires) and *Review of the River Plate* (Buenos Aires), British Library, Newspaper Department, Collindale, London.

Bulfin's literary works remain an important source in relation to establishing his thoughts and feelings in relation to critical events and experiences. His collection of short stories, *Tales of the Pampas*, provide evidence of his talent to convey characters, settings, observations in interesting short narratives. [15] However, the short stories are valuable for the insights they afford of his experiences and observations during the four years he spent working on the Pampas. Other short stories based on his experiences on the Pampas were published in America in *Everybody's Magazine* from 1891 to 1910 and they help provide a fuller picture of life on the Pampas. His unpublished novel 'Man of the Pampas' reinforces the evidence supplied by the short stories in relation to the Irish community in Argentina and, also, the culture of the gauchos.[16] *Rambles in Eirinn*, his account of his travels by bicycle in Ireland in 1902 and 1904, is valuable for what it reveals about Bulfin's personality and his view of the world.[17] *Rambles in Eirinn* provides a basis for understanding the exile's perspective on Ireland in the early years of the twentieth century. In it we see Ireland through the eyes of a returned exile. It illustrates how fully Bulfin had embraced the Irish Ireland philosophy and how it influenced his observations and thoughts in relation to all he experienced on his travels throughout the country. Bulfin's nationalistic vision and rhetoric are clearly in evidence in this book. His other unpublished novel 'The Rose of Esker' is set in Donegal in the early years of the twentieth century. Its characters and events reinforce the Irish Ireland philosophy that was gaining momentum in the various parts of the country.[18]

The Bulfin Papers – letters, note-books, accounts, lectures, newspaper editorials, articles and reports, short stories, sketches, novels – are an uneven and incomplete collection, especially for the years relating to the first half of his life.[19] There are no original letters or papers before 1890. The paucity of evidence for the early years of his life presents a challenge for the biographer. However there is certain retrospective autobiographical information available in the later material. Nevertheless, the Bulfin papers are an indispensable source for his life. Bulfin was a consistent correspondent and the records reveal his feelings and thoughts at

[15] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas* (London, 1900).
[16] NLI, William Bulfin Papers, Man of the Pampas, Ms 13804.
[17] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn* (Dublin, 1907).
[18] NLI, William Bulfin Papers, Rose of Esker, Ms 13807.
[19] NLI, William Bulfin Papers, Mss 13802-13823.

critical times in his life. Correspondence with family members, editors, clergymen, Douglas Hyde, Arthur Griffith, Eoin MacNeill, Michael Davitt and John Devoy indicate his priorities and concerns. As to his letters, journalism and lectures this study has frequently quoted extensively from them, rather than paraphrased them, in order to convey the tenor of his spirit and style.

Memoirs are valuable for the comparative perspective they provide in relation to the world of the Irish exile in Argentina. In *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Aires from the year 1845*, John Brabazon details his positive and negative opinions and experiences in relation to the province of Buenos Aires.[20] William McCann in his *Two Thousand Miles Ride through Argentina Provinces* highlights the world of the Irish workers and the gauchos.[21] In her autobiographical novel, *You'll Never Go Back*, Kathleen Nevin presents a woman's very different perspective of exile in Argentina.[22] These three books help to place Bulfin's account in the context of the experiences of other exiles.

The writer of this thesis conducted interviews in Argentina in 2006 that helped to throw further light on Bulfin's world. Jimmy O'Duirnin, editor of the *Southern Cross* (2006), Buenos Aires spoke of his role as editor and discussed the growth and development of the paper since its foundation.[23] Mateo Kelly, San Antonio de Areco, Buenos Aires, whose ancestors emigrated to Argentina shortly after the famine, recalled experiences working on the ranches of the Pampas.[24] Father Michael Egan, Holy Cross Church, Buenos Aires discussed the role of the Catholic Church in Argentina.[25]

As mentioned already, Murray's *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* and McKenna's, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina' are necessary sources because if their detailed account of how the Irish community evolved in Argentina. Other primary sources, particularly church and land records in Ireland, parliamentary papers, accounts of travellers and directories add to the overall picture and provide a context for Bulfin's life.

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[20] John Brabazon, *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Aires* (New Ed., Buenos Aires, 1981)
[21] William McCann, *Two Thousand Miles Ride through Argentina Provinces* (London, 1853)
[22] Kathleen Nevin, *You'll Never Go Back* (Boston, 1846)
[23] Interview with Jimmy O'Duirnin, editor of the *Southern Cross*, Buenos Aires, 1 July, 2006.
[24] Interview with Mateo Kelly, San Antonio de Areco, Buenos Aires, 2 July 2006.
[25] Interview with Father Michael Egan, Holy Cross Church, Buenos Aires, 4 July 2006.

This study sets out to present the social, political and economic context in which Bulfin lived. It will examine the various stages of his life and explore his major concerns and achievements. It will attempt to understand the key forces that shaped his character, attitudes and philosophy. What were the critical stages of his development? If we want to understand Bulfin, we must discover and establish the patterns that shaped his life. This leads us back to his earlier life to try to find the sources of his philosophy of life. Many of the patterns can be traced to his early years and they reappear throughout the subsequent years right up to his death. What influenced the growth and development of his nationalism? How did he find himself playing a significant role in both Argentina and Ireland? Why did he become a defender of the Catholic Church? What was his impact as journalist and editor? What was his overall legacy? This research has attempted to understand Bulfin in the context of Ireland and Argentina. It will focus on the different roles that were all part of his life; farming background in Ireland, student, emigrant to Argentina, exile, shepherd and foreman on the Pampas, young journalist in Buenos Aires, editor of the *Southern Cross*, author, nationalist, campaigner, propagandist for the Catholic Church, the Gaelic League and the Sinn Féin movement. There will be a discussion on the impact of his endeavours and an evaluation of his overall legacy.

While this study has concentrated, in the main, on the public life and career of William Bulfin, it is important to note, however, that the limited family correspondence contained in the Bulfin papers demonstrates that he was devoted to his wife, Annie and his five children, Eamonn, Mary, Anita, Aileen and Catalina. There is also documentary evidence to show he was loyal and supportive to his brothers and sister.

This study will seek to find answers to the key questions concerning Bulfin and his endeavours. It is hoped that it will serve to illuminate the various aspects of his life and lead to a renewal of interest in the man and his writings. It is hoped that his admirers and detractors may be prompted to view him more objectively There is still no collection of Bulfin's writings. No doubt future work may prompt a collection of his best journalistic and literary work so that the wider public can appreciate and savour the nature and extent of his writings.

Chapter 1

From Ireland to Argentina

If a young man left Ireland in 1884 to seek his fortune in foreign lands, he would leave behind a country that was in an unsettled state in many respects. Ireland presented many sides to the prospective emigrant. The political, economic, social and cultural tensions and conflicts were clearly in evidence. The year 1883 reflected the general unsettled state of the country. Michael Davitt was released from prison and had become a far more potent political force then he had before he entered.[1] The trial and legacy of the Phoenix Park murders were unfolding.[2] Parnell was at the height of his powers and his popularity was increasing.[3] Against this was the reality of an economic depression that was to contribute further to the exodus from the country. [4] In August 1884 the Gaelic Athletic Association was founded in Thurles, County Tipperary.[5]

There were many factors influencing a young emigrant's decision to leave Ireland in the year 1884. In the decades since the Famine of 1847 emigration had gathered momentum and had become the established norm for many Irish citizens. The uncertain political and economic state of the country during the nineteenth century remained largely unchanged. A climate of economic depression, with its accompanying unemployment and lack of opportunities, made emigration the inevitable choice for many people. Government agencies, shipping companies, assisted passages and agents from other countries, all in their different ways, helped to promote this. Non inheriting sons and daughters of tenant farmers felt it was their only real option if they hoped to retain some level of social and economic status. While the vast majority who left the country were poor, a certain number were members of reasonably prosperous tenant farmers.

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[1] *Annual Register 1883* p. 190.
[2] Ibid., p. 194.
[3] Ibid., p. 203.
[4] R. V. Comerford, 'The Land War and the Politics of Distress, 1872-82' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), A *New History of Ireland* (Oxford, 1996), vi, p. 51.
[5] D. J. Hickey & J. E. Doherty (eds), *A Dictionary of Irish History 1800-1980* (Dublin, 1980), p. 183.

William Bulfin was born in the townland of Derrinlough in the parish of Eglish, near Parsonstown (Birr), King's County (Offaly), Ireland in 1863. He was baptised at the Roman Catholic parish church of Eglish on the 14 November 1863.[6] No official record of his birth certificate is available, as civil records of births had not been kept prior to 1864. His father was William Bulfin and his mother was Margaret Grogan of Croghan, King's County. The Bulfin family belonged to the protestant religion but William senior converted to Catholicism. His wife, Margaret Grogan, belonged to a strong catholic tradition and her brother, Vincent, was eventually to become provincial of the Passionist order.

The first evidence of the Bulfin name in Ireland comes from Fethard, County Tipperary in 1710. The name on the whole seems to have originated in the old Ormonde territory of the south-east. The name has appeared in both Protestant and Catholic registers of deaths and marriages in Limerick, Laois (Mountmellick), Clare, Cork and Dublin. The Bulfin family had resided at Derrinlough since the early years of the nineteenth century. The first Offaly Bulfin traced so far is William Bulfin renting lands for three lives at Derrindull just south of Birr. Edward Bulfin (1783-1847), grandson of William of Derrinduff married a Catholic, Mary. He married a second time, Mary Ellen Mohan in 1813. According to the Tithe Applotment Book of 1827, Edward Bulfin had 15 acres 2 roods at Derrinlough.[7] Their son William inherited the farm at Derrinlough in 1847. A relative, Patrick Bulfin, went to Dublin, started a business and became prosperous. He was elected Lord Mayor in 1871, but died in office. Edward was then succeeded by his convert son William (1814-1892). William married Margaret Grogan of Croghan in 1854.[8] William and Margaret had ten children, nine boys and a girl, Mary. Edward the eldest, born 1859, died aged 19. Patrick, the eldest survivor, emigrated about 1879.

According to the Ordnance Survey Placenames survey, the name Derrinlough is from the Gaelic meaning Doirin an Locha, the Oak Wood of the

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[6] Roman Catholic Parish Records, Parish of Eglish, Diocese of Meath, King's County, 14 Nov. 1863 in NLI, Microfilm p. 4175.

[7] Brian & Tadhg Pey, 'Eglish Townland Histories' in Brian Pey (ed.), *Eglish and Drumcullen, A Parish in Firceall* (Birr, Offaly, 2003), p. 269.

[8] Jeanne Bulfin Winder, 'Bulfin: A Derrinlough Family' in Brian Pey (ed.), *Eglish and Drimcullen, A Parish in Firceall,* p. 221.

Lake. Derrinlough today is completely surrounded by bogs, as it was in 1863.[9] According to the Ordnance Survey Name Books, Derrinlough House, occupied by Mr Bulfin, was situated on rising ground from which there is a view of Lough Coura. It had a garden attached to it and the ditches about it are planted.(1831)[10] Derrinlough House was once the home of an army garrison in 1798. Its garden was planted and surrounded by ditches.

In the course of the nineteenth century the parish of Eglish in which Bulfin was born had its commentators and observers. The Rev. A. Cogan recorded seven holy wells within the space of a few perches in the parish of Eglish.[11] After a partial relaxation of the penal code, a mud-wall thatched chapel was erected at Five-Alley – about a half a mile from the present chapel of Eglish. Dr Plunkett, the Roman Catholic bishop of Meath, found on his visitation in 11 June, 1788 – 'five schools and two chapel rebuilt.'[12] There was one at Derrinlough attended by 7 Protestants and 21 Catholics. A national school was established at Eglish in 1840.[13] In 1801, Sir Charles Coote noted that in the barony of Eglish that 'the poor speak the English and Irish tongues with equal fluency.'[14] However by 1837, Lewis observed a change and remarked 'They speak English everywhere; if a person is heard speaking Irish, they invariably call him a Connaught man.'[15] In 1801 the Statistical Survey of the King's County also noted that while the barony of Eglish was thickly populated, it contained no town or village.[16] It acknowledged the advantages of the canal system to the county.[17] It also recorded that 'the propensity of the peasantry to better their state by acquiring learning is very evident from the number of their little schools.'[18] Irish became extinct as a spoken language in

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[9] John O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Name Books, King's County, From Eglish to Kinnitty*, No 81, p. 14.
[10] Ibid., pp 25- 27.
[11] Rev. A. Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern* (Dublin, 1867), p. 509.
[12] Ibid., p. 512.
[13] Rev. John Brady, *The Diocese of Meath. Eglish, Kilcormac, Rahan and Tullamore.Vol.ii* (Navan, 1941), p. 340.
[14] Sir Charles Coote, *Statistical Survey of the King's County* (Dublin, 1801), p. 98.
[15] Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1837), p. 225.
[16] Coote, *Statistical Survey*, p. 96.
[17] Ibid., p. 186.
[18] Ibid., p. 97.

King's County during the course of the nineteenth century.[19] These observations about the emphasis on education and the declining state of the Irish language proved to be prophetic.

Love of his native place was to have a lifelong influence on Bulfin. Bulfin retained an affection for the house in which he was born, the townland of Derrinlough and his home county. His regard for his county grew with the years and was to influence his future decisions and writings. By 1841 Lord Rosse had granted the lease of Derrinlough House to Edward Bulfin, containing 68 Irish acres, with the dwelling house and out offices. His son, William, inherited the house and lands. According to the Griffith Valuations of 1854, the total amount of land consisted of almost 170 acres. The House and lands were valued at a total of £90.10.0. The immediate lessor was Lord Rosse.[20] This would have placed the Bulfin family among the larger tenant farmers, with the added advantage of having a lease.

The environment of King's County helped to shape its inhabitants and their aspirations. Evidence exists at the present day to prove that the whole surface of the county was once an uninterrupted forest.[21]First impressions might suggest a rather monotonous, featureless landscape. However, on closer inspection one can see Slieve Bloom mountain range to the south. In the northern half of the county we have the central plain, with its brown bog, green pastures and eskers. Croghan Hill dominates in the north east. The great Bog of Allen, with its raised bog, is a striking feature in the central lowlands. To the west we have the Shannon River forming natural county and provincial boundaries.[22] The county was divided into 12 baronies and contains 51 parishes with 1,181 townlands. The county returned two members to Parliament. The county contained portions of five Poor Law Unions. As a member of the farming community of King's County, the Bulfins were exposed to prevailing economic conditions for tenant farmers. The

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[19] Nicholas Williams, 'The Irish Language in County Offaly', in William Nolan and Timothy O'Neill *Offaly History and Society; Interdisciplinary Essays in the History of an Irish County* (Dublin, 1998), p. 544.

[20] Griffith Valuation, Derrinlough, Parish of Eglish, Barony of Eglish, Union of Parsonstown, King's County (NLI, Microfiche 2), p. 19.

[21] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, p. 224.

[22] Grainne C. Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County in the Mid-Nineteenth Century' in William Nolan and Timothy P. O'Neill (eds), *History and Society*, p. 627.

environment of King's County in the nineteenth century had received its commentators and critics. In the statistical survey of King's County in 1801, recommendations were made in relation to the overall county which included 'the draining of their moors, a better attention to their farmyard and a serious determination to meliorate the conditions of the poor.'[23]

What were the determining factors that shaped the nature of rural society in Ireland during the nineteenth century ? In many respects King's County reflected the national situation in relation to landlords, tenants and labourers. The Bulfin family were well established tenant farmers and Lord Rosse was their landlord. As observed by W.E.Vaughan:

> Rural society was divided into three groups, defined by their relationship to the ownership and occupation of land; the landlords who owned the land , the tenants who occupied it and the labourers who worked on the larger farms. The landlords were the most visible but smallest of the three groups, numbering about 6,500 at most in the official returns of landowners made in the 1870s. The tenants were a much larger group, amounting to 500,000 in the 1860s. As a group they were more varied than the landlords, ranging from small tenants in the west, living in single room cottages to large graziers. Most tenants had the same tenure, a yearly tenancy, which did not vary from place to place. About 20 per cent had leases, but the remainder held by the year.[24]

In the mid-nineteenth century the estate system in the county was dominated by five leading families. The following statistics indicate the extent of their land ownership:

Table 1.1. Landlords and Land Ownership in King's County, 1876

Name	Acres
Digby	30,627
Rosse	25,167
Charleville	23,700
Bernard	15,979
Downshire	13,928

[23] Coote, *Statistical Survey*, p. 188.
[24] W.E.Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), pp 6-7.

Source: Grainne C. Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County in the Mid Nineteenth Century' in *Offaly History and Society*, p. 670.

These families had ownership of estates that were located in the higher valued land. The second largest estate in King's County, that of the Earl of Rosse, was administered from the estate core at Birr Castle. The estate was mainly located in the parishes of Birr and Eglish. Encompassing over 25,000 acres, the estate bore an annual valuation of £10,048. The Parsons brothers, William and Lawrence, arrived in Ireland as settlers following the sixteenth century wars. In 1620 Laurence Parsons became the receiver general of crown lands. Favoured with a resident landlord, Parsonstown estate symbolised the golden era of landlordism. The third earl became known as the telescope earl. The Earl of Rosse was the landlord who leased Derrinlough House and land to the Bulfin family.

New changes came from outside- changes in the law, increases in prices, the railways, new fertilizers and new sources of food. Irish landlords were not masters of their own fate. In a general sense, no European landlord elite went without challenge.[25] The Land War was one of the most important events of the nineteenth century, with its agrarian outrages and the strong alliance of Charles Stewart Parnell, Davitt and Devoy.[26] Growing up in the 1870s and 1880s, Bulfin would have been aware of their significance. Always a supporter of Parnell, he was later, as a journalist, to defend his reputation and legacy. He was, also, to interview Davitt and write extensively about his career and impact on Irish politics. In relation to Devoy, Bulfin was to correspond with him and befriend him on future visits to New York.

The decline in landlordism was protracted and not exclusively an Irish phenomenon. British landlords, for all their political skills, also declined. The fate of the great estates has been varied, but there are some remarkable survivals including the Earl of Rosse at Birr Castle.[27] King's County landlords, including Lansdowne, Norbury, Downshire, Digby and Rosse all made extensive improvements on their estates. The Bulfin family, like many other tenant farmers,

[25] William Vaughan, *Landlords* and *Tenants in Ireland 1848-1904* (Dublin, 1984), p. 218.
[26] William Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848-1904*, p. 28.
[27] Ibid., p. 228.

were to strive over time, with the help of the various Land Acts, to secure and eventually gain ownership of their home and property.

What were the realities of farming life in King's County for tenant farmers like the Bulfin family in the mid and late nineteenth century? Pastoral farming dominated in the county and accounted for 40 per cent of the usage of the land. About one third of the county consisted of holdings of under five acres and these were situated on the edges of the bog. Small farmers were forced to work in mills to supplement their income. Over the years tillage had not proved to be profitable and farmers were now concentrating on increasing their livestock. [28]

As distilling was one of the main industries, particularly in Tullamore and Birr, there was a demand for cereal crops such as barley, oats, wheat and bere. The main root crop was potatoes. Almost 30 per cent of the county consisted of bog and wasteland. The livestock statistics for the county for the year 1851 reveal the emphasis in terms of pastoral farming:

Table 1.2. Livestock Statistics, King's County, 1851

Livestock	Numbers
Cattle	48,553
Horses	12,553
Sheep	78,230

Source: Grainne C. Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County in the Mid Nineteenth Century'in *Offaly History and Society*, p. 655.

Clearly cattle and sheep rearing had proved to be popular. Pigs were also abundant in all areas and the biggest pig fair in the country was held at Geashill in King's County. The fairs and markets of the county dealt with the principal trade which consisted of sheep and store cattle. Fairs constituted the principal commerce of the county, which was in cattle.[29]

Education was to be one of the major influences and preoccupations in the life of the young William Bulfin in the 1870s. The parish of Eglish, King's County, had many schools and it had been remarked how important education was to the

[28] Grainne C. Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County in the Mid Nineteenth Century.' In *Offaly History and Society*, p. 654.
[29] Coote, *Statistical Survey*, p. 188.

people. William Bulfin was to attend five schools in the course of his education. This, in itself, prompts a number of questions. Why did he change schools? Was the decision influenced by the quest for certain standards? Was location a factor? He attended the Cloghan National School, where it is said he was taught by the father of the 1916 leader, Thomas MacDonagh. The National education system taught the nation to read and write English, but not Irish. The national school, when Bulfin was at school, provided a convenient place for the children to acquire the much valued English language. The school commissioners were not hostile to the Irish language so much as unaware of it.[30] Patrick Keenan, a head inspector, presented in his inspectorial reports a strong case for the use of Irish in the schools in Irish-speaking areas.[31] Patrick Pearse argued that the Irish language was not included in the school curriculum because 'the education in Ireland is founded on a denial of the Irish nation.'[32] The National Schools run by the Roman Catholic Church discouraged the use of Irish until about 1890. This was because most economic opportunity for most Irish people arose at that time within the United States of America and the British Empire, which both used English. The concept of cultural nationalism had not yet developed. This meant that Bulfin received no foundation in the rudiments of the Irish language. This was to cause him concern in later life and he sought to address the situation by taking classes as an adult.

Bulfin also attended the Classical Academy and the Presentation College in Birr. The population of Birr in 1881 was 4,955.[33] The educational institutions connected with Birr were St Brendan's Presentation Schools, a Model National School, the Chesterfield School and the national and Industrial Schools attached to the Convent of Mercy. On 2 October 1878 the Presentation School was opened at Moorpark under the management of the Presentation Brothers. Five hundred pupils attended and received a highly efficient religious, literary and scientific education. Students obtained excellent results in the examinations under the Intermediate Act thus proving the superiority of the school. The curriculum included Greek, Latin, French, Grammar, Music, Drawing, Mathematics, Algebra, Botany and Chemistry.

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[30] Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment. The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970), pp 378-381.
[31] *Appendix to the twenty-second report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, for the year 1855*, pp 72-3[2142-11], H.C. 1856, xxvii, p. ii.
[32] Patrick H. Pearse, *The Murder Machine* (Cork, 1976), p. 26.
[33] Ibid., p. 40.

Special attention was paid to students entering the Civil Service, the banks and the College of Surgeons. The superior was Brother T.B. Molony and there were seven of the community associated with him in the education of the pupils. Clearly Bulfin would have received the rudiments of a classical education in this school. The Chesterfield school was a preparatory classical school for boarders and day boys under fourteen years of age. It was under the management of a protestant clergyman, the Rev. William Ewing. Bulfin also attended the Banagher Royal School in Banagher. The borough of Banagher was founded in 1629 by charter of Charles 1. The charter made provision for the founding of a free school. But according to Michael Quane, no school was founded at Banagher till 1806. In 1806 the school opened with the Rev. Thomas Morris as its first master. Eventually it moved to Cuba house. Cuba House was originally a domestic dwelling and afterwards was used as a hospital. Subjects included classics, logic and Euclid. In 1821 Morris sold the headmastership to the Rev. Dr. Alan Bell. For the first time in its history , a Catholic, Patrick King Joyce, was appointed to the post of master in 1874. He had 40 pupils many of whom were Catholic boys from Banagher. He prepared some of the boys for Queen's college, Galway but in doing so incurred the disapproval of the bishop. Most of the Catholic boys removed to Birr. J.P. Mahaffy, afterwards Provost of Trinity College Dublin, visited the school in 1881 and reported to the Commissioners:

> The school is a complete failure...the buildings were dirty and decayed...But if the school were removed but a few miles to Parsonstown – a town of similar character and always the residence of the gentry – it would, doubtless, become a large school.[34]

Advertisements in Joyce's, *The King's County,* 1883 carried details concerning the advantages of Banagher Royal School. Parents and guardians were informed that students were prepared for a range of courses and examinations including Universities and Professional Licensing Bodies, Excise and Customs, Government Clerkships, Banks and the Intermediate Examination. The subject range was wide and included Greek, Latin, French, English, Mathematics, geography, history, orthography, chemistry, electricity, book keeping and acoustics. It also provided a list of former students who were successful in obtaining

[34] Michael Quane, 'Banagher Royal School' in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal,* Vol. X, No. 2, 1967, p. 140.

worthwhile employment with government agencies. Among the former students mentioned was P. Bulfin, brother of William, who secured a position with the Admiralty Office in London.[35] In attending such a school, Bulfin was continuing with his classical education and was also preparing himself for employment in the public service.

A detailed history of this institution – when it was under the control of the commissioners of Education and the superintendence of Mr P. King Joyce – could tell a tale about its headmasters and pupils. Headmasters included the honourable Mr Ponsonby, the late Dr Alexander of Derry and also one who could now be heard along the quays of Dublin crying out the morning papers. Former pupils included the late Lord Rosse, the late Chief Justice Monahan and Sir William Wilde, father of Oscar Wilde. King Joyce was the first catholic appointed to a Royal School in Ireland and the parents of the neighbourhood have availed of this, including the Bulfin family. Some of its students were studying for the priesthood in Paris and Maynooth.[36] In the centre of the town was the recently erected convent of La Sainte Union des Sacre Coeurs, a very spacious and imposing building. Bulfin was later to send his own daughters as boarding pupils to this convent.

Bulfin, in turn, was to complete his education at the Galway Grammar School as a border. The 19th century saw a series of reforms to grammar schools culminating in the Endowed Schools Act 1869. Grammar schools were re-invented as academically oriented secondary schools following literary or scientific curricula, while often retaining classical subjects. Education in the Republic of Ireland has traditionally been organised on denominational lines. Grammar Schools along the lines of those in Great Britain were set up for members of the Church of Ireland prior to its disestablishment in 1871. Grammar Schools were established in Tipperary, Galway, Ennis and Drogheda. Galway Grammar School, by contrast to many of the other Grammar Schools, lasted in excess of two hundred years.

The Bulfin family subscribed to the view that a good education was essential. In his will of 27 February, 1882, William Bulfin, senior, specified that priority be

[35] J. St. Joyce, *The King's County* (Birr, 1883), p. 35.
[36] Ibid., p. 46.

given to the education of his children and that money be set aside to make this possible. He made it clear when he requested that :

> As to my son, William, now at school at the establishment of Dr Biggs of Galway, who intends to sit competitive examinations or otherwise for an appointment in the public service or in some other employment. It is my will that my said trustees shall continue his education as I am now doing so as to prepare him for such competitive examinations or employment...[37]

In 1875 Dr Biggs was appointed as headmaster of Galway grammar School. He had worked in Parsonstowm (Birr) and had brought the borders from that school with him. The school was examined by the commission in 1880 and it was found to be in a thriving state, with its 70 boarders and 25 day students.[38] Dr Richard Biggs was a strong advocate of physical education and a promoter of rugby. His influence was immense and he revitalised the Grammar School.[39] Bulfin was very much a product of this system and it influenced his future writings and views on education. It is interesting to note that for generations the Bulfin family prized education for its own sake.[40] It is evident that the Bulfin family placed emphasis on educational standards and that, regardless of distance or location, they were prepared to send William to variety of schools in order to satisfactorily complete his education.

Clearly it was felt that Bulfin was destined for a position in the public service. His education to date would have left him a strong candidate for such a position. He was not seen as one of the sons that would inherit the farm and continue on the family tradition. His father's will made this clear. Bulfin, however, was to decide that his destiny did not rest with either the Irish farming community or the public service. The status of the non-inheriting son in Ireland was not an attractive option. There was evidence that in many cases the younger brother continued to follow the practice in Ireland – remaining on in the family home where they were categorized as labourers.[41]

The Bulfin family lived alongside the political world of their day. The political situation in King's County was very similar to that in other counties.

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[37] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13814 Folder (1)

[38] John Cunningham, *A Town Tormented by the Sea, Galway, 1790 – 1914* (Dublin, 2004), p. 341.

[39] Ibid., p. 307.

[40] Jeanne Bulfin Winder, Bulfin, 'A Derrinlough Family' in Brian Pey *Eglish and Drumcullen, A Parish in Firceall,* p. 226.

[41] Patrick McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina' (M.A. thesis, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1994), p. 253.

King's County sent two MPs to the House of Commons every year, as did every other county. Sir Patrick O'Brien, son of Timothy O'Brien, was M.P. for King's County from 1852 to 1885. Initially a Liberal he then became one of the first Home Rulers, reflecting the changing political world in Ireland.[42] By the 1860s, 3449 were qualified to vote in a county from a population of 89,064. At 3.9 per cent of the population, this figure was just under the Leinster average of 4.3 per cent. The franchise was confined to adult males who occupied property with a rateable value of at least £12. The 1868 General Election focused on the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, agrarian reform and amnesty for political prisoners.

The Bulfin family also lived alongside the major events of their time. In the 1860s and 1870s the political climate remained turbulent. In 1863 the first issue of the newspaper the *Irish People*, edited by John O'Leary, appeared.[43] The Fenians were actively pursuing a militant policy. In 1865 four leading Fenians, including Charles J. Kickham and James Stephens, were arrested.[44] In 1867 the Fenian rising took place with outbreaks in counties Dublin, Clare, Cork, Limerick, Tipperary and Wicklow. In the same year William Philiip Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien were convicted of the murder of Sergeant Brett in Manchester.[45] Their execution meant that they were perceived by nationalist as the Manchester Martyrs. As Allen was a native of King's County, his death had a particular resonance and a memorial to the three Fenians was subsequently erected in Parsonstown (Birr). The land war became a dominant issue and was to be so for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Growing up in this climate produced a strong sense of nationalist fervour among the people. In 1879 Charles Kickham's novel, *Knocknagow*, was published and it became a popular work throughout Ireland. Dealing with the land war, it presented a fervent, if sentimental, picture of rural life in nineteenth century Ireland. Bulfin always claimed that it was his favourite novel and this indicates his early awareness of nationalist beliefs. He was conscious of the conflicts that were raging in the country.

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[42] Patarick F. Meehan, *The Members of Parliament for Laois and Offaly, 1801 – 1918* (Portlaoise, 1983), p. 130.
[43] N.C. Fleming and Alan O'Day, *Longman Handbook of Modern Irish History since 1800* (Harlow, 2005), p. 30.
[44] Ibid,, p. 31.
[45] Ibid, p. 33.

What picture of the Ireland of the period was presented by newspapers and politicians? The Irish newspapers of 1862 contained notes of murders, homicides, beatings and outrages.[46] In 1863, Disraeli, the English prime minister was present in the House of Commons in London and he listened to the Irish representatives Sir T. O'Brien, Mr Maguire and Mr Hennessey as they outlined the distress existing in Ireland. They presented him with a stark and bleak picture:

> There had been a succession of wet seasons...this had greatly diminished the production of the soil and had involved all classes involved in agriculture in great difficulties...every indication showed the decline of prosperity...the population had diminished ...the distress then existing in Ireland was much worse than that of Lancashire and that in its existing condition Ireland was a source of danger to the empire.[47]

Other observers remarked on various aspects in the unfolding state of the country. In 1859 it was noted that the country was in a state of unrest with the number of agrarian outrages, evictions and murders.[48] In 1860 it was noted that the state of the King's County had given the authorities some anxiety because a series of attacks, outrages and murders.[49] This picture was also a concern for the country as a whole in 1861.[50] However, in 1862 it was noted that

> For the last few years the improved condition of Ireland...there was as increase in utility...great advances in material well being...a great decrease in population since trade and agriculture...a rise in the rate of wages...numerous undertakings of public the famine...this reduced the competition for land and employment...the introduction of the Poor Law...but there was a series of assassinations ...crimes...a sympathy of the peasantry with the criminals...the spirit of lawlessness had slumbered, not died.[51]

Given the political, economic and social climate in Ireland, what prospects were there for the children in the Bulfin family and similar homes in the second half of the nineteenth century? What did the future hold for the children of a fairly substantial tenant farmer? There were nine sons and one daughter in the Bulfin family. Emigration was endemic in Ireland after the famine and the tradition had been well established. Emigration maintained the existing structures of land

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[46] *Annual Register 1862*, p. 124.
[47] *Annual Register 1863*, p. 27.
[48] *Annual Register 1859*, p. 54.
[49] *Annual Register 1860*, p. 107.
[50] *Annual Register 1861*, p. 102.
[51] *Annual Register 1862*, p. 118.

occupation by permitting smooth removal of surplus children.[52] The emigration figures for King's County tell their own story. In 1852 the amount of people who emigrated from the county numbered 4,951. In 1862, it was 843. However, in 1884 it was 1,323.[53] This was the year that Bulfin left with his brother, Peter, for Argentina.

Table 1.3. Emigration Figures for King's County

1852	4951
1862	843
1884	1323
1902	352

Source: W.E.Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics, 1821-1971*, p. 217.

However, if we examine the population figure for the county, we can place these figures in perspective:[54]

Table 1.4. Population Figures for King's County

1821	131,088.
1841	146,857.
1851	112,076
1861	90,043
1881	72,852
1891	65,563
1901	60,187
1911	56,832

Source: W. E. Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics*, 1821-1971, p. 6.

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[52] William Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848-1904*, p. 217.
[53] W. E. Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), pp 278-280.
[54] Ibid., P. 6.

Clearly the famine of 1847 proved to be the watershed event that had a devastating impact on both the emigration and population figures. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century the statistics indicate that the population of King's County continued to decline and emigration remained a cause for concern.

The economic conditions were unstable and emigration was for many the only option. Helen Kelly, in her study of the Irish immigrant experience in Argentina 1840 -1920, drew attention to the importance of noting the regional variations in relation to the Irish economy. She concluded that 'emigration was generally greatest from regions dominated by agriculture.'[55] Primogeniture (first born), the common law principle of succession to a family estate by the eldest son, was a deciding factor. The purpose of such preference was to retain estates intact and to prevent excessive subdivision, a practice which, if repeated widely would dilute the economic and social power of individual families and weaken the whole fabric of landed society. Primogeniture also made it easy to monitor the services and duties owed by chief tenants to the crown.[56] However in his will, William Bulfin senior favoured one of his middle sons, Michael, as the most suitable heir to his property. He did make provision for the other members of his family in terms of money and endowments.[57] This meant that emigration was to be the likely destiny for certain members of the family.

Why was Argentina such an attractive option for certain Irish emigrants? Why, in particular, did it appeal to certain midland counties and, also, south Wexford? What was the 'pull' of Argentina?[58] Why did it become Bulfin's destination? Bulfin was conscious of the strong links between Ireland and Argentina and he felt the urge to reach out for far horizons. The story of how Latin America had become a landmark for certain Irish emigrants had a resonance and appeal for him. Patrick McKenna, in his study of the phenomenon, has explored the factors that influenced unfolding destiny of the Irish in Argentina. [59] The Irish were among the first

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[55] Helen Kelly, *Irish 'Ingleses', The Irish Immigrant Experience in Argentina 1840- 1920* (Dublin, 2009), p. 7.

[56] Bryan A. Garner (ed.) *Black's Law Dictionary* (8th ed., United States of America, 1999), p. 1230.

[57] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13814 (Folder 1)

[58] Helen Kelly, *Irish 'Ingleses'*, pp 13-21.

[59] McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 1.

Europeans to set foot on Argentine soil.[60] He argued that Argentina had become the preferred destination for the rural communities in Westmeath, Longford, Wexford and neighbouring counties. Ireland had had some relationship with Argentina from quite an early period. As early as 1535 we read of two Irish brothers participating in an expedition to the River Plate. Subsequent to this there was sporadic immigration during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Names like Murphy, Cullen, O'Hara and O'Donnell appear in Argentina. Another source of Irish colonists consisted of Irishmen who were members of the British Army. In 1809 William Brown of Foxford, County Mayo, arrived in Argentina. He became Chief Admiral of the navy and was soon to become one of the most eminent men in Argentina. Brown ranks with San Martin as one of the great heroes of the Independence era. Links between Ireland and Latin America are clearly seen if we examine the careers of William Brown in Argentina and Ambrose O'Higgins in Chile, we can see the strong links between Ireland and Latin America. Ambrose O'Higgins, Viceroy of Peru, grew up in County Meath, was sent to Spain for an education, became governor of Chile and was then Viceroy of Peru. His son, Bernardo O'Higgins, was liberator of much of South America. The contribution of the Irish to Argentine independence, particularly as they never sought personal gain in land or high office for their services afterwards, resulted in a great affection and respect for Irishmen at all levels in Argentine society and contributed greatly to their acceptably as immigrants throughout the nineteenth century.[61]

According to McKenna, the sending areas were essentially the Irish midlands, Westmeath, South Longford, North Offaly and also the Forth and Bargy area of Wexford.[62] All emigrants within the reproductive age group married each other. Irish settlements were mostly in the countryside as the instigators of the settlement planned. They became expert sheep farmers. The Irish in Argentina did not settle in urban areas.[63] From the data base the emigrants came from 31 counties, but the concentration came from those who had the skills on the land.[64] Westmeath and Wexford were two of the main sending areas – Thomas Armstrong and Patrick

[60] Ibid., p. 337.
[61] Ibid., p. 82.
[62] Ibid., p. 12.
[63] Ibid., p. 15.
[64] Ibid., p. 164.

Brown were the main sponsors of prospective emigrants and they came from these areas.[65]

Forth and Bargy in County Wexford had prosperous small farmers, with their own language, 'Yole'. There were certain similarities between Westmeath and Wexford. Both had well off tenant farmers, who were anxious to ensure that all their children would have an acceptable standard of living.[66] Westmeath farmers were less efficient than Bargy men. McKenna noted that Irish emigrants to Argentina tended to come from a very restricted area in Ireland. Foremost of these were the midland counties, especially Longford and Westmeath. One third of the settlers came from Westmeath, with another one thirds from Longford. If we add to these the numbers descended from immigrants from Wexford we account for well over 80 per cent of the entire Hiberno-Argentine community. Because of the military and commercial contacts that existed between Buenos Aires and Westmeath and Wexford, the first Irish emigrants of the nineteenth century were recruited from these areas ;

70% - Westmeath and Wexford

30%- Rest of the country.

The surplus people in these areas had all the skills the Argentine group deemed necessary to develop the Pampas region of Argentina. There was an ample supply of ships nearby in Liverpool to transport emigrants. There was an incentive for the British government to encourage Irish emigration – rapidly increasing population in Ireland – country in depression following the end of the Napoleonic wars – rising idle population seen as threat to the stability of United Kingdom – when resettled in the colonies the Irish were proving to be highly efficient producers of goods the British needed and high consumers of the goods they produced. It was in everybody's interest to encourage a skilled surplus population in Ireland to emigrate.[67]

Economists make the claim that there are three basic questions that pertain to the economy of any country -what goods are produced, how are they produced and

[65] Ibid., p. 163.
[66] Ibid., p. 171.
[67] Ibid., p. 341.

for whom are they produced.[68] Argentina, like the United States before it, needed extra labour to develop the land and resources at its disposal.[69] The basis of Argentina's economy and Argentine society was the export trade of wheat, maize, linseed, hides, wool and beef.[70] The best land was nearest the sea board in the Pampas region. This was in contrast with the United States, where the good land was located in the middle of the continent. The main centres of population remained in the east coast and there was no desire to push the frontiers.[71] Essentially the reason for the mass immigration into Argentina was to be found in the demand for harvest labour and rural tenants. The majority of the European born population worked on the 'estancias' as agricultural tenants.[72]

McKenna argued that nineteenth century emigration from Ireland to Argentina was the result of a calculated strategy, devised in Argentina by a number of groups, all of whom contained Irish members. The aim was to promote the economic welfare of the Buenos Aires region. A few had the idea of recreating the perfect Gaelic society there.[73] The Irish emigrated to the New World at ten times the average European rate. Emigration for the Irish was not a random choice. Records show intending emigrants gave a great deal of thought to the type of life they wished to follow and the available options.[74] It was in this context that about 45,000 Irish emigrants arrived in Buenos Aires in the period 1830-1930. Some of them worked hard and managed to acquire their means of production, becoming land owners and members of the local landed elite. In fact the majority of these emigrants were land-thirsty young men and women who wanted to seize the opportunity to improve their economic and social lives by leaving the security of a family farmstead in Ireland and settling in the uncertainty of the Argentine pampas.[75] McKenna noted the scale of trans Atlantic emigration from Ireland during the period 1720-1900. The following table provides a clear picture :

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[68] Laura Randall, *An Economic History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1978), p. 239.
[69] Ibid., p. 90.
[70] David Rock, *Politics in Argentina, 1890 1930* (Malta, 1975), p. 1.
[71] Ibid., p. 3.
[72] Ibid., p. 14.
[73] McKenna ' Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 88.
[74] Ibid., p. 341.
[75] Edmundo Murray, *Becoming Gauchos Injgleses: diasporic models in Irish-Argentine literature* (Paulo Alto, 2009), pp 18,19.

Table: 1.5. Trans Atlantic Emigration from Ireland, 1720-1900.

Destination	Number of Emigrants
North America (Canada)	1,000,000
United States America	5,000,000
Argentina	45,000
South Africa	30,000
Australia	350,000

Source: Patrick McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p.1.

There were a number of reasons for emigration. Firstly there was a reduction in employment for labourers after the Napoleonic Wars. There was less need for corn, but far more need for cattle production. Secondly Ireland had an expanding population and there was a recession in the country. Thirdly there was an ample supply of shipping capable of moving emigrants and goods to desired destinations.[76]

What was the role of the Roman Catholic Church in encouraging Irish people to emigrate to Argentina? Argentina was an independent Roman Catholic and Spanish speaking nation.[77] There was the belief that Irish Catholics could prosper outside Ireland, where they were held back by a foreign power. The elite believed that the new emigrants would build a true Gaelic society, as proof of the superiority of Irish culture and values.[78] The aim of the Irish elite was to settle in and develop the great almost uninhabited grassland area, the size of France. They wanted to create a prosperous, Irish farming community, ethnically separate, obedient to the laws of Argentina, a separate self governing entity operating within a model designed by them and run by the Irish Church.[79] From the beginning the elites were determined that this Irish community would have their own physicians, chaplains, schools, hospitals etc.[80]

[76] Ibid., p. 5.
[77] Ibid., p. 6.
[78] Ibid., p. 90.
[79] Ibid., p. 112.
[80] Ibid., p. 116.

On the 22 February 1829, a Roman Catholic priest, Fr Moran, wrote to the Archbishop of Dublin:

> This, my lord, is the country for the Irish farmer to emigrate to. The soil is productive...abundance of horses...oxen...people who will show themselves to Irishmen more than to any other nation. They are partial to us.[81]

Fr Anthony Fahy, a Dominican Prior, became the leading force for the Irish community in Argentina and he subscribed to the ideal of the "Catholic Irish identity." With his friend, the protestant merchant banker, Thomas Armstrong, they became the undisputed leaders of the Irish community.[82] Fr Fahy soon became an agent for the Irish, conducting business in the city for the far flung Irish community. Emigrants were able to avoid taxes by using Father Fahy as an agent.[83] All of this capital was held in the Banco Provincia, Thomas Armstrong's bank and provided considerable economic advantage for the Irish community.[84] McKenna concluded that:

> Father Fahy ...with his constant travels throughout the Pampas...directed his flock...met next boat of emigrants...knew where to direct them...secured jobs in the country for them...removing the temptations of city life...strengthened rural Irish communities...and he prevented the growth of a viable Irish community in the city.[85]

McKenna observed that the overwhelming majority of the Irish Catholics in Argentina joined the local chaplaincy, led between 1843 and 1871 by Fr Anthony Fahy (1805-1871), who worked successfully to isolate his flock and to maintain their identity as English-speaking Catholics, as distinct from native parishioners. The ultimate frontier was the countryside. It was a border line between the safety of the city and the hazards of the rural milieu, the comforts of European life and the bare necessities of the city. Land was the fabulous El Dorado that enticed thousands of Irish emigrants (as well as Basque, Scottish, Welsh and others) to Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century. The dream of owning land became true for a small group of immigrants. In 1888 the brothers John and Thomas Duggan of Ballymahon, County Longford, owned approximately 65,000 hectares of the best land in the province of Buenos Aires.

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[81] Ibid., p. 99.
[82] Ibid., p. 118.
[83] Ibid., p. 123.
[84] Ibid., p. 124.
[85] Ibid., p. 126.

In the 1840s a traveller in the Pampas region noted that Irishmen digging ditches on estancias (ranches) received ten to twelve shillings per day for their wages. With three weeks labour they would have enough to buy a flock of fifteen hundred sheep. The Irish sheep herder was able to profit greatly in these conditions. In fact, it was the Irish and Basques, who laid the foundations for sheep raising, introduced more intensive use of the land and brought families and settlements to rural areas.[86] Many of the landowners in the Pampas were prepared to turn their vast estancias over to the Irish, Basque and Scottish settlers. These shepherds operated on a share scheme. This gave them one –third to one-half of the flock's increase and fleece.[87] By 1871, an estimated five thousand Irish shepherds were in the province of Buenos Aires.[88] Beyond the city limits, the Irish, Scots and Basques controlled sheep raising.[89] This view of the Irish as successful sheep farmers is reinforced by Edmundo Murray in his collection of immigrant letters, *Devenir Irlandes*.[90] By the end of the nineteenth century, the most important sources of personal wealth were the ownership of land and of the related food processing industries.[91]

For Bulfin there was also the added incentive from his uncle Fr Vincent Grogan, a Passionist Roman Catholic priest, who was the Provincial of the Argentine province. Fr Grogan, his mother's brother, was born at Cloghan in the parish of Rhode in King's County in 1837. In 1881 he was elected Provincial of the Anglo – Hibernian Province of the Passionist Congregation. As his province included Argentina, he was able to advise Bulfin and to supply him with contacts in the Pampas region of the country. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Bulfin was later to find himself as a defender of the Catholic faith in his new life in Latin America.

What was the nature of the Irish community in Argentina? Essentially the emigrants were going to an established Irish community with Irish value systems.

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[86] James R. Scobie, *Argentina, A City and a Nation* (New York 1971), p. 99.
[87] Ibid., p. 84.
[88] Ibid., p. 85.
[89] Ibid., p. -97.
[90] Edmundo Murray, *Devenir Irlandes* (*Buenos Aires*, 2004), p. 81.
[91] Randall, *An Economic History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, p. 89.

[92]Most of the emigrants consisted of single non inheriting sons and daughters who were faced with the choice of a considerable fall in status at home or the choice of success abroad. The language and customs of Argentina were of Latin rather than English origins.[93]The Mulhall brothers, originally from Dublin, were publishers in Buenos Aires. In 1861, financed by the Duggans, they founded the *Standard* newspaper, which became the most prestigious newspaper in the country. Their handbooks, some of which were commissioned by the Argentine government, contain statistical data. In earlier editions the Irish, Scottish and English immigrants were listed separately, but in later editions they are all included as British.[94] In 1876, the *Southern Cross* newspaper was founded by Canon Dillon to serve as an organ for the Irish Catholic community of Argentina.

To what extent were future emigrants influenced by the systems of communication and travel that were available? Was Bulfin influenced by them? He would have been conscious of the traditional travel arrangements for emigrants leaving Ireland for Argentina. Thomas Murray, an emigrant, recorded the following in his diary– 'I'm the only one of them that has not travelled this route before.' Custom had sprung up among some of the wealthy immigrants by 1890s and lasted until the 1950s. They purchased or retained property in Ireland, spending half the year in Ireland and half in Argentina. They would leave B. A. In mid Autumn – in March, arrive in Ireland in April and remain until September. The vast majority of emigrants from 1850s used Liverpool as the port of embarkation. The journey lasted three months by sailing ship and one month by steamer. In letters home many gave the long voyage as their reason for never being able to return home.[95]

The 1860s was the era of steam. A third class fare from Liverpool to Buenos Aires cost £16. A similar ticket – Ireland to North America – cost £4 in pre-famine times. Many of the emigrants' fares were prepaid – by earlier emigrants or potential employers. William McCann had established the Recruiting (Immigrant) Agency in Buenos Aires by 1860. Shipping company Latham Brothers, Liverpool also worked closely with Father Fahy. Sailing tickets from Ireland could be purchased from Latham at £15 cash in advance – or £19.10.0 to be paid by

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[92] Helen Kelly, *Irish 'Ingleses'* p. 20.
[93] McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p.18.
[94] Ibid., p. 29.
[95] Ibid., p.153.

immigrants six months after arrival.[96] These customs clearly helped to promote emigration and to make it more accessible.

In a similar way advertising also fostered the emigrant trail. The newspaper advertisements in the *Westmeath Guardian* were more promotional in tone for Argentina than those for the United States or Canada.[97] In the *Westmeath Guardian,* 10 August 1865 the following advertisement appeared:

River Plate Steam-Ship Company
Steam from Liverpool
For Monte Video and Buenos Aires
Direct
The following names of vessels
Leda, Uruquay, Cordova, Parana, Una, Paraquey, La Plata.
Rates including provisions, without wine/liquor
Saloon Cabin £35, Second Cabin £25, Third Class £16
Children under 12 – half fare, infants – free.
Contact S.W. Kelso and Co., Liverpool or their agent
William Mulvihall, Ballymahon.

The advertisements stressed the availability of land, guaranteed employment, the assistance of Father Fahy and a character reference for an agent. However, the *Wexford People* gave a more balanced picture of life for the emigrant in Argentina. A letter appeared in the *Wexford People* on 18 June 1864 which stated that emigrants needed to have between £400 and £800, as well as strong hands, willing hearts and temperate habits.[98] By 1868 personal letters confirmed that Argentina was no longer a land of opportunity, unless emigrants had several hundred pounds to invest in addition to their labour. Letters had their effect. There was an irreversible decline in emigration – ending completely by 1895.[99]

To what extent did Irish immigrants meet with success? According to the 1869 census, 82.1 per cent of Irish male immigrants were living in rural Buenos Aires.[100] The age of emigrants remained constant throughout the nineteenth century i.e. Males – between 21 and 25, Females- between 18 and 25.[101] Emigrants, aged between 21 and 25 on leaving Ireland stood the greatest chance of economic

[96]Ibid., p. 155.
[97] Ibid., p. 156.
[98] Ibid., p. 157.
[99] Ibid., p. 159.
[100] Ibid., p. 227.
[101] Ibid., p. 243.

success.[102] Earlier emigrants had a better chance of succeeding, by their own efforts, than had the later emigrants. Single voluntary emigrants who were most successful arrived in their 20s. Those who arrived with children-i.e. (35 -40)- did worst.[103] The success of emigrants depended on many variables – age – date of arrival – single/married – size of family.[104] This augured well for Bulfin who was to emigrate in 1884 at the age of almost twenty one.

What particular advantages did immigrants have? How would Bulfin benefit as an Irish immigrant? Because of the system in Argentina of each child inheriting and equal share in all property, portions of land owned by Creoles were regularly sold.[105] Being an immigrant had certain advantages – over the Creole estancieros. The Irish were non-combatants. The Irish suffered less in political upheavals. They also had foreign status.[106] The practice of conscripting their own citizens while exempting foreigners in Argentina ensured the Irish had a natural advantage over native Argentines. It is not surprising that the Irish in Argentina were so successful when it is remembered only those who knew how to accumulate capital arrived.[107] The *Southern Cross* quickly replaced local papers like the *Westmeath Examiner* and the *Wexford People* as the main source of community information.[108] Argentina offered the best opportunity for an Irish person with little or no resources to become prosperous landowners. Their community spirit rather than the Protestant model of individual effort was largely responsible for their success. That fact alone makes this community unique among the Irish in the New World, while everywhere else that was ruled by Britain followed the protestant model of development. As a community they became and have remained more prosperous than any other group in Argentina.[109]

This story of the Irish in Argentina had particular resonance for the people of Westmeath, Longford, North Offaly and South Wexford. Bulfin was aware of the general, if not the particular aspects, of the links between Ireland and Argentina. King's County had become part of that tradition and legacy. His decision to leave

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[102] Ibid., p. 244.
[103] Ibid., p. 250.
[104] Ibid., p. 254.
[105] Ibid., p. 267.
[106] Ibid., p. 277.
[107] Ibid., p. 335.
[108] Ibid., p. 348.
[109] Ibid., p. 356.

Ireland for Argentina must be placed in the full context of the prevailing conditions and customs of the time. His departure was in certain respects predictable and inevitable. His father's will, with its financial arrangements for his family, was another incentive for Bulfin and his brother, Peter, to emigrate. William Bulfin, senior, had left money aside on condition that Bulfin was to take his brother, Peter, with him to Argentina. Clearly, the father viewed his son Willaim as a mature and steadying influence.

In 1884, Bulfin and his brother, Peter, left Ireland for Argentina. Their departure coincided with the boom years in Argentina and, this, in itself, would have proved to be a further incentive. The period 1882 to 1889 saw the beginnings of growth and prosperity that was characterized by land speculation, railroad building, public works, agricultural development and meat packing.[110] Bulfin's journey would have been very like that of Thomas Murray, a fellow emigrant, who left Ireland in 1892 for Argentina. Murray gave an account of his journey and remarked how steam power had reduced the length of the journey from 3 months to thirty days.[111] Murray left the port of Liverpool on 1 September 1892 and took the following route by steamer:

> Liverpool…Land's end...French coast...Mouth of the Garronne...anchor for Paris ...passengers...Spanish Coast...Corunna...passengers.... Vigo....Lisbon.... Tenerife...does not dock...St Vincent..Cape Verde...crossing the line of the equator...coast of Brazil....St Ferdinand island... Cape Frio...Quarantine Rio Grande...fumigation...anchored off Rio de Janeiro...sails from Rio ...La Plata...Passengers...Flores island...quarantined for 8 days... Montevideo... arrived in Buenos Aires on 9 October.[112]

His journey does seem to be typical of the Irish emigrant's experience – in all but quarantine (30 days).[113] Bulfin would have followed the same route as Thomas Murray's from Liverpool to Buenos Aires and would have taken a little over one month in all to complete the journey.

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[110] Ione S. Wright and Lisa M. Nerham, *Historical Dictionary of Argentina* (London, 1978), p. 1,083.

[111] McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 147.

[112] Ibid., pp 147-152.

[113] Ibid., p. 151.

Conclusion

Clearly there were many factors that shaped Bulfin's formative years. Family, the farming environment and his experience of education shaped a great deal of thought and character. He was destined to keep close ties with his family and Ireland. A passion for reading and an interest in education was to remain with him throughout his life. His decision to emigrate to Argentina was prompted by certain environmental factors. To an extent primogeniture was a consideration. The non inheriting sons and daughters of tenant farmers were surplus to social and economic requirements and therefore emigration was the obvious option. The economic depression in Ireland of the 1880s was an important consideration for many emigrants. Emigration was already a well established tradition in most parts of Ireland. Throughout the nineteenth century the links between Ireland and Argentina had been forged, particularly in relation to the midland counties and Wexford. Argentina was a country that had served the Irish well and many of them had flourished there. Bulfin's family connections with Argentina proved to be an important impetus. Transport links were well established and, indeed, shipping companies promoted emigration. He had been well educated and was among the more educated emigrants who left Ireland for Argentina. However, in later life when he reflected on why he left Ireland he was to admit that his leave taking was not influenced mainly by economic necessity. He was to conclude that a sense of wanderlust and the spirit of adventure were among the dominant forces that encouraged his departure.

Chapter 2

Life on the Pampas

Michael Mulhall praised Argentina for its outstanding attributes, its 'situation in the South temperate zone', delightful climate, varied soil, and its produce of cotton, wheat, tobacco, yerba-mate, cochineal, wine, coffee, silk, sugar, wool and fruits of every kind.' He, also, recorded its mineral resources of copper, silver, lead, salt, marble, lime-stone, granite
and coal.[1] This was the country that was to become home for many Irish immigrants where they arrived with a mixture of hope tinged with a certain trepidation. This was the country that beckoned to Bulfin and it was here that he hoped to establish himself by his endeavours.

On arrival at Buenos Aires in 1884, William and his brother, Peter were greeted by a city that had just been declared the capital of Argentina. In that very year the new city of la Plata was founded by the governor of the province of Buenos Aires, Dr Dardo Rocha.[2] Bulfin was to spend four years working on the Pampas as a shepherd and eventually as a 'capataz' (foreman). His experiences were to be distilled and then later recorded in his writings, particularly in series of journalistic articles, editorials, sketches, a selection of short stories and in his novel 'Man of the Pampas'.

. On arrival at the Old Mole, the landing dock in Buenos Aires, Bulfin was to share the hopes and apprehensions of the exile in a new land. This arrival point brought with it a variety of responses from immigrants. On his arrival William McCann, an Irish emigrant, was not impressed. He recorded 'the appearance of Buenos Aires on landing is anything but prepossessing.'[3] In her semi-fictionalized autobiography, Kathleen Nevin, another Irish emigrant, describes how the central character reacted at her first sight of the natives:

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[1] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate* (Buenos Aires, 1869), p. 4.
[2] Arthur E. Shaw, *Forty years in the Argentine Republic* (Buenos Aires, 1907), p. 99.
[3] William mac Cann, *Two thousand Miles Ride through the Argentine Provinces* (London, 1853), p. 168.

> Kate's first sight of the natives was quite shocking for her...at the mole there were wild-looking shaggy men in coloured shirts and, indeed, one could have believed anything of them.[4]

This negative view was reinforced by the landlady in Buenos Aires who warned Kate and the girls against the natives who:

> Are not to be trusted. My first and last word to you must ever be; beware of the natives!...The less you have to do with them the better. My house, it gratifies me to say, is occupied exclusively by our own people.[5]

Marion Mulhall also recorded her unfavourable impressions on her arrival in Buenos Aires and was critical of the dock area:

> My first impressions of the place were unfavourable owing to the difficulties that attended our landing. There being no bay or harbour, the mail steamer anchored twenty miles off shore and the passengers were put onto whale-boats...the mole... slippery planks...'a bridge of signs'...many accidents on the mole.[6]

Arthur E. Shaw, arrived in Buenos Aires in 1864 having travelled from Liverpool and remarked that 'the mole was a structure celebrated for its man-traps, holes in its floors.'[7] However, Bulfin was to take a very different view. He was to have a very different response to the landing dock, the mole, and was to present a more sentimental and positive picture. He recalled it as the meeting place of different nationalities and the starting point of the dreams and hopes of many immigrants. For him it would ever be associated with the all the feelings that an exile had on entry to a new world. [8]

John Brabazon, in his memoirs, recorded his anxiety on his arrival at Buenos Aires. Unknowingly he was brought by his friend not to the theatre, as promised, but 'to a house of bad fame, where I was surrounded by young ladies.'[9] Buenos Aires had become an international centre for white slavery and brothels

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[4] Kathleen Nevin, *You'll Never Go Back* (Boston, 1946), p. 14.

[5] Nevin, *You'll Never Go Back*, p. 22.

[6] Marion Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes* (London, 1881), p. 1.

[7] Arthur E. Shaw, *Forty Years in the Argentine Republic* (Buenos Aires, 1907), p. 5.

[8] *Southern Cross*, 26 Dec. 1890, p. 2.

[9] Eduardo A. Coghlan, *Andanzas de un Irlandes en el Campo Porteno, 1854-1864.* Tradducion de Ingles (Argentina, 1981), p. 102.

were endemic in the city.[10] In fact, prostitution prevailed on the Pampas. William W. Slatta noted:

> Both legal and illicit houses of prostitution operated in Pampean towns and in the countryside, usually near a pulperia (Tavern). An itinerant madame also travelled the plains with her girls in a huge oxcart.[11]

Bulfin became conscious of the nature of this social problem and was later to address it. As a social reformer and future editor of the *Southern Cross* he was to launch a campaign against the existence of white slavery in Argentina.[12]

Bulfin had letters of introduction to the Passionist Fathers in Buenos Aires and to a number of estancias in the Pampas. He was to go to the estancia of Don Juan Dowling, a man from Longford.[13] This estancia was near Carmen de Areco, a place where the Irish community were well established. In fact, in 1867 this centre established a fund to aid the imprisoned Fenians.[14] There were twenty seven estancias in this centre, with an average of two leagues each. The Irishmen of the district were all wealthy and prosperous. The Dowling estancia was large. It had been bought by the Dowlings for the sum of £800, but was now worth twenty times that.[15] The estancia consisted of 4 3/4 leagues and was valued at $350,000 per league. The Irish population was over 1,000 and the Catholic chaplain was Rev. M. Largo Leahy. There was also a church, state school, twenty shops and a lending library. The library at Carmen de Areco was founded in 1864. It had one hundred and twenty members, had a range of books of general interest and received eighteen Irish newspapers every English Packet. [16] There was also a literary society attached to the local St Brendan's school.[17] Bulfin was an avid reader and during his four years working in the Pampas he devoted his spare time to reading.

According to McKenna, the estancia was the basis of the Irish immigrant settlement.[18] Most of the immigrants aspired to becoming ranch owners on the

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[10] Albert Londres, *The Road to Buenos Aires*, translated by Eric Sutton (London, 1928), p. 32.
[11] Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier* (Lincoln & London, 1983) p. 66.
[12] *Southern Cross*, 17 Apr. 1908, p. 14.
[13] Benedict Kiely, 'Man from the Pampas' in *Capuchin Annual* (1948), Dublin, p. 429.
[14] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* (New York, 1919), p. 233.
[15] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 44.
[16] Ibid., p. 46.
[17] Michael G. Mulhall, *The English in South America,* (Buenos Aires, 1878), p. 430.
[18] McKenna, 'Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 234.

Pampas. Therefore they looked for work on a ranch with the goal of gaining experience, capital, livestock and, eventually land. This worked well and many achieved their goals. It was a land based settlement and it remained the case for the rest of the century.[19]

Thomas Murray noted the main settlement areas for the Irish in the Pampas. After Buenos Aires itself, Luzan was one of the oldest settlement areas for the Irish community.[20] San Antonio de Areco, Lobos, Giles, Baradero, Carmen de Areco, Pergamino, San Andres de Giles, Carmen de Areco, Mercedes, Rojas, Salto, Chivilcoy, Suipacha and Chacabuco were the main centres where the Irish settled.[21] These centres were located west and south of Buenos Aires within a relatively short distance from the city. Bulfin was to form his own impressions of the town of Mercedes. He caught the two sides and spirits of life there and saw how life was lived. He remarked:

> The most popular promenade of Mercedes is the station platform of the Western Railway. The place is the Palermo of the town – the Vanity Fair of this city of the plains...Crowds more or less well dressed...and more or less intent on showing itself off...But the prison of Mercedes had comfortable accommodation for 150 prisoners...at the present moment there are more then twice that number cofined with its wall...most are awaiting trial...many are over four years thus confined...[22]

In his novel 'A Man of the Pampas', Bulfin presented the setting for his readers and outlined the nature of the environment. He explained:

> What is meant by the word camp? It is the pampa that is meant...the word is of Spanish origin coming from camp – a tract of level country. In the United States they say prairies, when they speak of the great western plains. The wildnerness in Australia is called the Bush, in South Africa the Veldt and in Russia the Steppe. In like manner the Pampa wilderness of Argentina is called campo or camp...hence a camp man means a man of the plains..[23]

When Bulfin first arrived in the camp he was to meet with a variety of experiences. First there was the suffocating hot weather of December. He had no dog or cat and nothing to read. He was thrown back on himself, very much a

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[19] Ibid., p. 245.
[20] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 217.
[21] Ibid., pp 233 - 262.
[22] *Southern Cross* 1 June, 1894, p. 2.
[23] Bulfin Papers NLI, Ms 13808, A Man of the Pampas, p.1.

homesick and disillusioned shepherd. There was the real danger of nightmares and hallucinations. It became necessary to offset this with work and activity.[24] In the solitude of a shepherd's hut many curious friendships did take place.[25] In a humorous story Bulfin highlights how isolation on the Pampas led to the close bonds that shepherds formed with animals and a variety of nature's creatures. Pet dogs, cocks, ostriches and toads were among the creatures that shepherds befriended on the Pampas.[26]

In reflecting on his life on the Pampas, Bulfin pondered:

> I was alone. What had taken me out? I was trying to learn Spanish in those days. I knew so little of it and was naturally desirous of showing off the few words I had mastered...[27]

It was important for him to make real efforts to gain fluency in Spanish. As someone who had studied Latin and Greek, the learning of a new language, like Spanish, presented him with no great challenge.

Bulfin caught the changing face of the Pampas through the seasons. He observed:

> When nature wills it the Pampa is lavishly prodigal of its richness: it seems at such times to be the chosen home of plenty and fertility and fecundity. But when nature is unkind, when the rain stays away too long and the cold winds blow from the frozen south, the vast plains become like the bones of a dead planet and the blight of divine wrath seems to be in the chilly air, in the cheerless sky and to be lying heavy on the howling wastes.[28]

In the story 'The Course of True Love', Bulfin outlines the strong presence of the Irish community on the Pampas:

> Although it is not written, it is still true, that over the richest sheep runs in the Province of Buenos Aires, you may gallop during every hour of the longest day in summer without crossing a single road of land that is not owned by some son of the Emerald Isle or his children... Full sixty years ago the first Irish sheep-farmers went forth from Buenos Aires city to the teeming wilds of the Pampas and made their pioneer homes...The success

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[24] *Southern Cross*, 23 Nov. 1900, pp 16-17.

[25] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas* (Buenos Aires, 1997, first published in London, 1900), p. 37.

[26] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 116.

[27] *Southern Cross*, 8 June 1900, pp 13-14.

[28] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13808, p. 123.

> of these hardy settlers induced their kinsfolk to follow in their footsteps and now for leagues and leagues inland from the banks of the El Rio de La Plata and the Parana, north and west of Buenos Aires stretch the estates or estancias of men of Irish birth or parentage.[29]

In his writings, Bulfin depicted the Pampas in all its seasons and variations. It is important to remember that the Pampas was without a clearly defined road system. As Bulfin remarked 'the Pampa being practically a roadless country where there are, in any long drive, various streams to ford and many swamps and mud patches to navigate.'[30] What were the means of transport to the Pampas? In the year 1867 the Argentine railways extended to 319 miles. By the year 1892 they had grown to 7,514 miles. All of this was caused by the stimulus of the colonies, which supplied the roads with the freight of grain. The railways opened up the pampas to agriculture.[31] It was agriculture in the hands of immigrants that spread the railway network across the land.[32]

Bulfin was conscious that the Pampas had its own particular beauty and noted the changing colour and light. He remarked ' A Pampa sunset can beautify anything...oceans of purple and crimson that covered the sky and the sapphire blending with the green in the spaces between the clouds..'[33] By contrast, in the story 'La Quemazon' he depicted the violent storms and fires that could ravage the countryside.[34] However after storm and in a later season the Pampas could take on a very different hue. Bulfin, himself, caught the dramatic changes in the spirit of the landscape in his writings:

> Five months after the storm...what a change...lambs are frisking...plains are covered with verdant grass...glad sunshine...your face is very freckled...you have had the rough and now you are having the smooth...[35]

In his short story 'El High Life', Bulfin presented the action against a severe cold winter on the Pampas. The full rigour of the storm called the Santa Rosa, in other regions called an equinoxical storm, is conveyed and it lasted four

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[29] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 135.
[30] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13808, p. 17.
[31] Mark Jefferson, *Peopling the Argentine Pampas* (Washington, 1926), p.161
[32] Ibid, p. 164.
[33] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13802 (Folder 13), p. 1.
[34] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13802 (Folder 10), p. 1
[35] *Pilot* (Boston), 25 Sept. 1877, p. 1.

days.[36] 'It was May and May on the Pampas is raw...'[37] It was recorded that one famous dust storm on the Pampas brought with it winds at the speed of eighty eight miles an hour.[38] For someone like Bulfin, who was to develop a keen interest in the many aspects of nature, particularly ornithology, the Pampas offered an endless variety of birdlife, including snipe, duck, plover, spoonbills, wild turkeys, geese, flamingos, cranes and swans.[39]

Bulfin recorded his own critical and negative view of the political world and how it impinged on life on the Pampas. In one of his stories, a politician friend of an estanciero is presented as a professional camp politician – one of the manufacturers of Argentine public opinion, political trickery and civic trouble. This negative stereotype is reinforced throughout the story.[40] It became clear to Bulfin that corruption was endemic in politics, regardless of location. In politics, commerce and government, the same peculiarities were in evidence on the Pampas as in other regions of Argentina.[41] 'Politics is a game at the best of times', he claimed. Elections, bribery, corruption and voting several times were very much in evidence in the province of Buenos Aires.[42] This negative view of the political world was to remain with Bulfin all his life. The presence of the Irish community did not have an impact on political affairs. By remaining as immigrants, the settlers were unable to vote.[43] This was significant and may explain their non involvement in political affairs. It certainly meant that they had little or no influence on the political direction in Argentina.

Marriages and funerals were the important social occasions where the Irish gathered. Dances were popular and the occasional flute player or fiddler provided the music. The Irish traditional dances were favoured and the 'accordion was a piece of furniture that scarcely any house was without.'[44] The pulperia (tavern) was an important social institution for various members of the different communities on the Pampas. Various groups owned the pulperias, including the

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[36] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas* (Buenos Aires, 1997, first printed London, 1900), p. 55.
[37] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 113.
[38] Mark Jefferson, *Peopling the Argentine Pampa* (Washington, 1926), p. 10.
[39] Marian Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes*, p. 15.
[40] Bulfin Papers NLI Ms 13808, A Man of the Pampas, p. 108.
[41] Bulfin Papers NLI Ms 13804 (Folder 8), P. 4.
[42] Bulfin Papers NLI Ms 13808, A Man of the Pampas, p. 114.
[43] McKenna, 'Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 285.
[44] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 487.

Basques.[45] However, Arthur E. Shaw advised prospective immigrants 'to keep away from the low drinking shops (pulperias) and that a man who treats the gauchos as a man and on the neighbour as yourself principle has very little to fear.'[46] Bulfin acknowledged the role of the pulperia in camp life and expressed his reservations in a series of articles.[47] Mac Cann remarked, when estimating the relative success of immigrants in Argentina, 'all who are sober and steady soon become masters.'[48] However, Brabazon recorded in his journal that certain groups among the Irish 'When they got their wages, they would head for the pulperia – with their sticks specially sharpened.'[49]. It would seem, therefore, that drinking to excess and faction fighting existed among certain sections of the Irish community. Bulfin, by contrast, chose not to draw attention to this aspect of the Irish community. His aim was to highlight the positive nature of their lives. His prejudices in favour of his own race could cloud his judgement and prevent him from presenting a fuller picture.

Bulfin observed how life on the camp had its impact on the character and habits of the Irish community. The majority of the Irish who went to English speaking countries like Canada, the United States and Australia were soon to lose their accents. In the Spanish speaking environment of Argentina, there was no English norm to undermine and dilute their native brogue. He noted:

> Exile has of course modified some of their idiosyncrasies and accentuated others. The wilderness had taught them some of its mysteries.....deprived them of some of their spirituality, as well as taken some of the corners and angles off their Celtic mysticism. Spanish phrase and idioms have inflected the English which they habitually use, but the brogues of Leinster and Munster has remained intact....they struggle to preserve the traditions of motherland in constant earnest...but the old geniality is there...the inextinguishable humour of their race abides with them undimmed.[50]

It was important for Bulfin to present a clear and realistic picture of camp life and to disabuse people of any romantic notions about shepherd life. His future articles published in the *Pilot* (Boston) and the *Southern Cross* described vividly the rigours and harshness of camp existence:

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[45] William MacCann, *Two Thousand Miles Ride through the Argentine Provinces*, p. 69.
[46] Arthur E. Shaw, *Forty Years in the Argentine Republic*, p. 227.
[47] *Southern Cross*, 5 July 1895, p. 5.
[48] William MacCann, *Two Thousand Miles Ride through the Argentine Provinces*, p. 71.
[49] McKenna,'Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina' p. 101.
[50] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 136.

> You want to have an experience of Pampas shepherding...here is the hut...mud ranch...dogs, horses, sheep...no rain for months...red angry sun...you are a shepherd...five weeks since you saw the face of a fellow man...starving sheep...you are obliged to supply 1,500 skeletons with water...your feet are blistering...disappearance of your fresh complexion...stiffening in your knee joints...your shepherd's dinner...black tea...camp biscuits as hard as a stone...some meat cooked at the embers...sit at your doorstep...go to sleep...tired and hungry...it is terrible...[51]

In this passage he caught the unrelieved isolation of the shepherd's existence. His account reflected the almost primitive living conditions and the total lack of any comforts. It conveyed a real sense of both man and beasts fighting for survival in extreme conditions. Very clearly this kind of life was not for those who might be feeble in spirit or body.

In another account he depicts the other challenges facing the shepherd on the Pampas. The region was subject to violent storms and the shepherd had little protection in the open treeless land. Bulfin noted the sudden and dramatic changes in climate:

> Another week has passed...oppressive...clouds suddenly appear in the south...a first class dust storm...a darkness so intense you cannot see your nose...a howling seething pitch.....fills your eyes, mouth, ears, hair and clothes with dust...makes you cough and sneeze and struggle for breath...deluge of rain...a gathering thunder...lightening bursts from the clouds...sheep disappeared...your hut a mile away...terrible garlands of light...you romantic exile...you mother's darling...you sleepless shepherd...how do you like it?[52]

For the exile from Ireland such storms would have been a new experience. Ireland did not suffer from such extremes and therefore the Irish were ill prepared for them. For the hard working shepherd on the Pampas, it was another challenge to his mental and physical resources. In the outer regions of the camp, the Irish settlers could be found. Bulfin noted:

> In some of the distant huts are shepherds paid by the month – in others are shepherds, who own a part of the flock of sheep they mind; while in others are men who own from two to four or five thousand sheep on rented land. But whether millionaires or labourers, all are Irish, in thought, in sympathy and in character.[53]

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[51] *Pilot* (Boston), 18 Sept 1897, p. 1.

[52] *Pilot* (Boston), 25 Sept 1897, p. 1.

[53] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 136.

Not all the Irish were bachelors and there were many families with children. The bachelor life on the Pampas was forbidding in many respects. In a camp sketch this level of isolation is strongly depicted by Bulfin:

> To have a woman at home; to see children playing with dogs; to have somebody besides the dogs to be glad when you come home or sorry when you stayed away; to have your washing and cooking off your mind...[54]

However, the shepherd hut, as shown to us by Bulfin, was the starting point for most Irish-Argentine homesteads.[55] In 1881 single room structures made up 77% of all rural provincial housing.[56] John Macnie was clear and unambiguous in his advice to future immigrants. He advised that 'there is no prospect whatever for anyone who is not prepared for a very hard and generally a very lonely life.'[57] Latham advised young immigrant men to make themselves aware of the hazards of camp life. They had to understand that it meant living in a solitary hut, being alone for most of the time, cooking for oneself, no table or chairs and no comforts.[58]

A very obvious favourable bias is evident in Bulfin's portrayal of the Irish community. For example the principle character in his novel 'A Man of the Pampas' is Irish and his integrity is strongly established, 'Conor, a man who knows his own mind, who has principles and convictions and the courage to defend them'.[59] By contrast, the German manager in the estancia was a disciplinarian and he hated the Irish.[60] Conor proved to be a favourite with the gauchos.[61] They acknowledge and admire his fine qualities. The novel also conveys Bulfin's nationalist philosophy in the portrayal of the prejudice existing between the Irish and the English.[62] Conor is presented as noble and chivalric and is prepared to defend the honour of the camp girls. Jaime says to Conor, 'I had a lecture from you about my morals and about the honour of gaucho women.'[63] Bulfin delighted in the midland brogue of his fellow countrymen's speech and he

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[54] *Southern Cross*, 8 June 1900, pp 13,14.
[55] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 484.
[56] Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier*, p. 72.
[57] John Macnie, p. 174.
[58] Wilfrid Latham, *The States of the River Plate* (London, 1868) p. 234.
[59] NLI Bulfin Papers, MS 13808, P. 30.
[60] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13808, p. 31.
[61] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13808, p. 50.
[62] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13808, pp 55-56.
[63] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13808, p. 89.

strove to reproduce it with his pen.[64] Most of the Irish in Argentina did not speak Irish. However, Bulfin uses Irish language words in his tales and sketches when depicting Irish characters.[65] His particular bias is illustrated in that his Irish characters are inevitably good, and when weak, always likeable.[66] Bulfin's experiences on the Pampas served to confirm his thinking and prejudices in relation to different cultures and nationalities.

McKenna was convinced that without the help of the Irish priests, the Irish community would not have succeeded as they did.[67] Bulfin had heard the full accounts of Father Fahy and his role as chaplain to the Irish community. The Irish community, with the encouragement of Father Fahy, collected the sum of £144.1.10 to aid the famine victims in Ireland.[68] Father Fahy had become a household name on the Pampas and was much venerated.[69] For Bulfin, this priest was an inspiration and he always paid homage to him in his writings:

> God be with the days when Father Fahy started from Buenos Aires on horseback to visit his scattered flock. From forty to sixty miles a day, he often galloped over the camp, changing horses here and there, as opportunity offered. Many a night he slept on his 'recao', rolled in his poncho, with the thatched roof of a hut over his head and at times nothing but the starry sky of the Pampa. Many a meal he ate where every guest was meant to hold the meat in his fingers and use his own long camp knife to advantage...[70]

The various Irish settlements had their own Irish chaplains, schools and libraries. An example of this was Father Samuel O'Reilly was based for some time in Mercedes and later at Chivilcoy. In all he spent fifty years as an Irish chaplain in Argentina.[71] The Passionist Fathers and the Pallotine Fathers established monasteries and churches in Argentina in the 1880s.[72] Each Irish church developed into a social centre for a radius of thirty or forty miles. Mass would be celebrated, groups would play cards, newspapers would be distributed and there would be a meeting place for social interaction.[73] Bulfin became aware of the

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[64] Edmundo Murray, *Becoming Gauchos Ingleses*, p. 86.
[65] Ibid., p. 87.
[66] Ibid., p. 91.
[67] McKenna, *Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina*, p. 116.
[68] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 147.
[69] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13804, p. 11.
[70] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 142.
[71] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, pp 252,253,
[72] Ibid., p. 448.
[73] McKenna, *Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina*, p. 129.

many aspects of the role of the priest on the Pampas. He could be cast in the role of peacemaker between feuding families. He could, also, continue the role of Father Fahy as matchmaker.[74]

Bulfin noted the significance of Luzan as a place of pilgrimage. Michael Mulhall saw Luzan as being like an Irish county. The government census accounted for 2,573 Irish residents, not counting their children. The Irish chaplin, Father Samuel O'Reilly, had a library for his parishioners.[75] Luzan was the major Marian shrine in South America and had become a place of pilgrimage for Catholics, including the Irish community.[76] For many of the Irish community attendance at Sunday mass meant a long distance gallop across the Pampas.[77] Bulfin's account of midnight mass at Christmas in the Pampean town of Salto caught the earnest devotion of Catholics. For many, the church at Salto was a journey of twenty one miles, a three hour gallop by horse. Midnight mass was called Misa de Gallo, gallo being the Spanish for a rooster. The mass took place at the time the roosters began to crow.[78]

The vexed question of land and inheritance was a feature of camp life. Many farmers were reluctant to allow their sons have control of the land. This brought bitterness and division. In a camp sketch Bulfin highlighted this and advocated a more enlightened and generous approach to the problem. McKenna claimed that Irish landowners on the Pampas ultimately failed themselves, their countrymen and their country Argentina. They reacted as if they were in Ireland and did not make full provision for the future generations.[79] Bulfin became aware that the Irish community in the Pampas were not involved in the political world and, therefore, had little impact on government decisions that related to their future. It was, he felt, essential that landowners should alert themselves to the real possibility that the government could make major increase in land taxes. It was, therefore, essential to make a stand and to present a united front against future

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[74] *Southern Cross*, 22 Dec.1899, pp 15-16.
[75] Michael Mulhall, *The English in South America,* p. 428.
[76] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 8), p. 12.
[77] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13802 (Folder 13)
[78] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13802 (Folder 13), p. 2.
[79] McKenna, 'Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 356.

government policies. This issue was to feature among his future campaigns as a journalist and editor.[80]

Many of the more prosperous members of the Irish community educated their children in Ireland. This was due to a number of factors, including the uncertain standard of education available on the Pampas.[81] Over many years the camp was unable to provide a full Irish education for the Irish community. This was to influence Bulfin in the future in relation to the education of his own children. There had been little or no emphasis on Irish history, customs or traditions. Bulfin noted this but was pleased to see how certain changes were taking place. As the community grew in number, Irish schools and colleges, like St Patrick's College in Mercedes, were founded.

It was estimated that one out of every two Irish who went to Argentina returned to Ireland or relocated to other destinations of the Irish diaspora, including England, the United States and Australia. Emigration brought with it a sense of isolation and alienation. In Nevin's story, when Kate is asked by the priest, Father Slattery what she would most like, she replied:

> "I'd go home, father." "You would not", he said. "No one comes out to this country to make a living ever goes back, d'you hear? So let that nonsense out of your head now and settle down as soon as you can get the chance with any decent fellow that will have you"!

Newspapers from Ireland were important sources of contact for the Irish community. Shops and libraries on the camp were the usual sources of distribution. Subscribing to overseas newspapers was the general approach. However, subscriptions were expensive and delivery of the newspapers was slow and unreliable.[82] The English language press in Argentina became more central to the community. The *Standard* and the *Southern Cross*, both published in Buenos Aires, were important. Despite being Irish owned, the *Standard* was oriented towards England.[83] The *Southern Cross* was a weekly and it devoted much attention to camp news.[84] It was founded to represent and foster Irish catholic interests in Argentina, particularly in the province of Buenos Aires. It had become

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[80] *Southern Cross*, 12 Oct.1900, p. 12.
[81] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 493.
[82] Oliver Marshall, *The English language Press in Latin America* (London, 1996) p. ii.
[83] Oliver Marshall, *The English-Language Press in Latin America*, p. 13.
[84] *Southern Cross*, 7 Dec. 1900, p. 7.

a valuable source of information for social and religious events, politics and economics and it reflected the lives of the Irish community, including life on the pampas.[85] It quickly took the place of local Irish papers such as the *West Meath Examiner* and the *Wexford People* as the main source of community information.

Many of Bulfin's future stories were to take place against the background of the shearing season on the estancias.[86] One of the most interesting events on an estancia was the 'Yerra', the branding of cattle. Marion Mulhall described vividly how the peons, dressed in coloured ponchos, drove the cattle into a corral. A wood fire was lit, half-a-dozen brands were heated, a calf was lassoed and a red hot branding iron was planted on his flank. Each estancia had its own brand that was registered at the Government House. This was necessary as the estancias of the Pampas were unfenced. Cattle and horses were branded in the same way.[87] The horses on the Pampas were of a particular breed and noted for their endurance in the face of many hardships.[88] Bulfin was to devote some of his future writing on the art of good horsemanship based on his experiences in the camp.[89] The tales serve to highlight the important aspect of life on an estancia. Cattle could stray or be stolen and Bulfin caught this in his story 'Castro Telleth of Tavxlonghis Horse'. Again the shearing season brought with it certain rites and festivities. Gin or cana was the popular drink for the shepherds.[90]

One of the major threats to normal life on the Pampas was ongoing possibility of a plague of locusts. The plague could last many years and have a major negative impact on commerce, prices and health.[91] Bulfin was to experience all this and he vividly captured the extent of such a plague in his writings.[92] Malaria was a very real threat to the health of immigrants and precautions were essential.[93] In Carmen de Areco there was a high incidence of malaria and it was felt that the presence of many stagnant pools was one of the contributing factors. Also in the same area tubercolosis was prevalent and as many as one third of the

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[85] Oliver Marshall, *The English language Press in Latin America*, p. 13.
[86] *Southern Cross,* 5 Oct 1905, p. 15.
[87] Marion Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes*, p. 19.
[88] William Latham, *The States of the River Plate*, (London, 1868), P. 49.
[89] *Southern Cross*, 12 Oct 1893, p. 4.
[90] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, pp 69,70.
[91] Arthur E. Shaw, *Forty years in the Argentine Republic*, p. 122.
[92] *Southern Cross* 7 Jan 1898, p. 10.
[93] Arthur E. Shaw, *Forty Years in the Argentine Republic*, p. 116.

population suffered from the disease.[94] Bulfin was later to write about the increasing death rate from tuberculosis. He campaigned for more hygiene and better overall standards. He, also, recognised the necessity for keeping patients apart in order to contain the disease.[95] Marian Mulhall observed that heart disease was prevalent among the natives of the Pampas and she felt that the harshness of life there was a major factor.[96]

There was a high incidence of cancer among the Irish community in Argentina.[97] In fact, the incidence of the disease was much lower in Ireland. This was noted by many observers and various causes were suggested. Bulfin, himself, was later to address this subject in a series of journalistic articles and to conclude that diet was one of the key factors leading to the disease among the Irish. He claimed that the consumption of meat was the key factor. Life on the Pampas meant a very different diet. In Ireland very little meat was consumed, whereas in Argentina it was the standard source of food for most meals.[98] Isolation and loneliness led to a number of mental and nervous disorders. Bulfin, himself, had experienced hallucinations brought on by a state of isolation and paralysis.

Bulfin was to encounter the gaucho community on the pampas and to form his own favourable impressions. He was aware of the very different responses to them and their way of life. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, a writer and journalist, who became the seventh president of Argentina presented his view of the gauchos in his book *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism*. He argued that many of the problems of Argentina were caused by the gauchos whom he viewed as barbaric and uneducated.[99] He described what he felt were the four main types of gaucho. The first type was the 'Rastreador' or tracker, who had the instincts and skills to track the feet of animals and people.[100] The second was the 'Baqueano' or guide, who knew every inch of the countryside.[101] Thirdly, there was the 'payador', a kind of wandering ministrel, who wandered from rancho to pulperia with his

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[94] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 310.
[95] *Southern Cross*, 30 Nov 1900, p. 18.
[96] Marian Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes*, pp 16,17.
[97] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the irish in Argentina*, p. 490.
[98] *Southern Cross,*
[99] Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier*, p. 180.
[100] Marion Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes*, p. 21.
[101] Ibid, p. 23.

guitar singing songs of adventures and war.[102] Fourthly there was the 'gaucho malo' or outlaw, who despised the people of the towns and was a fugitive from the police.[103] Sarmiento viewed the passing of their culture as welcome and inevitable.

Sarmiento's negative view of the gauchos was challenged by the poet Jose Hernandez in his epic poem 'Martin Fierro'. He argued that the gauchos had an honourable place in Argentine culture in terms of courage, national values and race.[104] Unlike Sarmiento, he maintained that civilization was not always a positive force and that the culture of the gauchos had many merits.[105] The poem 'Martin Fierro' was inspired by Hernandez's wish for a change in the way the gauchos were treated by the central government.[106] He demanded policies that would give full recognition to the culture and entitlements of the gauchos. To date the law had promoted the interests of ranchers at the expense of the gauchos. His sympathy can be felt in almost every line in the poem:

My glory is to live as free
As the birds in the sky
I make no nest on this earth
Where there is so much to be suffered.....
There was a time when
I knew this land
As the gaucho's own domain....
The wretched gaucho is a waif and stray
Cast out in the wild to roam
His wrongs never stir a single heart
To take up the outcast gaucho's part
And give him his rights as a citizen –
A church, and schools and a home.[107]

Bulfin also challenged Sarmiento's views. His sympathies were with the gauchos. He defended them, their values and their culture. There was much to admire and Bulfin was always at pains to present a positive picture of them in his sketches, short stories, articles and novel. His writings devoted a great deal of time to the subject and what emerged was a comprehensive overview. According

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[102] Ibid. p. 24.
[103] Ibid. p. 25.
[104] Edmundo Murray, *Becoming Gauchos Ingleses*, p. 97.
[105] Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier*, p. 184.
[106] E. Caracciolo-Treza, *The Penguin Book of Latin American Verse* (Great Britain, 1971), p. v.
[107] Walter Owen adapted *Martin Fierro* by Jose Hernandez (Oxford, 1935), pp 4, 6, 304.

to Edmundo Murray, Bulfin was of the opinion that the gauchos and the Irish shared similar circumstances. The areas colonized by the English and the Spanish belonged to the Irish and gauchos respectively.[108] This would certainly have served to prejudice Bulfin in their favour.

For example, the gaucho, Castro, featured in many of his short stories and was described thus:

> Castro was typical of his class – a gaucho from head to heal – swarthy skin – somewhat bow-legged while on the ground, but a living and superb picture on horse back…[109]

In his story 'The Fall of Don Jose', Bulfin depicts the art of the gaucho story teller. In Argentine Spanish, a story is embellished with quaint conceits, word-play, droll humour and subtle irony to full effect.[110] In his camp sketches, Bulfin sometimes celebrated the races, betting, fights, gambling and riding contests that was part of the gaucho world.[111] He also caught the tradition of cock fights.[112] Bulfin outlined certain characteristics of the gaucho in his novel 'A Man of the Pampas'. He claimed:

> For it is in the gaucho breed to be as fierce as the wildest creature that walks or flies or creeps or swims. In the gaucho there meet and mingle the strains of the Visigoths, the Iberian, the Indian and maybe some of the moor.[113]

Miers commented on the importance of the lasso and the bolas as essential equipment for gauchos and camp men. Both were used for rounding and capturing animals. The bolas consisted of three balls affixed to the end of a thong, about a yard long. This weapon was generally aimed at the legs and seldom fails to entangle the strongest bull at full speed. The gaucho kept his bolas wrapped around his waist, while his lasso was always coiled up and tied to his saddle.[114] Mate was the traditional beverage of the gauchos and had an important place in their community life. This was observed by Richard W. Slatta and he remarked:

> As important as beef to the gauchos was his favourite beverage mate…After heating water in a small kettle, the gaucho would pour hot but not boiling water into a small pear shaped gourd (also called the mate) filled with tea leaves. Passing the gourd round a circle, gauchos sipped the hot, strong tea through a communal straw or bombila, usually made of

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[108]Edmundo Murray, *Becoming Gauchos Ingleses*, p. 97.
[109] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 71.
[110] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 116.
[111] *Southern Cross*, 1 Dec. 1899, pp 17-18.
[112] *Southern Cross*, 9 June 1899, p. 13.
[113] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13808, p. 200.
[114] John Miers, *Travels in Chile and la Plata* (London, 1826), p. 89.

> silver or other metal. Lively conversations, jokes, gossip and plans for the day's work accompanied the seemingly endless rounds as the gourd was refilled, time after time....An elaborate folk ritual and folk belief developed around the beverage and its preparation. Beyond the sense of intimacy, sharing and camaraderie involved in sipping from a communal straw.[115]

Bulfin devoted a number of articles teasing out the origin and development of mate in the social and cultural life of Argentina.[116] The symbolic nature of the beverage is illustrated in the following lines from a poem on the subject:

> Bitter mate shows indifference ,
> Sweet mate, friendship,
> Mate with balm-mint, displeasure,
> Mate with cinnamon, you are on my mind,
> Mate with orange peel, come look for me,
> Mate with bee balm, your sadness pains me,
> Mate with milk, respect,
> Mate with coffee, offence pardoned.[117]

In 'A Man of the Pampas', Bulfin noted:

> Hospitality is a virtue of the Pampa, especially among the gauchos and no matter how rickety and dilapidated may be the mud-wall dwelling, with its shutterless and paneless window and floor of sodden clay, so long as there is a scrap of meat hanging outside on the gable or cooked beside the fire-place, the stranger is welcome to it.[118]

It is interesting to note how others viewed the gauchos and their way of life. John Brabazon, in his memoir, of his experiences in Argentina did not share Bulfin's positive view. He maintained that they 'were not good workers', that they had 'disgusting manners' and that they 'did not till their land' and that they 'took long siestas.'[119] Marion Mulhall concluded that life on the Pampas was severe and brought with it inevitable consequences. Her analysis was:

> Pampa life is attended with so much danger and hardship that it is said no one has ever seen a grey-haired gaucho, although a healthier climate cannot be found in the face of the earth.[120]

Charles Darwin, in his travel journal, recorded his favourable impressions and claimed 'the gauchos, or country people, are very superior to those who live in

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[115] Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier*, p. 78.
[116] *Southern Cross*, 11 Sept. 1908, p. 14.
[117] Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier*, p. 78.
[118] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13808, p.15.
[119] Eduardo A. Coghlan, *Andanzas de un Irlandes en el Campo Porteno (1854-1864),* p. 53.
[120] Ibid. p. 16.

towns. The gaucho is invariably most obliging, polite and hospitable.'[121] Miers described 'the gauchos of Buenos Aires and Chile as making the best and hardiest soldiers in the world.' [122]

In the short story 'Compeano', Bulfin explored the attractions of the gaucho way of life and how it could have its appeal for the immigrants. The young Irishman on the camp is drawn to their way of life and is being warned of the possible consequences:

> Mike says to him, 'You're getting too much of the country into you, me boy – racin, bettin and helpin the natives to cut each other to pieces, and galavantin round the seven parishes, suckin mate an colleaguerin with the gauchos – that's all right while it lasts, but you'll get a bad name for yourself, take my word for it – you'll get into their ways and the day will come when the dickens a decent man in the country will have anything to say or do with you.' Mike was as good as gold and meant well by me. But he failed to convince me.[123]

Bulfin, himself, clearly understood the conflicts between the two worlds and is sympathetic to the young Irishman. He understood the appeal of the gaucho way of life.

Head remarked that the gauchos of South America had much in common with the Highlanders of Scotland. In a sense both communities had a strong sense of their own culture, but were to become displaced in their own country.[124] The gauchos were Roman Catholics and in nearly all of their huts there was an image of a cross.[125] He defended the gauchos on the charge of indolence and claimed, 'not so – the gaucho has no luxuries, but the great feature of his character is that he is a person without wants.'[126]

Richard W. Slatta explored the history of the gaucho and concluded:

> The gaucho, exploited even when useful as a seasonal worker or soldier, faced the relentless oppression of successive administration acting on

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[121] Charles Darwin, *Journal of Researches, H M.S. Beagle round the World* (2nd Ed., London, 1845), p. 156.

[122] John Miers, *Travel in Chile and La Plata*, p. 176.

[123] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 110.

[124] Francis Bond Head, *Rough Notes taken during some rapid journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes* (London, 1828), p. 15.

[125] Head, *Rough Notes taken during some rapid journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes,* p. 29.

[126] Head, *Rough Notes taken during some rapid journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes*, p. 22.

> behalf of a powerful land elite that sought to eradicate than educate them to twentieth century life…The wave of millions of foreigners that rolled into the Pampas during the last third of the nineteenth century further eroded the gaucho way of life….As with other figures of history, disdained in life, the gaucho became far more appealing after his passing.[127]

Bulfin himself concurred with this view. With reluctance he had to accept that the gaucho culture was disappearing in Argentina. He had reflected on the subject and acknowledged with sadness that:

> There is no use in shutting one's eyes to the facts. The gaucho is going, I am sorry. But sorrow will not stop the hand of fate. Seventeen years ago he was still well in evidence….in the north and west of Buenos Aires province…had his ranch…his horses…his work at trooping or marking or herding sheep…he drank his anis or cana or took his mate under his own fir tree and gambled with bone or cards or on horseracing at the pulperias of all the camps.[128]

Bulfin lamented the decline of the gaucho and his culture and way of life. He did not feel that such a decline and eventual extinction was inevitable. Rather he argued that the gaucho was the victim of certain prevailing forces:

> Ages of twisted theology and warped religious tradition are behind them. Around them in the Pampa air, are freedom, the romance, the poetry, the heroism, the squalor, the viciousness, the empty monotony, the crime, the fatalism from which they cannot escape – of which they are a product. Before them is a future that belongs to others, not to them or theirs. Were it not generally so futile and so sad to give serious thought to the might have been, one might be tempted to speculate upon what these people would have done in this world had they not been so long and so cruelly neglected.[129]

This passage captured his insight into the many aspects of their lives, both positive and negative. It gave a clear grasp of the fuller picture of their existence. However, it portrayed them as powerless over their eventual destiny.

On reflecting on his experiences, Bulfin observed the different destinies of the Irish on the Pampas. While the majority achieved much, there were a number who returned to Ireland with a sense of failure. Some were unable for the discipline and challenge of camp life. Some were not able to secure work on the estancias because the work was very demanding. His advice to the young

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[127] Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier* (Lincoln & London, 1983), pp 1-6.
[128] Benedict Kiely, Man of the Pampas, p. 430.
[129] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 106.

immigrant was, 'to keep your aristocratic connections to yourself...you stand on your merits here...steer clear of the grog...and mind your religion.'[130]

There was a tendency among the Irish community to settle in centres that were within one hundred miles of the city of Buenos Aires, the inner camp. In'A Man of the Pampas' this preference is reinforced by the mother of the central character. Her prejudices against the outer camp are clearly stated: ' there's nothing out there – neither mass nor meeting, nor luck, nor a roof over your head nor a bed to lie on – no one to talk to but gauchos.'[131] However, Bulfin presented the advantages of the outer camp regions to the new immigrants. This was the real possibility of success for those with a pioneering spirit. His advice was clear and compelling;

> Go outside - God is out there just as well as in Mercedes or Carmen de Areco or Salto or anywhere else...where the stamp of industry is placed, where money is earned, where Christian homes are founded...the adjuncts of civilized life...the church, the post office, the shop, the policeman, the newspapers, the railway, the milliner, the barber...[132]

His detailed knowledge of the inside and outside camps allowed him to contrast the two and to inform the prospective settlers of the full picture. New settlers had certain fears and uncertainties about the unknown. However, Bulfin illustrated his arguments by presenting reassuring profiles of settlers and statistics. McKenna disagreed and maintained that 'life was primitive further out.'[133] He insisted that the rigours of the outer camp was far too great a challenge for the majority of settlers. While Bulfin was correct in saying that prosperity could be achieved there, his overall picture was romantic and somewhat misleading. However, his hero, Conor, in the novel does embrace the outside camp and achieves success and vindication. In the final paragraph he affirms the qualities in his hero. Bulfin praises his endeavours:

> It was the free man's spirit within you that rebelled against the lazy, narrow lot to which your parents' foolish pride and vanity would have bound you. You defied the false code of self respect which obtained amongst your class. You proclaimed that code to be a lie and a fraud and you tore it into shreds and trampled it under foot. You showed the value of self-reliance, the strength of self help, the nobility of honest toil. You went out into the world...[134]

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[130] *Southern Cross*, 7 Jan. 1898, p. 13.

[131] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13808, pp 93 – 99.

[132] *Southern Cross*, 15 June 1894, p. 2.

[133] McKenna, *Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina*, p. 292.

[134] NLI Bulfin Papers Ms 13808, p. 237.

While certain settlers were to achieve prosperity in the outer camps, there were others who failed. Often it was a question of commitment and the capacity to endure. Bulfin urged for a greater sense of courage and the pioneering spirit. By contrast, McKenna claimed that while large fortunes could be made by settling deep in the outer camp, very few were able to prosper there because of the harsh conditions.[135]

The Irish in Argentina achieved much by way of wealth and status. As a community the Irish became and have remained more prosperous than any other group in Argentina, argued McKenna.[136] Many were of humble origin and their starting point was a life of simplicity with few luxuries. Bulfin was conscious of a certain tendency to forget one's earlier life and to concentrate on the new state of prosperity. He wrote to this effect and reminded his readers to remember their past experiences. He reminded them that he was once 'a common peon in the camp, and an uncommonly bad one at that.'[137] It was, he felt, necessary to remind himself and others of the dangers of complacency and arrogance. In a camp sketch, he illustrated this dilemma, where one Irishman defends himself against the growing arrogance of his neighbour:

> I'm not a brute, because you say it, or a coward, but a man just as good as yourself. My father and you went to school together at home barefoot, both of you and equals, and now because you have four leagues of land...[138]

Bulfin met his future wife, Annie O'Rourke from Ballymore, Westmeath, while working on the Dowling estancia. She was employed there as a governess. He also made a number of close friends during his time on the Pampas, particularly among the Irish chaplains, and was to sustain these friendships throughout his life. His capacity to make and sustain friendships, even in the austere life on the Pampas, was clearly evident.

Bulfin felt the call of writing and sensed that the city was the only place that offered opportunities for journalism. His four years on the Pampas had been fruitful in many respects, but the city of Buenos Aires was to be his next

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[135] McKenna,'Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 295.
[136] Ibid., p. 356.
[137] *Southern Cross,* 26 Feb. 1897, p. 5.
[138] *Southern Cross*, 7 Sept. 1900, p. 7.

destination in his quest for pastures new. While the appeal of the camp was seductive, it had to be resisted in order reach out to other horizons. As Castro, the gaucho, advised:

> It is a graceless life, sure enough. Don't stick to it. Don't let it put its charms on you. It isn't good enough for those who are fit for anything higher. Yes, yes, it is a graceless life, but men like me who are born to it, can be made no worse by it. It is what has made me what I am. It is what will bring me to whatever end is to be mine.[139]

Bulfin was to admit that 'life on the Pampas was intellectually stagnant.'[140] There was very little by way of intellectual stimulus and life was circumscribed by the everyday routine of work on the camp. This view was also echoed by John Miers, when he observed the inhabitants of the camp and commented on 'the torpid state of their minds.'[141] In 1888, Bulfin visited his friend Father Samuel O'Reilly in Chivilcoy in order to seek advice about his future. After four years working on the Pampas he felt it was now time to leave. He discussed his future hopes in relation to a possible future as a journalist in Buenos Aires. The priest advised caution and felt it would be best to settle down in some business before embarking on a career as a journalist. Bulfin acknowledged the wisdom of this advice and decided to reflect further on the matter.[142] For Bulfin, Father O'Reilly was admirable – 'a man in a thousand, a good priest and a good Irishman.'[143]

However, Bulfin was also to record the ambiguity of his feelings in relation to his experiences on the Pampas. He was aware of the ironies it presented and reflected:

> An empty life, wasted years – I do not know – It was an experience and it had its lessons – now and then when the smoke is thick – the casual remembrance of other and simpler conditions of existence is welcome – a contrast – rejoice that your life was so full – rejoice that its memory remains.[144]

Because of his experiences on the camp, Bulfin was qualified to record what he observed. The Pampas proved to be an inspiration for him and his future

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[139] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas*, p. 100.
[140] NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 8) p. 4.
[141] John Miers, *Travels in Chile and La Plata* (London, 1826), p. 33.
[142] *Southern Cross*, 22 June 1900, p. 13.
[143] *Southern Cross*, 22 June 1900, p. 14.
[144] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug 1899, p. 13.

writings.[145] Kathleen Nevin concluded on a positive note in relation to her overall experiences in Argentina and stated that 'the country accepted us and was generous to us; and we gave it to our children...'[146] McKenna argued that both Brabazon and McCann presented an excellent insight into the conditions experienced by Irish emigrants who left Ireland for Argentina up to and including the famine.[147] However, Thomas Murphy felt that it was Bulfin's experiences in the Pampas coupled with his instincts as a writer that enabled him to best portray the realities of camp life:

> For no writer that I have any acquaintance with has so genuinely entered into the spirit of camp life and so accurately and sympathetically described it as Bulfin....Bulfin's descriptions...in the humorous vein, plentiful ornamentations and sometimes, perhaps, what would seem to be a generous colouring, but there is no invention, no overdrawing in the picture.[148]

While Bulfin reluctantly accepted the inevitability of the decline of the gauchos, he did not accept that the Irish community would be eventually absorbed and assimilated into the general pattern of life in Argentina. For him there were signs that this tide could be reversed and he was prepared to play his part.[149] From his early days on the Pampas he felt a growing urge to define and declare himself as an Irishman. He was determined to resist all pressures to that would tend to classify him as 'Ingleses', as an Englishman. This conviction of the importance of his national identity was to become a central part of his overall philosophy. However, McKenna argued that the wealthy Irish saw it differently and eventually chose assimilation into the wealthy British merchant and Creole class as their best option.[150] Bulfin resisted such pressures and this was to unfold as an ongoing source of conflict between him and certain sections of the Irish community in Argentina.

Commenting on a key passage from Bulfin's account of life on the Pampas, Benedict Kiely, the Irish author, remarked:

> The ingredients of that passage are an eye for colour and a remembrance of things past, an ability to see and value the phenomena of social change. In varying degrees they are almost always found among the ingredients of

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[145] *Southern Cross,* 5 Oct 1900, p. 17.
[146] Nevin, *You'll Never Go Back*, p. 226.
[147] McKenna, 'Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 28.
[148] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, pp 143-145.
[149] *Southern Cross*, 11 May 1900, p. 10.
[150] McKenna, 'Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 324.

> the good journalist and since the good journalist lives in cities, the cities claimed William Bulfin.[151]

Bulfin pondered on the reasons why he decided to leave the camp and move to Buenos Aires. His reflections led to the following conclusions:

> We often think we should be happier if we were somewhere else. There were times when I would almost give a year of my life for an hour or two under a certain beech tree in a certain Irish dale or for the privilege of rolling for a quarter of an hour amongst the grasshoppers in a certain Irish meadow. Yet when I was at that kind of work I wanted to be a few thousand miles away from it – I wanted to leave it so badly that I actually did it.[152]

Essentially he was aware of the ambiguities and contradictions that are part of everyday thinking and decision making. His reflections led to an understanding of the ironies of life.

Conclusion

The four years spent on the Pampas were to have a lasting effect on his life and to help shape the direction of his future. His experiences gave him an understanding and sympathy for the world of the exile. The practical work as a shepherd and 'capataz' (foreman) enabled him to deal with the rigours of camp life. His capacity to endure was tested by the extremes of hardship and loneliness of life on the Pampas. It did serve, however, to set a pattern that compelled him to overextend himself in future endeavours. However, his understanding of the lives of the Irish community on the Pampas was enriched and this brought with it a growing sense of his own identity as an Irishman. His regard and respect for the gauchos and their culture was to cast him in the role of their defender against the prevailing attitudes of the time. He met his future wife and also established close friendships with members of the Irish community. The seeds of future endeavours had been sown. He now had a greater sense of purpose and direction and decided to explore possibilities in journalism. All of these experiences were to be distilled in his imagination and eventually they became a major source of inspiration for his future writing.

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[151] Benedict Kiely, 'Man from the Pampas' in the *Capuchin Annual* (1948), p. 430.
[152] *Southern Cross*, 8 Dec 1899, p. 13.

Chapter 3

The Young Journalist in Buenos Aires

When William Bulfin decided to leave behind his life on the ranches of the Pampas and to pursue a career in journalism in Buenos Aires, he was to embrace a city that was vibrant, progressive and dynamic. Along with Rio de Janeiro, Sydney and Melbourne, it was one of the finest cities in the Southern Hemisphere.[1] In 1891 it had been declared the capital of Argentina and was acquiring all the facets of a truly modern and sophisticated city with its elegant squares, streamlined boulevards, commercial and banking centres, theatres, churches and growing population. It was the hub of life in Argentina and reflected all aspects of the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country.

Situated on the banks of the River Plate, the city had many natural advantages, with its rich hinterland of the Pampas, its wide and accessible port and developing system of communications. Shipping lines linked the city with the major ports of the world, particularly those of England, North America and Italy. There was almost daily communication between Europe and Buenos Aires with 46 steamers on a monthly basis in the busy season and never less than 24 at other times. [2] Rail communication was developing and five railways linked the city with outer regions. A tramway system also served the needs of the city.[3] There was also telegraphic communication with every part of the world.

Essentially the plan of the city streets conformed to a grid pattern that had 52 streets that ran from north to south and 31 that run from east to west. This covered an area of 3.5 miles by 2.5 miles. Most of the city banks were located in the Calle Reconquita. The merchants ran their business on the Calle Maypin. Calle Victoria was regarded as the main street for shops. On the Calle Piedad the money changers and newspapers could be found. The Calle Florida was renowned for beauty and the

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[1] M.G.& E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate* (London,1884), p. 238.
[2] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1921), p.107.
[3] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of River. Plate*, p.249.

world of fashion. [4] Twelve main squares, called plazas, were important features of the city with their fine buildings and historical associations. The cathedral in the Plaza Victoria was regarded as one of the finest churches in the new world. In all there were 24 Catholic churches and 4 chapels for dissenters.[5] In 1720 the Franciscans built the Recoletta cemetery. Of the six theatres in the city, the Colon on Plaza Victoria was the largest and held 2,500 persons. It was built in 1856 for performances of Italian Opera.

During the presidencies of Mitre, Sarmiento and Avellanda, (1863 – 1880) Buenos Aires shared largely in the national progress. The city, as capital and port, played an important role in the new prosperity and cultural development and became a powerful administrative centre.[6] In 1826, John Miers gave an unflattering account of the city and spoke of the dirt and decay that was in evidence there.[7] While the climate of the city was regarded as healthy, hence the name, the city was not in a good sanitary condition. However, by the year 1868 Wilfrid Latham was describing Buenos Aires as a large, handsome and prosperous city.[8] Events happened rapidly and the country had undergone great political, economic, cultural and social changes.

"La tierra de lo inesperado"

"The land of the unexpected"[9]

In 1857 the population of Buenos Aires was 78,000 and by the year 1869 it had grown to 177,000. It had reached the figure of 295,000 by the year 1882. [10]

During the nineteenth century there were many English language newspapers and periodicals. Even though they served a certain section of the Argentine community and had a limited circulation, they still managed to exert a great deal of influence. In 1861 *The Standard* was founded by the Mulhall brothers from Dublin and initially financed by Michael Duggan. [11] In the first issue the editors defined the policy of the paper as a means of creating a bond between the various members of the

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[4] Ibid., p. 239.
[5] Ibid., p. 241.
[6] Ione S. Wright & Lisa M. Nekhom, *Historical Dictionary of Argentina* (U.S.A., 1978), p.120.
[7] John Miers, *Travels in Chile and La Plata* (London, 1826), p. 4.
[8] Wilfrid Latham, *The States of the River Plate* (2nd ed., 1868), p.6.
[9] Bulfin Papers, NLI, Ms 13804 (Folder 8).
[10] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of River. Plate*, pp 10,11.
[11] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p.301.

Anglo Celtic race in Argentina – all who came from England, Ireland ,Wales, Scotland and America. The paper became a success and, in protecting the interests of settlers, it saw itself as the voice of the English speaking community. However, the historian Thomas Murphy and others felt that the Mulhalls were not loyal to Ireland but were, in fact, loyal to the queen and that their paper had become the recognized organ of the English community in Buenos Aires.[12]

Canon Dillon, who succeeded Fr Fahy as chaplain to the Irish community, issued the following circular stating that he was about to found a Catholic weekly in the English language:

> To supply the want of an Irish and Catholic organ in the country, the *Southern Cross* will appear on the 1st January (1875). I hope the paper will be found on the table of every Irish and English home in the Argentine Confederation. I have already experienced the love you bear your religion and the land of your fathers and consequently count on you for support. The tone of the paper will be liberal (like the *Freeman* of Dublin). The paper will not adhere to any particular party in this country. The events of the world will be narrated with comments which proceed from a strictly impartial pen. The paper will contain general Irish, English and North American news and the Catholic news of the world, as well as the news of the country in which we live. To be enabled to do this, I have already appointed correspondents in Dublin, Rome and New York.[13]

The paper was to cost twenty dollars a month and it came out as promised. For a while Frank M. Mulhall became its editor and manager under Canon Dillon. In October 1879 Mulhall retired from its service and Canon Dillon continued in charge. For some time the *Southern Cross* was published in the office of the *Standard* and at its inception the Mulhalls were very friendly towards it. Michael Dinneen from Bandon, Co Cork was appointed as editor in the year 1882 and he held sole control for a period of ten years until 1892.[14] During his editorship the paper had developed a sturdy and robust presence and he proved to be strong and fearless champion for the

[12] Ibid., p. 303.
[13] Ibid., p. 394.
[14] Ibid., p. 445.

Irish community in Argentina.[15] Dinneen retired from the paper and died in his native Bandon in October, 1896. He had been a professor in a university in Chile. It was his intention to open a college in San Pedro, when the editorship of the paper was handed to him. He was a highly educated man, an able writer and is said to have translated the classics into Gaelic. He opposed the City of Dresden enterprise and with the *Standard* attempted to prevent all that happened. Among the other English language papers was the *Buenos Aires Herald* founded by William T. Cathcard in September 1876.[16] It began life as a weekly, but soon became a daily and served the Buenos Aires community. On the 5th December, 1891 the *Review of the River Plate* was first published and it established itself as an influential financial journal. It had a wide circulation in Argentina and abroad. The *St Andrew's Gazette* was founded to serve the interests of the Scots and the first issue was published on 31st January, 1894.[17]

A warm welcome was extended in the editorial of the *Southern Cross* in January 1888 to the prospect of a new paper to be called the *Irish Argentine*.[18] It was to be published in Azcuenaga near Carmen de Areco and to be edited by its founder, Fr Bernard Feeney (1844 – 1919). It was described as being a strenuous defender of Catholicism, as well as Irish and Argentine rights. The *Irish Argentine* was to have been published weekly, but in the course of a year only twelve issues were produced.[19]

William Bulfin contributed his very early newspaper articles to the *Irish Argentine* and they were published by the editor, Fr Bernard Feeney. He used the pen name Bullfinch, which appropriately reflected the origins of his own surname and also his interest in the world of ornithology[20]. Not only was this nom de plume a link with his own name but it also captured that picturesque personality that was very much part of his nature – colourful, lively and striking. His articles consisted of accounts and stories of life on the Pampas and were based on his own experiences of

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[15] See obituary notice in *Southern Cross*, 6 Nov., 1896, pp 4-5.
[16] Oliver Marshall, *English Language Press in Latin America*, pp 5-6.
[17] Ibid., p. 10.
[18] *Southern Cross*, 6 Jan.1888, p. 4.
[19] Oliver Marshall, *The English Language Press in Latin America* (London, 1896), p. 1.
[20] Ibid., p.1

camp life. Like the paper itself, they were directed at the rural Irish community that lived in the Pampas near Carmen de Areco, San Antonio de Areco, Mercedes, Pergamino, Giles and Lucan. The paper was of local interest and its circulation was limited. In March 1889 the final issue was published.

Having decided to pursue a career in journalism, Bulfin felt that Buenos Aires was the most obvious starting point for him. Initially he worked for a furniture trading company in the city. He then obtained a post as a lecturer in English in the Salvador College.[21] While working on the ranches of the Pampas he met Annie O'Rourke of Ballacurra, Co Westmeath. She was a governess at the Dowling Estancia near Carmen de Areco.[22] On the 4th November, 1891 they were married at the Church of the Holy Cross in Buenos Aires.[23] Their marriage was blessed with harmony and contentment. In the following year their son, Eamonn, the first of their five children was born.[24] In the following years their daughters Mary, Anita, Aileen and Catalina were born. They settled in the city and lived in the Palermo district with its fine parklands and view of the River Plata.[25] Bulfin always maintained that his wife, Annie, was to become the person that sustained him at all times. In later years, he confided in his friend Henry Egan Kenny (Sean Ghall) ;

> Whatever I am or hope to be, Sean Ghall, I owe to her; she has been my support, my comforter, my sunshine, my guide and my pride. Years ago I should have been submerged but for her stout heart and prayerful soul.[26]

Michael Dinneen was editor of the *Southern Cross* and was on friendly terms with Bulfin. For the best part of a year Bulfin sent him articles for publication, but they were rejected on the grounds that they were not up to the required standard. Bulfin persisted in his attempts and late in year 1890, when the Dinneen was out of town, the sub-editor published one of his articles.[27] Bulfin signed the article with the latin proverb Cui Bono?, meaning "What odds?". The printer changed it to Che Buono

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[21] William Bulfin, *Tales of the Pampas* (Buenos Aires, 1997), See Preface by Susan Wilkinson, unpaginated.
[22] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811(Folder 1)
[23] Registro Civil, Buenos Aires, No 20324.
[24] Registro Civil, Buenos Aires, No 33043
[25] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 1)
[26] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn* (7th edition, Dublin, 1920), Preface, p. xvi.
[27] *Southern Cross*, 7 Jan. 1899, p. 13.

because he may have had difficulty reading the handwriting. [28] The nom de plume remained and followed him for the rest of his life. However, Dinneen was critical of the article when he returned. With time, praise came and he was encouraged to write more. This encouragement from the editor gave him the impetus to become a regular contributor to the paper. In the years ahead, Dinneen proved to be both mentor and friend.[29]

Bulfin established himself as a weekly columnist with the *Southern Cross* with a series entitled Sketches of Buenos Aires and signed with his nom de plume Che Buono. He wrote about key issues of his day and particularly how he related to his adopted city and country. Looking around him he was clearly influenced to respond to the community that lived and worked in the city ; the native Creole, the different ethnic groups, the Italians, Spanish, French, German, Turks, English, Scots, Irish and many others.[30] Essentially he explored the important political, economic, social and cultural aspects of their lives.

There is a sense in which the subject matter of his writings, at this stage, can be identified and classified as follows: political world at local, national and international level; the social services; social issues; religious and ethical issues, and the arts and society. One of the vexed questions for the Irish community, at home and abroad, was the issue of Irishmen enlisting in the English army. Letters to the *Southern Cross* during the first half of the year 1891 were critical of Irishmen who fought for England in the Peninsula and Crimean Wars. Bulfin defended the heroes of these wars and adopted a very balanced approach.[31] He gave an incisive account of why so many of the Irish found their way into the English armies and considered the following factors to be crucial: the economic climate, the impact of recruiting sergeants, the glamour, human vulnerability, human frailty and laughing girls. With his keen sense of military history he could illustrate his ideas with telling examples. He could also relate it to personal experience and recounted how in his own native county Offaly in Ireland, where Sergeant Nolan, one of the last of the Waterloo

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[28] *Southern Cross*, 20 Nov. 1896, p. 5.
[29] *Southern Cross*, 7 Jan. 1899, p.13.
[30] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 8), p. 6.
[31] Ibid., Ms 13804 (Folder 5), p. 6.

veterans, was well regarded by local people. Bulfin was aware of the public mood among the Irish in Argentina but was fearless enough to say – 'But I defend the memory of any man who dies bravely doing his duty.'[32] On the question of Parnell, Bulfin was clear in his praise of the fallen leader and was reluctant to condemn him.[33] Bulfin, in line with many exiles, was aware of Parnell's political achievements and, therefore, would not allow private issues to detract from the public life of the man.

While the *Southern Cross* held firmly and consistently to its role as defender of the rights of the Irish community, it also challenged them on a number of important aspects of their lives in Argentina. As McKenna noted, the Irish were not successful urban dwellers and the majority were spread over the broad Pampas in the Province of Buenos Aires.[34] Fr Anthony Fahy and Thomas Armstrong had been the undisputed leaders of the Irish community and they had recommended rural settlement to the Irish immigrants for social, cultural and economic reasons.[35] This prevented the growth of a viable Irish community in the city. They did not participate in the political life of the country and were reluctant to exert their growing economic power in any way.[36] However, Bulfin always felt that a debt of gratitude was owed to the Argentine nation for the hospitality, friendship and opportunity afforded to Irish immigrants which enabled them to lead contented and prosperous lives.[37] Therefore, he argued, it was essential for them to participate fully in the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of their adopted country.

Leadership at local, national and international level was to remain a dominant concern for Bulfin throughout his life. He was convinced that good citizenship involved a commitment to the political process and therefore he advocated that the Irish community should play their part. He was motivated, not only by a desire to improve and help his own community, but also he saw clearly the need for men of

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[32] *Southern Cross*, 19 June, 1891, p. 5.
[33] *Southern Cross*, 9 Jan. 1891, p. 4.
[34] Patrick Mc Kenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p.15.
[35] Ibid. p. 241.
[36] Ibid. p.139.
[37] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms. 13804 (Folder 10), p.15.

vision, courage and political skills who could have a lasting impact on the lives of all men, regardless of creed or race .[38]

In focusing on the Irish community, Bulfin noted that only a very small number of them resided in the capital of Buenos Aires. Since the death of Fr Fahy there had been disintegration rather than unity among the community.[39] There was no social or political union. There was no landmark fixed to mark material or moral progress. No charitable institutions had been founded, no schools endowed and no monuments erected. There was no leader to succeed Fr Fahy. Neither Fr Fahy nor Thomas Armstrong had groomed a successor.[40] Their combined leadership worked well, but ended with the death of Fr Fahy in the year 1871. There was no man of great influence and broad national sympathy who could call his countrymen together to make a united stand. Bulfin felt that the time was favourable for a union among the Irish. It was time for a new leader to emerge in order to unify and consolidate the Irish community and to add a positive contribution to the political life of Argentina.[41]

The *Southern Cross* saw itself as the organ of the Irish community and consistently campaigned for its welfare in both city and camp. Bulfin subscribed in full to this. He constantly recommended that the Irish in Argentina should look to themselves, to their own culture and develop a strong sense of personal identity and individuality. They should resist the temptation to identify with England. They should become more self reliant and less dependent on English ideas and traditions.

> We should have more feelings of individuality. To me it is clear that we Irlandeses and our children – Hiberno-Argentinos – will never be worth anything, while we are cultivating English ideas. I am in favour of strong Christian courtesy and tolerance to English people, but I do not believe in copying Ingleses.[42]

Mercedes, a camp town, located in the Pampas about sixty miles north of Buenos Aires, was one of the places favoured by the Irish immigrants and they had

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[38] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 496.
[39] *Southern Cross*, 27 July, 1894, p. 4.
[40] Patrick McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p.141.
[41] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804
[42] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13812.

established themselves there over many years.[43] In a series of articles based on his own experiences of the town, Bulfin presented Mercedes in a sympathetic and enthusiastic light. The Irish community had made positive contributions to the life of the town and their presence was well regarded. His account and descriptions of the important aspects of their social lives included: the Sunday rituals, mass, shopping, the segregation of men and women, the children, the social groups and the schools. In particular, he made reference to St Patrick's College and its superior, Fr Patrick O Grady. The college had established an excellent reputation served the needs of the Irish community in the town and outlying districts.[44] In one of his articles, he examined the fashionable side of life in the town. He then went on to convey the economic realities of managing a sheep or cattle ranch in order to live in such comfort.[45] From his own experiences and from observation, he could portray for his readers the very heart of camp life in Mercedes and bring before them a vibrant Irish community.[46]

Argentina, as a new independent state, had its own constitution and government. It was designated a federal republic with fourteen provinces in all. The President and Vice President had to be native born. They were elected for a period of six years.[47] The country had its own regular army, with 800 artillery, 2500 cavalry and 3,500 infantry – in all 6,800 men.[48] Bulfin understood fully the central and important role of the army in terms of national security and the preservation of the state. He saw clearly the internal and external forces that made the country vulnerable. The border with Chile remained a source of dispute an uncertainty. Therefore, in writing about national celebrations and military parades, he was careful to note and stress what was really important. His account of the national celebrations and military parade – The National Guard – which took place in Buenos Aires on the 9th July, 1894 – was both detailed and perceptive. He presented the pageantry in all its stages : the arrival of the President of the Republic, the church services, naval and

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[43] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p.124.
[44] *Southern Cross*, 25 May, 1894, p. 5.
[45] *Southern Cross*, 1 June, 1894, p. 2.
[46] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p.143.
[47] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 92.
[48] Ibid., p. 69.

military cadets, the National guard, drums, flags, trumpets, crowds of well dressed people, flowers showered from balconies, cavalry and artillery. He was aware of the platform oratory that had little substance, but noted with real pleasure the major levels of progress in the army itself. This progress, he felt, was an important reason for celebration and reassurance for his readers and all the citizens of Argentina.[49]

Buenos Aires had its own Intendent or Lord Mayor, who was appointed by the president.[50] The office was clearly open to abuse and Bulfin felt justified in offering his own criticism. He wrote about the contradictions and mistakes made by those who held the office over the years, illustrating his criticisms with convincing examples.[51] His advice to future incumbents was clear and strong and flavoured with his usual wit and hyperbole. The list of suggestions ranged from dealing with stray dogs on the streets to the new taxes that were to be imposed on the citizens. His satirical pen with its various shades of humour and irony enabled him to both entertain and inform his readers about the reality of public office and to advocate the need for reform. Because the mayor was one of the leading players on the crowded stage of Buenos Aires, it was important that his role should have a positive impact on the lives of the citizens.

Political leadership and vision were essential for the future progress of Argentina and Bulfin persisted in addressing this issue in his writings. In his book *South American Sketches* (1898), Robert Crawford states his conviction that Argentina and the other Southern States of South America needed to free themselves from the legacy of political upheaval and disturbance.[52] Crawford was convinced that ignoring the facts would not cure the disease. For the country to advance with the times, the skeletons must be laid bare and banished for all time.[53] Bulfin shared this conviction and in his article 'Glorified Mediocrities' he expanded on the nature of the problem and how it might be resolved. He argued that Argentina was one of the finest and richest countries under the sun, but that it was lacking in effective leadership. [54] The minister of war had just proposed to create eight new generals. There were

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[49] *Southern Cross*, 13 July 1894, p. 4.
[50] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 260.
[51] *Southern Cross*, 31 Aug. 1894, pp 4-5.
[52] Robert Crawford, *South American Sketches* (London, 1898), p. 279.
[53] Ibid., p.278.
[54] *Southern Cross*, 5 Oct. 1894, p. 4.

already forty one and Bulfin felt that three would have been sufficient. Essentially the country needed to clarify its vision and simplify its administration. It needed a mastermind and not vain reputations. The country was divided and badly governed and, therefore, a strong leader with vision, ability, integrity and courage was essential. Bulfin presented his idea of a true patriot and how he could transform Argentina. He could unite the country and promote among the citizens the civic virtues of loyalty, thrift, honour and industry. The country was waiting for such a leader.

Bulfin continued to evaluate the role and effect of the army.[55] On the 9th July, 1895 the annual celebration of the National Guard took place and he was pleased to note that there were many improvements. He praised General Luis Maria Campos for his positive impact on army morale and spirit. However, in his constant search for high standards, Bulfin had recommendations to make. He advised that the guards be taught more open and close order tactics, a little taste of campaign life, cavalry training and riot marching. In his evaluation and advice, he was alerting his readers to the necessity of the army and its important role in terms of national security.

In January, 1895 the President, Dr Luis Saenz resigned and the Argentine daily newspapers said they had forecast this. Over a long period the Press had attacked him because of his antagonism to the Press, his sense of dress, his Catholicism and his refusal to grant an amnesty. Bulfin was determined to defend the president against the bias of the Press, the party system and the army.[56] He argued that Dr Saenz had been elected by compromise and that he did not have a party behind him. In spite of his faults and mistakes, he did assume the cares of office as a patriotic citizen would do and he tried to keep the law. His intentions were always good. It was important for Bulfin to alert his readers to the influence and power of the party system, the army and the press in the political world of Argentina. In standing against the popular press and public opinion, he displayed a strong sense of personal conviction and independence of thought and spirit.[57]

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[55] *Southern Cross*, 12 July 1895, p. 4.
[56] *Southern Cross,* 25 Jan. 1895, p. 4.
[57] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13803 (Folder 8) , p.5.

Bulfin attempted to inform the government, the policy makers, the army and the public of the full truth of the situation. He stressed the need for a radical reform in the army. Army officers had always been chosen on the basis of favouritism and not on merit. His advice was that there should be more practice drilling, new artillery, better tactics and promotion on the basis of merit. In its present state the National Guard was not fit to defend the country.[58] This confrontational and combative approach to the important issues of his day became part of his crusading mission. He felt it was the duty of the journalist to inform, to expose, to challenge and to promote reforms.[59]

Government policy in relation to the economic development of Argentina as a whole was of major concern to Bulfin and he addressed the situation in a series of articles. He confronted the policy makers with their neglect of Rosario. He argued that it had the potential to be one of the great South American ports of the future. It would, he felt, be necessary to make a full study of Rosario in order to develop its growing importance as a commercial port. He detailed the state of decay and neglect that existed in the town and port for his readers. As he was aware of the physical, economic and political realities, he was careful to present clear and practical suggestions to remedy the situation.[60] While his outlook was positive, he realised it was necessary to launch a strong attack on local and national government in order to achieve any results.

In his article entitled 'Some Humours of the Week', Bulfin outlined the political crisis that faced Argentina. He was cynical of the endeavours of political figures like Roca, Mitre and Pellegrini, whom he felt were individually and collectively responsible for state of the country.[61] He had become disillusioned with national politics and accused the President and leading politicians of hypocrisy. The sharp satirical tone clearly revealed that his anger and impatience were growing. It was his duty as a journalist to confront the truth.[62]

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[58] *Southern Cross*, 26 July, 1895, p. 4.
[59] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13812, pp 12-14.
[60] *Southern Cross*, 6 July, 1894, p. 2.
[61] *Southern Cross*, 16 Nov. 1894, p. 4.
[62] *Southern Cross,* 23 Mar. 1894, p. 4.

The Chilean boundary question remained a recurring problem for the Argentine government. Given the location of the Andes mountains on the Chilean Argentine border, and all the ambiguities relating to the boundary line, it was an issue that was left unsettled. Bulfin interviewed Captain Richards, a Welshman and mining expert, and the Chilean boundary question was discussed in depth.[63] Both men agreed that the industry was in need of reform and that the government must take action. There should be a ministry of mining and agriculture and the examples of Cape, Australia and California were cited. Richards felt strongly about the grave situation of the ownership of the lands occupied by the Upper Welsh colony. Chile's claim to the land could be made good. Both Richards and Bulfin felt that people in Buenos Aires were not aware of the full situation. Although the Welsh saw the Chilean people as good friends, the dangers of invasion remained and, therefore, Argentina should at all times be prepared for war. Both agreed that it was essential for the Argentine government to fortify the Rio Negro and open it up for navigation, that the valley should be pierced by a railway, that military stations be established along the passes and that the country should be prepared for war. Bulfin was not an alarmist, but he saw that these recommendations for safety were practical and compelling.[64]

Any understanding of Argentine's political situation would involve an examination of how the country related to neighbouring countries and the world beyond. In his article 'A Glance at the International Situation' (19th July,1895), Bulfin addressed the crisis of the impending war with Chile and placed it in the context of the power politics of South America with the key players presented in a critical light.[65] Uruguay, located as it was on the other side of the River Plate, was attempting to retain its own neutrality. Brazil was watching the events in anticipation. Paraguay was also in a state of readiness. Bolivia was without a sea port and was anxiously trying to negotiate a seaboard that would allow it commercial and trading access with other nations. Peru was ruled by political leaders who were in close sympathy with Chile. Chile, itself, had to deal with its own political and financial crisis. Bulfin's description and analysis of the crisis was incisive and challenging.

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[63] *Southern Cross,* 14 Sept. 1894, pp 4-5.
[64] *Southern Cross*, 29 May 1896, p. 5.
[65] *Southern Cross*, 19 July, 1895, pp 4-5.

Vested interests in the Press and the Bolsa (The Stock Exchange) were exploiting the situation for their own advantage. A certain section of the Press was in league with speculators at the Bolsa and they both conspired to incite a climate of impending war.

War had broken out between China and Japan and the telegraphic services of Buenos Aires indicated that Japan was to be swallowed up by China. This sentiment was echoed by editors and staff.[66] Bulfin challenged this view of the war and argued that *The Times* and a number of other influential papers had certain controls over the transmission of telegraphic messages abroad. He argued that there was a bias in the press and telegraphic services against Japan and that it originated in England. His account of the war was graphic, clear, ordered and detailed. He was able to look ahead and envisage the social and political future for Korea. He championed the rising star of the yellow race and felt they were destined to triumph. As a political correspondent, he had a sense of history and an insight into world powers, military strategies and war tactics. He also had a sense of destiny in relation to the Yellow Race and his world view was essentially that of an opinionated commentator.

As the war in the East continued, Bulfin continued to champion the case for Japan. He was pleased to report Japan's progress and felt that a new and wonderful nation had risen to confront England and Russia in Europe. His defence of Japan against her detractors was spirited and fervent.[67] The days had gone for sneering at Japan and here was a new and wonderful nation that was set to reconstruct the East. In selecting the important stages and details of the war, he presented a convincing account to his readers of Japan as a worthy and probable victor.

When it was announced that the war was over and that Japan had won Bulfin was pleased, but not surprised. He had consistently championed Japan and felt they were worthy victors. While he celebrated their victory, he recommended caution.[68] In turning to the future, he could see the rise of Japan. Her people could manufacture and drive bargains and they were both artistic and practical. It would be necessary to keep an army and a navy. However, the spirit of militarism must be prevented from entering into the internal politics of the country. He was aware that nations, flushed

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[66] *Southern Cross*, 21 Sept. 1894, p. 4.
[67] *Southern Cross*, 30 Nov. 1894, p. 2.
[68] *Southern Cross*, 19 Apr. 1895, pp.4-5.

with the victory of war, could be over zealous in times of peace. Japan, he hoped, would know how to keep the peace as well as to win the war.

World events impinged in different ways on Argentina. For Bulfin, the death of Alexander III of Russia in 1894 had its own particular significance. In his analysis of his legacy, he presented the man in the full context of Russian history. [69] The population of the country had doubled and trade had also doubled. However, he felt, that militarism was not progress and that the progress of a nation could only be judged by its constitions and laws, educational statistics, its method of administering justice and also its foreign policy. In Russia only a small percentage of the population went to school. Harsh laws reigned over the peasants and the Russian peasant was despondent, cowed and took refuge in drunkenness. The laws discriminated against the poor. Bulfin argued that the young Nicholas II would have to lift up his people, to liberate and educate them and to shape the destiny of Russia. He saw the situation as a major crisis in the national life of Russia and felt the country had a chance to pass to greatness or sink into despair.

In his writings about Germany and England, Bulfin explored the economic conflict that existed between the two countries. He portrayed William II of Germany as ambitious, greedy and dangerous and a sharp practitioner in the market place in Buenos Aires. England, for all her faults as a colonial and European power, did not engage in the same corrupt trade practices as Germany.[70] He argued that Germany had become mercenary and devoid of public spirit. His acute awareness of the practices in the world of commerce and economics enabled him to present a clear picture of the forces that shape countries and their destinies.

The plight of Cuba caught the sympathy and moral imagination of Bulfin. He wrote about the unfolding story of Cuba and placed it in a detailed historical context. In focusing on Spain's colonial history, with all its oppression and betrayals, he evoked a sympathy in his readers for the Cubans and their attempts to gain liberation.[71] He presented the ongoing war between Spain and Cuba in terms of the different stages, the statistics and the role of the leaders. He noted that Cuba was

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[69] *Southern Cross*, 9 Nov. 1894, p. 2.
[70] *Southern Cross*, 17 Jan. 1896, p. 4.
[71] *Southern Cross*, 27 Mar. 1896, pp 4-5.

about twice the size of Ireland, had a debt of £40,000,000 and a population of 1,500,000. It cost Spain more to govern the island than she received from it. His defence of Cuba was passionate and convincing, because he believed their cause was right. He exposed Spain's oppressive rule, the role of the Catholic Church in blessing the Spanish battalions before they went out to war and also the godfather role of the United States of America. He proved to be a persuasive advocate for Cuba.

Immigration continued to dominate as a social and economic reality throughout the nineteenth century. Immigrants from Italy, Spain, France, Germany, United States, Turkey, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and other countries arrived on the shores of Argentina.[72] The table below indicates the number of immigrants, who entered the Argentine Republic during the thirty two year period from 1857 – 1888.[73]

Table 3.1. Number of Immigrants entering Argentine Republic, 1857-1888.

1857	4,951
1867	17,046
1877	36,325
1887	120,842
1888	155,632

Source: *Correspondence respecting Emigration to the Argentine Republic* (C-5873), Vol. lxxvi, p. 7.

Of these 65% were Italians, 14.6% were Spanish, 9.27% were French, 2.32% were English and Irish and 0.78% were Germans.

Italians were by far the largest immigrant community in Argentina, particularly in Buenos Aires. Between the years 1857 and 1888, 65% of the immigrants who entered the Argentine Republic were from Italy.[74] Statues were erected to MacMahon and Garibaldi to commemorate and celebrate the unification of

[72] NLI, Bulfin Papers. Ms. 13804 (Folder 8) , p.2.
[73] *Correspondence respecting Emigration to the Argentine Republic* (C-5873), 1889, lxxvi, p. 7.
[74] *Correspondence respecting Emigration to the Argentine Republic*, p.7 [C – 5873] H.C. lxxvi

Italy. The new monuments and the celebrations provided Bulfin with the opportunity to examine the careers and legacies of these two men. He contrasted their legacies and the impact made by the two men. Italy remained in an uncertain state and he was doubtful that any real and lasting unification had been achieved.[75] His lack of enthusiasm in relation to these leaders and the future of Italy was certainly conveyed to his readers.

In an attempt to deal with this situation and the excessive influx of Italians, Argentine information offices were established in France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Great Britain, Denmark, Portugal and the USA.[76] But when the ship 'City of Dresden' arrived in Buenos Aires from Ireland with 1,800 Irish immigrants on 16th February, 1889 there was little by way of provision or order and this resulted in a great deal of hardship and suffering. Under the Immigration Law of 1876:

> Immigrants are entitled to be lodged and boarded in a proper manner at the expense of the nation during the five days subsequent to the landing and to be conveyed to their lodgings in that part of the territory which they prefer to settle. [77]

The Argentine officials were held responsible, but Michael Dinneen and the *Southern Cross*, among others, gave help and support to the stranded immigrants.[78] People had been enticed by the lure of a free passage and it was felt that in the future emigration from Ireland would have to undergo a process of selection.

As early as 1824 a committee was established to look after the welfare of immigrants.[79] In Buenos Aires there was the Emigrants' Home near Plazo Retiro that provided free board and lodgings for distressed immigrants until they could get employment. It received 7,000 people annually. The Immigration Law of 1889 did provide immigrants arriving at the port of Buenos Aires with the right to be lodged and boarded during the five days subsequent to their landing.[80] This was to be at the

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[75] *Southern Cross*, 7 June, 1895.p.5.
[76] Ibid., p.1.
[77] Ibid. p.12.
[78] Ibid, p.12.
[79] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 253.
[80] *Correspondence respecting Emigration to the Argentine Republic* [C-5873], 1889, lxxvi, p. 12.

expense of the state. They were also entitled to be conveyed to the destination of their choice in Argentina. The *Southern Cross* was always alert to the plight of Irish immigrants and did all they could to help the victims of the Dresden affair.[81]

One of Bulfin's first articles to be published in the *Southern Cross* was entitled the 'Old Passenger Mole'. In 1826, John Miers in his travels in Chile and La Plata noted that he landed on a kind of jet in Buenos Aires, called the Mole, formed of rough blocks of mica slate.[82] Marian Mulhall referred to the mole as the Bridge of Sighs that victims had to pass over when they arrived at the docks of Buenos Aires.[83] With its slippery planks and numerous holes, it reinforced for her the negative impression that immigrants could have of the port of Buenos Aires. But for Bulfin the old passenger mole had become symbolic of many things. He described the mixture of feelings the immigrants experienced as they walked along the mole on their arrival. It provided shelter for 'victims of themselves sometimes or, sometimes, victims of others or of fate.' [84] The various nationalities, Italian, Spanish, French, German, English and Irish displayed their own native characteristics as they walked along the mole on their arrival after the long journey across the Atlantic. Like many waterside features, the mole had become a favourite waterside promenade for Bulfin and the citizens of Buenos Aires.

As a cosmopolitan city, Buenos Aires was host to a vast array of nationalities and personalities. His article entitled 'Hotel Table Talk' provided Bulfin with the opportunity to present in a comic vein a cross section of life in the city.[85] He profiled the Italians with their wild assumptions, the French "all talking together" and concluded that three or four Frenchmen will discuss thirty subjects in an hour. He observed that the Spaniards – "they spit on the floor and they fold their napkins most artistically". The topic at one table was the Parnell case and various views were being expressed. Bulfin was a keen and perceptive observer of races and very much a man with outgoing social instincts.

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[81] Ibid. p. 15.
[82] John Miers, *Travels in Chile and La Plata* (London, 1826), p. 4.
[83] Marian Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes*, p.1.
[84] *Southern Cross*, 26 Dec. 1890, p. 2.
[85] *Southern Cross*, 16 Jan. 1891, p. 5.

He observed how the social system operated with what he termed its "fixed stars, meteors and comets". [86] The social circles kept apart and the different nationalities kept among themselves. At this stage, the population of the city was almost half a million people. Among the Irish community he noted the level of social interaction and gossip. He could say – "Privacy, secrecy and circumspection are meaningless words here."

As Bulfin humorously observed, we all must eat. For him, eating habits revealed much about society and its social mores. Hotels, restaurants, fondas, boarding houses and the street corners provided the setting where people ate their food in public. He noted that a typical boarding house in Buenos Aires would house many bachelors, old and young, who would pay 80 to 100 dollars per month for board and lodging. One of his articles described his own experience of a boarding house with 32 boarder, property of an aged widowed owner with the following residents; two professors, four school mistresses, three journalists, two artists, an Italian anarchist, two American book canvassers and others. [87] While English was the language most spoken, scraps of Norwegian, Spanish and French passed freely about. In all of this, he remarked on the poor food and abundance of conversation. In another situation, he captured the rushed pace of eating habits at lunchtime among the workers of Buenos Aires.[88] Another aspect of the eating habits of the citizens of Buenos Aires was described when the reader was introduced to a typical German restaurant and its proprietor. Bulfin recounted his own comic experiences with detailed observations of the proprietor, diners and the food. [89]

In order to establish a vivid picture of the various ethnic groups, Bulfin presented them in their working, social and recreational environment. In the case of the American community, he profiled them against the background of their homes and their national game of baseball. He observed that the referee, players and spectators were chewing gum at a baseball match he had just attended in Buenos

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[86] *Southern Cross*, 10 July 1891, p. 4.
[87] *Southern Cross*, 1 Sept.1893, pp 4-5.
[88] *Southern Cross*, 8 Sept. 1893, pp 4-5.
[89] *Southern Cross*, 29 Sept. 1893

Aires.[90] With humorous broad strokes he highlighted the sense of constant facial and body movement amongst players and spectators. Visiting Americans in their homes, he discovered the existence of the rocking chair and all the movement it implied. From this satirical portrayal, he came to the comic conclusion that Americans had no capacity for repose and that they were in a state of constant movement. However, he detailed his reactions to the game of baseball and allowed his readers to share them with him.[91] By asking the elementary questions about the rules, he succeeded in bringing the game alive before his readers. He understood the importance of understanding and learning about other cultures and traditions.

The widespread existence of poverty in Buenos Aires was to constantly exercise Bulfin's concern and moral imagination.[92] He recorded the figure of 20,000 homeless children who were scattered over the city, living on doorsteps and the gullies of the sidewalks. By his detailed and evocative description of their everyday existence, he conveyed to his readers a convincing and moving picture of human misery and suffering. He depicted scenes of squalor and human degradation that had a Dickensian quality about them. These children were on the road to self destruction, crime and vice. He was moved to anger and compassion and challenged the state, church and law for their neglect of the situation. He could write with great force, clarity and conviction:

> While we are engaged in politics and polemics, thousands of boys and girls are preparing for a future in the gutter. Children die day after day from unmentionable diseases ....our prisons are well filled.....revolution follows revolution....and the country can only be governed by a state of siege.[93]

As a consequence of so many disparate elements, crime was to manifest itself in a variety of ways in Buenos Aires. In a series of articles, Bulfin focused mainly on the incidents of murder, assault and theft that were prevalent in the city and the camp. His examination of the various cases included an exploration of the motives for the crimes and also of the roles of the police and the law. His analysis of the case of Enrique Campanelli, a man guilty of assault, abduction and murder, led him to

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[90] *Southern Cross*, 17 May 1895
[91] *Southern Cross*, 10 May, 1895, p.
[92] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 6) p.27.
[93] *Southern Cross*, 20 Oct. 1893, p. 5.

conclude that the courts were over- lenient.[94] The popular press proved to be irresponsible by pleading the case of the defendant and the judge erred on the side of leniency. By making the defendant into a hero, the press and the law created the possibility of further crime. Bulfin found himself campaigning for the rigour of the law to be implemented fairly and justly and for the press to exercise a real sense of social responsibility.

Serious crime continued to have its consequences, not just for society, but also for the law courts and the prison system. Murderers found themselves in jails awaiting sentencing. There were long delays in the administration of justice.[95] In his exploration of domestic crimes, he concluded that property was perceived by the public and the law courts to be more important than life itself.[96] In examining the case of Henry Tormey from the camp district near Mercedes, who shot a man in self defence, Bulfin expressed his anger and disbelief at the unfolding events. Tormey was still awaiting his trial after spending sixteen months in prison.[97] This was clearly an injustice. Bulfin felt compelled to call for major reforms in the workings of the law courts and the prison system.

Bulfin was very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of his adopted countrymen. The excessive consumption of alcohol was manifesting itself as a social problem in Argentinean society. Brewing was an important industry in Argentina and alcohol was readily available.[98] In a number of vivid scenes, he established a clear picture of the drinking habits to be found in the city. Drinking to excess was leading to the problem of addiction. 'We are drinking too much and the women are learning from the men.[99] After confronting his readers with the realities of the national drinking habits, he advocated a series of remedies. It would, he argued, be necessary to try all possible solutions including abstinence, pledges, leagues, gymnasiums and circulating libraries.

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[94] *Southern Cross*, 19 January, 1894, p. 4.
[95] *Southern Cross*, 28 Sept. 1894. p. 4.
[96] *Southern Cross*, 21 Dec. 1894, pp 4-5.
[97] *Southern Cross*, 1 June 1894, p. 2.
[98] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p.260.
[99] *Southern Cross*, 5 July, 1895, p. 5.

Gambling to excess was also manifesting itself as a cause for concern. Bulfin profiled the lives of gamblers and illustrated how the addiction could develop.[100] The victims had become enslaved to the whirlwind of sudden gains and losses. Their eventual fate would be to lose all. His advice to his readers was to reflect on their own lives and to confront any possible tendencies to yield to the habit of gambling. However, his main target was the government for its role in encouraging the National Lottery. He argued for the abolition of the National Lottery as a means of discouraging the habit of gambling. A government must protect and not endanger its people.

Extravagant living was endemic in the life style of Argentine society. Bulfin was critical of the lavish spending and extravagance that ended up in the courts of bankruptcy.[101] With a sharp and satirical pen, he pointed to how bankruptcy had been made easy and that it had become fashionable and contagious. He saw it as one of the main blights in the city, which was inherited from the system of fraudulent government inaugurated by the regime of Roca and consummated by that of Pellegrini. He traced the source of the trend and advocated a series of essential reforms. His account captured the timeless and universal nature of this social problem that has its roots in extravagance, corruption and lack of discipline.

'Aburrido' was the term applied to feelings of boredom, inertia and laziness and it had found its way into the national characteristics of the people. As a man with a high energy level and a strong sense of commitment, Bulfin was unable to accept the state of 'aburrido' that he encountered in Argentina.[102] With humorous and pointed pen, he outlined how this tendency had been cultivated in all walks of life from young children in school to the soldiers in the National Guard. He concluded that the national capacity for 'aburrido' was a mirror of the state of the country. In his quest for way forward towards greater ideals for Argentina, he felt that this tendency had to be identified, confronted and eradicated.

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[100] *Southern Cross*, 27 Oct. 1893, p. 4.
[101] *Southern Cross*, 10 Aug. 1894, pp 4-5.
[102] *Southern Cross*, 9 Aug. 1895, p. 5.

The cemetery of Recoletta was built by the Franciscans in the heart of the city in the year 1720.[103] Mourning for the dead and all it implies is part of every society. The cemetery of Recoletta had a special annual day – The Day of the Dead – when the community of the city would gather at family graves to commemorate the dead. In his account of this special day, Bulfin was provided with an opportunity to profile a variety of the people and their responses to death and bereavement.[104] His panorama of the day included a profusion of details in the order that he had noted them: the presence of the police, iced lemonade, lottery tickets, oranges and cakes, beggars, coffins visible in vaults, gentlemen smoking, young ladies and servants. Some of the people were in grief, but many were indifferent. He remarked that many of the tombs of the famous were neglected and that no wreaths had been placed on the monument of Admiral Brown. Bulfin's pensive and reflective account of the day, with its echoes of 'Grey's Elegy', conveyed an understanding of grief and the ironies of life.

However, Bulfin was strongly opposed to certain aspects of the tradition of mourning. Some customs, he felt, had become a well developed conventional lie. The custom of wearing black was very much for public display and had become a fashionable lie.[105] It was natural to mourn for the dead, but as grief belongs to the heart, it should remain there. Sorrow was not a fad of fashion to be displayed, but rather state of deep feeling. With vivid images and examples, he illustrated for the reality and hypocrisy behind the conventions of mourning. His aim was to expose the truth behind the public display and to provoke thought and discussion among his readers.

Like any other capital city, Buenos Aires attempted to respond to the needs of its citizens by establishing institutions and personnel with designated missions and goals. These services operated in all aspects of life but particularly in the areas of immigration, health, law, education, finance, the press and civil registration. Bulfin placed himself in the role of an investigative journalist in order to explore the nature and impact of these social services.

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[103] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 243.
[104] *Southern Cross*, 2 Nov. 1893, p. 4.
[105] *Southern Cross*, 11 Jan. 1895, p.7.

According to Michael Mulhall, there were 272 physicians practicing in Buenos Aires in the year 1884.[106] Bulfin put the figure as much higher, but he was including those who designated themselves as doctors, regardless of their qualifications. In a series of articles, he praised those doctors who were excellent examples of their profession. However he reserved his anger, scorn and ridicule for the many charlatans who left a legacy of pain and damage behind them.[107] His portrayal of these rogue doctors was satirical, damning and convincing. He had set himself a formidable task in confronting the world of medicine and he proved to be relentless in his pursuit of exposing the full situation. The libel laws and the courts did not deter his campaign and he continued with his crusade.

Bulfin's attack on the medical profession provoked a strong and immediate retaliation from a number of doctors. They felt he had no right to question their position. He informed his readers of the methods used by them in an attempt to silence him.[108] They held a series of protest meetings. Then they subscribed money and consulted with lawyers to see if the law could restrain him. Finally they hired bandits from the Boca area to silence him by physical force. At this stage he was very much alone in the stand he took, but in spite of all opposition, he continued to adopt a combative, defiant and fearless position.

Initially the national press sided with the doctors and against the *Southern Cross*. However, Bulfin did succeed in provoking the press to take a stand and eventually the national papers *La Nacion*, *La Prensa* and *El Diario* began to confront the question of medical practice.[109] Even the National Health Board began to take notice. Bulfin praised the national papers for taking up the issue, but remained critical of the English language papers for their silence on the question. He challenged the rival newspapers to take courage and to act. Clearly there was the usual newspaper war between rivals over distribution, sales and reputation. As a crusader, Bulfin would have felt vindicated in his campaign against the fraudulent medicine men.

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[106] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 248.
[107] *Southern Cross*, 2 Feb. 1894, p. 4.
[108] *Southern Cross*, 23 May, 1894, p. 4.
[109] *Southern Cross*, 29 June, 1894, pp 4-5.

It was important for Bulfin to restore faith in doctors and he did defend the integrity and achievements of the medical profession. In a later article, he outlined the advances in medical science, paying a particular tribute to Luis Pasteur.[110] He praised the modern wonders of antiseptic surgery and the impact of ether, chloroform, morphine and cocaine in killing pain. He could recall childhood memories in Ireland when there was little or no relief from pain. His analysis of the overall world of medicine helped to restore a more positive perspective for his readers.

The law and its agents were crucial in determining the course of justice and public safety in the city of Buenos Aires, where crime was endemic.[111] Bulfin examined the legal system and its operations and found much to stir his anger and moral indignation. He cited the case where five people were shot and killed.[112] This was the case of Enrique Campanelli, who killed five members of his sweetheart's in revenge. It was clear to Bulfin that this tragedy could have been prevented and that it illustrated the lenient criminal code that existed. It pointed to the lack of discernment exercised by judges. He argued for law reform and decisive judgements in court. In examining a number of other cases, he was alarmed to note that property was placed before life in the administration of justice.[113] He was further dismayed to find that the prison system did not facilitate the course of justice. There were many delays and defendants were held in prison for long periods awaiting trial.[114] In alerting his readers to how justice was being administered by the courts, he hoped to initiate debate about the necessity of law reform.

From a very early age, Bulfin believed in the importance of education.[115] In a series of articles, he discussed the nature and impact of the educational system in Argentina. The primary education was for the main part controlled by the government.[116] There were 540,000 children of school age in the country. Less than one quarter of this number received any instruction.[117] Bulfin was aware of the great

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[110] *Southern Cross*, 27 Dec. 1895, pp 4-5.
[111] Marian Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes*, p.12.
[112] *Southern Cross*, 19 Jan. 1894, p. 4.
[113] *Southern Cross*, 21 Dec. 1894, pp 4-5.
[114] *Southern Cross*, 1 June, 1894, p. 2.
[115] *Southern Cross*, 11 Feb.1910, pp 14-15.
[116] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 67.
[117] Ibid., p. 68.

numbers of children in Buenos Aires who would never attend a primary school. The law that stated that education was compulsory was not enforced and children suffered the consequences.[118] He felt that this situation had to be addressed and that every effort should be made to ensure a primary education for all children. One of his constant recommendations was that the government should make full use of the profits from the National Lottery to fund hospitals, homes, asylums, schools and other essential services.[119]

His comic description of children returning reluctantly to school after holidays had a local and universal flavour to it. He caught their lack of enthusiasm and vigour. While he understood the somewhat oppressive nature of the curriculum and the teaching methods, he still favoured discipline, order, respect and a strong work ethic.[120] However, he pleaded for changes in the curriculum and advocated the introduction of the gymnasium in order to restore balance to the overly academic school programme.[121] He fully agreed with the philosophy of the late editor of the *Boston Pilot*, John Boyle O Reilly, who wrote:

> And the merit that mounts to the highest place,
> Must have bone and sinew and brain.[122]

He believed that intellect, heart and muscle should be nurtured and developed in the schools. It was Bulfin's belief that the laboratory, the lecture hall and the classroom should open into the gymnasium. He appealed to history to illustrate his ideas, indicating the gymnasium was of Spartan origin and that in Athens alone there were several gymnasiums. From the classical world of Greece and Rome, he went on to further argue the case for physical fitness by looking at the traditions and legacy of North America, Europe and Ireland. He believed that physical fitness could have a positive impact on body, mind and soul. As an education reformer, he was alerting his readers and was making a passionate plea for change to the Board of Education.

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[118] *Southern Cross*, 20 Oct. 1893, p. 5.
[119] *Southern Cross*, 27 Oct. 1893, p. 4.
[120] *Southern Cross*, 22 Feb. 1894, pp 4-5.
[121] *Southern Cross*, 2 March, 1894, p. 4.
[122] James Jeffrey Roche, *The Life of John Boyle O'Reilly, with his complete poems and speeches* (New York, 1891), p. 512.

The constantly changing economic climate in Argentina was a cause of concern for Bulfin. He was anxious to investigate the role of the major financial institutions and to discover their impact on the economy. The Bolsa or Exchange, originally called The Consuate or Beehive, had 2,200 members in all.[123] There were seven major banks and they were mostly located in the Calle Reconquita. [124] In a series of articles, he described and attacked the operations at the Bolsa. He highlighted how the policy makers at the Bolsa could fatten on panic, a panic often contrived by themselves. As gold was their only god, they were not hampered by scruples. Often they were in league with the press in creating a sense of panic, as was the case with the Chilean war scare. It became clear to Bulfin that the Bolsa had no real allegiance to the country or the people.[125] As a financial institution, it was speculative, self serving and without any moral code.

Usury, for Bulfin, was one of the characteristics of a progressive city and Buenos Aires had imported it. As an investigative journalist, he entered the world of the usurers and brought his readers with him. In presenting the history of usury in Buenos Aires, he focused on the role of the Jewish community.[126] With a series of strong and vivid examples, he stressed the sharp and corrupt practices of the moneylenders. His satirical portrayal of the Jewish moneylenders was negative, critical and unflattering. Yet one feels that, rather than reinforcing the stereotype of the Jew as moneylender in the Shylock tradition, he was attempting to express his disdain for the whole tradition of usury. He certainly portrayed Argentina as a credit society, where consumerism, greed and debt made usury almost inevitable.

The civil registration of births, marriages and deaths was intended as a state service to record and safeguard important details about the lives of the citizens. In Buenos Aires the Civil Registry was a legacy from the time of Juares Colman. Bulfin, in his satirical account of the workings of this institution of the state, pointed to the outdated procedures that led to confusion and inefficiency.[127] The bureaucratic approach to dealing with the citizens had made the service ineffective. As a defender

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[123] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 254.
[124] Ibid., P 239.
[125] *Southern Cross*, 19 July, 1895, pp 4-5.
[126] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug. 1893, pp 5-6.
[127] *Southern Cross*, 29 Dec. 1893, p. 2.

of individual and traditional rights, Bulfin argued that personal privacy and the rights of each person were at stake. The Civil Registry was not providing a meaningful and efficient service for the citizens and it was now time for major reform.

One of the main aims of the press was to provide a service that would inform public opinion about the major issues and events of the time. As a journalist, Bulfin was aware of all the factors that could influence newspaper proprietors, editors and journalists in their task of presenting the news.[128] He understood the political, economic, social and cultural constraints that prevented journalists from presenting the full truth about any given situation. However, he would consistently hold the view that :

> A newspaper man must be prepared –
> It is better to be in danger on the side of right
> Than to be in safety on the side of wrong.[129]

No fewer than 82 newspapers were published in Buenos Aires during the 1880s and 1890s, including 25 daily, 17 Spanish, 3 Italian, 2 English , 2 English and 1 German. Buenos Aires was the only city in the world where there were daily papers in five different languages.[130]

The existence of such a variety of newspapers to serve the many communities led to inter press conflicts and tensions at times. Bulfin followed his convictions and was a consistent defender of the Irish community and the Catholic Church.[131] In many of his articles he challenged the positions taken by local and national newspapers in relation to important issues. He accused the national press of political bias against Japan during the war in the east.[132] He pointed to the tendency in the national press to pander to popular opinion and thereby encouraging a lenient criminal code.[133] He challenged the *Standard* for its bias in favour of England and its failure to represent the interests of the Irish community.[134] As with all other services

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[128] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 6), p. 35.
[129] *Southern Cross*, 23 Mar. 1894, p. 4.
[130] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 249.
[131] Oliver Marshall, *The English Language Press in Latin America*, pp 12-14.
[132] *Southern Cross*, 21 Sept.1894, p. 4.
[133] *Southern Cross*, 19 Jan. 1894, p. 4.
[134] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13812.

that were there to serve the people, Bulfin demanded high standards from the press and he would not accept less.

Argentina described itself as a Catholic country and the majority of the citizens claimed to be Catholics. The Catholic cathedral located in the Plaza Victoria, Buenos Aires was reputed to be one of the finest churches in the new world. There were 24 Catholic churches and 4 chapels for dissenters in the city.[135] The *Southern Cross* had always adhered to its founders' vision that it would be 'an Irish and Catholic organ' for the Irish community in Argentina.

In a series of articles, Bulfin addressed a number of religious and ethical issues in the light of unfolding trends in the country. He presented a very strongly satirical account of churchgoing habits in the city during the early 1890s. It seemed that 90% of those in attendance at mass were women, who were able to dress well, fan themselves and pray while sitting. The men are caricatured as vandals standing by the walls leering at the girls. As an effective satirist, he could contrast the reality of religious practice in Argentina with the exile's vision of life in Ireland:

> And deep the zeal
> Their true hearts felt
> As low they kneel to pray
> Ah! Dear old Ireland
> Blest old Ireland
> Ireland boys hurrah.[136]

It was clear to Bulfin that churchgoing had become a fashionable habit for some people and that it had no deep religious significance in their lives. He could offer no solution but felt the cause could be traced back to Spanish history.

He chronicled the spirit of Buenos Aires on any given Sunday.[137] With an almost Dickensian flair, he presented all the personalities of the city in a humorous, vibrant and colourful light. He described a world of jewellery shops, bazaars, drinking shops, peep shows, olive oil and people of all nationalities. They all entered into the spirit of Sunday on their own terms. While there were many who observed the Sabbath in a traditional way and went to church, Bulfin argued that the majority

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[135] M.G. & E. T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 241.
[136] *Southern Cross*, 21 Aug. 1897, p.
[137] *Southern Cross*, 11 Oct. 1895, p. 4.

were materialistic and secular in their way of life. As a satirist, he could focus on this aspect of life in Bueno Aires and place it in the context of similar trends in the world in general. The decline in the observance of Sundays was part of a general decline in the practice of religion.

Luzan, a town locate north of Buenos Aires, was the most important Catholic shrines in South America and was well established as a major pilgrim centre. Bulfin's account of his own experiences conveyed his responses to the various aspects of a day of pilgrimage there.[138] The basilica was one of the largest churches in South America and was built in modern gothic style. He presented the basilica, the altars, the pilgrims and the ceremony in strong, vivid terms. He was pleased to note the strong presence of the Irish community. However, in his quest for the essentials and in his reflection on all that he witnessed, he was left with a feeling of uncertainty and ambiguity about the prevailing spirit of the day.

The Catholic Church in Argentina had become very dependent on the political good will of the government and this situation was allowed to continue without censure. Bulfin became alarmed and decided to expose the full truth about the subservient position of the church in relation to the government.[139] He cited a number of clear and telling examples for his readers. He was motivated by genuine concern for the welfare of the church and felt obligated to speak the truth. Therefore he issued a strong challenge to the church to free itself from all political influences in Argentina.

There were many social problems to be addressed in the country. Clearly the church had a duty to respond to needs of people in distress. Bulfin was not convinced that the church was playing its full part and he particularly questioned its responsibility in relation to the street children of Buenos Aires.[140] However, when the *Buenos Aires Herald* criticized the efforts and legacy of Irish Catholic chaplains in Argentina, Bulfin was prompt and strong in their defence.[141] He was aware of the divided response in the press and elsewhere to the role of the Catholic Church and its

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[138] *Southern Cross*, 20 Mar. 1896, p. 2.
[139] *Southern Cross*, 29 Nov. 1895, pp 4-5.
[140] *Southern Cross,* 20 Oct. 1893, p.5.
[141] *Southern Cross*, 24 May, 1895, p .4.

priests. He defended Fr Fahy and paid a tribute to his memory as a devoted and committed chaplain to the Irish community. By outlining all the work and achievements of the various chaplains, he was able to refute the accusations that had been made. As a defender of the church, he was both passionate and convincing.

The question of suicide had become a cause for real concern. It had become more prevalent and there was a variety of responses to the problem. Newspapers detailed the circumstances and speculated on the causes. One school of experts focused on the psychological and medical causes. Bulfin did not favour this approach to the problem.[142] He saw it as an ethical and religious question. For him, it was a question of choosing right over wrong. In presenting the vision of life contained in the bible, he argued that virtue and strength could give us the power to resist any suicidal impulses. His stance on this subject was firm and almost dogmatic.

Divorce had become a social reality in Argentina, particularly in Buenos Aires. Bulfin confronted this reality by presenting his views on marriage.[143] He saw marriage as a compromise, a contract involving give and take. His sharp and satirical analysis of modern trends shows his insight into the very nature of marriage. He advocated a strong defence of marriage as an institution as a protection against the growing fashion of divorce. Essentially he presented a traditional, moral and conservative view of marriage and used irony and humour as his weapons against the growing trend of divorce.

Buenos Aires prided itself as a city with an enviable location, a pleasing urban fabric, numerous natural advantages, a healthy climate and a strong sense of aesthetic and cultural identity.[144] Bulfin had a refined aesthetic sensibility and a strong visual sense. He recorded his own responses to these features of the city in a number of articles. In taking his readers on a guided tour of the city, he commented on the streetscapes and architecture, both old and new. [145]He noted that some of the Spanish influences, such as the terracotta ridge tiles and massive doors, still remained with their echoes of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. For him, the most perfect

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[142] *Southern Cross*, 15 Nov. 1895, pp 2-3.
[143] *Southern Cross*, 14 Feb. 1896, p. 4.
[144] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, pp 239 - 243.
[145] *Southern Cross*, 5 Jan. 1894, p. 4.

building in the city was Government House with its air of the country house of a prince. However, he described the new buildings on the Avenida de Mayo as 'shams from foundation to roof.' The streets lacked that certain elegance and grandeur that could be found along the old Parliament Building in College Green, Dublin, along the streets of Rouen in France, alongside Westminster Abbey in London and in the vicinity of Palace of the Doges in Venice. For Bulfin, architecture was a symbol and mirror of the soul, mind and heart of a nation.

His observations on the street doors led to insight into the various households.[146] The different woods and emblems represented the various countries: hawthorn for Ireland, palm for Brazil, tulips for Holland and lilies for Tuscany. Each door could tell the story of the household. Bulfin noted with amusement the advent of the bicycle on the streets of Buenos Aires and remarked on the changing fashions in women's clothes, particularly the knickerbockers for women cyclists.[147] By adopting the persona of participant, observer and narrator, he was able to present vivid and humorous scenes involving the lives of the citizens, from the stockbrokers to the antorrantes (tramps), against the changing fabric of the city streets.

It was one of Bulfin's priorities to encourage in his readers a sense of the visual, the aesthetic and the historical. The ancient monastery of San Lorenzo was located close to the town of Rosario, north of Buenos Aires. His account of his visit to the monastery captured the sense of awe and reverence he felt.[148] He was impressed by the spirituality of the place and the gracious and gentle presence of the monks. His emphasis on the architectural and artistic details allowed him to illustrate the beauty and importance of the ancient monastery. His advice to his readers was 'If you are in Rosario, go to San Lorenzo.'

In his quest for high standards, Bulfin was prompted to expose the fake or the lie. He was critical of the charlatans and 'fake artists', whose paintings had become popular with the critics and public. [149] There were many artists in the city, whose paintings had received public acclaim and their works had become fashionable. In

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[146] *Southern Cross*, 19 Oct. 1894, pp 4-5.
[147] *Southern Cross*, 1895, p. 5.
[148] *Southern Cross,* 1 Mar. 1895, pp.4-5.
[149] *Southern Cross*, 1893, pp 4-5.

examining some of the representative paintings on view and in attempting to assess their merits, he was forced to conclude that they were of little worth and that popular taste was no indicator of standards. He was moved by a concern for the true artist and was aware that a certain conforming mediocrity had become the norm.

Buenos Aires was reputed to be one of the most musical cities in the world and this may have been due to the presence of a large Italian community.[150] Of the six major theatres in the city, the Colon Theatre was the most prestigious and was mainly for Italian opera. It was built in the year 1856 in Plaza Victoria and it held 2,500 people.[151] As an opera house, it had achieved international standards and the great operas, with major world singers, were performed there.

Bulfin argued that in other countries the singers were seen as central in a performance of opera. In Buenos Aires it was the audience in the dress circle that became the main attraction.[152]Fashion and newspapers dictated all. Tickets at the box office were very expensive and were only for the wealthy and the fashionable. Up in the Gods there were the Italian artisans who would applaud or growl during a performance. Bulfin argued that they were the only people in the audience who appreciated music. When asked by readers for his credentials as a music critic, he was able to put into words the sensual, emotional, imaginative and spiritual impact that music had on him. He was critical of the standards that prevailed. Even though the tickets were expensive, the singing was poor, the acting was weak and the sets were not up to standard.[153] Fashion dominated over standards. Given the generous subsidy the opera house received, higher standards should have been possible. The national and local press were acting as public relations officers and, therefore, provided no genuine criticism.

From the very early stages of his journalistic career, Bulfin wrote reviews of various literary works. Prompted by an article in the *Boston Pilot*, he gave his own overview of the life and literary achievements of Mark Twain.[154] Firstly, he acknowledged Twain's great spirit, because as a very old man, he was prepared to

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[150] NLI, Bulfin Papers. Ms 13804 (Folder 13) p.1.
[151] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 246.
[152] *Southern Cross*, 23 Aug. 1895, p. 4.
[153] *Southern Cross*, 16 Aug. 1895, p. 5.
[154] *Southern Cross*, 27 Sept. 1895, p. 5.

continue writing in order to clear his debts. He then proceeded to highlight the novelist's powerful imagination and his capacity to create characters and stories. He stressed the writer's ability to weave the English language with the ease and power of the master. It was clear to Bulfin that Twain had left a legacy of works that would guarantee his place as one of the great writers of American literature.

There were fifteen clubs catering for the various groups and interests in Buenos Aires. In the year 1876, the English Literary Society was founded. It had a library of three thousand volumes and provided a yearly programme of lectures and dramatic entertainments. There were three hundred and fifty members.[155] Bulfin became an active member and reported on all the events of the society. Over the years he gave lectures at the meetings on various literary topics, including poetry. He was a popular lecturer and his experiences with the English society consolidated his natural gifts as an orator. This became an interesting dimension in his life and would prove to be one of factors that influenced his decisions in the future.[156]

Conclusion

The decision to move from the ranches of Pampas to the city of Buenos Aires was prompted by the belief that the city was the natural home for the journalist.[157] It could provide stimulus, scope and employment. Buenos Aires, as a thriving, vibrant and cosmopolitan capital, offered all of this. Bulfin, as an aspiring journalist, felt it was an essential move for him.[158]

What emerges from these early writings is a clearer and fuller picture of the Bulfin himself and his world. His political writings illustrate that he had a knowledge and understanding of the tensions, conflicts and vested interests that existed at local,

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[155] M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate*, p. 250.
[156] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13812, pp 107-109.
[157] Pat Callan, 'William Bulfin's Rambles in Eirinn' in *Studies* (Winter,1982), p. 393.
[158] Benedict Kiely, 'The Man from the Pampas' in *Capuchin Annual* (1948), p. 432.

national and international level. His strong convictions and fearless spirit prompted him to take unpopular stands on political issues. He confronted the national government and politicians with a vigorous and trenchant pen. Motivated by a belief in the political process, he encouraged the Irish community to play an active part. As a moral crusader, he presented his vision of a better world and he was essentially optimistic.[159]

His accounts of the social issues revealed the two extremes in his personality. On the one hand, there was the playful, witty and picturesque story teller describing the social habits and mores of the citizens of Buenos Aires.[160] However, in his writings about poverty and crime, his sense of moral outrage and anger were clearly in evidence. As an investigative journalist exploring the services provided in the areas of immigration, health, the law, education, finance and the press, Bulfin proved to be combative, fearless and relentless in his campaign for reforms. As a writer dealing with religious and ethical questions, he was clearly an ardent Catholic with a strong belief in traditional values. As a journalist describing the arts and society, he emerged as a man with a refined aesthetic sense of the world of architecture, art, music and literature.

In reflecting on this period of his life, Bulfin emerged as his own best critic. He felt that his early writings were uneven and that some of his articles should not have been published.[161] He had been too prolific and had worked to too many deadlines. He felt that he was too opinionated and was critical of the strained humour and meaningless rhetoric that was sometimes a feature of his writing style. He argued that the content and style of his articles needed severe editing. This was a fair estimate and there were lessons to be learned for the future. As a man of integrity with a belief in high standards, he could not say otherwise. At its worst, it was as he described it. However, at its best, his journalistic writings were challenging, robust, informative and entertaining and augured well for his future career. It was said that Dickens caught the spirit of Victorian London and that Joyce conveyed the essence of

[159] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn* (7th edition, Dublin, 1920), Preface, p. xiv.
[160] Ibid., Preface, p. xvii.
[161] *Southern Cross*, 7 Jan.1899, p.13.

Edwardian Dublin. In his own way, Bulfin established for his readers the character and pulse of the city of Buenos Aires in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 4

A Growing Sense of Nationalism

In January, 1896 the *Southern Cross* celebrated its twenty-first year of existence. It was important to once again state the aims of the newspaper and to clarify its role. Its primary purpose was to serve the interests of the Irish community in Argentina. While the majority of its readers were Catholics, it was not a religious paper and could never be an organ for the church. In 1882 there was a change of editors and Michael Dinneen became the new editor and proprietor. At that stage it did not have its own printing office. Over a period of fourteen years the circulation of the paper had grown and by 1896 it was ten times higher than in 1882.[1] Editorials and articles were being quoted in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Columbia, the United States, Ireland, England and Australia. Editor and staff felt a justified sense of pride in these achievements.

In 1890 Bulfin started as a columnist with the paper. Within a year he was on the fulltime staff as a journalist. By 1892 he was on the editorial staff and was acting as sub editor. His commitment to the paper was such that it sometimes involved working for eighteen hours on some days in order to meet the deadlines for publication.[2] Towards the end of 1894 he was acting practically as sole editor and manager of the paper. Michael Dinneen sold his interest in the *Southern Cross* to Bulfin in January, 1896 and stated:

> I beg to announce I have sold my interest in the *Southern Cross* to my esteemed partner, Mr William Bulfin. He is a journalist of considerable experience and highly appreciated by a wide circle of readers....When I became sole editor and owner of the paper in July, 1888, I promised to do my best to make the *Southern Cross* a journal worthy of the Irish community. Mr Bulfin, during his term of editorship, has conducted the paper on the same principles and I have entire confidence that he will continue to do the same.[3]

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[1] *Southern Cross*, 3 Jan. 1896, p. 4.
[2] *Gaelic American,* 19 Feb. 1910, p. 5.
[3] *Southern Cross*, 31 Jan. 1896, p. 4.

Dinneen had made certain that all business accounts were in order when he sold the paper to Bulfin. He had decided to return to Ireland for an extended visit and before his departure he paid a tribute to the many friends in Argentina for the "kindness, generosity and hospitality received".[4]

Dinneen had been both friend and mentor to Bulfin and his legacy as an editor was impressive.[5]. He was a strong willed man and could be positive and forceful in argument. He had once been described as the fighting editor of the *Southern Cross*.[6] He was fully committed to the *Southern Cross* and its philosophy and proved to be an effective editor. Dinneen died on the 4 October, 1896 in his home town of Bandon, County Cork and, Bulfin, in his tribute to him wrote:

> In Dinneen's time as editor, good relations did exist between the *Southern Cross* and the *Standard*. His policy in journalism was to uphold Irish ideals and to take the side of the poor man. He did his duty by the Irish people and the *Southern Cross*. He made the paper stronger and made it unsafe to insult Irish people.[7]

In a letter to the *Southern Cross* from Bandon, Dinneen's sister wrote: 'he sleeps under the green grass of holy Ireland, as guileless a soul, as stout a heart, as true a friend and as loyal an Irishman.'[8] Dinneen was a classical scholar and a man of learning. He spoke Gaelic and French fluently. As a Gaelic scholar and enthusiast, he also proved to be one of the early influences in Bulfin's interest in the Irish Ireland movement

Bulfin was now the proprietor and editor of the *Southern Cross*. Unlike Dinneen, however, he was to continue writing his own articles. He was not prepared to forego his desire to commit to paper his observations on all that was happening about him. His articles continued to draw from a wide range of subjects that included politics, economics, education, art and social issues at local, national and international level. As editor he was to continue the vision of the newspaper's founder to foster the interests of the Irish Catholic community in Argentina and, also,

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[4] *Southern Cross*, 6 Nov. 1896 pp. 4-5.
[5] *Southern Cross*, 6 Nov. 1896, pp. 4-5.
[6] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1921), p. 456.
[7] *Southern Cross*, 6 Nov. 1896 pp. 4-5.
[8] *Southern Cross*, 6 Nov. 1896 pp. 4-5.

to reinforce the robust approach and style of his predecessor, Michael Dinneen. The important legacy of patriotic fervour and conviction was central.[9] The early years of his editorship were devoted to concentrating on the crucial issues that were unfolding in Argentina and Ireland. Bulfin's own priorities and philosophy can be discerned in the emphasis and direction that was taken by the *Southern Cross* during his early years as editor. A close examination of the editorials, general reporting, articles, overall contents and approach reveal what he felt was important for the newspaper and its readers. From the years 1895 to 1900, Bulfin's editorial influence can be seen in the strong emphasis placed on certain priorities. These priorities can be grouped under the following headings: The *Southern Cross* and the role of the press; Home Rule for Ireland; the Gaelic League; the 1798 Centenary Celebrations; Poverty in Argentina; Church and State; Political Leadership at Local, National and International Level; and the Boer War.

From his youth Bulfin was a keen and ardent reader. The father of Thomas Mac Donagh, the 1916 patriot, was headmaster at Cloghan National School, Offaly when Bulfin was a student there. In much later years Bulfin was to acknowledge and pay tribute to the writers and books that influenced his formative years. The novelist and poet, Charles Kickham from Mullinahone, County Tipperary was an author that he greatly admired. His novel *Knocknagow* or *The Homes of Tipperary*, with its story of Irish people and the struggle for land remained for Bulfin one of the most important books representing a true picture of Ireland during the second half of the nineteenth century.[10] He felt that most Irish homes should have a copy of this book because of Kickham's insight into the native character and his understanding of the challenges facing his people. 'Rory of the Hills', one of Kickham's best known poems, was also much admired by Bulfin and the central character captured his imagination and sympathy.[11] He was keenly aware of the importance of the sagas and stories of Ireland's Gaelic literature dealing with the heroic past.[12]

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[9] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 12), pp 17-18.
[10] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn* 9 (Dublin,1907), p. 357.
[11] Ibid., p. 351.
[12] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 2), pp 1-14.

Feelings for the homeland were heightened for Bulfin during his years of exile in Argentina. While it is true to say that he committed himself to his new home and also encouraged his readers to do so, he increasingly became conscious of his status as an exile.[13] For him, Ireland became holy ground and her welfare and future began to absorb him. As editor of the *Southern Cross*, he felt bound to the Irish in Argentina and the Irish at home. It was important to stress the necessity of identity with, and allegiance to, the newly adopted country. However, at the same time, it was crucial to sustain and develop ties with the homeland. For him it was not question of divided loyalties, but rather the challenge of embracing the new world with a strong sense of personal and cultural identity. In fact he felt that the welfare of both communities was linked and could not be separated. Therefore, he took a special interest in the unfolding movements and events that were taking place in the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life in Ireland.

In a series of articles entitled 'Ballads Old and New', Bulfin turned his attention to Irish ballads written in English. He acknowledged that the very fine ballad poetry of Ireland was written in Irish. However, he was greatly impressed with dramatic intensity and fervour of the ballad Dark Rosaleen by James Clarence Mangan. A number of the strong and stirring passages are quoted for effect.[14] The ballad poetry of Ireland was rich and varied. 'The Macaura Ballad' by Denis Florence Mac Carthy was also a real favourite. Charles Gavan Duffy also deserved a leading place as ballad writer, particularly because of the ballad 'The Irish Raparee'. Thomas Davis was the first of the heroic balladists who wrote on Irish subjects in the English tongue. In style, in finish, in dramatic sequence of incident, in pathos, in poetic enthusiasm and in intellectual power his poems were regarded by Bulfin to be of the first order. Poems like 'The Sack of Baltimore', 'Fontenoy' and 'The Geraldines' caught his imagination and stayed with him since childhood.

One of the formative influences on Bulfin's growing sense of Irish nationalism was the Gaelic scholar John P. Tierney who lived in San Juan at the foot of the Andes

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[13] *Irish Peasant and Nation*, 12 Mar. 1910, p. 8.
[14] *Southern Cross*, 4 Feb. 1898, pp 4-5.

Mountains.[15] As far back as October 1888 he had written a letter in Gaelic to the *Southern Cross* and it was printed with a translation in English.[16] He also enclosed ten dollars for the Irish Parliamentary fund and promised to send a barrel of excellent wine of his own manufacture. Bulfin recalled the importance and impact of his first meeting with John Tierney.

> When I first met John Tierney, he was dying at the time. Yet he spoke with such fire and passion about our Irish heritage that he forced me to think on the matter.[17]

Tierney welcomed the new dawn in Ireland with the founding of the Gaelic League. He was enthusiastic about the new paper *Fáinne an Lae* and also felt that the book *Simple Lessons in Irish* could facilitate the learning of Gaelic by the Irish community in Argentina. The Welsh language was being taught at night schools and the same could be done with Gaelic. In New York, the Gaelic League had achieved a great deal and Argentina could do likewise. Patrick Mac Manus proved to be another influence on Bulfin's growing sense of the importance of the Irish language, culture and tradition. His wife, Ailse, was the sister of Bulfin's wife, Annie O'Rourke and this family connection also proved influential.

> Then came Patrick Mac Manus, also with fire, who has done more than anyone else to forward the language movement in Argentina .... working tirelessly, careless about personal credit and studiously keeping in the background.[18]

The *Southern Cross* was pleased to celebrate and to give an account of the unveiling of a monument in Boston to the memory of the patriot, author and editor, John Boyle O Reilly.[19]

He was born in Dowth, County Meath in 1841, became a Fenian, but was deported to Australia. Bulfin always admired his achievements, his courage and convictions. As editor of *The Pilot* newspaper (Boston), he won the trust and sympathy of his readers. When he died in 1890 he was greatly lamented in both America and Ireland.[20] As

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[15] *Southern Cross,* 4 Feb. 1898, p. 5.
[16] *Southern Cross*, 26 Oct. 1898, pp 4-5.
[17] *Beathaisnéis A Cúig* (5), p. 26.
[18] Ibid., p. 26.
[19] *Southern Cross*, 7 Aug. 1896, p. 2.
[20] *Southern Cross*, 18 Sept. 1896, p.4

editor and Irishman of strong convictions, Bulfin felt a deep affinity with him. Many of Boyle O Reilly's patriotic poems
of exile appeared on the pages of the *Southern Cross.*

A letter to the *Southern Cross* in March, 1898 complained about the amount of time and coverage that the paper had given to the Parnell story. It indicated that the paper had always kept a dignified silence on the whole matter and that this was the best policy. Bulfin reiterated the newspaper's stance in strong and decisive terms.[21] The paper had never sided with Parnell after the split and it was not going to do so now. It deeply regretted the deplorable scenes which closed his magnificent career. No stone would be thrown over the grave of Parnell. It was better to forget the tragedy of his private life. It was important to remember that Parnell, in spite of everything, stood out head and shoulders over his political generation. Bulfin contended that as a statesman, leader and organiser he was the greatest Irishman of the nineteenth century. The good news was that faction was dying out in Ireland. Some of the *Southern Cross* articles dealing with this issue were quoted in Irish newspapers and this may have had some influence to ease the prejudice and bitterness that fostered division.

Bulfin's study and analysis of Irish history gave him a certain insight into the forces that shaped its destiny.[22] In his examination and analysis of the political and economic state of Ireland in the year 1896, Bulfin drew his own strong and definite conclusions. Emigration had reached fatal proportions, population had decreased to four million people, markets were depressed, trade was declining, prices had fallen and a sense of decay was felt in all aspects of Irish life. He claimed:

> After ninety six years of experiment the practical result of absolute English rule in Ireland is a dead failure and disgrace. Ireland is dying under the curse of an alien rule. The answer lies in Home Rule. However, Lord Salisbury,

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[21] *Southern Cross*, 25 Mar 1898, p. 4.
[22] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 5), pp 56-61.

with his solid majority of 150 in Westminster, could easily dismiss Irish leaders every time they raised their voices demanding reforms.[23]

W.S. Stead, the editor of the London based journal *Review of Reviews* reached similar conclusions and said that Ireland was being over-taxed and that the country was being plundered by a stronger power.[24]

The vexed question of continued emigration from Ireland to Argentina was the subject of an interview with Fr O Grady of Mercedes, Buenos Aires in the *Tuam Herald* of 13 November, 1896. As editor, Bulfin considered it important to publish the interview in the *Southern Cross*. When asked if he would advise people to emigrate to Argentina from Ireland at that time, Fr O Grady replied - 'I would and I would not. I would not advise a labouring man, because he will not get good wages. However, a man of capital could become rich ...'[25] While conditions were harsh and unrelieved in Ireland, it was essential to present the full and accurate picture for intending emigrants.

Disunity and fragmentation was the inevitable legacy after the Parnell split. A letter from John Dillon appealed for funds from the Irish people at home and abroad for the Convention and the Irish party.[26] Bulfin advised his readers not to finance John Dillon and his followers, because he felt that the Convention had done nothing for unity. He felt that no party should be supported until some degree of unity was established. While respecting Mr Dillon, Mr Healy and Mr Redmond, it was essential to end the infighting and bring about some unity among the leaders. Irishmen in Argentina and throughout the world wanted to see unity in the Irish party. It was vital that the policy and strength of the Irish parliamentary party of the 1890s be restored. Then and only then would Bulfin advise his readers to subscribe.[27] This view was also supported by W.S. Stead in the *Review of Reviews*.[28] Local Government for Ireland had become an important issue and gave rise to various

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[23] *Southern Cross*, 12 June, 1896, p. 4.
[24] William Thomas Stead, 'The Nineteenth Century' in *Review of Reviews*, vol xiv (July-Dec. 1896), p. 538.
[25] *Southern Cross*, 13 Nov. 1896, p. 2.
[26] Sou*thern Cross*, 27 Nov. 1896, p. 2.
[27] *Southern Cross*, 27 Nov. 1896, pp 4-5.
[28] William Thomas Stead, 'The Progress of the World' in *Review of Reviews*, vol xiii (Jan – June 1896), p. 199.

responses among the Irish at home and abroad. The new local Government Bill for Ireland was viewed by Bulfin as an important step forward and he welcomed it.[29] It would not kill Home Rule, but would, in fact, show that the Irish people were fit to deal with their own legislation.

Bulfin's review of Barry O'Brien's biography of Parnell was discussed in the *Southern Cross* in February 1899.[30] It was described as a work of exceptional value and human interest. The book stressed Parnell's central belief that nothing was to be gained by Ireland from England through a policy of conciliation. It must be war to the hilt and nothing else. This was the guiding thought of Parnell. Bulfin felt the biographer had caught the story of Parnell's life and had an understanding of his genius and political philosophy. As a biography it was to be highly recommended. An article on the Parnell tragedy by William O' Brien appeared in the *Southern Cross*.[31] Bulfin always supported Parnell and felt that his private life was separate from his role as political leader. The *Southern Cross* was pleased to note that the Dublin Corporation had granted a site at the head of O'Connell Street for the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of Parnell.[32]

In a letter to the *Southern Cross*, Bulfin, as editor, was taken to task for his perceived bias against Englishmen. The writer was an Englishman and he felt that Englishmen could not be blamed for the faults of England. Was the editor trying to sell newspapers? Did it pay to run the English down?

> Tell me....Have you no friend who is an Englishman? Are all Englishmen stuck up, bigoted brutes, who can only say "Don't cher know ?" Is it fair to put all the faults of the English government on every isolated Englishman? Does it pay to run us down and make the paper sell ?
> I am English....my best friends are Irish....constant reader of the *Southern Cross* since my friend Dean Dillon founded it....enjoy reading it... more so since a certain camp man took over.....should the *Southern Cross* not try to unite us more in this country ?[33]

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[29] *Southern Cross*, 25 Mar. 1898, p. 10.
[30] *Southern Cross*, 24 Feb. 1899, p. 10.
[31] *Southern Cross,* 29 Jan. 1897, p. 2.
[32] *Southern Cross*, 6 Oct. 1899, p. 16.
[33] *Southern Cross*, 30 April, 1897, p. 2.

In his defence, Bulfin claimed many Englishmen among his friends. He denied ever implying that Englishmen could not speak properly or ever placing blame on isolated Englishmen for the wrongs done by the English government. He could well understand why the Irish held aloof during the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. For Englishmen it was natural to rejoice, because her reign had brought prosperity to England. For Irishmen, it had brought impoverishment to Ireland and the Irish still awaited their rights. He hoped the day would come when, having obtained justice from England, the Irish people would be able to say – God bless the queen.[34] A letter to the editor indicated, with a pun on the title of the newspaper, that he had become a cross editor. Patience and balance were recommended as an antidote.[35] Bulfin's passionate nature and strong convictions could sometimes lead to a hectoring tone and a sense of moral righteousness. This, at times, served to alienate some of his readers.

The news about Balfour's new bill of local government for Ireland (1897) was greeted with much optimism in both Ireland and Argentina. Bulfin saw it as a major new departure that would bring blessings to the country. Irish people would be given charge of their own local affairs and would have to pay less taxes. He believed that this was an important step forward on the road to self determination. He was aware that it might not satisfy the extreme elements in the Irish party, but hoped that the infighting and disunity among Nationalists would disappear. In quoting the following verses from John Boyle O'Reilly, he was presenting a vision for Ireland's future:

> It is the mud that unites, but the sand is free
> Aye, every grain is free
> And the freedom of the individual man
> Is the highest liberty.
>
> It is mud that coheres; but the sand is free
> Till the lightning smites the shore
> And swells the grain to a crystal mesh
> To return to sand no more.
>
> And so with the grains of our Irish sand

[34] *Southern Cross*, 25 June, 1897, p. 2.
[35] *Southern Cross*, 9 July, 1897, p. 5.

That flash clear eyed to the sun
Till a nobler purpose smite them
And melt them into one.[36]

As an admirer of Boyle O'Reilly, he felt that his poetry was a real source of inspiration for the Irish people and that his insights could guide them on the path of unity and purpose.

It was decided to devote a number of columns under the heading 'Ireland at Home and Abroad' in the *Southern Cross* on a weekly basis.[37] It was intended to publish as much news as possible on Irish affairs. The purpose was to inform readers how the cause of Ireland was progressing. It was also hoped to let them see how the Irish race were doing in the wide world over. Bulfin saw it as important to build strong links between Ireland and the Irish in Argentina and other parts of the world. His paper would provide that link and be a forum for advancing the cause of the Irish at home and abroad. A notice from the United Irish League announced a convention to be held at Claremorris and that William O Brien, Michael Davitt, John Dillon, J.J. O Reilly, Dr Ambrose, David Sheehy and John Roche would be in attendance.

Again Bulfin paid tribute to W.T. Stead, editor of the *Review of Reviews*, for his courageous exposure of English misrule in Ireland. [38]He deserved the admiration and respect of the Irish people for his brave stand. He consistently drew attention to the need for England to restore justice to Ireland and to make reparation for past wrongs. As a journalist, he had courage, insight and integrity. However, Bulfin was dismayed to learn that Stead approved of Kipling's 'White Man's Burden' and concluded that both men were 'expansionists' and 'Jingoes'. Stead could be admired as a journalist but his judgement in literature was seen as flawed and biased.

It was noted that Cecil Rhodes, an important figure in South Africa, had subscribed £10,000 to the Home Rule Fund. Africa was still the object of the white man's designs and desires. The weak were still being plundered by the strong and the popular poet of the year 1899, Rudyard Kipling, was chanting the praise of England's policy of expansionism in Africa. By contrast, Bulfin argued that Shakespeare had the

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[36] *Southern Cross*, 25 June, 1897, pp 4-5.
[37] *Southern Cross*, 3 Mar. 1899, p. 4.
[38] *Southern Cross*, 17 Mar. 1899, p. 12.

vision and poetic imagination to bring his King Lear to an understanding of poverty and the abuse of power.

By 1899 Bulfin was adamant that that it was now important for Irish nationalists to demand complete legislative independence - fiscal, judicial, police, trade, imperial and other issues- nothing less than Home Rule.[39] The Irish had never gained anything by conciliation. Their best man, Parnell, was sacrificed in the interest of conciliation. The foibles of the Georges, of the present Prince of Wales and others were condoned. The opinion of the Irish on them was not even sought. The moment Ireland had one of the most powerful leaders known to modern times, the Irish were asked to examine his morals from the standpoint of English conciliation. For Ireland the best policy is to agitate, to organize and to use the County Councils as a means. The younger statesmen of the English Tories were already half converted to Home Rule and the Whigs were committed to it. Ireland had achieved all this by her own endeavour and not by conciliation. This was the only way forward for Irish nationalists.

News of the death of Gladstone in May, 1898 brought the tribute in the *Southern Cross* that he was the greatest Englishman of the nineteenth century.[40] Yet a memorial service for him in Buenos Aires was poorly attended. He had sympathies outside the parochial bounds and this did not endear him to all his fellow countrymen.[41] For Bulfin, Gladstone remained a statesman and a man of integrity. He defended his tribute to the deceased English prime minister declaring that he admired his policies in general and not simply his policy in relation to Ireland.[42]

The foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893 was to have an impact not only on the people of Ireland, but also on the Irish communities in the various parts of the world, including Argentina. Douglas Hyde, one of the founders of the Gaelic League, acknowledged the importance of the Gaelic Athletic Association, founded in 1884, in paving the way for the language movement.[43] Branches of the League were founded in America and England within a short time. At every opportunity Bulfin gave a platform in his newspaper to the Irish Ireland movement. A letter from Fr O

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[39] *Southern Cross*, 19 May, 1899, p. 10.
[40] *Southern Cross*, 20 May, 1898, p. 11.
[41] *Southern Cross*, 3 June, 1898, p. 13.
[42] *Southern Cross*, 10 June, 1898, p. 10.
[43] Thomas O Sullivan, *The Story of the GAA* (Dublin, 1916), p. 1.

Growney, which appeared in the newspaper *The Irish American*, was reprinted in the *Southern Cross*.[44] The letter dealt with the Oireachtas festival, organized by the Gaelic league, the St Columcille celebrations and the work being done by the Gaelic scholar, Dr Kuno Meyer. An article from the *Irish World* of New York based on the life and work of the great Irish scholar, Eugene O'Curry, was reprinted in full in the *Southern Cross*.[45] O'Curry was born near Carrigaholt, County Clare in 1796. His work on preserving the old Gaelic manuscripts left a rich legacy that deserved the gratitude of all Irishmen. It was important to give publicity to the lives of those who came forward at a critical time to save the ancient language.

Padraig Mac Manus was an ardent supporter of the Gaelic League and was active in promoting the revival of Irish in Argentina. He argued that the native language had been well nigh exterminated. As Spenser had said, the suppression of native tongue and music was essential, otherwise the Gael would flourish. This mission had almost been accomplished. However, a great change was taking place in Ireland since the foundation of the Gaelic League a few years earlier.[46] The people want to be Irish again in fact as well as in name. He felt that the Irish in Argentina, particularly the readers of the *Southern Cross*, should contribute money to help the programme of the Gaelic League and give generously to the Feis and Oireachtas fund. Bulfin was in full agreement and began to provide a platform in his paper for publicity, promotion and fund raising for the Gaelic League.

Reports from the Gaelic League newspaper *Fáinne an Lae* indicated that there was a growing feeling in the Gaelic movement that inscriptions on all national monuments to Irish patriots should be in Gaelic.[47] Patrick Mac Manus proposed that an association be founded among the Irish of Buenos Aires to set about learning the rudiments of their native tongue.[48] An article by Conor Mac Nessa dealing with the Gaelic Revival and the use of surnames appeared in the *Southern Cross* in November 1898.[49] It outlined the progress made by the Gaelic Revival movement at home in

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[44] *Southern Cross*, 3 Sept. 1897, p. 2.
[45] *Southern Cross*, 3 Sept. 1897, p. 6.
[46] *Southern Cross*, 25 Mar. 1898, p. 5.
[47] *Southern Cross*, 1 Apr. 1898, p. 5.
[48] *Southern Cross*, 20 May, 1898, p. 13.
[49] *Southern Cross*, 25 Nov. 1898, pp 4-5.

Ireland, as well as America and Britain. Yet there was no echo of it on the shores of the Plate in Argentina. The Irish colony on the Plate was prosperous and probably the wealthiest Irish colony in the world. He claimed they were the least patriotic. The Basques brought names from the Pyrenees and the Germans, Welsh and English have brought their names with them. They have given names to places in Argentina. This has not happened with the Irish. A servile people place very little value on themselves. Some of the Irish do not object to the name 'Inglesses' and some send their children to London to be anglicized. We must now work as a unit for the restoration of our language, tradition and music. The Gaelic League was founded for this purpose. A great deal has been achieved by the Gaelic League over the last five years.

In the journal *Fáinne an Lae* there was a detailed tribute to the late John A.T. Tierney describing his life, vision and achievements in Argentina.[50] Tierney wanted a Gaelic Ireland first and then let Gaelic Ireland say what she wants. He was pleased to learn that Gaelic was used occasionally at public meetings. It would be an uphill struggle, but he knew it could be done. He was no idle dreamer, but a practical man who ran a vineyard and made money. He would sometimes be in Buenos Aires, often searching out those who could speak Gaelic. It was the first time he conversed in Gaelic. He had acquired the language by study and never had the means of rectifying his notions of pronunciation. His contacts reassured him that he was not too far out in his pronunciation

A further article on the Gaelic Revival and Irish surnames appeared in the *Southern Cross* and sounded a note of optimism in relation to the Irish colony an the Plate River.[51] It also noted the decision of the *Southern Cross* to provide a weekly column devoted to the Gaelic movement and its activities. There was a real sense that the readers would respond with interest and enthusiasm. The new column 'Ireland at Home and Abroad' in the *Southern Cross* had great pleasure in publishing the following appeal from the Irish Language National Fund and recommending it to all its readers:

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[50] *Southern Cross*, 25 Nov. 1898, p. 5.
[51] *Southern Cross,* 2 Dec. 1898, pp 4-5.

> History shows that the revival of the language of a people precedes any permanent national re-awakening. One of the great possessions of Ireland is her literature and the language which enshrines it ... Greece, Belgium, Hungary, Bohemia, Finland are important examples. The Gaelic League, the periodical the Gaelic Journal, the newspaper *Fáinne an Lae* and the travelling teachers of Gaelic are all in need of help. We appeal now to the Gaelic race throughout the world. Subscriptions needed. To support the cause contact -
>
> William J. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin
> Patrick O Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe
> Daniel Tallon, Lord Mayor of Dublin
> Douglas Hyde, President of the Gaelic League
> Eugene O Growney, Vice President of the Gaelic League
> John Mc Neill, Editor of the Gaelic Journal[52]

By 1899 the Gaelic League was flourishing in Ireland and branches had been established in places as far apart as London and New York.[53] Bulfin presented the vision and challenge of the Gaelic League to his readers in March 1899 and called for their commitment and effort. It was vital for the Irish in Buenos Aires to rise to this challenge and organize a branch of the Gaelic League, even on a small scale. It was necessary to respond to the great Irish awakening known as the Gaelic movement, with its sense of the grandeur of the Irish race, language, nationality and tradition. Why, he insisted, should the Irish in Buenos Aires lag behind those in other countries?

Some of the readers of the *Southern Cross* wrote saying they felt the paper was being too optimistic in its views on developments in Ireland. Bulfin sincerely hoped they were mistaken and set out to convince them of what had been achieved to date. He described and defined the nature of the Gaelic League in order to confront the doubts in the minds of some of his readers. He assured them that it was an association in which men of all shades of political opinion could meet on neutral ground.[54] Protestant and Catholic, Nationalist and Unionist, Tory and Whig, clergyman and layman were working for the preservation of the language. The movement had bound men together, as far apart as the late Dr J. Tierney in San Juan and Dr Douglas Hyde

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[52] *Southern Cross*, 10 Mar. 1899, p. 4.
[53] *Southern Cross*, 31 Mar. 1899, p. 5.
[54] *Southern Cross*, 7 Apr. 1899, p. 10.

in Ireland. He stressed that the Gaelic League had nothing whatsoever to do with politics.

The first number of a new Irish paper *The United Irishman* reached Bulfin in April, 1899. He described it as honest, Irish, noble and with a good deal of common sense. He fully agreed with the sentiments of its editor, who said –

> No! Ireland and the Empire are incompatible. One cannot be an African civilian and an Irish nationalist; one cannot trample on the rights of other people and consistently demand his own.[55]

Bulfin continued to promote the possibility of establishing the Gaelic League in Buenos Aires. He addressed the questions and doubts that might disturb his readers.[56] Why keep a language alive? The answer is that the language means everything in the individuality of a people. We are a people apart because we are Gaelic – our individuality, our faith, fancy, feeling, patriotism, hope, price of grace – all Gaelic. The Gaelic also contains literary treasures of immense value. These should not be lost. They hold the records of a complete and distinct racial development – mythology, religious awakening, laws, institutions, literature, all complete. It is a sacred duty to preserve them. What good would a revived Gaelic be in the practical concerns of life? It would make them once more themselves. A second language always opens to the mind new fields of thought and thus widens the intelligence. Every man who knows two languages is doubly armed in an intellectual sense for the battle of life. The language must be used. Bulfin told his readers that the present adult generation could scarcely hope to acquire it. However he noted that it was proposed to have Irish extensively taught in the schools in Ireland, to have chairs for it in the universities, to develop a journalism in connection with it, to publish manuscript treasures, to give prizes for poetry, to hold annual festivals like the Oireachtas and to keep alive old Gaelic games and customs.

The column 'Ireland at Home and Abroad' carried further news of the progress of the Gaelic League.[57] Forty new branches had been established and classes were held in many places. The use of Irish in churches had increased and in some towns

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[55] *Southern Cross*, 7 Apr. 1899, p. 15.
[56] *Southern Cross*, 14 Apr. 1899, p. 11.
[57] *Southern Cross,* 14 Apr. 1899, p. 20.

the names of streets had been posted up in Irish. Father O'Growney's book *Simple Lessons in Irish* was proving to be very successful and Irish songs were being sung at concerts. There was further news of the Oireachtas committee and the work of the travelling teachers of Irish. A warm welcome was extended to the newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis*, a new weekly organ of the Gaelic League in English and Irish. [58] It was praised for its careful editing and deserved success. In the United States the Gaelic movement had made wonderful progress. Patrick Ford, the editor of The *Irish World* of New York, had collected £1,000 for the teaching of Gaelic fund.

The *Herald* did feel that a branch of the Gaelic League could be established in Buenos Aires, but that the difficulties were great.[59] Bulfin was determined that the *Southern Cross* would make every effort to see this accomplished. A provisional committee had been formed and a meeting would be called.[60] Any person wishing to help to the movement by moral or monetary support could send his name to the office of the *Southern Cross*. The aims of this new branch were to help the Gaelic movement, to send contributions to the teaching fund and to show a solidarity with the people who were working for the revival of Gaelic games, Gaelic customs and Gaelic spirit.

The first meeting was scheduled for 7 May, 1899 and was to take place at a room in the Irish church, Caridad and Estados Unidos, Buenos Aires, at the conclusion of the afternoon devotions.[61] The Rev Fr Eugene, Superior of the Passionists, had given his support to the movement in the practical manner of placing a room at their disposal. All interested in the movement were invited to attend. It was noted that Conor Mac Nessa, a contributor to the *Southern Cross*, who after the late John L. Tierney of San Juan deserved the honour of suggesting the formation of the League had handed in his subscription. This was followed by many more subscriptions to the fund.

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[58] *Southern Cross*, 21 Apr. 1899, p. 5.
[59] *Southern Cross*, 21 Apr. 1899, p. 10.
[60] *Southern Cross*, 21 Apr .1899, p. 11.
[61] *Southern Cross*, 28 Apr. 1899, p. 11.

A letter in Gaelic from a celebrated Danish Professor, Doctor Holger Pedersen of the University of Copenhagen created quite a stir.[62] He argued that if the Irish language died out, Irishmen would then lose their nationality and become Englishmen. The Irish nation possessed the most wonderful medieval literature. Responding to this in the periodical *The Irish World*, Professor Richard Heneberry of Washington acknowledged that Professor Pedersen was acquainted with many tongues, ancient and modern, and that he also spoke Irish. He remarked on the number of men who had been caught by the alluring force of Irish literature – German, French, Swedish, Danish and Italian professors and students. The Rev Thomas Shahan also explored this phenomenon in his book entitled The Gaelic Renaissance.[63] He noted the revival of interest, during the latter half of the nineteenth, in Celtic tongues and literature and the work that had been done by the various scholars, including Johann Casper Zeuss, Eugene O'Curry and John O'Donovan.

Some very telling advice appeared in *Fáinne an Lae* about how to start a branch of the Gaelic League. If one called together a number of people of position and if many speeches were made, the effort would be doomed and descend into self glory. Far better to find a few earnest people who loved the language and were prepared to work without the hindrance of red tape. With all this in mind, the *Southern Cross* once more stressed that the first meeting of the Gaelic League in Buenos Aires would take place on Sunday, 7 May, 1899. No special invitations would be sent out.[64] It was hoped that all of Gaelic stock, no matter what their political convictions, would attend and take up the cause. Although it was non-political, it could still find enthusiastic support amongst Irish nationalists, who were idealists in the best sense of the word.

The inaugural meeting of the Gaelic League took place on 7 May 1899 in the parlour of the Passionist monastery. Father Eugene, Superior of the Order, was elected to the temporary chair and William Bulfin as temporary secretary.[65] The following resolution was then put and carried unanimously – 'That a branch of the Gaelic League be formed to be called the Buenos Aires Gaelic League which shall

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[62] *Southern Cross*, 28 Apr. 1899, p. 16.
[63] *Southern Cross*, 5 May 1899, p. 16.
[64] *Southern Cross*, 5 May 1899, p. 11.
[65] *Southern Cross*, 12 May 1899, p. 14.

work in sympathy with the central executive of the Gaelic League in Ireland.' In proposing John E. Curry as president, Patrick Cole said that he was worthy of the office because he was the grandson of Eugene O'Curry. The following were duly proposed and seconded –

Vice President: P.S.H. Conway, Treasurer: David Suffern, Secretary: M.F. Breen and Pro-Secretary: Padraic Mac Manus. M.F. Breen was one of the most enthusiastic Gaels and the late Michael Dinneen always alluded to him as the leading Irish scholar in the river Plate. The following resolutions were moved by Padraig Mac Manus:

(1) That the inaugural meeting of the Buenos Aires Gaelic League sends greetings to our brother Gaels in Ireland and elsewhere and tenders its warmest support to the national movement for the preservation and extension of our ancient tongue and for the de-anglicization of Ireland.
(2) That in hearty sympathy with the principles of the Gaelic revival we call on the Gaels, who have found a home on the free land, to morally and financially aid our brothers in Ireland, so nobly struggling to preserve for is and our descendents the cultural language of the Gaelic race, the stronghold of our nationality and our last bulwark against the disintegrating influences of foreign domination.
(3) That we are determined to do what in us lies for the encouragement of the Gaelic language, music and sports and we call upon the football clubs founded by the Irish and their descendents to become affiliated with the G.A.A. and to discontinue with all games, except the G.A.A. and under no circumstances to affiliate with any league or association, not playing according to Gaelic rules.
(4) That we hereby empower the executive committee to take all necessary steps for the propagation of Gaelic ideas and the carrying into effect of these resolutions.
(5) That we sincerely thank the Rev Father Eugene and the Passionist Fathers for the use of our meeting room and their kind offer to continue its use to us should so desire.

P.S.H. Conway proposed the following resolution which, having been seconded by P. O Brien was put and carried like the others-

(5) That we publicly thank the *Southern Cross* for the propaganda it has made in favour of the Gaelic League and its kind offer to keep its columns always open to us and do any printing, which we may require, gratuitously.

The objects of the Gaelic League were fully endorsed.

(1) The preservation of Irish as the national language and the extension of its use as a spoken language.

(2) The study and publication of existing Gaelic literature and the cultivation of a modern literature in Irish.[66]

The means to achieve these objects were also endorsed in full.

The next meeting of the Gaelic League had to be postponed because of a church mission. Members were encouraged to bring a non member along.[67] Those who could not attend but wished to become a member could contact the *Southern Cross* and the rest would be done. Subscriptions for *An Claidheamh Soluis* could be forwarded to the Gaelic League Office, 24, O'Connell Street, Dublin or to the secretary, Gaelic League, 1661, Cangallo, Buenos Aires. A letter from Dr O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, the most enthusiastic of Irish bishops in the Gaelic cause, to the Irish World was reprinted in the *Southern Cross*.[68] He had successfully organized the *Aonach Tirconaill* the year before in Letterkenny. In his letter he pleaded eloquently for the ancient tongue of the Gael. The work of the Gaelic League was worth doing well. It was now or never for the Irish language. It is the language for the poet, scholar and orator, as well as the farmer, shepherd and artisan. He advised people to go and hear it spoken. Now was the time to check its decline and spread far its sway.

Bulfin felt a sense of deep regret that the periodical, the *Shan Van Vocht*, had ceased publication. It was a nationalist literary paper of the very highest merit. It was edited in Belfast by Alice L. Milligan (Iris Olkyrn), a leading Gaelic worker and Anna Johnston (Ethna Carbery), the author of many Irish ballads and verses.[69] In their farewell message, they explained that they were leaving the field clear to the papers published in Gaelic. They acknowledged the generous support they had received over the years from the following Irish American newspapers – *Irish World, The San Francisco Nation, Boston Pilot, The Irish American, The Southern Cross* (Buenos Aires), *Chicago Citizen, Ohio Pilot, United Irishman*, *The Catholic Register* (Toronto), *Boston Republic, Father Matthew Herald, Donohue's Magazine* and *The Irish Republic*. They expressed regret that the national papers of Dublin had not shown similar encouragement. Bulfin had published many of the poems by Ethna

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[66] *Aims of the Gaelic League*, Pamphlet (Dublin, 1900), p. 1.
[67] *Southern Cross*, 19 May 1899, p. 11.
[68] *Southern Cross*, 19 May 1899, p. 14.
[69] *Southern Cross*, 19 May 1899, p. 20.

Carbery and they had proved very popular with his readers.[70] There was a real solidarity among the editors, journalists and writers who worked in the nationalist cause and the provided support and encouragement for each other.

It was customary to reprint articles and letters that were deemed relevant and of interest to readers. Douglas Hyde's letter to the *Irish World* on the Gaelic language was reprinted in the *Southern Cross*.[71] In his letter he stressed that the life or death of the Irish language must be fought out and decided within the following ten years. All over Europe there had been a renaissance of the smaller nationalities and their languages. This was important for Ireland and helped to make Irish people aware of their valuable and interesting literature. The Gaelic League Leaflet on the twelve reasons why Irishmen should know, prize and cherish the Irish language was printed in full in the Gaelic section of the *Southern Cross*.[72]

Who was anglicizing the Irish community in Argentina? This question was of real concern for Bulfin. He argued that the nationalist philosophy of protest was dignified, reasonable and justified.[73] Ireland demanded legislative independence and England must grant what had been granted to Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. It was essential to retain a strong and confident Irish identity for the sake of self respect and the right to be respected by the world. The most recent meeting of the Buenos Aires Branch of the Gaelic League had good news to report. There were seventy five member enrolled.[74] A sum of money was to be sent for a special prize at the following Oireachtas to be called the Buenos Aires prize. There was sense of purpose and conviction following on the debate on Douglas Hyde's speech in which he stressed how much was at stake for the language over the next ten years. These accounts served to direct and stir the Irish community. The question concerning the de-anglicization of Ireland was debated at the Buenos Aires Branch of the Gaelic League. Bulfin was in attendance and he presented a strong case for what had to done in the future. He contended:

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[70] *Southern Cross*, 9 May 1899, p. 16.
[71] *Southern Cross*, 27 May 1899, pp 4-5.
[72] *Southern Cross*, 8 Dec 1899, p. 4.
[73] *Southern Cross*, 2 June 1899, p. 10.
[74] *Southern Cross*, 9 June 1899, p. 4.

> The preservation and preference of every Gaelic element in the national life of Ireland, not to the exclusion of the English language, but in order to give the future men and women of the land, the advantages of being a bilingual people, Furthermore that it meant the revival of the Gaelic Spirit in art, music, literature, and social life, so that the people of Ireland might become Irish and not a despicable counterfeit of any other people or a muddy backwater of any other nation's stream. The term Gaelic is non political, non sectarian, purely intellectual and national.[75]

Reports from Ireland were encouraging and received prominent coverage in the *Southern Cross*. Articles in *An Claidheamh Soluis* gave accounts of the opening of an Irish Literary Theatre in Dublin.[76] The play *The Countess Cathleen* by William Butler Yeats was to be performed on the opening night. There was also an account of the Irish spirit prevailing at the Cistercian monastery of Mount Melleray, County Waterford. In the monastery chapel many of the prayers were in Irish and the students in the college were singing in Irish. However the worst feature from Ireland concerned emigration.[77] Thirty four thousand Irishmen and women had left Ireland during the past year. Anglicized Ireland had withered the country and since the Act of Union, 6,000,000 had emigrated. Yet, Bulfin argued that there was hope. The county councils and the growth of the Gaelic movement could help reverse the trends. It was hoped that a Gaelic Ireland would flourish.[78]

The General report of the Gaelic League for the year ending 30 September 1898 was positive and promising. [79]The growth of the movement had been rapid. There had been several public meetings. Many of the monuments raised during the year to the memory of the men of '98 had been enscribed either solely in Irish or with English as a translation. The use of Irish in churches had increased. Fr O'Growney's *Simple Lessons in Irish* had been adopted as a textbook. John MacNeill had been appointed as professor of Irish in St Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra. The American movement had entered a new phase.

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[75] *Southern Cross*, 9 June 1899, p. 11.
[76] *Southern Cross*, 16 June 1899, pp 4-5.
[77] *Southern Cross*, 16 June, 1899, p. 10.
[78] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13802 (Folder 13), p. 8.
[79] *Southern Cross*, 16 June 1899, p. 5.

In a letter to the *Southern Cross*, Professor Seamus Meaney wrote to express his thoughts on the state of progress in relation to the Gaelic League and Argentina. He praised the role of the *Southern Cross*, John Tierney and all those who worked for the advancement of the Gaelic renaissance.

> The *Southern Cross* has assumed the position which corresponds to being already the recognized organ of the Irish people on South America. It has further assumed the position of the official organ of the Gaelic language in this Southern Continent. Never before has the *Southern Cross* been put to a nobler use and here, my countrymen, we have a centre around which we can all rally. A beginning has been made. We are pretty much divided here - some south, some west, and a few north, but we have a common centre – the Southern Cross – by which we can keep in touch with each other, no matter how separated.[80]

He was also grateful that the *Southern Cross* had put him in touch with John Tierney of San Juan two years earlier, who had proved to be an inspiration to him and so many others. Bulfin expressed his appreciation of Professor Meaney's letter. He noted that membership of the Gaelic League in Buenos Aires was increasing. It had decided at the last meeting in June 1899 to make every effort to bring the movement out into the Camp and establish branches there.[81] The Irish community of the city was only a fraction of the whole. There was news from Campana, located out in the Camp, that they wished to form a branch. Every help would be offered to them and a number of Buenos Aires members would travel to Campana to help with the proceedings.

At the next meeting of the Gaelic League in Buenos Aires the question of spreading the movement to the Camp was discussed and a sub-committee was formed to deal with it.[82] Bulfin proposed that £50 be sent to the Gaelic League in Dublin and this was seconded. The possibility of holding a Gaelic festival in Buenos Aires was also discussed. It was noted that *The United Irishman* in Dublin had a full account of the work done the Buenos Aires Branch of the Gaelic League and said the *Southern*

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[80] *Southern Cross*, 23 June 1899, p. 5.
[81] *Southern Cross*, 23 June 1899, p. 11.
[82] *Southern Cross*, 7 July 1899, p. 11.

Cross, 'the able and patriotic organ of the Irish Argentine has promised to keep the columns always open to the Gaels and to do gratuitously any printing they may need'.[83]

Rev Dr Michael Hickey of St Patrick's College, Maynooth had outlined his philosophy in the 'The True National Idea' and Bulfin promoted it in his paper.[84] His belief was that every person in Ireland should be able to speak, read and write Irish. The more languages we know the better, because we will gain in breadth of vision and intellectual equipment. The language and its literature should be a bond of unity and enable the Irish to proclaim their distinctive nationality to the world. He said, 'When we go abroad Vous etes Anglais,? or its equivalent, should not be a standing reminder to us of our national degradation.' Bulfin agreed in full with his sentiments, because they confirmed his own growing conviction of the importance of the language. Therefore Dr Hickey's thesis appeared, in its various stages, in different editions of the *Southern Cross*. Part of his thesis contained a discussion not just on the National phase of the Irish language, but also on the educational, ethnological, philological and practical phases. He concluded that. 'We should all speak Irish whenever we possibly could and English only when we should.'[85]

Bulfin noted that *The Irish World* had raised £300 for the Irish language fund and forwarded the money to the Gaelic League.[86] There was a growing sense of solidarity among newspapers and all those working on behalf of the Gaelic movement. Conor Mac Nessa, a correspondent with the *Southern Cross*, wrote challenging certain groups in the Irish Argentine community for the way they were to divest themselves of everything Irish in order to flatter themselves that they were English.[87] This was essentially a humiliating stance that indicated a lack of personal identity and self respect. It was also felt that the young Irish – Argentine footballers should adopt the Gaelic rules of the game.[88] It should be possible to have an Irish Argentine Athletic League. This would serve to promote both unity and standards. It was also noted that

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[83] *Southern Cross*, 14 July 1899, p. 4.
[84] *Southern Cross*, 2 July 1899, p. 5.
[85] *Southern Cross*, 28 July 1899, p. 5.
[86] *Southern Cross*, 28 July 1899, p. 4.
[87] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug. 1899, p. 4.
[88] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug. 1899, p. 10.

the concert presented by the Porterio Athletic Club did not have any Irish music on the programme. It was recommended by the Buenos Aires Branch of the Gaelic League that any club connected with the Irish Argentine community should be encouraged to include Gaelic music in future events.[89] Bulfin was pleased to announce that a branch of the Gaelic League had been established in Birr, King's County.[90] It gave him real pleasure to see his home county playing an active role in the Gaelic movement. The first number of the manuscript journal *Sgiath Con gCulainn*, issued in Belfast, and devoted entirely to Gaelic matters was warmly welcomed by Bulfin. Readers of the *Southern Cross* were recommended to keep a look out for articles regarding the Gaelic movement in the French, Italian and German Press.[91] It was noted that a single society in the United States, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, gave $50,000 in gold for the establishment for a chair of Celtic in the Catholic University.[92]

At the request of the Buenos Aires Gaelic League, an appeal was made on behalf of the Irish language National Fund in Ireland. Bulfin urged all his readers to respond in full and with a generous spirit.

> Whatever influence the *Southern Cross* may have with its readers, whatever poor merit it may have gained in their eyes by its labours amongst them, whatever friendship it has been enabled to win must now go with this plea, because all our heart is in it for dear Ireland's sake. Every service done to the Gaelic league not only arrests Irish decay, but adds a stone to the rising temple of the Gael. Every cent subscribed to the Irish language fund pulls down some of that prison house – the barriers of an alien tongue and an alien rule – by which the genius of Ireland crippled and caged.[93]

From Ireland came the news that Douglas Hyde had given a lecture in September 1899 in the courthouse at Gort, County Galway to a crowded audience, with W.B.Yeats and Lady Gregory in attendance.[94] Lady Gregory herself had joined the movement. A letter came from the Central Executive of the Gaelic League thanking the Buenos Aires Branch for the subscription to the language fund and the proprietor

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[89] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug. 1899, p. 11.
[90] *Southern Cross*, 18 Aug. 1899, p. 4.
[91] *Southern Cross*, 25 Aug. 1889, p. 4.
[92] *Southern Cross*, 25 Aug. 1899, p. 5.
[93] *Southern Cross*, 1 Sept. 1899, p. 10.
[94] *Southern Cross*, 22 Sept. 1899, pp 4-5.

and editor of the *Southern Cross* for his assistance. Many people in Ireland were hearing of Buenos Aires for the first time and they were proud to learn of all that was being done. This was an encouragement for all.[95]

From *An Claidheamh Soluis* came much praise for the work of the *Irish World* and the *Southern Cross*. It acknowledged the endeavours and impact of the two newspapers in promoting the Gaelic movement.

> For clear, firm and consistent exposition of the aim and true meaning of the national language movement, the page devoted to the movement week after week in the *Irish World* cannot be surpassed. We look forward and not too far forward to the day when the press of Ireland will follow this splendid organ of the exiles. No less encouraging is the stand being taken for the old tongue and the old nationality by the sterling Irishmen of the Argentine Republic, whose second generous subscription to the National language Fund is acknowledged this week. Like the *Irish World* in the North, the *Southern Cross* in the South one or more pages weekly to the interests of the National Language Movement and by its aid the great bulk of money forwarded from the Argentine Republic has been collected.[96]

From the Camp came the good news that a Gaelic hall was being built in Mercedes and that it was nearing completion. This was seen as an extension of the Gaelic movement into the Camp towns and was warmly welcomed as another centre for the Irish community.[97] It was important to embrace all the Camp towns and regions where the Irish had settled.[98]

The death of Fr Owen O'Growney, Vice – President of the Gaelic League, was noted. He was one of the founders of the Gaelic League and had worked incessantly for the regeneration of Ireland. For health reasons he was obliged to emigrate to California a few years earlier and died at the early age of 36 years.[99] A full and detailed obituary appeared in *An Claidheamh Soluis* and was reprinted in the *Southern Cross.*[100]

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[95] *Southern Cross*, 20 Oct. 1899, p. 5.
[96] *Southern Cross* 10 Nov. 1899, p. 5.
[97] *Southern Cross* 17 Nov. 1899, p. 4.
[98] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 494.
[99] *Southern Cross*, 24 Nov. 1899, p 4.
[100] *Southern Cross*, 1 Dec. 1899, p. 4.

Bulfin was also determined to see the Gaelic Athletic Association established in Buenos Aires. He himself played an active role as player and referee in hurling and Gaelic football games and was instrumental in the foundation of the Buenos Aires Hurling Club in May 1900. The *Southern Cross* consistently promoted the Gaelic Athletic Association by publishing the rules of hurling and other Gaelic games, fundraising and encouraging its readers to participate in and support all events.[101]

In January, 1898 the *Southern Cross* appeared in a new form. The paper was greatly enlarged and now had twenty pages. This was the 24th year of its existence and due to public support it was now possible to extend the scope and range of the paper. The Irish-Argentine community had proved to be solid friends and the paper had very few enemies.[102] Bulfin was pleased to note that the new format of the paper with its extended range and coverage had met with the approval of the readers.[103]

The fervour and extent of the Centenary celebrations for 1798 impressed Bulfin and he entered fully into spirit of the event. The *Southern Cross* reported that the *New York Sun* estimated that 50,000 men and women of Irish blood would visit Ireland for the celebrations.[104] Bulfin decided to publish a series of articles dealing with the Rebellion of '98. It was felt necessary to inform readers of the historical facts of the rebellion and to present them without passion or bitterness.[105] The first article in the series dealing with the '98 Rebellion appeared in late January and began by acknowledging that the subject was bound to arouse partisanship. However, it stated that the rebellion was a vindication of a great principle – the principle that Ireland was made by God almighty for the people of Ireland. The rebels were essentially in the right.[106]

The series based on the 1798 Rebellion continued in the columns of the *Southern Cross*. This was augmented by articles written by W. T. Stead in *The*

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[101] *Southern Cross*, 4 May 1900, pp 4-5.
[102] *Southern Cross* 7 Jan. 1898, p. 10.
[103] *Southern Cross*, 14 Jan. 1898, p. 10.
[104] *Southern Cross*, 18 Dec. 1896, p. 3.
[105] *Southern Cross*, 7 Jan. 1898, p. 11.
[106] *Southern Cross*, 21 Jan. 1898, p. 13.

Review of Reviews and reprinted in the *Southern Cross*.[107] Stead, an eminent and influential editor, was much admired by Bulfin for his level of insight, intellectual weight and independent thinking. His article was entitled 'Article of the Month. The Centenary of 1798.' While fearful to speak of it, he wrote a vivid and strong account of the rebellion and admitted, as an Englishman, his real sense of shame at England's role in the rebellion. His examination of the 1798 Rebellion led him to the conclusion that England had manipulated the whole course of events in order to hasten and ensure the Act of Union 1800. It was, he argued, a government made insurrection:

> To what purpose, it may be asked, do we remember 1798? What has it to do with us today? It is an old story – a hundreds years old. The inquiry reminds us of the protest of the spendthrift, who protested against being sued for a debt which was really so long over due that it ought to be written off. A hundred years is but as yesterday in the history of nations; and although a century has lapsed, Ireland is united with England by virtue of the crimes at which I have briefly glanced. So far as Ireland is concerned we stand in the felon's dock, not sit on the judgment seat.[108]

This analysis and perspective from an English editor was to challenge conventional views about the Irish rebels and prompt a rethink about English policy in relation to Ireland.[109] Stead's article was reprinted in full in several editions of the *Southern Cross.* It was noted that there were Orange riots in Belfast during the '98 centenary celebrations.[110]

John Redmond gave a lecture in the Round Room in the Rotunda (Dublin) on 'Wexford in 1798'. Bulfin reported that the meeting had a full attendance. Redmond argued that it was necessary to clarify important aspects of the rebellion in order to avoid misrepresentation, particularly among anti Irish Irishmen.[111] It was not a Popish

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[107] *Southern Cross*, 26 Aug. 1898, p. 2.
[108] W.T. Stead, 'The Topic of the Month. The Centenary of 1798' in *Review of Reviews*, vol xviii, July-Dec. 1898, p. 76.
[109] Ibid, p.189.
[110] *Southern Cross*, 8 July 1898, p.11.
[111] *Southern Cross*, 24 Dec. 1897, p.

rebellion and was not marked by cruelty. Out of the 162 leaders, 106 were Protestants and only 56 were Catholics. Wexford was at the heart of the rebellion and it was there that the struggle was most severe. Redmond praised the role of Father Murphy and refuted charges of barbarity on the part of the rebels. He welcomed the centenary celebrations that were planned for the coming year. John O'Leary proposed a hearty vote of thanks and then closed the meeting. From the United States came a report of Maud Gonne's visit to that country. A year earlier she started editing the journal *Irlande Libre* in Paris in order to promote the cause of Irish nationalism. There was much praise for her endeavours and she was seen as Ireland's Joan of Arc.[112] There was also an account of the strength of the Gaelic League and an account from the various branches in Ireland.

For the Irish in Ireland and other parts of the world, St Patrick's Day 1898 was a day of national significance and the feast was celebrated by banquets, parades, concerts and a variety of other festival gatherings. At the festival banquet in Buenos Aires, Bulfin paid a special tribute to the men of 1798, their endeavours and their achievements.[113]

Bulfin found it necessary to confront two of the major English language papers in Argentina, the *Herald* and the *Standard* in relation to how they presented the Irish community. According to the historian Thomas Murray, *the Standard* had become the organized organ of the English community in Buenos Aires.[114] McKenna viewed the *Standard* as the most prestigious English language newspaper in Argentina.[115] *The Herald* of Buenos Aires found itself in dispute with the *Southern Cross* over an article published in its newspaper about the Irish community in Argentina. This article was reprinted in the *Southern Cross.*

> Of late the Civil Registry has been entering natives of Ireland as Irish. There is no such legal nationality and if the authorities begin to use the provincial terms they should use them all - English, Scot, Welsh, Manx, Figeans and so on. There is no Irish government or consul or "papelela" or anything different to the other provinces of the Empire. British is the correct word for

[112] *Southern Cross*, 31 Dec. 1897, p. 2.
[113] *Southern Cross*, 18 Mar. 1898, pp 13-14.
[114] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 303.
[115] Patrick McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina', p. 29.

> all whether born in a Westmeath shanty, a highland cottage or a Rangoon go down.[116]

Bulfin's response was passionate and immediate. Although respecting the *Herald* as a newspaper of real merit, he was critical of the amount and level of anti-Irish sentiment that found its way into its columns. He argued that the Irish people called themselves Irish before the word British was heard of. It was, he felt, important to point out that the English speaking people of the River Plate were there together in a foreign country. Different views were held about politics whether British, Irish, American or African and it was essential to respect them all.

A later edition of the *Herald* carried a letter which presented the Irish Catholic community in Argentina as feckless, drunken and unreliable. Again Bulfin strongly refuted these charges. While admitting that the Irish-Argentine community had its faults like every other community, it also had a proud record of honour and achievement. They had won prosperity without dishonesty, they were trusted and esteemed and had kept the faith of their fathers. The *Southern Cross* would not stand by without protest while the Catholic religion and the Irish-Argentine community were subject to insult.

> The Irish community here is not to be found in public houses, brothels or in the jails. It is to be found law-abiding, self-respecting and respected, enriching the soil with the sweat of honest manhood and making a living by honourable and useful labour.[117]

However the *Herald* responded and claimed it was not anti-Irish and that it had a fair appreciation of Irish genius, virtues and good fellowship. Bulfin agreed with this as an overall picture, but felt justified in complaining about more recent articles in the paper.[118]

The *Herald* accused the *Southern Cross* of being in dread of the contaminating effect of British surroundings on American ambassadors, when it speaks of Colonel Foy becoming 'a black sheep if he had remained long enough in London'.[119] Bulfin strongly refuted this charge. He did argue, however, that the Irish people and their children's children had always been against the Anglo-American alliance and that

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[116] *Southern Cross*, 12 Aug. 1898, p. 10.
[117] *Southern Cross*, 12 Aug. 1898, pp 10-11.
[118] *Southern Cross*, 19 Aug. 1898, p. 10.
[119] *Southern Cross*, 30 Sept. 1898, p. 10.

there was very good reason for this. As an Irish nationalist, he felt unhappy with the cordial understanding that was growing between England and the United States.[120] It was necessary for the Irish to play off their influence in the United States against English policy in Ireland. If Irish national claims were fully satisfied the Irish could then look more amicably on the projected alliance between England and the United States. It should, he felt, be the policy of the Irish at home and abroad to discourage this alliance – at least until Ireland was granted justice from England. If the *Herald* understood the Irish people and their history, they would see the logic of their views and withdraw criticism of them.

Bulfin devoted many editorials to defining and defending the meaning and nature of Home Rule for Ireland. *The Herald* proposed the idea of an imperial parliament, along with a measure of local government to satisfy national aspirations.[121] Clearly the *Herald* was labouring under a misapprehension regarding Home Rule and it was necessary to clarify the situation. Ireland had not resigned her identity. Her sovereignty had passed away. Her individuality remained. Therefore she demanded to be considered as an entity in her own right. She demanded the right to manage her own affairs and to legislate in a constitutional manner for her own fiscal, commercial and social needs. This was the national feeling and as John Boyle O'Reilly wrote:

> Mankind is a marching army with a broadening front the while
> Shall we skimp its ranks to the farm paths or clear to the outward file ?

The fears of the *Southern Cross* in relation to the growing alliance between England and the United States have proved to be well founded, as noted by the *Herald.*[122]

English language newspapers in Argentina tended to avoid political interventions, but did not hold back on attacking their commercial rivals. Sometimes the attacks between rivals periodicals were due to the fact that the circulation of English newspapers was small.[123]

The vexed question of Home Rule for Ireland was debated strongly in the editorials of the *Southern Cross* and the *Herald.* Taking a stand against Home Rule, the *Herald*

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[120] *Southern Cross*, 7 Oct. 1898, p. 12.
[121] *Southern Cross*, 21 Oct. 1898, p. 10.
[122] *Southern Cross*, 18 Nov. 1898, p.10.
[123] Oliver Marshall, *The English Language press in Latin America* (London, 1996), p. iv.

argued that it was not self government that Irish agitators wanted but complete separation from England.[124] Gladstone was misled and misguided and the people of England were carried off their feet by a policy that was not fully considered. It could not support rebellion and treason. *The Herald* contended:

> Why should Ireland be put on a different footing to other portions of the British Empire? But the *Southern Cross* knows perfectly well that it is not self government that Irish agitators want, but complete separation from Great Britain and that is what they will never get.....the people of Great Britain were carried of their feet by the ardent and impetuous devotion of Gladstone to a line of policy they had not fully considered.[125]

The *Southern Cross* refuted all this as wild allegation. The paper had always favoured Home Rule from honest convictions and not convenience. The *Herald* went on to say that it could endorse the Home Rule claim as defined by the *Southern Cross*. However they asserted that the Irish party would not accept this definition.[126] Even the Tory party in England declined to say a settlement in terms of self government would have to be final. They were not prepared to say that a far wider measure of self government would not be advisable by them at a later date. Bulfin was aware that political controversies were often unnecessarily bitter and could leave a lasting legacy. He insisted that the tone of certain papers to which the *Herald* alluded was no argument against Home Rule or the attitude of the *Southern Cross*. It was unacceptable to find this bitterness of tone in so many of the opponents of the *Southern Cross* who set out to discredit, to misunderstand and to induce others to do the same.

The Herald insisted that one of the main difficulties with Home Rule was that the term was indefinite and ambiguous and that very few Irish people understood its meaning.[127] In all discussions much depended on the definition of terms. What Home Rule meant depended on who used the term. The *Herald* accepted the definition that described Home Rule as a measure enabling the Irish people to administer their own purely Irish as distinct from imperial affairs. This implied that no country could be

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[124] *Southern Cross*, 22 Dec. 1898, p. 11.
[125] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 18 Dec 1898, p. 2.
[126] *Southern Cross,* 30 Dec. 1898, p. 10.
[127] *Buenos Aires Herald,* 20 Dec. 1898, p, 2.

well administered except in direct response to the public opinion of its own people. It also implied that in the interests of the Empire and of Great Britain itself, it was necessary for the Imperial Parliament, whose business every session grew more congested, to devolve some of its local functions to subordinate local legislatures. This definition given by the *Southern Cross* would not be acceptable to radical Home Rulers.[128] They would demand a full separation from the United Kingdom, but this was not a possibility. *The Herald* denied that it had changed its mind on Home Rule, but that it had held to definition outlined by the *Southern Cross.*

Bulfin confronted the *Standard* for writing the obituary for Ireland, when Parnell died. Had Home Rule been buried with Parnell, there would not have been the great response from the citizens on the anniversary of his death. People do not deck the tomb of repudiated aspirations. Parnell was renowned in death, because the cause he served still lived. In denouncing the *Standard* he wrote:

> The *Standard* has evidently outlived whatever of Irish virtue it once may have possessed. It will not live long enough to rejoice, as it fain would do, at the death of Irish nationalism. The *Standard* has so long and so persistently toadied to the "predominant partner"that it no longer feels any shame in writing anti-Irish twaddle for the delection of those whom it favours and this is chiefly why it its opinions and utterances about Ireland are so worthless and discredited.[129]

In writing about the death of Edward Thomas Mulhall of the *Standard* in February 1899, Bulfin outlined his career as a journalist in Buenos Aires. He felt that his writings lacked ideals and moral purpose. Without possessing many of the Celtic ideals, he still had the Celtic temperament.[130] Shortly afterwards his brother and fellow journalist of the *Standard*, Francis M. Mulhall, died. Again Bulfin paid tribute to this second member of the Mulhall family, outlined his career including a reference to his role in the early years of the *Southern Cross*.[131] In spite of the tensions and conflicts that existed between them, because of the Mulhalls' strong tendency to favour England, Bulfin acknowledged the personal and professional strengths of the

[128] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 25 Dec. 1898, p. 2.
[129] *Southern Cross*, 14 Oct. 1898, p.12.
[130] *Southern Cross*, 17 Feb. 1899, p. 11.
[131] *Southern Cross*, 3 Mar. 1899, p. 11.

two men. None of the family except Michael seemed to have been possessed of any real Irish spirit. The private lives of the Mulhalls were honourable, but they were not popular with their own countrymen. They were willing to lend a helping hand to any cause that did not conflict with their loyalty to Queen Victoria.[132] Although in fact Irish, the Mulhall brothers usually referred to themselves as English and championed the interests of the British community.[133] This was in direct contrast to Bulfin's growing nationalism and, in fact, it sharpened his focus and made him more determined than ever to present the case for Ireland.

Once again the *Herald* attacked Bulfin and the *Southern Cross* for causing and fostering bitterness between Englishmen and Irishmen. The paper argued that attempts were being made to keep the English away from all Irish reunions.[134] This claim was strongly refuted by Bulfin. He insisted that there was never a policy of excluding English guests from Irish reunions. However, mutual respect was required. It is not a sign of bitterness to ask for the respect that one is expected to give. Therefore it was crucial, he argued, that the Irish community and those who represent it in any way should not give away Irish national principles to please their English friends. Bulfin claimed that he had many English friends who esteemed him none the less because his political views were different to theirs. There had been several English converts to Home Rule and he hoped there would be more.

Further reports from Dublin gave accounts of the Queen Victoria Jubilee celebrations. There was much excitement and scenes of turbulence on the principal thoroughfares, Grafton

Street, Dame Street, College Green, Westmoreland Street and O'Connell Street. Flags and bunting were torn down. Over 300 people received treatment in Jervis Street Hospital.[135] Clearly the city was divided on the issue of the Jubilee celebrations. This division was also reflected in the Irish community in Argentina. Mr E. T. Mulhall, the senior editor of the *Standard,* gave an enthusiastic account in his paper of the Jubilee

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[132] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 307.
[133] Oliver Marshall, *The English Language Press in Latin America*, pp 14-16.
[134] *Southern Cross*, 9 June 1899, p. 10.
[135] *Southern Cross*, 13 Aug. 1897, p. 3.

celebrations in London. Bulfin insinuated mockingly that the author deserved to knighted by the queen for his allegiance and flattering reports.

Bulfin well understood the reluctance in Ireland to celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday. He was not alone in being critical of the Queen, particularly in relation to how she treated Ireland. Some of the English and North American press noted how silent the Irish were in response to the Queen's birthday. By referring to articles and editorials in a variety of newspapers, Bulfin was able to support his own position and that of the Irish. The *North American Review* was critical of the Queen's role during the famine of 1847 – 'when a word from her would have saved the lives of tens of thousands of those she claimed as subject.' [136] The *Standard,* the *Herald* and the *Review of Buenos Aires* dismissed all this as scurrilous, prejudiced and bigoted reporting. In response, Bulfin argued that the figures and the truth about the famine in Ireland were plain enough and could be verified in Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics.[137] He defended the *North American Review* for having presented the truth and was critical of the Argentine papers that had been dismissive of this.

Bulfin took issue with the *Standard* for referring to the boys in Irish Orphanage in Buenos Aires as of 'British parentage.' Children of Irish descent or parentage was how they should be described, unless they claimed to be Argentines, he argued.[138] This was part of the old dispute between Bulfin and the *Standard* and it was once again gaining momentum. The *Standard's* consistently pro-British stand was a source of constant conflict and confrontation for Bulfin. Editorials in the *Standard*, such as the following, stirred his spirit and provoked his wrath:

> Her Majesty Queen Victoria completes her 77th year to-day and the event is the signal for rejoicing throughout the broad expanse of that empire on which the sun never sets. It must be a grateful task indeed for our beloved sovereign to contemplate the prosperity of her subjects in all parts of the world, to watch the growing power of Great Britain, to survey the present with all its attractions, the past with all its triumphs and the future with its dazzling prospects.[139]

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[136] *Southern Cross*, 23 June 1899, p. 10.
[137] *Southern Cross*, 30 June 1899, p. 10.
[138] *Southern Cross*, 4 Aug. 1899, p. 10.
[139] *Standard*, 24 May 1896, p. 3.

It made him more determined to define and defend the rights and demands of the Irish community in Argentina. It also served to focus and shape his growing sense of nationalism.

Conclusion

A series of influences shaped the growth and development of Bulfin's nationalist philosophy. From his early childhood in Ireland to the years of exile in Argentina, he encountered much that led him to strong convictions about Ireland and her unfolding destiny. Irish writers like Charles Kickham, Thomas Davis, James Clarence Mangan and John Boyle O'Reilly had always stirred his spirit with their patriotic works depicting the history of Ireland. An avid reader from his early schooldays, Bulfin was very familiar with the history, literature and legends of his own country.

However, it was in Argentina that his sense of nationalism was to unfold and to reach fruition. Along with many exiles, he was to feel more keenly his sense of Irish nationality and identity. As the editor and proprietor of the *Southern Cross,* he felt a responsibility to represent the Irish community in Argentina and to foster their welfare. This role prompted him to examine his own beliefs and political convictions. His commitment to the Irish in Argentina was extended to embrace a sense of mission for the future destiny of Ireland itself. Michael Dinneen, Padraig Mac Manus and John Tierney were influential mentors and Bulfin was moved by their patriotic fervour and spirit.

His own view of Irish history led him to admire Parnell and to support the Home Rule Movement. He became committed to Home Rule as the way forward for Ireland. This policy was advocated by him in the *Southern Cross* and he constantly advised the fragmented Irish Party to unite in the wake of Parnell's decline and death. The foundation of the Gaelic League had a major impact on Bulfin. He fully embraced its philosophy and was responsive to the new spirit of awakening in terms of the Irish language, identity, culture, literature and traditions. As editor he promoted it by fundraising and presenting a forum for it in his newspaper. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Gaelic League in Buenos Aires and was a constant supporter of all its activities, including the promotion of hurling and other Gaelic

games. The 1798 Centenary celebrations also helped to focus Bulfin on Ireland's history and future destiny. He was impressed by the world wide response to the celebrations and he entered fully into the spirit of nationalist fervour that it brought. As editor he provided a platform in the *Southern Cross* for a variety of articles that dealt with the rebellion, its causes and consequences. He wrote on the subject and defended the rebels and their cause.

As a journalist and editor, Bulfin was conscious of his role and the impact of the press on readers. He had confronted *The Standard* and the *Herald*, two of the leading English language newspapers in Argentina, for their pro-British and anti-Irish bias. Ironically, it was this very role of defending Ireland against her critics that was to further sharpen his resolve and accelerate his growing sense of nationalism. This, in turn, was to lead to greater involvement and commitment, on his part. His mission now became clear. He would work with greater zeal for the independence of Ireland and the spread of the Gaelic League philosophy.

Chapter 5

The Editor's World

This chapter will focus on the many other aspects of Bulfin's role as editor of the *Southern Cross* during the period 1896 to 1902. It will demonstrate that his strong sense of commitment to the cause of Ireland and the Gaelic League did not prevent him from responding to what was happening in Argentina and the world at large. It will concentrate on his role as editor in relation to the following major issues and events: poverty in Argentina; church and state; leadership at local, national and international level; and the Boer War.

Argentina was a wealthy country with many valuable resources. It had many prosperous industries, including agriculture, fishing and manufacture. Yet like many wealthy nations it was faced with the growing problem of poverty. Ireland, with its history of famine and poverty, was a constant memory for the exile abroad. For Bulfin there were many reminders in the streets of Buenos Aires. The Irish, themselves, had sometimes become casualties, as in the case of the Dresden Affair. The 'antorrantes'(vagrants) were constant reminders of homelessness for him. His visit to the Conventillo (slum area in Buenos Aires) with its Dickensian squalor and depravation was to leave a lasting impression on him. It was in the cities rather than on the plains of the Pampas that real destitution could be seen. The Gauchos had a tough and primitive existence but they were strangers to real hunger and poverty.

Essentially Bulfin was social campaigner and reformer. He was prepared to confront the harsh reality of people's lives, to examine the causes and to campaign for change. As an editor he felt obligated to inform his readers, to alert them to the full situation, to promote a sense of public concern and to agitate for reforms. As a realist, he knew that change would be slow but he took the long view and pleaded certain changes to be made. By informing his readers and by sustaining the focus on the suffering of the poor, he hoped that a consciousness would emerge that would precipitate changes in the social order.

Bulfin's visit to the Basura Fields, located on the edge of Buenos Aires, where the city refuse was dumped, was to leave a lasting impression on him. He described it as a place of smoke, fires, squalor and human degradation. A community of rag pickers, men, women and children of all ages lived out an existence there. They were dirty, sullen and desolate. They lived around the edges of the ash mounds in hovels built with tins and roofed with bagging and old carpets. These cabins were no more than twelve square feet. In this environment of filth and desolation, the rag pickers lived:

> They were huddled together like badgers, caked with dirt....never washing. Never wearing a single thing that is clean; clothing themselves and feeding themselves from the refuse in which they root like pigs; and passing the weeks and month and years without any other time amusement than that of pay day. They never go to church. No clergyman ever goes near them. No instruction is ever given to the children. The girl child in her second year passes the day with the mother, father and brothers rooting in the garbage near the fires in the foul smoke, in the foul air, listening to foul language and imbibing the foul spirit of the place.[1]

In reflecting on this scene, Bulfin pondered the destiny of such people. By contrast, the rich lived on the Boulevard Callao Eutro Rios and the children of the wealthy would have very different destinies. He concluded that while the world was ordered in this way, the rich and the poor, the social and economic structure would have to be challenged and justice would have to prevail.

As a student of economics, he understood the forces that made for poverty. As a student of human nature, he could see the situations that made poverty inevitable. However, he felt morally bound to address the situation and to seek for remedies. As an editor, the least he could do was provide a forum in the *Southern Cross* for debate on the issue. Bulfin was aware of the vagaries of life and how misfortune could fall at any time. The aristocrat could turn beggar. In a series of articles and moral fables he described how the plight of animals reflected the changing fate of humans. He was highlighting for his readers that poverty was a possible destiny for everyone. The wheel of fortune could change the life of the rich man and he could find himself

[1] *Southern Cross*, 30 June 1899, p.13.

homeless and impoverished.[2] In another moral fable Bulfin illustrated that death was the destiny for all, rich and poor. He argued that poverty did not have to be degrading, that wealth was good to have, provided that one did not worship it. Belief in God and the prospect of heaven were real comforts to all.[3]

In an article in the *Southern Cross* dealing with poverty in Argentina, it was argued that that a real effort must be made to understand the rights of labour. The worker in office, factory or ranch must be dealt with in a fair and equitable way. The duties of capital had to be examined and reinforced. Every employer must look to his responsibilities. In this way, a clearer understanding of capital and labour would develop and this would benefit both parties.[4] Unemployment in Argentina fluctuated and was dependent on a number of factors. An article in the *Southern Cross* described how critical the situation had become in rural parts of the country in the year 1897.[5] This was due to the increase in immigration, the failure of the crops and the collapse of the sugar industry. Six thousand men were unemployed and this brought hunger and poverty in its wake. The writer recommended that the government should initiate a series of work schemes. There was much work to be done to improve the country, particularly in relation to canals, irrigation and roads.

The series of articles and letters in the *Southern Cross* dealing with poverty in Argentina was collected and published in pamphlet form. The object was to reach a wider audience so that the issues could be debated in full. It was important to put the issue of poverty on a firm footing. The *Tablet* journal was warm in its praise for the pamphlet and its objectives.[6] It had the effect of creating an awareness of how to deal favourably and equitably with the workers in town and country. In the Camp the common wage for shepherds was thirty dollars a month. In the city of Buenos Aires a servant girl could earn between forty and fifty dollars a month. It was clear that the 'puestro' and his family were entitled to a living wage. Bulfin alerted his readers to a new danger in their midst in the Camp regions.[7] Certain storekeepers bought or rented

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[2] *Southern Cross*, 7 May 1897, p. 5.
[3] *Southern Cross*, 4 June 1807, p. 4.
[4] *Southern Cross*, 11 June 1897, p. 4.
[5] *Southern Cross*, 18 June 1897, p. 4.
[6] *Southern Cross* 22 April 1898, p. 3.
[7] *Southern Cross*, 19 May 1899, p. 11.

Camp sites and property and then sub rented them to others, preferably Irish. They, then, obliged the tenants to purchase in their stores. It was a form of usury and the *Southern Cross* was determined to examine the situation in full.

Bulfin was also a gifted orator and could present his views in lecture form with resonance and conviction. In a lecture entitled 'The Latin American Church and its Calumniators', he outlined his analysis of the subject.[8] He began by insisting that the Latin American Church, stretching from Mexico to the Straits of Magellan, was the most maligned section of Catholicism. However, he argued that the Latins had resisted the proselytisers and that 'if it was quite possible for the Latin to make a bad catholic, he would never make a good protestant'. He mentioned the work of the early Catholic pioneers and how they helped to establish a social order and consolidate the government of the country.

While Bulfin consistently argued that the *Southern Cross* was not an organ of the Catholic Church, he would nevertheless continue to defend the Church and her priests against her detractors. Critics of the role of the Church in Argentina found their voice in the editorials, articles and letters pages of national and local newspapers. Some of the criticisms focused on the part played by priests in the exercise of their duties. This led to a vigorous debate on the role of the Church and the *Southern Cross* presented a strong defence of the Catholic Church.

In a detailed article in the *Buenos Aires Herald* on 9 May, 1895, Andrew Geoghegan outlined his views on the history of Roman Catholic priests in Argentina. He was critical of the legacy of Irish chaplains and made particular reference to Father Fahy. The charges against the chaplains included fraud, dishonesty and drunkenness. As an Irishman he felt it was necessary to highlight his views on the subject and he concluded as follows:

> I regret to say that within the last fifty years the Roman Catholic priests have not left a very clean bill of health regarding their sacred calling.[9]

Bulfin felt it necessary to protect both the Church and the Irish community. The *Buenos Aires Herald* had always received the support of Irish readers and now they

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[8] Bulfin Papers NLI, Mss 13804 (Folder 2), p. 1-13.
[9] *Buenos Aires Herald,* 9 May 1895.

felt insulted and publicly ridiculed. It was difficult to understand why the editor allowed the columns of his newspaper to be used to undermine the Irish community and their clergy. The situation called for an ardent response and the *Southern Cross* provided it in its editorial.

> For if on this God's world there are men who have earned the eternal gratitude of the Irish people, these men are assuredly the Irish priests. And if there be in this Republic any men whose devotion and self sacrifice have earned them a warm place in the affections and the respect of the Irish community these men are the Irish chaplains.....But as a class, take them as an element in the sociology of today, or as an historical group of individuals, who have played a great role in the past....we maintain that there is no clerical body on earth that can compare with them in virtue, in zeal, in tradition and in lofty elevation of thought and purpose. [10]

Father Edmund Flannery, a prominent Irish chaplain, entered the debate. The *Southern Cross* readily provided him with a platform for his defence of both Fr Fahy and the Irish community.[11] He argued that the money collected from the Irish community was not devoted to the object of erecting a memorial to Canon Fahy. Its main purpose was the payment of his debts and this had proved to be a more fitting tribute. When it was suggested by the *Buenos Aires Herald* that the Irish were 'too thin skinned and sensitive' to receive any form of criticism, Bulfin responded with 'we venture to object, not as censors, but as Irish readers of the *Herald*...we have a very warm corner in our hearts for our clergy...we do not like to see them dragged through the columns of an influential and well written paper as drunkards, cheats and so forth.'[12]

As a strong moralist, Bulfin was opposed to the liberal laws that allowed people who were exiled from their own countries on account of crimes to settle in Argentina.[13] No country in the world could afford to take this risk in terms of the welfare of its own people. He felt that the liberal parties in the country were

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[10] *Southern Cross,* 24 May 1895, p.4.
[11] *Southern Cross*, 24 May 1895, p. 4.
[12] *Southern Cross*, 31 May 1895, p. 4.
[13] *Southern Cross,* 3 Sept. 1897, p. 4.

responsible for allowing this situation to develop. It was not right that the person with the criminal record should receive from the laws of the Argentine Republic the protection which is due to the honest and industrious immigrant.

The *Southern Cross* decided to present a series of articles entitled 'The State and the Commonweal' in order to explore the relationship between Church and State and to provide its readers with a forum for debate on the subject.[14] The writer of this series used the pseudonym Justicia and in the introductory article described the Argentine Republic as a Catholic State with a long Christian tradition. He contended that the State had the power to teach disregard, if not contempt, for the laws of the Church. It was important, however, to understand that the more religious a people were the more secure would life and property be in that State. The *Southern Cross* had already recommended that citizens in Argentina should exercise the franchise in favour of the political party who would promise to respect the laws of the Church. It was best to make religion and justice the basis of legislation. The edition of 8 October 1897 carried another article in the series.[15]

In the edition of 29 October 1897, it was noted that electioneering took place on Sundays in Argentina. However, in England the Sabbath was still fully observed and this practice did not exist.[16] It was felt that there was a general disregard, and more particularly, an official disregard for Sunday as a day of rest. There was an official breach of the Sabbath. Bulfin contended that the holding of elections on Sundays and at the doors of the churches was an abuse and violation of the constitution of Argentina.[17] Fr O'Reilly wrote to the *Standard* complaining about the way the newspaper was in breach of the Sabbath. The *Standard* replied that 'its conscience was tranquil'.[18] However, Bulfin argued that the *Standard* had declined to reply to its critics for over thirty five years and that this was no exception. He felt that the printers on the staff of the newspaper deserved a day of rest on Sundays and that Irish chaplains like Fr O'Reilly should not be dismissed with 'unkindly levity'.[19]

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[14] *Southern Cross,* 1 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[15] *Southern Cross,* 8 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[16] *Southern Cross,* 29 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[17] *Southern Cross,* 12 Nov. 1897, p.4.
[18] *Southern Cross,* 19 Nov. 1897, p. 4.
[19] *Southern Cross,* 26 Nov. 1897, p. 4.

With the approach of Easter, Bulfin wrote on the subject of Calvary, ancient and modern. He discussed the biblical story, referring to the crucifixion, the role of the Jews and the character of Judas.[20] He linked the biblical story to what he considered to be the darker events and movements of history; the godless eastern empire, tyranny of Spain, imperialism of the Burbons and the godless revolutions. He felt that the world was drifting towards a modern calvary in the closing years of the nineteenth century and that Christian values were being lost.

The *Times of Argentina* was critical of the Catholic Church, accusing it of being sympathetic to Spain and biased against America. Bulfin defended the church and argued that it had nothing to do with the Argentine sympathy for Spain.[21] He insisted that Spanish intolerance, either ecclesiastical or lay, was not the voice of Rome or the Catholic Church. However, he did agree that some Spanish prelates had shown themselves to be prejudiced in their utterances against America.

The *Times of Argentina* also accused the Catholic Church of opposing civil marriages because of the potential loss of clerical revenue. Bulfin refuted this charge and deemed it a slander against the Church.[22] He argued that the Church was trying to protect the sacredness of the married state against the influence of the civil powers. He insisted that the state should not be allowed to exercise undue power in the area of public and private morality. There was clearly a conflict between the role of the church and the power of the state.

Bulfin was wary of the climate of liberalism that was gaining ground in Buenos Aires.[23] He pointed to the contradictions that he found in the liberal's philosophy. He felt that liberals were tolerant only of their own views and dismissive of the views of others. They attacked and dismissed religious belief and practice. Their philosophy would discourage church going, all religious observance and all manifestations of faith. Because it was a world wide phenomenon that was growing in Buenos Aires, Bulfin felt compelled to alert his readers and to defend the Church.

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[20] *Southern Cross,* 8 Apr. 1898, p.11.
[21] *Southern Cross,* 3 June 1898, p.10.
[22] *Southern Cross,* 14 Oct. 1898, p.12.
[23] *Southern Cross,* 14 Oct. 1898, p. 13.

In December 1898, Bulfin expressed his concern at the rising rate of divorce in Argentina. The figure of two hundred and fifty divorce cases was recorded for the month of November, 1898. While human frailties were a major cause, there were also other influencing factors. Bulfin contended that the role of the state was responsible, in part. [24] Twelve years earlier, the State introduced the Civil Marriage Law and this had a negative impact on the stability of marriage. The new law was in direct conflict with the teachings of the Church in relation to the nature and indissolubility of marriage. He asked his readers to reflect on the situation and to consider the ways of addressing the problem.

E. Hanson, a contributor of the *Southern Cross*, argued that the citizen had the duty and right to promote the interests of religion, especially in the area of public and private morality.[25] He contended that in serving god, one was also serving the state and the public good. The citizen with his religious convictions should be a force for good in the political world. There was, he insisted, a need to reform the educational system in Argentina. Religion was debarred from the schools and this government policy should be reversed. Religion should have its rightful place in the educational system.

Bulfin felt compelled to defend the Catholic Church against any false accusations. His responses were always immediate and incisive. This was prompted by his own personal convictions and his sense of duty to the traditional founding philosophy of the *Southern Cross*. The following account originated in the *New Zealand Tablet* and was republished in the *Dunedin Evening Star* and the *London Sunday Magazine.*

> How Converts are made in Argentina
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> Methods used in Argentine Republic for uniting the Indians to the Roman Catholic Church. Article 15 of the Argentine Constitution obliges the government to do all in their power to convert the Pagans and this is how it was done in the case of two hundred Indian prisoners. The ceremony took place in the presence of the governor of Chaco, the officials of the province and a crowd of spectators. The Indians were obliged to kneel between the long

[24] *Southern Cross,* 16 Dec. 1898, p. 10-11.
[25] *Southern Cross,* 14 Apr. 1899, p. 11.

> rows of soldiers. An officer obliged one prisoner after another to open his mouth. Then a second functionary threw a quantity of salt into the open mouth. Then followed a Franciscan monk with a vessel of water and he sprinkled the kneeling Indians. Each Indian received a scrap if paper, on which his new name was inscribed. He was then given a sort of cape or mantle and a glass of rum. The conversion of the Indians was now completed.[26]

By republishing this account in the *Southern Cross*, Bulfin was alerting his readers to accusations that were being made against the Catholic Church. He refuted the charges and dismissed the account as calumny. Documents came from the secretary of the Diocese of Sante Fe containing a complete and official denial of the claims made in the article.[27]

In May 1899, Bulfin noted the exclusion of the Vatican from the Peace Conference at the Hague.[28] He was aware that this policy of exclusion was well received in many quarters. This, he felt did not mean a loss of prestige for the Vatican. It was far older than other European power and would endure longer. However, he regretted the absence of the Vatican as it was a moral force that could influence the political world for the good. In June 1899, it was officially announced that cordial relations between Argentina and the Vatican had been re established.[29] Prior to this, President Rocca had ordered the Papal nuncio to leave the country. The *Southern Cross* welcomed the new situation in relation to church and state. Bulfin believed that the proper status for the Catholic Church as teacher, leader and governor, in its own right, was that which it had in Ireland and the United States. He feared the 'anti clerical movement' in Argentina and was pleased to see the status of the church being re established.

Editorials and letters to the *Standard* were critical of the *Southern Cross* for condemning converts from Catholicism to the Methodist religion.[30] Bulfin held the view such converts had betrayed their original beliefs and were unworthy. He, also, accused the Methodist Church of proselytising. He accused the *Standard* of not being

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[26] *Southern Cross,* 19 May 1899, p. 10.
[27] *Southern Cross,* 10 Aug. 1899, p. 15.
[28] *Southern Cross,* 19 May 1899, p. 10.
[29] *Southern Cross,* 16 June 1899, p. 11.
[30] *Southern Cross*, 30 June 1899, p. 11.

willing to see the difference between one religion and another and that it was prepared to sacrifice political and religious principles. The *Southern Cross* remained adamant in its defence of the Catholic Church and its legacy.

A new Catholic newspaper, *El Pueblo*, had just been founded by Fr Grotie, the founder of the workman's clubs.[31] It was warmly welcomed by the *Southern Cross* and Bulfin was pleased to see a Catholic daily newspaper in Argentina. The zeal of the Argentine clergy had influenced the people with their endeavours and there was a sense of Catholic revival in the country. Against this background, Bulfin felt optimistic about the future for the new paper.

In April 1900 the National Council of Education introduced new measures relating to the role of religion in the schools of Argentina.[32] The new ruling meant that there would now be a half an hour of religious instruction in the afternoon after classes; that school staff were prohibited from taking part; and that students were not bound to attend. Bulfin viewed the actions of the Council as unacceptable and their views as being hostile towards the Catholic religion which the government professed to patronize. He urged all Catholics to protest at these new measures. Argentina had renewed its friendly relations with Rome, but it was now necessary for Catholics in Argentina to become militant. The argument that the State education of a country should be undenominational was not acceptable to Bulfin. He argued that the exclusion of religious education was unconstitutional and an offence to public morality.

In October 1900, Bulfin welcomed the appointment of Rev Dr Mariano Antonio Espinosa as Archbishop of Buenos Aires.[33] A native of Buenos Aires, he had been a friend of Fr Fahy and had always respected and admired the Irish community and their traditions. The *Southern Cross* carried a full profile of the new archbishop and stressed that he would prove to be a positive influence on both church and state.

The ongoing dispute in relation to the Irish Catholic Association prompted Bulfin to present a special supplement in the *Southern Cross* to facilitate an

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[31] *Southern Cross*, 2 Mar. 1900, p. 12.
[32] *Southern Cross*, 27 Apr. 1900, p. 13.
[33] *Southern Cross*, 12 Oct. 1900, p. 17.

exploration of its past, present and plans for the future.[34] The supplement traced the history of the organization, including an account of the dissolution of the society. Essentially the purpose of the supplement was to place the problems facing the society in the context of its constitution and history. It was felt that reforms of the Charter and Statutes of the Association were necessary in order to carry out the beneficent work inaugurated by Fr Fahy.[35] A broader plan was deemed essential owing to the conditions of the Irish people and the Argentine Republic itself.

In January 1901, Bulfin highlighted the importance the new encyclical of Pope Leo XII.[36] It was entitled 'The Future of Religion and the Needs of the New Century' and he recommended his readers to examine it with care. He also recommended his readers to note the pastoral of Dr Espinosa, because the Archbishop praised the Irish community in Argentina for retaining their nationality and traditions.[37] This was the first document of its kind ever addressed to an Irish community in South America and the full text was published in the *Southern Cross* in January 1901.

> .....love of faith, constancy in preserving traditions and principles of Ireland. An eloquent testimony of this is found in the Irish Orphanage, the Irish religious communities, the chapels and churches built by Irish charity and the first altars erected in the new basilica of Luzan and donated by an Irish lady. We ourselves in our journeys over the wide province of Buenos Aires have been able to appreciate the religious spirit and patriotism of the Irish and from them we have ever received demonstrations of affection and respect.[38]

The archbishop's pastoral was seen as a vindication of the stand taken by the Irish community to preserve their national identity and culture.

Luzan, the most important Catholic shrine in South America, was located north west of the city of Buenos Aires. A special Irish pilgrimage to the shrine was organised for St Patrick's Day, 1901. Archbishop Espinosa appealed to all the Irish community to attend and give witness to their faith and traditions.[39] Bulfin

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[34] *Southern Cross,* Special Supplement, 19 Oct. 1900, pp 1- 8.
[35] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13818, p. 3.
[36] *Southern Cross*, 18 Jan. 1901, p. 19.
[37] *Southern Cross*, 25 Jan. 1901, p. 12.
[38] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13819, pp 4-5.
[39] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13819, p. 7.

encouraged his readers to participate fully, declaring that it could prove to be the most significant event ever organized by the Irish community in Argentina.[40] He was not disappointed. Almost ten thousand pilgrims were present on the day. For him, it was public testimony of the Irish in Argentina. It was an act of adhesion and a manifestation of loyalty to the Argentine Republic. It also helped to sow the seeds of permanent unity among the Irish community. [41]

Fr Dominic Fahy, a Dominican priest from Loughrea, County Galway had been an inspirational and effective leader for the Irish community in Argentina from 1843 to his death in 1871. After his death there was nobody to continue his legacy and there was no leader to take his place.[42] If the vision and plans of Father Fahy and Thomas Armstrong had been sustained, the Irish community would have gained a great deal more in terms of status and material wealth. However they had never groomed a successor to take over from them.[43] This lack of leadership remained a constant concern for Bulfin and he persisted in addressing the problem in the pages of the *Southern Cross*. A committee was established to commission and raise funds for a statue in honour of Fr Fahy. It would be located in a place of honour in the new Irish Orphanage in Buenos Aires.[44] However, it was proved necessary to make constant appeals for the Fr Fahy fund in the columns of the *Southern Cross*.[45]

In considering the qualities that make for effective leadership and achievement, Bulfin examined the historical perspective.[46] Great works of architecture were often, but not always, built in a spirit of faith, sacrifice and love. Soldiers have fought for a variety of reasons. Great works of literature were often written out of need and poverty. All of this demands constant effort and it is easier for the average man to idle than to toil.

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[40] *Southern Cross*, 15 Mar. 1901, p. 13.
[41] *Southern Cross*, 22 Mar. 1901, p. 12.
[42] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1921), pp 495-497
[43] Patrick Mc Kenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina' (M.A. Thesis,
St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1984), p. 140.
[44] *Southern Cross*, 15 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[45] *Southern Cross*, 15 Dec. 1898, p.15.
[46] *Southern Cross*, 18 Jan. 1901, p. 17.

In examining the role of Irish leaders during the nineteenth century, Bulfin drew his own conclusions.[47] Daniel O Connell dominated in the first half of the century and achieved many successes, including Catholic Emancipation. However, when the Repeal Movement failed, he declined with it. Charles Stewart Parnell was the major Irish leader in the second half of the century. While he did not have the gifts of O Connell, he was a more effective parliamentary leader. For Bulfin, the most outstanding Irish leader of the nineteenth century was Charles Stewart Parnell. He could not be replaced and the lack of leadership and unity among Irish nationalists remained the unresolved and persistent problem. W. E. Gladstone remained for Bulfin one of the greatest Englishmen of the nineteenth century. When he died in May, 1898, he paid tribute to his achievements.[48] As a leader he had sympathies beyond parochial bounds and prejudices.

In a strong editorial in May 1900, Bulfin advised the leadership of the Gaelic League in Ireland not to yield to pressure to deviate from its own constitution and policy.[49] It was important, he felt, for the Gaelic League to remain independent of all other political groups. He did not wish to see the organization being absorbed into the world of politics and politicians. The United Irish League was working for the benefit of the farmers of Ireland and deserved the good wishes of all Irish nationalists. The Gaelic league and the United Irish League might in many ways help each other, but Bulfin was adamant that they had to work independently. They should both vow that neither would turn away from its separate and distinctive task. This was, he insisted, the best way forward for success.

It was important for all citizens to take an active part in politics at local and national level. In an editorial in the *Southern Cross* entitled 'Irish Argentine Citizens – Their Duties and Opportunities', this was clearly highlighted for the readers.[50] As a community the Irish Argentines were wealthy and 'hundreds of leagues of the best land in Buenos Aires was in their hands.' Bulfin contended, however, that Irish Argentine citizens had mostly remained politically aloof and had exercised very little

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[47] *Southern Cross*, 1 Apr. 1898, pp 4-5.
[48] *Southern Cross*, 20 May 1898, p. 11.
[49] *Southern Cross*, 4 May 1900, p. 10.
[50] *Southern Cross*, 17 Sept. 1897, p. 4.

influence on politics in their newly adopted country. This indifference should not continue. In certain Camp districts a number of Irish 'portenos' had taken part in politics and this had proved beneficial to the locality. This was encouragement for the entire community to follow their example. The editor advised them to find leaders in their own ranks and then form a separate body or ally themselves to one of the established political parties. He concluded that it was their duty to respond in full as citizens of their adopted country.

The *Southern Cross* carried an article describing Denmark as the most civilized country in Europe. Here was an example of a country where the citizens participated fully in all aspects of life.[51] There had been universal suffrage for the past forty years and there was respect for the king. There were many schools and all the citizens could read. The country was in a strong economic state and its produce was of a very high standard. Boggy marshes had been converted into arable land which was suitable for farming. Denmark stood as a standard bearer for all countries, not only in Europe, but all over the world.

A letter from Emilio Hanson to the *Southern Cross* in April 1899 contended that the presence of the Irish Argentine was an important political factor in Argentina.[52] He argued that the Irish Argentine had many advantages including courage, a respect for the Gauchos, a sense of law and order, a religious faith, good material circumstances and a spirit of honour. All of this recommended that he should play an active role in the political world. It was the intention of the writer to present a series of articles outlining his views on how best the Irish Argentine could fulfil his role as a citizen.

The first of these articles by Hanson was published a week later and it gave a clear picture of the writer's vision for future citizens.[53] He challenged the readers to work for the essential reforms in society. He pointed to the political life of the province of Buenos Aires and the existence of corruption, dishonesty and confusion there. It was not acceptable to condemn politicians and then remain uninvolved oneself. There were reforms needed in a variety of areas, including education, the

[51] *Southern Cross*, 24 Sept. 1897, p. 2.
[52] *Southern Cross*, 7 Apr. 1899, p. 11.
[53] *Southern Cross*, 14 Apr. 1899, p. 11.

legal system and the electoral system. The Irish Argentine had a choice to either leave matters as they were or to play an active role in political life in order to effect change. He called for a campaign to be launched in order to unite and mobilize the Irish community into a strong force for political change in Argentina. In the letters column of the *Southern Cross*, readers expressed their enthusiasm for these ideas and indicated a hope that an Irish Argentine political party could be founded. Bulfin, himself, fully supported Hansen's proposals and was eager to promote them in his newspaper.[54] In the debate in the columns of the news paper, it was suggested that a provisional committee should be set up to organize the new Irish Argentine Party.[55]

In a further article, Hanson concentrated on the benefits of political action in relation to local government.[56] He envisaged the possibility of local government politics as a good training ground for aspiring national leaders. Important issues could be tackled, such as electoral reform, effective administration, the proper endowment of churches, schools and hospitals, the reform of the police force and judiciary. There was also the need to reform the taxation and legal system at local level. All of this, he argued, could be achieved by citizens and local leaders who had a sense of patriotic duty and commitment.

Hanson continued with his observations and suggestions. While many of the laws and institutions of state were good, there was much to be done. It was imperative, he felt, that every citizen in Argentina should be encouraged to vote in elections. When elections were held in the provinces, only one fifth of registered voters exercised their franchise.[57] He called for a programme of action to be drawn up and for a plan of campaign to begin. This would mean preparing a policy document that would deal with taxation, reform of municipal law, reform of electoral and criminal codes, simplification of legal process, winding up of the two existing state banks and the creation of a rural bank to aid the agricultural economy.[58] The financial concerns of the new party must be solidly laid down. He advised that a preliminary

[54] *Southern Cross*, 21 Apr. 1899, p. 11.
[55] *Southern Cross*, 19 May 1899, p. 11.
[56] *Southern Cross*, 28 Apr. 1899, p. 10.
[57] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug. 1899, p. 10.
[58] *Southern Cross*, 25 Aug. 1899, pp. 10-11.

meeting should be called within a few months and that a committee should be formed to consider all that was necessary to be done.

In his reflections on the Argentine revolution of 1890, Bulfin was critical of the role of the police under the command of the Colonel, later General Capdeville. He felt that their unpopularity had been deserved, for towards the end of 1889, he felt that they had treated the citizens of Buenos Aires with harshness, arrogance and often times brutality. Bulfin concluded that the revolution of 1890 was necessary. It was justifiable and justified. It heralded the advent of a new and better era in Argentine Political life.[59] To a great extent it had rid the country of Juarez and the system of which he was at once victor and observer. The revolution was a vindication of popular rights, but Bulfin hoped that another one would never be necessary.

In August 1897, Argentina was preparing for the election of a new president. The *Herald* supported General Roca as a candidate for the presidency and felt he would be the best choice for the country.

> The *Southern Cross* does not think that the best elements of public opinion favour the election of General Roca. We think so. Those whose interests are allied to law and order and peace believe him to be the best candidate available. We are not able to find another to compare with him, but we are not claiming that he is an ideal candidate.[60]

Bulfin disagreed with the *Herald* and argued that, while General Roca had ability, political and military prestige, he did not deserve to be president. He felt that his military abilities were best suited to the army and that his strength should be used to suppress foreign invaders and national enemies. As a president he might restore law and order to Argentina, but it would be at the cost of justice and liberty. As a president he would prove to be a dangerous and undemocratic force in civil government. Bulfin was always alert to the dangers of a military style dictatorship. On the eve of the Presidential election, it was felt that it might be difficult to organise a coalition with the Mitristas. Bulfin hoped that the best elements of the Radical

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[59] *Southern Cross*, 30 July 1897, pp 4-5.
[60] *Southern Cross*, 13 Aug. 1897, p. 4.

Party, the Irish Argentine elements, would vote for the candidate put forward by the Union Civica Nacional.[61]

Because of the strong stand taken by Bulfin on local and national issues, it was inevitable that there would be a reaction on the part politicians and citizens alike. In October 1897, a Senator from the La Plata Legislative threatened the *Southern Cross* with a lawsuit concerning an article written by an anonymous correspondent.[62] Bulfin refused to name the writer of the article on the grounds that he could be intimidated. The Senator had already threatened the newspaper itself. Bulfin challenged the Senator to proceed with the lawsuit and, resulting from this, the correspondent would then have a further opportunity to reveal the full truth to the country at large. In a later edition of the paper, Bulfin named the politician concerned, Senator Macaya of the La Plata Legislature, and challenged him to formally commit himself to a lawsuit.[63] Only then would he release the name of the *Southern Cross* correspondent. He felt that the publicity would act as the best protection for the correspondent and the newspaper. He cited the case of a local editor in Bragado, Buenos Aires, who challenged certain politicians and was, in turn, subjected to intimidation and harassment. In his editorial of 29 October 1897, Bulfin accused Senator Macaya of being unable to take legal proceedings against the *Southern Cross*.[64] He concluded that the Senator could not refute the serious criminal charges that were made against him. Therefore he was unfit to remain in the Senate and prison was the appropriate place for him.

It was important for leaders and politicians to learn the art of public speaking. Far too many of Argentine politicians remained seated when speaking in parliament. For Bulfin, this was unsatisfactory, because it militated against effective oratory.[65] He contended that an orator could not do himself justice in a seated position and that passion, movement, gesticulation and pose were necessary. Cicero, Danton, Grattan, Curran, Burke and O'Connell were among the orators that he

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[61] *Southern Cross*, 22 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[62] *Southern Cross*, 8 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[63] *Southern Cross*, 22 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[64] *Southern Cross*, 29 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[65] *Southern Cross*, 4 Nov. 1898, p. 11.

admired. His advice to leaders and politicians was to cultivate the skills that made for effective speaking in public.

While effective political leadership was necessary in order to influence the full growth and development of a country, there were also a number of other important considerations. A well organized and efficient civil service was essential in order to facilitate the proper administration and implementation of government policy. Bulfin claimed that the civil service in Argentina was in need of major reforms.[66] There were far too many employed by the state and the number would have to be reduced. Every effort should be made to attract people of ability and commitment who would take an active role in the running of the state.

In the editorial of 3 December 19897, Bulfin surveyed the comparative state of political concerns in relation to a number of countries.[67] In the United States of America the political leaders concerned themselves with the issues of slavery, currency, state banking, free trade and protection. In England, the concern was for the Reform of the House of Lords, Labour problems, Church disestablishment and education. In France, Austria, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Portugal, issues of national interest were to the fore in politics. However, he contended that in Argentina there was no programme of government and no policy to advocate. There were no commercial, financial, political, educational or legislative concerns on the part of political leaders. This situation was neither satisfying nor edifying for the citizens of the country.

In his interview with Frank G. Carpenter, author, journalist and special correspondent, Bulfin discussed the political situation in China, Japan, Brazil, Greece, Germany and Argentina.[68] Carpenter was the author of several books and contributed to twenty seven newspapers from his base in Washington. He described Bismarck as an old man, feeble in body, but keen and vigorous in mind. He felt that he well deserved the name of man of blood and iron at the height of his power. As a statesman, he was stern, commanding, forceful and assertive.

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[66] *Southern Cross*, 2 Dec. 1898, p. 10.
[67] *Southern Cross*, 3 Dec. 1897, p. 4.
[68] *Southern Cross*, 1 July 1898, pp 11-12.

The history of South American dictatorships made for sobering and tragic reading. Rosas and Francia were once popular idols and so were others whose names were linked with the bloodshed in South American republics. Bulfin was aware that a dictatorship, no matter how upright and patriotic its intentions, could be driven to extremes by the force of circumstances. In a dictatorship, militarism comes to the front and when the soldier in uniform turns politician, the violation of human liberties is only a question of time. In an editorial on 3 December, 1897, he expressed his alarm at the situation in Uruguay, because the people of Montevideo and the Banda Oriental were calling for a dictatorship.[69] He advised them strongly against this course of action. Senor Cuesto was the popular choice of the people to lead the dictatorship and accounts in the *Montevideo Times* gave graphic descriptions of the manifestations in support of him.[70] While Bulfin admired him as a statesman and democrat, he hoped that he would resist the step towards a dictatorship. He hoped that Senor Cuesto would have the vision to see the real dangers of a dictatorship for the future of his country. As an editor, Bulfin felt it essential to alert his readers to the importance of democracy and the dangers inherent in a military dictatorship. The history of South America was an important reminder.

Bulfin called on the political leaders in Argentina to reject the principle of compromise.[71] In examining the state of political parties in the province of Buenos Aires, he concluded that they were fragmented and in disarray. Democratic government involved the realization of party ideals. For Bulfin, this was impossible in the context of a coalition government. In Buenos Aires, politicians were determined to get into office and were prepared to trade for power and form coalitions. They ignored public opinion and compromised party ideals. The *Southern Cross* took a strong and consistent stand in relation to this practice and spoke out against it at every opportunity.

Towards the end of 1897 tensions were increasing in relation to events in Cuba. In the United States of America, President McKinley issued a clear and strong statement in relation to the question of Cuba.

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[69] *Southern Cross*, 3 Dec. 1897, p.4.
[70] *Southern Cross*, 3 Dec. 1897, p.5.
[71] *Southern Cross*, 3 Feb. 1899, p. 11.

> If it should happen that in the interests of civilization and humanity and in compliance with obligations due to ourselves we should have to interfere later by force, it will be through no fault of our own, but simply because that course has been imposed on us if we are to retain the approval of the civilized world.[72]

Cuban patriots demanded full independence from Spain. Bulfin did not consider this entirely practical, because he felt that Cuba could not afford to lose American sympathy.[73] The United States would favour a Cuban autonomy framed in a frank and liberal mould. He was critical of the role of Spain and felt that history would expose the full picture. By April 1898 war between the United States of America and Spain seemed inevitable.[74] Bulfin blamed the legacy of former Spanish rulers. Their policy of cruelty had outraged the civilized world. The only road to peace would be the withdrawal of Spain from Cuba. However, the United States were to take certain steps that could not receive universal approval.[75] When the war started Bulfin challenged the Argentine press to tell the truth about the role of Spain in relation to Cuba. He argued that not a single newspaper published in Spanish had the courage to speak out against Spain.[76]

However, in a letter to the *Southern Cross,* Bulfin was confronted with a different point of view in relation to the Cuban war.[77] The writer argued that America had no political sympathy with Ireland. Essentially it was a case of vested interests on America's part. There was also the question of the Anglo-American alliance. The writer did not wish to see Spain lose her standing internationally in this war.

On 10 February, 1899, it was noted that war had started in the Philippines. Bulfin viewed the United States as an imperial power and forecasted that they would gain control of the Philippines.[78] It would take years to organize the islands and would cost many lives. He questioned the wisdom of it all and concluded

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[72] *Southern Cross*, 10 Dec. 1897, p. 5.
[73] *Southern Cross*, 8 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[74] *Southern Cross*, 15 Apr. 1898, p. 13.
[75] *Southern Cross*, 22 Apr. 1898, p. 22.
[76] *Southern Cross*, 20 May 1898, p. 10.
[77] *Southern Cross*, 24 June 1898, p. 4.
[78] *Southern Cross*, 10 Feb. 1899, pp 9-10.

that there were other and, perhaps, better options. He also noted that the revolution in Uruguay had ended and advised the political leaders and people of the country to reflect on the situation. The trend of staging revolutions on a regular basis was weakening the fabric of the country and making for unstable government. It was necessary to end this tradition. Mr Cuestas, acting president of Uruguay, was a disappointment and was unable to retain the confidence of the people.[79] Bulfin claimed that that the people were calling for a leader that would guide the country through its crises. Unless this call was answered, he felt the country would drift rapidly towards a military dictatorship.

In looking ahead at the future of South America, Bulfin speculated on its possible destiny. He wondered if the Anglo-Saxon influence would predominate and if the Hispano-Indian races would pass away.[80] He doubted if England could ever people India. It was clear that mankind reached its fullest growth physically, morally and mentally in the temperate regions, such as Western Europe and North America. He also felt that Australia and New Zealand were pointing the way forward. However, he argued that the Gauchos were not a hopeless case and that they had a potential that was waiting to be fulfilled. It would not be fair or accurate to dismiss them as idle, lawless and nomadic. Their good qualities and skills needed harnessing and direction.

The *Southern Cross* published an article from the London *Saturday Review* entitled

'South American Possibilities' and retitled it 'Who will annex Argentina?'.[81] The article outlined the possibilities of acquiring a foothold in South America, as had been done in Africa. Bulfin was determined to alert his readers and by extension the political leaders to the dangers of further colonial endeavours in Argentina and elsewhere in South America.

In examining the question of Argentina's relations with other countries abroad, Bulfin concluded that certain reforms and changes were necessary.[82] One of

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[79] *Southern Cross*, 24 Dec. 1897, p. 4.
[80] *Southern Cross*, 24 Mar. 1899, p. 11.
[81] *Southern Cross*, 19 May 1899, p. 14.
[82] *Southern Cross*, 8 June 1900, p. 11.

the negative forces that militated against good trading relations was the protective and prohibitive custom tariff that Argentina had imposed. It was necessary for this to change. It was also necessary to reorganize the country's use of diplomacy in relation to world affairs. Brazil had picked its representatives well and was an example of what could be done. Argentina needed a corps of diplomats with negotiation skills, an understanding of the commercial world and a capacity to seek out new opportunities for the country.

Turning his attention to the crucial question of leadership in the field of education, Bulfin noted the importance of a university in terms of national progress.[83] He argued that reforms were needed in the Buenos Aires University and that a new leader was essential. Dr Leopold Basabilbase had been elected rector of the university for the fourth time. While he was a learned man, he had not proved to be an effective leader. The faculties of Medicine and science were good, but the faculty of Law was weak. Writers and political leaders were often the products of the faculty of Law. The university was in need of complete reorganization with a new leader at its helm.

In reflecting on the question of freedom of the press, Bulfin observed that Argentina granted the writer far more latitude than he would have elsewhere. It was possible to write articles that were libelous and subversive and still go unchallenged. He felt that he himself had written certain articles that would have cost him imprisonment in another country.[84] There was no country in the world where the press was freer than Argentina and few countries where freedom of speech was so comparatively restricted. The person who expressed his ideas from a public platform was more likely to be the object of careful study by the authorities. Bulfin was aware that the written word that was printed and published had more potential for good or evil than the spoken word. He concluded that in Argentina, freedom of speech was foolishly suppressed and that the freedom of the press had degenerated in a great many instances into license.

A free press was one of the hallmarks of democracy and was one way to encourage good and effective leadership in a country. However, the editor of a

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[83] *Southern Cross*, 24 Dec. 1897, p.4.
[84] *Southern Cross*, 29 July 1898, p. 11.

forthright newspaper could be the object of attack in a country undergoing political and social strife. A.J. Lamoureux, editor of the *Rio News* in Rio de Janeiro, was being subjected to attack because of the unrest in Brazil.[85] As editor, he had spoken out against the government and its abuse of power. Bulfin viewed Lamoureux as a truthful and independent editor and that he deserved protection from his aggressors. He called on the entire press of South America to support him and to enable him to continue in his role as editor of the *Rio News*. In the field of journalism, Bulfin regarded Lamoureux to be one of its leading exponents. He considered him to be 'a man of broad views, firm principles, proven ability and integrity'.[86] For ten years he challenged the financial policy of the Brazilian government, but he was dismissed as a traitor and became the object of a social and business boycott. He was looked upon as a pariah. Now his forecasts have proven to be accurate and he has been justified in his campaign for reforms.

One of the questions often asked about the *Southern Cross* concerned the possible political affiliations of the paper. Bulfin insisted that the paper was independent and belonged to no political party.[87] He felt that the paper had used its independence for the benefit of the country. In the political strife of the previous six years, it had given support to every political movement that believed in the democratic institutions of the state. It also criticized severely any policy which it considered inimical to organic democracy. The paper favored the Revolution of 1898, because it was the only possible way to deal with a system of government which had become intolerable. The government had become dishonest and public servants were chosen for their political creed. The *Southern Cross* held the view that political principle could be vindicated in opposition as well as in office. It opposed the idea of compromise as a means to the constitution of state government. Bulfin believed that no effective government could be achieved by coalitions.

A number of the native newspapers remonstrated with foreign newspapers published in Buenos Aires insisting that they were guests in the country and, therefore, should refrain from criticizing the affairs of the country. Bulfin rejected

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[85] *Southern Cross*, 30 Dec. 1898, p. 10.
[86] *Southern Cross*, 21 Sept. 1900, p. 16.
[87] *Southern Cross*, 27 Jan. 1899, p.10.

this and declared that a foreign editor had as much right to speak his mind as a native Argentine. He quoted from the constitution of Argentina to illustrate his point:

Constitution of Argentina Part 1

Article 2 All inhabitants are equal before the law.

Article 15 All inhabitants of the nation have the right...publishing their ideas.[88]

He argued that foreign journalists, who told the truth, were of far more service to the country than those who did not. Argentina was more liberal than her editors and the press had a freedom that should not be undermined by anyone. He highlighted the need for respect and cooperation among editors.

Turning his attention to the crisis in South Africa, Bulfin examined the Transvaal question in the light of history. Essentially it was a colonial history.[89] The negroes were the original owners of the soil. Then came the Dutch settlers. After that England occupied the land on behalf of Holland. There was a conflict of interest between the Dutch and the English settlers. This led to open conflict and bloodshed. A treaty was made and Britain recognized the independence of the Boer Republic. When the Diamond Fields were discovered there was further conflict. The Boers were now determined to fight for their territory and Bulfin supported them in full.

In an editorial of July, 1899, Bulfin accused England of attempting to take control of the situation in the Transvaal.[90] He contended that the three leaders, the high Commissioner of England in the Cape, Chamberlain and Rhodes were conspiring to persuade the English people to accept a plan to take over the assets of the Transvaal. While admitting that the outlanders had grievances in the Transvaal, so also had the outlanders in England. Bulfin quoted the example of the Jews in East London, who had never been enfranchised because they could not afford the £6 necessary for qualification. The alien in England had to live there five years and to

[88] *Southern Cross*, 10 Feb. 1899, p.10.
[89] *Southern Cross*, 6 Oct. 1899, p. 10.
[90] *Southern Cross*, 21 July 1899, p. 11.

pay £6 in fees. Bulfin further denounced Cecil Rhodes as an imperial speculator, who had a large portion of Africa under his control.[91]

Many of the English papers, including the *Spectator*, were advising the Boers to yield to the demands of England in relation to the Transvaal.[92] However, the letters column of the *Southern Cross* indicated an admiration for the Boers and their way of life. It was felt that their patriotism was impressive and it was hoped that there would be an early settlement.

However, when President Kruger of the Transvaal sent proposals for a settlement to London, they were not accepted. War had become a possibility. Bulfin sided with the Boers and the *Southern Cross* presented the case for them. He was glad that they had the full support of the Irish miners in the Transvaal.[93] He reported that from New York came the news that ten thousand Irishmen in the United States were ready to help the Boers in case of war. However, Bulfin was aware that the news agencies had central control and influenced reporting of major conflicts and events. He was critical of how the press, in general, supported England's claims and dismissed the case for the Boers. He was disillusioned with how the power of the stronger nations, like England and the United States, could gain control over the press and how journalists neglected their duty to present the truth.

The *Standard* took up position with England and defended her claims on the Transvaal. In an editorial in September 1899, this became clear.

> .... She is now determined to enforce her rights and defend the cause of justice with a force absolutely irresistible. May God defend the right.[94]

For Bulfin, it was unacceptable that the editor of the *Standard*, an Irishman, could have written this. England's imperial record in Ireland and Africa was strong evidence of the case against her. He argued that the Boers had a right to defend their claims against England in the Transvaal. He accused the *Standard* of engaging in propaganda on behalf of England. He argued that the majority of the Irish in the Transvaal, in Ireland and in America were against the war. Irish soldiers in the British

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[91] *Southern Cross*, 28 July 1899, p. 10.
[92] *Southern Cross*, 25 Aug. 1899, p. 13.
[93] *Southern Cross*, 15 Sept. 1899, p. 10.
[94] *Southern Cross*, 29 Sept. 1899, p. 10.

army, he contended were there by force of circumstance and not conviction. The only newspaper in Buenos Aires who supported the war was the *Standard*.[95]

Telegrams detailing the stages of the war were biased in favour of England, according to Bulfin, and were only telling one side of the story.[96] He applauded Michael Davitt for resigning his seat in Parliament as a protest against England's role in the war. Davitt gave his reasons:

> Had I been offered not Home Rule only, but an Irish republic by her majesty's government on yesterday week in return for one vote in favour of this war to destroy the independence of the Republic of Transvaal, I would speak no such word nor record any such vote. Sir, I would not purchase liberty for Ireland at the base price of voting against liberty in South Africa.[97]

It would be best, Bulfin concluded, for all Irish politicians to do likewise and register their protest. He noted that the journal the *Speaker* was prepared to state the case for the Boers.

> The least we can do in so unequal a contest is to recognize frankly the pluck - the fatal pluck – of this little band of Dutch conservatives and to show them that a love of race and of country commands the respect of all who are stirred by its imperious bidding.[98]

However, he was critical of President Roca and the Argentine government for making a present of eight hundred horses to the British government for the Transvaal. It was a case of helping the strong against the weak.[99] This war was unnecessary and everything should be done to end it. One of the best ways to stop it, Bulfin suggested, was to make all diplomats, foreign secretaries and newspaper editors pay three or four weekly visits to hospitals or to scenes where human suffering may be witnessed.[100] They would then experience the consequences of war and, hopefully, reflect on how to bring it to an end.

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[95] *Southern Cross*, 13 Oct. 1899, p. 13.
[96] *Southern Cross*, 27 Oct. 1899, p. 10.
[97] *Southern Cross*, 8 Dec. 1899, p. 2
[98] *Southern Cross*, 17 Nov. 1899, p. 11.
[99] *Southern Cross*, 8 Dec. 1899, p. 10.
[100] *Southern Cross*, 15 Dec. 1899, p. 10.

A Southern African correspondent for the *Speaker* posed the following question – given that the government and people of South Africa did not desire to fight, how did it come to pass that an ultimatum, amounting to a declaration of war, proceeded from them? He outlined his view of what happened with the following catalogue of events; devised arbitration for South Africa, cheated of the proffered inquiry, cajoled into an offer of a five year franchise with conditions which England never intended to entertain, she was finally lured into an ultimatum by a carefully contrived delay in the fulfilment of England's promise to make an early statement of her final proposals.[101] Bulfin agreed with this analysis. He also noted that the war that was causing great suffering in South Africa had brought advantages to Argentina. As a result of the war, the trade between Argentina and South Africa had increased.

The journalist, A. Hobson, with the *Speaker* presented his views on some of the real issues at stake in the war.[102] He stated that developments in the Transvaal gold mining had thrown the economic resources of the country into the hands of a small group of international financiers, chiefly German in origin and Jewish in race. The gold mines of the Rand were in the hands of this group. They had a vested interest in the war and its outcome. Hobson was critical of the role of the Jews in the Transvaal and saw them as financial capitalists who were prepared to exploit the situation. Bulfin agreed with Hobson's conclusions that financial intrigue, unscrupulous political adventurers and corrupt journalists were among the root causes of the war. Bulfin returned to this subject and repeated his claim that that it was the Jewish Transvaal ring that was a key factor in the war.[103] The *Southern Cross* reported that the journalist Thomas St John Gaffney of the *Pilot* (Boston) had complained about the well directed and organized effort that was being made in the United States to discredit the Boers.[104]

The English Cardinal Vaughan told his priests to pray for British victory and many of them refused. Bulfin published the Cardinal's pastoral letter and some of the replies to it in the English press:

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[101] *Southern Cross*, 22 Dec. 1899, p. 8.
[102] *Southern Cross*, 29 Dec. 1899, p. 14.
[103] *Southern Cross*, 5 Jan. 1900, p. 2.
[104] *Southern Cross*, 5 Jan. 1900, p. 14.

> .... Whatever doubt was entertained as to the lawfulness of enforcing the British demands by recourse to the sword, there can be no doubt now that we have been forced into war and that justice is on our side. Shall the British empire be allowed to fall to pieces by supineness and the want of determination and self denial. The answer is no.[105]
>
> Signed : Herbert Cardinal Vaughan

In a letter to the *Catholic Times* of 5 January, 1900, Dr William Barry, an English Catholic clergyman, responded to the Cardinal Vaughan's pastoral and said 'I decline to lay upon the altar my personal prejudices in the shape of a petition for victory to the side where birth or position happens to place me.' Another letter writer in the *Catholic Times* claimed that it was not right to 'offer public prayers for the success of an unjust war'. Bulfin also published an account of a sermon given by the Rev Armstrong, a Protestant clergyman, in Hope Street Church, Liverpool. In his sermon, he insisted that it was 'not possible to profess Christianity and engage in this war'. In the letters page of the *Southern Cross*, Father Samuel O'Reilly of Buenos Aires declared that the *Standard* was in error in saying that Pope Leo XIII was in favour of the English side in the war. He defended the Pope that as a man of 'prudence, wisdom and reticence'; he would not commit himself to take sides. He added that Cardinal Vaughan's views were confined to only those with the same kind of thinking.

Bulfin provided a glossary of terms for his readers to help them understand more the world of the Transvaal.[106] He noted the account of Major John MacBride carrying the flag into enemy country.[107] Bulfin was to admit that the Boers had their faults and that the Oatlands had grievances.[108] However, he felt that had the British desired peace, the dispute could have been peacefully settled. He saw it as a war of absorption, of conquest and of greed. He reminded his readers that the cause of the Boers – National Independence - was a reminder of Ireland's historical situation.

Father Kenelm Vaughan, a British priest, had a letter in the general press relating his experiences in the Transvaal.[109] There were, he said, one hundred and

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[105] *Southern Cross*, 2 Feb. 1900, p. 2.
[106] *Southern Cross*, 9 Feb. 1900, p. 15.
[107] *Southern Cross*, 9 Feb. 1900, p. 13.
[108] *Southern Cross*, 16 Feb. 1900, p. 12.
[109] *Southern Cross*, 16 Mar. 1900, p. 13.

fifty thousand immigrants there and the Boers treated them like slaves. It was the Boers who invaded English territory, he claimed. The British government intervened to help the immigrants. Bulfin refuted these accusations and insisted that the immigrants in South Africa had more liberty than the subjects of Queen Victoria. However, the *Southern Cross* columnist, Justicia, wrote defending Fr Vaughan's views on the war. She also agreed with Rev Dr Gaughran, bishop of Kimberly, South Africa, when he said that 'England very seldom had a more just cause for war.' She praised the bishop as a cultured and unbiased man. Bulfin disagreed and contended that peaceful methods would have been the best way to redress grievances. Padraig Mac Manus wrote to the letters column of the *Southern Cross* protesting against the pro-English bias of both Fr Vaughan and the *Standard*. Bulfin challenged Fr Vaughan over a requiem mass he celebrated in Merced church for the dead of the British army in the war.[110] It was, he felt, to exclude the Boer dead.

In the letters to the *Southern Cross* a variety of views on the war were argued and debated.[111] One correspondent insisted that neither the Orange Free State nor the South African Republic could be considered independent, that treaty conditions had been broken by the Boers, that the British Government had to intervene, that President Kruger had ulterior motives in starting the war; and that the Boers had no cause for complaint for forty years. In response, Bulfin contended that the Boers were not slave holders, that the treaty argument was overstated, that many of the Dutch were disenfranchised, that Cecil Rhodes used bribery and that South Africa itself was the real victim.

Bulfin had his critics, particularly in relation the Boer War.[112] E. Nisbet, writing to the *Southern Cross*, argued had that the editor betrayed his own prejudices against England in his handling of accounts of the war. He insisted that England had justification for her actions and that the Boers had a case to answer. Bulfin, he argued, refused to listen to England's claims and was too willing to accept all criticisms made against her.

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[110] *Southern Cross*, 6 Apr. 1900, p. 12.
[111] *Southern Cross*, 15 June 1900. pp 14-15.
[112] *Southern Cross*, 5 Oct. 1900, p. 8.

It was inevitable that Bulfin's writings would appear in other publications outside the confines of Argentina. His natural abilities as a journalist and his contacts with editors made it possible for him to have his work published elsewhere. He was requested by James Jeffrey Roche, the editor of the *Pilot* (Boston), to write some articles about life in Argentina. His series based on Camp life and his own experience in the Pampas of Buenos Aires proved to be a vivid and realistic account of that world and was popular with the readers of the *Boston Pilot.* The *Herald* of Buenos Aires complimented Bulfin on his honesty and accuracy in depicting the harsh side of Camp life:

> Che Buono (William Bulfin) of the *Southern Cross* has in the August number of the *Boston Pilot* an article describing the shady side of a puestero's life, which in vividness and pathos is unequalled by anything we have read. Unfortunately, the shady side of the shepherd's life comprises its larger part, but it is too often pushed aside for a lighter and less true picture.[113]

Bulfin understood the hazards that militated against the writer, particularly the creative writer. As he remarked, there was no difficulty finding subjects to write about in Argentina, but the challenge was to do it well.[114] The enemy was time and haste. He felt that whatever was written in haste was seldom of lasting value. There were a few exceptions to this rule, like Victor Hugo who wrote *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in a few weeks. In general, however, the hurried piece of writing had negative consequences for both writer and reader. This, he observed, had been his own experience to date as a writer.

Bulfin began to experiment with the short story form and his early stories were published in the *Southern Cross*.[115] These stories were based on camp life and his own experiences working on the ranches of the Pampas. They were popular with his readers, both in Argentina and beyond. One of the stories entitled 'Connor's Way' had the ingredients of a short novel and appeared in serial form in his newspaper. All of this encouraged him to devote more time literature and to write more stories. In

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[113] *Southern Cross*, 22 Oct. 1897, p. 4.
[114] *Southern Cross*, 12 Aug. 1898, p. 11.
[115] *Southern Cross*, 21 Dec. 1900, p. 19.

December 1899, it was announced in the *Southern Cross* that the Che Buono (William Bulfin) Camp stories were to be brought out in book form and that they would be published in the new year.[116] Bulfin had been urged to collect some of his writings in order to publish them in book form. The stories were sent to the publishing firm, Fisher Unwin, in London and they agreed to publish them. The collection would consist of about a dozen stories, several of which would be appearing for the first time. There would be two bindings, one in cloth and one in paper. News came from the London publishers in April 1900 that Bulfin's collection of short stories entitled 'Tales of the Pampas' was soon to be published.[117] The new title was chosen by the publishers to replace Bulfin's original title 'Between Professionals'. It was also decided to publish eight out of the fifteen stories submitted and that the remaining seven stories would appear in magazines and later in book form.

Reviews of the book were, in general, positive and enthusiastic. The *Sunday Review* wrote of a certain carelessness in the writing but praised 'the inspiration that comes when men are cast together from all corners of the earth and bound by common dangers and common toil, where the hot blood of the Spaniard encounters the humour of the Irish and the ranchmen gradually sift down to a species distinct, peculiar and exclusive.' The *Literary World* commented on the skill of the writer in transforming the commonplace in 'the great open treeless plains stretching across South America.' The *South American Journal* compared the book to Rudyard Kipling's Plain 'Tales from the Hills' and remarked on how the writer had caught the tragic and comic aspects of life on the Pampas. The *Herald* (Buenos Aires) felt the collection of stories represented Bulfin at his best. However, the *Rio News* (Brazil), while praising the stories, insisted that Bulfin had written better ones that had been published in the *Southern Cross*. The *Montevideo Times* concurred with this view and stressed that while the writer had the 'most powerful, trenchant, picturesque, journalistic pen in South America', this collection of his stories did not reflect his real strengths. The *Daily Express* was not impressed with the writer's attempts at humour

[116] *Southern Cross*, 8 Dec. 1899, p. 11.
[117] *Southern Cross*, 20 Apr. 1900, p. 11.

and could only find one story in the collection worthy of praise. In contrast, the *Illustrated London News* described the collection as being unlike anything else in literature and that Bulfin had 'exploited this new field with admirable humour'. Thomas Murray, in his book *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, was to say:

> For no writer that I have any acquaintance with has so genuinely entered into the spirit of camp life and so accurately and sympathetically described it as Bulfin.[118]

In August 1901, Doubleday, Page and Co., the publishers from New York, purchased the copyright of several of Bulfin's short stories. Two of the stories were to be illustrated by the artist, Frederick Remington. The first of these short stories would appear in the September issue of *Everybody's Magazine*.

Conclusion

Under his editorship the *Southern Cross* increased in both size and readership. As editor, Bulfin consolidated the founding philosophy of the *Southern Cross*. His approach was to focus on the Irish Catholic community of Argentina and their world. In effect the paper became a propaganda organ for them. This meant that he acted as their spokesman and defender. He was emerging as a potential leader. On the question of leadership, he placed the issue in a local, national and international context. He identified it as one of the most important challenges facing every country in the world. He confronted and explored the problem of poverty and campaigned for major reforms. He emerged as consistent and fearless social reformer. The role of church and state remained one of his recurring concerns and he cast himself as defender of the Catholic Church. Unlike his predecessor, Michael Dinneen, Bulfin was not only proprietor and editor, he also remained a prolific journalist and continued to write articles on a weekly basis. His combative style of journalism was very much in evidence in his editorials and accounts of the Boer War in the Transvaal. His sympathies were with the Boers. He provided full coverage of various stages the war and challenged the pro-British stance of a number of the Argentine newspapers. Under his robust editorship, tensions surfaced and developed between

[118] Thomas Murray, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 143.

the *Southern Cross* and the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald*. His literary ambitions found an outlet in his collection of short stories, *Tales of the Pampas*, which received favourable reviews.

Chapter 6

The Exile's Return

'You'll never go back', was the repeated chorus that the emigrant from Ireland would hear in Argentina. Kathleen Nevin described this sense of loss in her memoir and felt destined to live by it.

> I would face in this strange, foreign country among its dark skinned people; the unknown tongue, the blue sky, the blazing sun, the flat roofed city, even the solitude of the camp and the sky at night with its unfamiliar stars. I would accept all these and make them mine. Fr Slattery was right after all, "You'll never go back." [1]

By contrast Bulfin was determined to return to his native shores and with each year the possibility became stronger. In January 1902 he expressed his intention to visit Ireland that year. This was prompted by the fact that he was tired and exhausted after a very demanding year as editor of the *Southern Cross*. 'Journalism is a dog's life for a man who goes in for casting out devils', he remarked, and it was clear that his campaigning in combative style had left him more that a little weary.[2] Besides he had left Ireland in 1884 and had been seventeen years in exile. It was now 1902 and he was ready to make his visit home.

Bulfin's decision to visit Ireland must be placed in full context. It had become a tradition for certain Irish immigrants in Argentina to make return visits to Ireland, in spite of the distance.[3] A certain number had returned to stay. However, there had always been a wish on the part of certain immigrants to have their children educated in Ireland. Bulfin and his wife, Annie, had five children, Eamonn, Aileen, Mary, Anita and Catalina and the question of their future education was now becoming an issue for them.[4] Bulfin was always conscious of the importance of education and he would have been sceptical of the facilities and standards that existed in Argentina. His own growing sense of nationalism and his

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[1] Kathleen Nevin, *You'll Never Go Back* (Boston, 1946), p. 225
[2] NLI, Bulfin Papers Ms 13812, pp 112-114.
[3] Patrick McKenna, 'Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to and Settlement in Argentina' (M.A. Thesis,
St. Patrick,'s College, Maynoothe, 1984), p. 105.
[4] *Southern Cross*, 9 May 1902, p. 14.

belief in the philosophy of the Gaelic League would have greatly influenced him in the choice of Ireland as the future location for the education of his children.

However, Bulfin had other considerations that influenced his decision. As an exile he felt a deep longing to see his native land. His original family home at Derrinlough, King's County meant a great deal to him. In 1901, it had been necessary for him to clear debts on the home incurred by his brother, Michael, in order to prevent the sale or confiscation of the home.[5] He felt obligated to help his family of origin and had a strong sense of allegiance to them. He had corresponded regularly with his brother, Joseph, who was in residence in the family home and Bulfin himself was viewed as a father figure by his siblings. His return was seen as both positive and beneficial by all.

Bulfin was also keen to renew contacts with members of the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin. His intention was to experience and explore all that was happening in Ireland and to record his findings by publishing them in the *Southern Cross* and newspapers in Ireland. The decision to spend almost seven months cycling through the various regions in the country was prompted by a desire to see at first hand the changes and developments that had taken place in his absence. His travels were to lead him to a real encounter with the people themselves along with their changing world. This meant a response from him to the key issues that influenced their lives. These issues included emigration, depopulation, unemployment, industry, trade, taxation, communications, education, deforestation and the impact of English rule in Ireland. He was also to respond to the religious and cultural state of the country, particularly in relation to the Gaelic League.

Bulfin's travels involved three thousand miles of touring with the 'four seas of Ireland'.[6] One of his primary concerns was to record his experiences and observations for the benefit of Irish exiles on the other side of the world. While conscious of certain defects in the writing, he was determined not to apologise for the philosophy or the spirit in which his accounts were produced. Essentially the heart of the writer was in the writing and that for him was all important.

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[5] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 3).
[6] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn* (Dublin, 1907), preface, unpaginated.

In general, Bulfin was to use his family home at Derrinlough as the starting point and base for his travels around Ireland.[7] It was possible for him to return to his home place when he was touring the midland counties. His stays in Dublin always centred round visits to An Stad, the meeting place of members of the Gaelic League and other enthusiasts of the Irish language.[8] Owned by Cathal Mac Garbhaigh, a native Irish speaker from Donegal, An Stad was a tobacco shop situated in North Frederick Street adjacent to the headquarters of the Gaelic League in Parnell Square, Dublin. It became a social centre for the Gaels and its rooms hosted meetings, debates and traditional music sessions. Its visitors included Arthur Griffith, Sean T. O Ceallaigh, Eamonn Ceant, Michael Cusack, Major John McBride among others.[9] Bulfin was to find an appreciative audience here among old and new friends as he entertained them with vivid and colourful accounts of his experiences in Argentina.[10]

As he cycled through the four provinces of Ireland, he noted and reflected on all that he encountered. His observations were wide ranging and included themes as diverse as the country's landscape, natural resources, infrastructure, deforestation, the land question, industry, emigration, depopulation, religion, education, literature and the Irish-Ireland movement. He excused himself from his 'unconventional way of roving from one subject to another in my rambling in Eirinn.'[11] However, there is a strong sense that he was mainly concerned with the economic and cultural state of the country and this concern is a recurring theme in his writings.[12]

For the returned exile, one of the most striking and revealing features in Ireland proved to be the very nature of the landscape itself.

> Bulfin regarded every sod of turf, every blade of grass from Malin Head to Cape Clear as sanctified.....Ireland was holy ground to Bulfin.[13]

Bulfin had a strong affinity with the Irish midlands, particularly Westmeath, Longford and his native King's County. For him, Kinnitty, with its dramatic

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[7] *Southern Cross*, 9 May 1902, p. 14.
[8] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p. 175.
[9] Sean O Cearnaigh, *An Stad, Croilar na hAthbheochana* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1993), p. 5
[10] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, Preface, p. xvii.
[11] Ibid, p. 182-183.
[12] Maureen Murphy, 'The Cultural Nationalism of William Bulfin' in Janis and Richard Landraville (Eds.), *John Quinn, Selected Irish Writers from his Library* (USA, 2001), p. 58.
[13] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, Preface, p. xx.

setting at the foot of the Slieve Bloom mountains, was by far the most striking village in Ireland.[14] It had all the advantages that mattered most to him – natural beauty, a vibrant community, a sense of personal identity and the strong presence of the Irish-Ireland movement. What struck him in particular was the evidence of reforestation in the immediate environment. He noted with pleasure the young trees in the new forest plantations on the hills leading into the village. However, he was to be dismayed and alarmed to discover the general state of deforestation that existed in the country as a whole.

On reflection, he could gleam the source of the tragedy of deforestation in Ireland. There were historical reasons that caused the present situation.[15] In 8000 BC Ireland was a land almost covered by forests. However the land had to be cleared for farming and cultivation. By the year 1600 forestation was reduced to 12%. In the seventeenth century forests were exploited for commercial purposes and by the early eighteenth century Ireland had to import timber. In the nineteenth century landlords made attempts at forestation, but this ended with the decline of the big estates and the distribution of the land.[16] Ireland had been transformed from an essentially wooded country into a pastoral landscape.[17] In 1885, a government report stated:

> The question of utilising by forestry the immense tracts of waste land in Ireland, much of which is incapable of profitable tillage, has been brought before your committee...The evidence already given appears to point very distinctly to the necessity of introducing an extensive system of afforesting to Ireland.[18]

However, Bulfin could see little evidence of any major government scheme that had been put into action in relation to the problem. In a spirit of anger and disillusionment he concluded:

> The problem of deforestation is tragically eloquent of the evils of foreign rule in Ireland. A wise native government, drawing inspiration from national needs and national interests would derive from Irish forests a permanent and considerable revenue. Under foreign rule Ireland is being

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[14] *United Irishman* 29 Nov. 1902, p. 6.
[15] John Mackay, *Forestry in Ireland* (Dublin, 1934), p. 131.
[16] *The Encyclopaedia of Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), p. 441.
[17] Ibid., p.772.
[18] *Report of Mr D. Howitz, Forest Conservator, on the Re-afforesting of Waste Lands in Ireland.* HC 1884, lxii, p. 3.

> denuded of her beautiful woods. The axe and cross-saw are at work in all directions. A mania for tree slaughter seems to have afflicted the landlords.[19]

Bulfin had noted, however, a plantation of larch trees on the mountains of Tipperary and was conscious of its potential worth. This was an example of what could be done that should be followed throughout the country.[20] He was keenly aware of the many advantages that a policy of afforestation could bring to Ireland and was determined to play the role of advocate. He noted:

> The effects of forests on climate are common knowledge in other countries. It is Greek to the average man in rural Ireland ...The Press should team with articles dealing with afforestation. At present *Sinn Féin* is alone in this department of journalism, as indeed it is, sad to say, in too many other works of constructive nature...If schools and colleges dedicated one day in the year to the planting of trees...[21]

In certain respects Bulfin proved to be prophetic in relation to forestry and the welfare of the state. The Avondale Forestry School was established in 1904 and at that time the total area of forestry in Ireland was 1.4% of the land. A much later study of the economic aspects of the subject concluded that a lumber forest of 300, 000 acres over a period of eighty years would give employment to 4,000 men.[22] At the present time, Coillte, the state forestry authority, hope to achieve forestry coverage of 14.7% of the land of Ireland by the year 2015.[23]

In his determination to explore what for him was the real Ireland, Bulfin chose to dismiss the itinerary recommended in the standard guidebooks.[24] His description of the Curragh highlighted for his readers his view of that particular aspect of the Kildare landscape:

> I never saw the Curragh without being reminded of the Pampas. It is very like a slice of land taken out of Areccifes or San Pedro. The land rises and falls in long and gentle indulations. There are no hills or vales, no hedges or walls - nothing but the shallow depressions and billowing ridges.[25]

As he stood on the hills of Rath Croghan in County Roscommon surveying plains of Connaght, Bulfin could see clear evidence of depopulation. He was angered

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[19] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p. 200.
[20] Ibid., p. 56.
[21] Ibid., p. 206.
[22] John Mackay, *The Forest and the National Life* (Dublin, 1938), p. 2.
[23] *The Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, Dublin, p. 411.
[24] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, p. 73.
[25] Ibid., p. 189.

and saddened by the implications of what was before him. Again his sense of Irish history reinforced his feelings of outrage and he concluded:

> It is not easy to give an adequate idea of depopulation as it exists. I had no adequate idea of it myself until I saw it. I stood on the Pillar Stone over King Daithi's grave on Rath Croghan and looked over the grasslands that spread around me for miles. I could see three or four leagues in every direction. I can safely affirm that there was not one house to the square mile. The richness of the soil was evidenced in many ways. There could be no doubt that the land was some of the best in Europe. It could easily support in decent and prosperous comfort a family to every fifty acres...At present there are tracts of the Pampas more thickly populated. And there is ample room on the Connacht ranches for all the emigrants that ever left Ireland for the great stock runs of the south.[26]

Bulfin's journeys in Connacht and Leinster confirmed his fears concerning the causes of depopulation in Ireland. He could see that vast tracks of land had been given over to grazing and that this was one of the major reasons why the countryside was denuded of people. The ranching system of farming had a negative impact on every aspect of peasant society.[27] The graziers had confiscated the land from the people and, in turn, had not made any real effort to provide employment. This had a huge impact on the rural community, leaving the peasantry landless and contributing to depopulation and lack of employment.[28] All of this served to enrage Bulfin and led him to passionately proclaim:

> It is for the up torn homes and empty fields that you are angry. It is for these things that curses rise in your lips. It is against the infamous law which formed and sanctioned and authorised the depopulation that you are a rebel to the utmost core of your manhood. And it is for the day you will see English rule swept out of Ireland and those plains dotted once more with peaceful, happy, God fearing, Patriotic Irish homes – it is for that blessed day that you are hopeful with a yearning, hungry hope.
>
> Think of what it would mean to Ireland, if such a rich territory, now given over to sheep and cattle, were divided into farms of forty or fifty acres, each with a family of from five to eight children on each farm![29]

Bulfin's travels in Meath led him to the same conclusions. While he was aware that many writers had described Meath as 'a grassy desert and a grazier made wilderness', it did not strike him immediately as so.[30] Woodlands and hedges

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[26] Ibid., p. 53.
[27] David Seth Jones, *Graziers, Land Reform and* Political *Conflict in Ireland* (United States of America, 1995), p. 254.
[28] Ibid., p. 255.
[29] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p, 49.
[30] Ibid., p. 87.

served to hide the fact it was a very thinly populated. He could admire the plains of Meath concluding that not only was it excellent fattening land, but also that it was one of the richest tracts of land in Europe.[31] However, he was adamant in his criticism of the control that the graziers had exerted over the people and the cost entailed. He noted:

> This bullockdom was always a curse in Ireland and never was or could be a factor on the side of national prosperity or self respect. It never gave Ireland any recompense for the Irish homes it swept away or that were swept away to make room for it[32]

The land question remained a crucial and determining factor for the people of Ireland. With the foundation of the Land League in 1879 and the strong leadership of Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell, the war began in earnest for the control and ownership of the land of Ireland. A series of Land Acts culminating in the Wyndham's Land Act 1903 were designed to bring about the transfer of ownership of tenanted land from landlord to tenant. Under the 1903 Act, the state advanced money to tenants for land purchase and the conditions were attractive to both tenants and landlords. A bonus was given to the landlord for selling his property.[33] Bulfin was prepared to acknowledge the positive impact of the Land Acts, but felt they were not the final solution to the Irish land question. [34] He insisted:

> The solution of the Irish Land question cannot be achieved by half measures. It is a deeply rooted evil and needs a drastic remedy. Landowners will have to go, root and branch, with all the sporting rights and turbary rights and head rents and mining royalties and every feudal and archaic absurdity. Compulsory sale and nothing else is the only remedy and come it must soon or late.[35]

Irish Landlords had not been prepared to invest in their estates in the same way as was the case in England. This left them vulnerable in terms of how their role was perceived. It became difficult for them to justify their position.[36] With the eventual ending of landlordism a new system of private ownership took its place. Ownership became confined to those who inherited the land. There was no

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[31] Ibid., p. 91.
[32] Ibid., p, 90.
[33] N.C. Fleming and Alan O'Day (Eds.), *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations Since 1800* (Critical Essays) (England, 2008), p. 147.
[34] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, p. 57.
[35] Ibid., pp 53-54.
[36] W.E.Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1840-1904* (Ireland, 1984), p. 25.

common ownership.[37] The Bulfin family themselves were able to purchase their home and farm at Derrinlough due to the impact of these Land Acts.[38]

Arthur Balfour established the Congested Districts Board in 1891. The main objectives were to provide additional sources of income by developing industries and to improve agricultural organisation and productivity by increasing the size of holdings and improving livestock and cultivation methods.[39] Bulfin's account of their work to date was positive and encouraging:

> During my cycling through Connacht I have in various places come across the work of the Congested Districts Board. The Board buys any grazing property or tract of unoccupied land which comes within the possibilities of its financial resources. It then drains, fences and lays out the land into farms from twenty to thirty acres each and the men who are paid for doing this work are from the locality and are generally the people who will be the new tenants. Comfortable but plain and suitable dwellings with out offices etc and the farms are then ready to be occupied. The Board is slow in its operations and is able to cope with only a small part of the work. And it points the way to the definite solution of the Irish land question.[40]

By 1904 the Board had concentrated on the purchase of estates under the new land Acts and was engaged in their resale to tenants.[41] Between 1891 and 1911 the number of dwellings of the poorest category in the congested districts was reduced by approximately 80%.[42] Bulfin's assessments and optimism in relation to their work were well founded.

In his travels Bulfin was constantly encountering the problem that Ireland faced in relation to transport. The infrastructure of the country was undeveloped and did not lend itself to the efficient transport of either people or produce. Bulfin was witnessing the decline that could be seen in relation to the roads, canals, railways and shipping transport. He could see clearly the condition of the roads that made safe travel a real challenge.[43] The canals had become 'weed grown, half idle and half forgotten.'[44] In observing the scarcity of bogs in the country, he

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[37] Ibid., p. 41.
[38] NLI, Bulfin Papers,
[39] Frederick H. A. Aalen, 'Constructive Unionism and the Shaping of Rural Ireland, c. 1880-1921'in N. C. Fleming and Alan O'Day (Editors), *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations Since 1800* (Critical Essays) (England, 2008), p. 153.
[40] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p. 53.
[41]Frederick H. A. Aalen, 'Constructive Unionism and the Shaping of Rural Ireland, c. 1880-1921, *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations Since 1800*, p. 154.
[42] Ibid., p.158.
[43] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, p. 211.
[44] Ibid., p. 202.

noticed that very little Irish coal was being used. It was cheaper to import coal from Wales than to transport it by rail from Kilkenny.[45] He presented his analysis of the situation and then made a number of strong recommendations:

> The railways of Ireland now own wholly, or in great part, most of the canals, so the competition between the two is at an end....Canals are kept practically idle, so that the railways may be fed with traffic at bloodsucking rates...It actually costs less to send a ton of wheat from Buenos Aires to Belfast than from Athlone to Dublin. It is cheaper for the Dublin Merchants to send goods to Sligo via Glasgow by steamer than to send them across Ireland by rail...If there were such an institution as an Irish Board of Trade there would be cheap transit. The railways and canals would either be owned by the state or subject to such laws as would make them serve the economic need of the people at large. There would be a hundred coasting steamers for every ten that ply between Irish ports. And there would be a network of canals to carry the bulk of the produce from some of the most important of the agricultural districts.[46]

When he compared the railways in other countries to the situation in Ireland, Bulfin concluded that there were many differences and reform was essential. In other countries the railways served the needs of the citizens. In Ireland, he felt, the people were subject to the priorities of the railway companies. On some of the main lines the accommodation was adequate and the trains were fairly punctual. However on the branch lines, the accommodation was unacceptable and timetables were ignored. He insisted that the Irish railway companies were given 'too free a hand.'[47] He felt that they were not entitled to the privileges they enjoyed and that restraint was needed. A radical response was essential and he advocated that the railway companies be 'expropriated by the state and then managed subject to popular control.'[48] At this stage there were a growing number of advocates who wanted some form of state ownership of the railways.[49]

Bulfin was to remain forever preoccupied with the problem of emigration for the Irish people. His own experience of seventeen years in exile in Argentina was to heighten his awareness of the plight of emigrants and his first return visit to his native land reinforced all his thoughts and feelings on the subject.[50] On his

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[45] Ibid., p. 278.
[46] Ibid., p. 202.
[47] Ibid., p. 115.
[48] Ibid., p. 116.
[49] Edwin A. Pratt, *Irish Railways and their Nationalisation* (London, 1910), p. 9.
[50] Ibid., p. 383.

visit to Queenstown (Cobh) in County Cork, he recalled with sadness the emigrant ships that left there for America carrying with them Irish people who would never return to Ireland. He recalled with bitterness Queen Victoria's landing at Queenstown and how 'she had never expressed a kindly thought for the Irish'.[51] He was critical of the government policy that failed to properly exploit the natural resources, to promote industry and to invest in the infrastructure for the benefit of the Irish people. This very failure was one of the root causes of emigration. Emigration was a problem that posed a challenge to all aspects of Irish life. Government and other agencies sought in vain for answers. In 1900, the Gaelic League promoted the Oireachtas essay competition with the title 'Irish Emigration – its Causes and Effects' in an endeavour to focus on the urgency of the problem.[52] A very real cause of concern was the exodus of so many native Gaelic speakers from the west of Ireland.

He would have agreed with many of the suggestions made in 1902 by W. R. MacDermot, when he recommended:

> Agriculture has to be created in Ireland....the country has to be under sustained and systematic cultivation....The creation of agricultural industry under joint-stock enterprise would open up a new chapter..[53]

Bulfin was always convinced that increased tillage was an important consideration in terms of stopping the tide of emigration. However, he did not look favourably at the efforts of Sir Horace Plunkett in his endeavours to address the economic and social ills of the country. Plunkett and George Russell (AE) were pioneering forces behind the co-operative movement in Ireland. Plunkett promoted a Stop Emigration campaign in the pages of the *Irish Homestead,* a journal he had founded in order to have an organ for the Irish and Industrial Development Society. The campaign presented the view that the causes of emigration were partly economic and partly social; people left the country because they could not obtain the means of a livelihood, many left because they sought excitement in the cities, because country life was dull. The campaign set out to encourage co-operative societies to make their local places so attractive that no native would wish to emigrate.[54] Because he was wary of Plunkett's role as a Unionist MP,

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[51] Ibid., p. 382

[52] Philip O Leary, *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881-1921* (Pennsylvania State University, 1994), p. 142.

[53] A.P.A. O'Gara (W, R. MacDermott), *The Green Republic* (London, 1902), pp 236- 238.

[54] Anon., 'How to stop emigration' in *Irish Homestead*, 8 Nov 1902. vol viii, No 458, p. 884

Bulfin dismissed his endeavours as 'political souperism.'[55] As an ardent nationalist, he was cautious and Plunkett had already been accused of 'killing Home Rule with kindness'.[56] The publication of his book entitled *Ireland in the New Century* served to alienate many people among the ranks of Irish nationalists, the clergy, Home Rulers and landowners.[57] Douglas Hyde shared some of Bulfin's reservations, as he felt that Plunkett was not 'in sympathy intellectually with the bulk of the people.'[58]

On his visits to the various cities and towns throughout the country, Bulfin recorded the various degrees of industrial progress and decline that were in evidence. For all its material progress, Belfast failed to leave a positive impression. His account was critical and dismissive:

> Belfast impresses you as a very rich and very busy city. But somehow it repelled me. As I stood within it I asked myself was I in Ireland....I saw churches of all denominations...wide streets...towering smokestacks, huge factories, crowded traffic...a shipbuilding yard where 10,000 men were hammering iron into great ocean liners...palatial banks and insurance offices...[59]

Bulfin saw clearly the need for promoting industry in Ireland, yet Belfast was not the model of his aspirations. For him the city was dominated by the wheels of industry and commerce and had lost its spirit and heritage. When challenged later for his harsh views on the city he promised to revisit Belfast in an attempt to restore balance to the overall picture. Like Belfast, Derry proved to be a busy industrial centre. He noted the many factories all working fulltime and along the quays there were lines of steamers with exports marked for Buenos Aires, Rio, Bombay, Melbourne, Valparaiso and Shangai.[60] Wexford town impressed Bulfin greatly. It was in touch with its past and yet it was 'a town that works and prospers.'[61] Doyle's machine factory in Wexford town was an example of an Irish model of industry that met with Bulfin's aspirations. It was native, productive and efficient. Limerick city was also in touch with its past with

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[55] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, p. 272.
[56] Frederick H.A. Aalen, 'Constructive unionism and the Shaping of Rural Ireland, c. 1880-1921, *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations since 1800*, p. 162.
[57] Ibid., p. 165.
[58] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 14).
[59] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, p. 117.
[60] Ibid., p. 137.
[61] Ibid., p. 281.

its thriving bacon factory and steamers on the quays.[62] Cork struck him as a very Irish city and deserved its status as capital of Munster.[63] Galway city was in a state of decline since its ocean trade had faded , but Sligo was prospering as a town serving its hinterland.[64] Bulfin's observations, although sometimes expressed in opinionated language, were well founded as they were based on his practical understanding of commerce and industry.

Bulfin always had a keen interest in education and wrote about it extensively in the *Southern Cross*, discussing and analysing the various aspects of the education system in Argentina. He had been a student in Ireland and was aware of how the system of schooling operated. The National Schools were established in 1831 and a big proportion of them were managed by local clergymen.[65] During the second half of the nineteenth century this became institutionalised. The development of the Irish school system in the nineteenth century was influenced by the presence of politically powerful priests.[66] In 1898 the Commission on Intermediate Education was established.[67] Patrick Pearse attacked the inadequacies of the prevailing school system in his pamphlet, the *Murder Machine*. He claimed:

> Education is meant to foster; this education is meant to repress, Education should inspire. This education is meant to tame. Education should harden. This education is meant to enervate. The English are too wise to educate the Irish in any worthy sense. As well expect them to arm us.[68]

Pearse argued for the place of religion, patriotism, literature, art and science in the formation of boys and girls.[69] He felt that the main object of education was to help the child to be his true and best self.[70] He claimed that 'a heroic tale is more essentially a factor in education than a proposition in Euclid."[71] Religion and

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[62] Ibid., p, 237.
[63] Ibid., p. 360.
[64] Ibid., pp 24- 25.
[65] Sean Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dundalk, 1985), p. 35.
[66] E. Brian Titley, *Church, State and the Control of Schooling, 1900-1944* (Canada, 1983), p. 4.
[67] Ibid., p. 14.
[68] Patrick Pearse, *The Murder Machine and other Essays* (New Edition, Cork, 1976), p. 6.
[69] Ibid., p. 9.
[70] Ibid., p. 16.
[71] Ibid., p. 21.

legends were important sources of inspiration in the life of a child. The present system of education had made slaves of the Irish people.[72]

Bulfin shared these views and was eager for change in the system. He insisted:

> Archbishop MacHale stood for a total rejection of the national schools and said that the children of Ireland should be educated on Irish lines. A temporising policy was substituted for this wise and manly ideal; and from the day on which this melancholy error was committed the Anglicisation of the Irish mind went apace.[73]

During his stay Ireland in 1902, Bulfin took every opportunity to visit as many schools as possible. He could witness clearly the impact of the National School system and its legacy. Irish children had little or no knowledge of the history and legends of Ireland. The education system had become a central part of the process of denationalising the people and disinheriting them from their past. In a spirit of bitter irony, he concluded:

> Oh wise apostles of denationalisation that kept the study of Irish history out of the "National Schools"![74]

However there were exceptions and efforts were being made to establish schools that reflected the philosophy of the Irish- Ireland movement. One such example was the Dominican College in Newbridge, County Kildare. Bulfin visited the college many times and was pleased to note:

> The Dominican College there is doing good work for Irish-Ireland. It is an educational institution which does its business on an Irish plan, It is bringing up Irish youths in the knowledge and love of their native land. When there are thirty such colleges in Ireland taking part in the feeding of an Irish University there will be some long steps taken in the work of nation building.[75]

On the strength of these sentiments, Bulfin enrolled his son, Eamonn, as a boarding student at the college.

The campaign for a new university was gathering momentum. Douglas Hyde, Eoin MacNeill and other leading members of the Irish-Ireland movement were actively involved in the campaign. Bulfin lent his full support and presented his own convictions on the subject.

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[72] Ibid., p. 22.
[73] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p. 56.
[74] Ibid., p. 273.
[75] Ibid., p. 178.

> What is needed is a Catholic University, broadly National, democratic and richly endowed, able to open its doors to indigent genius as well as to wealthy mediocrity, and under such control as shall keep its teaching in close accordance and sympathy with the religion of its alumni and at the same time train them to look upon Ireland as their country and think and work for its advancement.[76]

Many, but by no means all, of the Irish-Ireland movement would have shared these convictions. The novelist, George Moore, had returned to Ireland and gave active support to the Gaelic League. He was convinced that what Ireland needed was 'not a Catholic, but a Gaelic University.'[77]

In both Argentina and Ireland, Bulfin was called upon to address an audience on a variety of subjects. His approach combined a blend of serious research and the flair of the natural storyteller and talented orator. He had prepared a series of lectures that he could draw on when necessary. His choice of topics ranged from life in South America to history, Irish nationalism and literature and clearly indicated his interests and conviction. Essentially his approach was professional and he always had a written draft for the various talks.[78] During his visit to Ireland he found himself speaking on some of his favourite subjects, including the course of Irish history, the Gaelic League and the heroic literature of Ireland. His lectures on Irish history were detailed and showed a close study and understanding of his subject. In tracing the key characters and events over the centuries, one of his main aims was to pay a tribute to all Irishmen, past and present. He would conclude such lectures with the sentiments 'if I have given pleasure to my countrymen and to the well wishes of my country, I am content.'[79] The lectures on heroic Irish literature provided a detailed account and vivid portrayal of the heroes and epic events of that ancient era. He would conclude such talks with a justification and vindication of his subject:

> One reason I gave you already for inviting your attention to-night to the human qualities brought out in these ancient legends. And now in conclusion I will give you another. Foolish people say that the tales are very old – fanciful – only fit for children. We hold different views – famous scholars everywhere tell us that we are right.[80]

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[76] Ibid., p. 178.
[77] George Moore, *Hail and Farewell* (Washington, 1911), p. 235.
[78] NLI, Bulfin Papers Ms 13804 (Folders 2-13)
[79] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 5), p. 61.
[80] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folder 4), p. 59.

Bulfin's stay in Ireland during 1902 allowed him to consolidate his friendship with Arthur Griffith. Griffith had been in correspondence with Bulfin and was appreciative of his efforts in promoting the Sinn Féin philosophy among the Irish in Argentina.[81] He now enlisted Bulfin's help in promoting the Sinn Féin philosophy in Ireland.[82] Bulfin's accounts of his travels and observations in Ireland were appearing on a regular basis in Griffith's *United Irishman* and he was becoming established as the well known returned emigrant. At Griffith's request, Bulfin gave a number of public lectures on behalf of Sinn Féin at various locations throughout the country. As a personable and gifted speaker, he was clearly seen as an important asset for the movement. He also had the fervour and conviction that could proclaim:

> We are told that Home Rule is coming... It will come when Ireland by her own efforts makes England fear her and not until then. Ireland is not yet in a mood to accept the role of a conquered nation.[83]

Bulfin found himself in agreement with many of Griffith's ideas and was prepared to promote them at every opportunity. Griffith had published his views on 'The Resurrection of Hungary, A Parallel with Ireland' in a series of articles in the *United Irishman*. In examining the case of Hungary and how they had achieved so much by way of freedom and independence, he applied the same strategy to Ireland. He advocated the withdrawal of Irish Representatives from Westminster. This was not a new idea, because O'Connell, Davis and Parnell had also considered it. However, Griffith was the one who persevered with the idea.[84] Bulfin was convinced that it was a sound policy and published the series for his readers in the *Southern Cross*.[85] The early Sinn Féin movement was far from being the organised political movement that it later became. At this stage it was a movement of people that were part of the propaganda campaign of Arthur Griffith. However, when he was in Wexford, Bulfin recorded:

> Several intelligent and thoughtful men spoke to me about the Sinn Féin movement. They were strongly in favour of it. It is finding favour with independent thinkers throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. The

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[81] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (12).
[82] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (12).
[83] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p. 276.
[84] Carlton Younger, *Arthur Griffith* (Great Britain, 1981), p. 23.
[85] *Southern Cross,*

> policy of refusing to recognise the Union of 1800 as legal and of standing firm upon the still extant Constitution of 1783, is assuredly winning adherents day by day in Ireland.[86]

It was said that few people were on intimate terms with Griffith. He did not give his friendship easily, was difficult to work with and quickly parted company with those who disagreed with him. He was keen on physical fitness, walked or cycled at weekends and swam every morning.[87] However, he remained on good terms with Bulfin and they often went on cycling expeditions together. They shared the same views and love of the outdoor world.[88]

Bulfin also had the opportunity to renew his friendship with Douglas Hyde. They had been in correspondence with each other and Bulfin had done a great deal in Argentina to promote and gather funds for the Gaelic League. Hyde was anxious to avail of Bulfin as a spokesman for the Gaelic league in Ireland and he encouraged him in the role of guest speaker at meetings throughout the country.[89] Bulfin was enthusiastic and welcomed the opportunity to speak at meetings as far apart as Dublin, Cork and Donegal.[90] He was following Bulfin's literary career with interest and admiration. He had read the collection *Tales of the Pampas* and remarked on the certain similarities between the Argentineans and the Irish.[91] Her particularly enjoyed Bulfin's satirical account in his travel series of the Irish aristocracy at the Shannon Regatta. John O'Leary was also an admirer of Bulfin's travel writing.[92]

The pilgrim spirit in Bulfin prompted him to explore places of religious, mythological, historical and literary significance in Ireland. He fully agreed with Pearse's conviction that religion was a source of inspiration in people's lives and, therefore it should be given its real place in the order of priorities. For him the pattern day of Clonmacnoise with its seven churches, which was held yearly in honour of the patron saint, was a major event in the Irish religious and social calendar. His visit there allowed him to recall the history of St Ciaran and to inform his readers of his heroic work for the Christian church and Ireland.[93]

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[86] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p. 278.
[87] Carlton Younger, *Arthur Griffith*, p. 22.
[88] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* p.
[89] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (14)
[90] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 7).
[91] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810(14)
[92] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 14)
[93] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, p. 425.

Bulfin, like Pearse, believed that people needed to understand the historic past of their church and to learn about the lives of their native saints. Learning about the heroic age in the Irish Christian church would serve to inspire hope and idealism in the people. His account of the pattern depicted not only the devotional practices on the day but also the carnival spirit that that encouraged the people to celebrate with food, drink, music, matchmaking and dancing.[94]

By contrast his visit to Belfast brought dark thoughts and feelings of dismay in relation to the religious divide in the city. He recalled the years of sectarian strife that had become endemic in every part of the life of the city from education to the workplace. His hope was 'that Ireland must bury the religious hatchet.'[95] Yet he could find in the Irish church signs of hope and courage for the future. In Wexford he met Father Kavanagh, a Franciscan, who was an eminent historian and a disciple of the Irish-Ireland movement.[96] On his visit to Cork he was reminded of Father Matthew, the apostle of temperance, whose efforts to help those addicted to alcohol were of an heroic nature.[97] His visit to the Glen of Aherlow in Tipperary prompted him to think of Father Peter O'Leary, the author of many stories in Gaelic.[98] In Derry city he recalled for his readers the story of Saint Colmcille, reminding them that his deeds were heroic and that "the dove of the church was more like an eagle."[99] At Kildare, he paid tribute to Saint Brigid, 'the Mary of Ireland' and the legacy she left after her for the Irish people.[100] His visits to the Cistercian monasteries at Mount Saint Joseph, Roscrea and Mount Melleray in County Waterford convinced him that the monks were very much in support of the Irish-Ireland movement.[101] He was also greatly impressed with the Franciscan Brothers' College at Mount Bellew in Galway.[102] In all Bulfin sought to reassure his readers that the Catholic Church in Ireland was and still remained a positive and uplifting force in the lives of the people. Religion, as well as most related subjects, stirred the missionary zeal in Bulfin and his writings often read like evangelical tracts.

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[94] Ibid., p. 437
[95] Ibid., p. 125.
[96] Ibid., p. 284.
[97] Ibid., p. 274.
[98] Ibid., p. 400.
[99] Ibid., p. 141.
[100] Ibid., pp 196-197.
[101] Ibid., pp. 9- 11.
[102] Ibid., pp 55-56.

In his visits to the places of prehistoric and mythological interest Bulfin was reminded of how Douglas Hyde, Eoin MacNeill and Patrick Pearse had stressed the importance of heroic tales and myths in terms of the inspiration of the lives of people. Therefore, he himself presented to his readers the legends and tales associated with the important prehistoric sites that he visited. He was aware that many of his readers had very little knowledge of Ireland's heroic past, because of what Pearse termed the 'Murder Machine'.[103] Bulfin's visit to Tara proved to be inspirational. He recreated for his readers an epic world of Irish high kings, warriors and heroic deeds. As a gifted storyteller, he succeeded in bringing alive the characters and adventures of that legendary era, including the story of Diarmaid and Gráinne.[104] At the fort of Grianán an Aileach in Donegal, he could bring before his readers vivid images of the heroic exploits of the Ulster chieftains.[105] At Rath Croghan in Roscommon he could visualise the court of Queen Maeve and the power and might of her reign.[106] Standing alongside the cairn of Queen Maeve on the top of Knocknarea mountain in Sligo, he wondered about her eventual destiny and legacy.[107]

A country with such myths and legends also had a history that needed to be told and heard. As Eoin MacNéill had indicated in an editorial in *Fáinne an Lae* in 1898:

> It is not like that with the people of Ireland. Irish history is not taught to them during their youth. They read accounts of the Armada and of the Battle of Waterloo, but they do not hear a word about the Battle of the Yellow Ford or about the deeds of King Daithi.[108]

In order to combat this situation, formal lectures in Irish history were a regular feature on the schedule of many Gaelic League branches, particularly in urban areas like Dublin, Cork or London during the early years of the twentieth century. Speakers at these lectures included Eoin MacNéill, Patrick Pearse, Padraig

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[103] F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London, 1971), p. 77.
[104] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, pp 96-98.
[105] Ibid., pp 146-148.
[106] Ibid., p. 53.
[107] Ibid., pp 25- 26.
[108] *Fáinne an Lae,* 2 July, 1898.

Dinneen, Seosamh Laoide, Standish O Grady, Seán Ua Ceallaigh, Arthur Griffith and P.S. O'Hegarty.[109]

On his visit to places of historic interest, Bulfin felt it was important to relate to his readers accounts of the important historical characters and events connected to the area. In one sense he was presenting a lecture in history but reaching a wider audience than would be present at a meeting or talk. Standing on the bridge at Limerick city, he reflected sadly on the city's past, Patrick Sarsfield, the broken treaty and the flight of the wild geese.[110] On the top of Vinegar Hill in Enniscorthy, County Wexford, he recreated for his readers scenes from the 1798 rebellion with profiles of Father Murphy and other leading participants in the conflict.[111] From Lough Gill in Sligo he could see O'Rourke's Table Mountain and this prompted him to recapture scenes from the life and adventures of O'Rourke.[112] Alongside the walls of Derry city he cast his mind back to the historic siege of the city and its legacy for future generations.[113] As he stood by the Lagan River in Belfast, he pondered on the role of Henry Joy MacCracken and the causes of the two traditions, nationalist and unionist, that influenced the destiny of the city.[114] In all, Bulfin's accounts of history were a mixture of fact and opinion, and his picturesque style enabled him to put them before his readers in a dramatic and persuasive way. The art of the storyteller took precedence over the objectivity of the historian.

A short time after his arrival in Ireland, Bulfin received news from his American publishers, Doubleday, Page and Company. Months beforehand he had sent them his first novel entitled 'A Man of the Pampas' in the hope that they would be prepared to publish it. After a long period of consideration, they had decided against it. They rejected it for a number of reasons and in their letter to him stated:

> I am awfully sorry to have to write to you that after giving your story most mature reading, it to our consideration, we don't feel confident enough of making it a success to warrant us placing it in the adding list. The market

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[109] Philip O'Leary, *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival 1881-1921* (Pennsylvania, 1994), pp 167-168.
[110] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, pp 240-248.
[111] Ibid., pp 266-271.
[112] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, pp 35-42.
[113] Ibid., pp 138-142.
[114] Ibid., pp. 128- 132.

> for fiction has become demoralised.... Difficult to sell enough copies of a book by a new author...Admirable story, but it does not strike hard enough....not convinced of its drawing power.[115]

This rejection was not expected and Bulfin was bitterly disappointed. However he was resolved to take other steps to have the novel published. He wrote to the publishers to that effect and they promised to enlist the aid of an American literary agent for him.[116] All efforts in this regard were to prove unsuccessful and the novel remained without a publisher.[117] A major consolation for Bulfin's was that his short stories were proving popular and were published on a regular basis by Doubleday, Page and Company. A number of the stories were rejected on the grounds that they were 'too long', had 'prolonged introductions' and lacked 'immediate interest.'[118] Bulfin was determined to persist with his literary career and was preparing to negotiate with the publishing world in every way possible. His publishers had highlighted a recurring weakness in Bulfin's writing which was evident in much of his journalism, short stories and fiction. He had a tendency to be over expansive and repetitive. Brevity was not one of his strengths.

While in Ireland he decided to visit a number of places that had very meaningful and personal literary associations for him. Ethna Carberry, the poet from Antrim, had contributed many poems to the *Southern Cross* and her patriotic verses had been popular with readers. Bulfin admired her spirit and had been in correspondence with her. With Alice Milligan she had helped to edit the *Shan Van Vocht* and the *Northern Patriot*. She married the writer Seamus Mac Manus, but died at the early age of thirty six early in 1902. Bulfin was deeply saddened by her death and expressed his grief in the pages of the *Southern Cross*:

> One of the most pleasurable anticipations that were mine in sailing for the old land was that of meeting Eithne Carberry and telling the readers of the *Southern Cross* about her and her work. And now I take to her sorrow stricken husband the message of our consolation.[119]

He went to pay tribute at her grave at the Frossas, near Mount Charles in Donegal.[120] Like the poet William Rooney, she had died young and Ireland was

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[115] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 1), p. 13.
[116] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 1), p. 14.
[117] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 1)
[118] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 10), p.20.
[119] *Southern Cross*, 9 May, 1902, p. 13.
[120] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, pp 155-156.

left without their voices and spirits.[121] They were two people who had 'sang for Ireland' and it was important to acknowledge their work in fostering the philosophy of the Gaelic League.

From his early days Bulfin had been influenced by the works of the writer Charles Kickham and felt compelled to visit his birthplace and grave at Mullinahone in county Tipperary. His novel *Knocknagow* (*The Homes of Tipperary*) was a household book and its characters and action reflected rural life in nineteenth century Ireland. For Bulfin it was the great Irish novel, in spite of imperfections. His poem 'Rory of the Hills' also captivated the young Bulfin and remained with him all his life. Standing at his grave in Mullinahone, at the foot of Slievenamon, Bulfin reflected on Kickham's life and achievements.[122] He wondered why Kickham's output of poetry was so limited but, on reflection, he could see that there was 'no time for writing poetry in the fettered life of a militant journalist.' Yet Thomas Davis, he noted, could devote his time to both the nationalist struggle and to the writing of poetry.[123] Bulfin could relate to both men and their struggle. He himself constantly had to confront the competing worlds of journalism and creative writing. In his case journalism was to dominate.

Bulfin's partiality to verses of a patriotic flavour prompted him to spend time in Longford and Westmeath which he termed the 'country of Leo Casey and Oliver Goldsmith'. Leo Casey was a local poet from Gurteen who wrote poems with a strong nationalist fervour such as the Rising of the Moon:

> Oh, thank God, there still are beating
> Hearts in manhood's burning noon,
> Who would follow in their footsteps
> At the rising of the moon.[124]

His poems were published in the *Nation* and were popular among readers. Bulfin had come to believe that 'Ireland must fight – if not with arms, then, some other way'. Casey, who died at the early age of twenty four, represented for Bulfin a poet of the people who could keep alive 'the ideal of nationhood, vigorous and militant, in the minds of younger generations.'[125] By contrast, Bulfin insisted that while Oliver Goldsmith was clearly the greater poet, Casey was more truly Irish in

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[121] Ibid., p. 289.
[122] Ibid., p. 350.
[123] Ibid., p. 355.
[124] Ibid., p. 292.
[125] Ibid., p. 303.

vision, sentiment and style. 'The Deserted Village' could be 'English or Scotch or Welsh.'[126] Bulfin claimed:

> You see, Casey loved Ireland better than Goldsmith did, and wrote about Irish things. That is why I say he is higher, as an Irish poet than Goldsmith. Of course he was not a great genius like Goldsmith, but he was an Irish singer and Goldsmith was not. Goldsmith wrote for the people in England, mostly about English things, and Casey wrote for the people in Ireland, mostly about Irish things. True, Goldsmith's great poem is about an eviction campaign and it is some of the most beautiful poetry that ever was written, but there is nothing in it to specially mark it as Irish.[127]

His strong nationalist convictions led him to make the claim that writers like Kickham, Carberry, Casey, Rooney and Davis best represented the character, traditions and imagination of Irish people as a race. His sense of literary standards, however, would have to grant that Goldsmith was the major poet.

It is important to remember that during his stay in Ireland Bulfin was in constant contact with the staff of the *Southern Cross* in Buenos Aires. A weekly correspondence was sustained for the full length of seven month period. The *Southern Cross* remained not only his main source of income, but also his passionate commitment. From Jaye Manson, the accounts and advertising manager, he received regular financial statements, including cheques to cover his own living expenses in Ireland.[128] Gerald Foley was now acting as editor and he kept Bulfin informed about all aspects of the *Southern Cross* and its progress. He reassured him that 'the paper is all right. You need not be the least uneasy.' He wrote regularly outlining the work of the *Southern Cross*, the articles that were being published, the readership, the state of the Gaelic League, the hurling leagues, conflicts within the Irish community in Argentina and editorials that featured in the *Standard* newspaper. Bulfin had submitted a series of articles based on his travels in Ireland and was pleased to learn that they were very popular with readers of the *Southern Cross.*[129] His experiences and observations had been recorded mainly for the interest and attention of the Irish emigrant community and he was reassured to hear of their impact. Bulfin was both pleased and surprised to learn of the response to his travel articles in Ireland. Many of

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[126] Ibid., p. 317.
[127] Ibid., pp 316-317.
[128] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815.
[129] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815.

them were published in the *United Irishman* and they were very well received.[130] He had not expected that they would appeal to the Irish at home, because he felt the scope of the material was directed at readers overseas.

It was now time for Bulfin to begin the leave-taking. Having settled his wife and family in Ireland, he decided to return to Argentina in order to once again take up duties with the *Southern Cross*. There was much work to be done. Firstly he was anxious to have a full audit done on the company to see what measures were needed to secure the future of the paper.[131] He implemented the necessary changes that were recommended. Very soon he resumed duties as editor and was busy writing feature articles for the paper. He was determined to put the *Southern Cross* on a firm footing and there was a certain feeling of self recrimination because of his long stay in Ireland. Most of the year 1903 was devoted to consolidating the position of the *Southern Cross* and to securing subscriptions from advertisers and readers.

Bulfin's stay in Ireland convinced him that he must now take every step to learn Irish and to gain some degree of proficiency in the language. Language classes in Irish had always presented a problem in Buenos Aires. There was always the difficulty of securing a teacher and even then some of the teachers proved to be problematic. If it was not a case of payment it could be a difficulty over payment. There was no easy solution, but he was determined to persist. He lent his full support as always to the Gaelic League and continued to promote the hurling leagues. Douglas Hyde wrote to him from Ireland in October, 1903 once again requesting financial help.[132] On one level the Gaelic League was thriving with nine organisers and eleven paid officers working for them. Books were being published, but all of this was at great expense and they were now in debt to the figure of £1,000. Hyde was hoping that through the aegis of the *Southern Cross* money could be raised to retrieve the situation. Bulfin once again obliged and began a successful fund raising campaign. Hyde wrote acknowledging all the efforts that were made and also congratulating Bulfin on his progress in learning Irish.[133]

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[130] Máire de Buitléir to William Bulfin, 28 Oct 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 5).
[131] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815.
[132] NLI, Bulfin Papers Ms 13810 (Folder 14).
[133] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 14)

Even though he was now working fulltime as editor for the *Southern Cross*, Bulfin was still determined to pursue his literary career. He persisted in his attempts to find a publisher in America for his novel 'A Man of the Pampas', but met with no success. However he was successful in having more of his short stories published. Two of his articles dealing with life on the Pampas were also published. At this stage he was seriously considering the options that were open to him. He felt compelled to travel to New York in order to deal in person with the publishing world. As an experienced public speaker on a variety of subjects, he was drawn to the idea of a short lecture tour in America.[134] Hyde had mentioned that Yeats was in America on a very successful lecture tour and this proved one among many incentives.[135] However Bulfin's schedule was busier than ever. This included long hours working with the *Southern Cross* and the management of three stock farms. In spite of warnings about overwork from Hyde and others, he persisted with old patterns because there were debts to be cleared and he was anxious for the future of the paper. In October 1903 he wrote to Arthur Griffith to say:

> I am busier than ever now...I have the management of three big stockfarms thrown on me now besides the paper ...wish I was freer to help you and the cause...hoping to be home in March.[136]

In fact he did not leave Argentina for Ireland until July 1904 because of the pressure of work.

On his arrival in Ireland, Bulfin was immediately reunited with his wife and children. This was his second return visit and he was still anticipating it with eagerness of an exile. Bulfin was now deciding about making a clear commitment to a future in Ireland. His family were settled there, yet he was still strongly linked to the *Southern Cross* and life in Argentina. Again he devoted a great deal of time working for the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin. Griffith and Hyde were keen that he should address more meetings at various places throughout the country. At a meeting in the Mansion House in Dublin on 8 October, 1904, he spoke on the work of the Gaelic League and urged people, including the bishops, to play their

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[134] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13812, pp 158-159.
[135] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 14).
[136] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13812, p. 154.

part.[137] More and more he became part of the evolving stages of Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin movement.

Bulfin continued his rambles in Eirinn, pleased that his writings about his earlier journeys in 1902 had been enthusiastically received by readers of the *United Irishman* and the *Southern Cross.*[138] Leaving Dublin one Sunday morning for a tour of Wicklow he paid a visit to the Martello Tower at Sandycove, Dun Laoghaire and encountered the writer James Joyce, Oliver St John Gogarty and French.[139] In his biography of Joyce, Richard Ellman recounts the scene:

> On Sunday, September 12, the tower sustained a visit from William Bulfin late from Argentina but the more ardently Irish for that. The Southern X chap Senor Bulfin, as Joyce called him, was gathering materials for his travel book. In it he delineates the three men ..one of them (French) ...another (Gogarty) ...and another (Joyce) was a singer of songs...[140]

In many of travel articles, Bulfin presented cameo scenes of Irish life that appealed to his readers for their charm, freshness and humour. One such scene was the time he encountered girls working in the fields of Westmeath and how he entertained them with stories of their relatives and neighbours and the emigrant life in Argentina. As he remarked 'they were brothers and sisters of men I had met on the Pampas and nieces and nephews and even parents as well.' [141] His sketch of the regatta on the Shannon with its satirical portrayal of the landed gentry and their decline was both humorous and prophetic, if somewhat laboured and repetitive.[142] His descriptive powers as a writer are evidenced in his depiction of landscape, of Irish rain as 'a kind of damp poem' and of the bird life culminating in the picture the lark as the 'only bird that never fails to give the wanderer a welcome home.'[143]

However, there were times when Bulfin's strong feelings led to prejudice and excess. As early as 1894 he had made a passionate plea in the pages of the *Southern Cross* for better treatment of the Jewish people. He argued that they

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[137] *United Irishman,* 8 Oct. 1904, p. 1.
[138] Gerald Foley to William Bulfin, 16 Aug 1902, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 1)
[139] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, pp 322-324.
[140] Richard Ellman, *James Joyce* (Oxford, 1904), pp 172-173.
[141] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* pp 410-414.
[142] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn,* pp 59- 72.
[143] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, pp 401-405.

were banished from Russia because of the anti Semitism that existed there.[144] However, his encounter with a Jewish peddler during his travels in Ireland produced a very different response. He observed:

> I was given to understand while in Longford that these Jewish peddlers are to be met with in many parts of Ireland. I was sorry to hear it. I was told that some of them, out of the profits of their trade, have already established themselves in Dublin and other cities as wholesale merchants and moneylenders.[145]

In the 1840s the Jewish community in Ireland numbered several hundred, but by 1901 the figure had reached almost four thousand. [146]They had mostly settled in the cities of Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Limerick. Early in 1904 the Redemptorist priest, Father John Creagh, denounced the Jews of Limerick and accused them of unscrupulous practices in trading and usury. He advocated a boycott of their shops and businesses and this led to a pogrom in the city.[147] John Redmond defended the Limerick Jews and spoke out against the boycott.[148] In an editorial in the *United Irishman,* Arthur Griffith supported Father Creagh.[149] However, Michael Davitt wrote to the *Freeman's Journal* and spoke out against the boycott. He presented a strong case defence for the Jewish community.[150] He declared:

> The Jews have never done any injury to Ireland. Like our own race they have endured a persecution, the records of which will forever remain a reproach to the Christian nations of Europe. Ireland has no share in this black record.[151]

In his examination of the examples of anti-Semitism in Ireland, Cormac Ó'Gráda concluded that while militant Catholicism could be a factor, the real cause was essentially economic in origin.[152] Bulfin himself was strongly influenced by the economic aspects of the problem and this may, in part, explain his negative reactions.

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[144] *Southern Cross*, 9 Nov. 1894, p. 2.
[145] William Bulfin, *Rambles in Eirinn*, p. 309.
[146] Dermot Keogh and Andrew McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott, Anti-Semitism in Ireland* (Cork, 2005), pp 4-5.
[147] Ibid., p. 38.
[148] Ibid., p. 44.
[149] *United Irishman,* 23 Apr. 1904.
[150] *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Jan . 1904.
[151] *Freeman's Journal,* 18 Jan . 1904.
[152] Cormac Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce* (United States of America, 2006), p. 181.

Toward the end of his second stay in Ireland, Bulfin was preparing for a visit to New York on his return journey to Argentina. He had corresponded with Michael Davitt and had received letters of recommendation from him that would facilitate easy access to various political and social circles in New York.[153] Having traced and admired Davitt's life and achievements he was determined to spend time with him before his departure for America and to interview him in relation to his views on the policies and prospects for Ireland. A meeting was arranged and Bulfin met Davitt for the first time at his home in Dalkey. He would have known him from paintings and photographs, but felt they had not flattered him.[154] Davitt looked older than his years, but 'his eyes were bright and kindly.' He admitted to Bulfin that he had never been strong since his imprisonment and that his health frequently broke down because of overwork. He expressed a wish to visit Argentina.

The two men did not agree on every point, but Bulfin reminded himself 'that the man seated opposite me had been working for Ireland before I was born'. Much passed between them, but Bulfin decided to exercise discretion in publishing the details. He remained respectful, but not deferential. On the question of obtaining any broad measures of self government for Ireland by parliamentary means, Davitt argued that the best that could be achieved at present would be a legislative body whose acts would be subject to the veto of the English Parliament. Bulfin insisted that this was less than Home Rule and therefore unacceptable. He argued for the implementation of Griffith's policy as outlined in his articles on the 'Resurrection of Hungary' and that this could be the way forward. Davitt did not entirely disagree.

On the land question, Davitt stated that he had no part in the Dunraven Land Conference and that he rejected the proposals put forward.[155] He felt that the measures put forward favoured the landlords and not the tenants. They spoke about the Parnell Movement and its impact. Bulfin put forward his belief that the presence in the ranks of so many of the old militant elements gave Parnell immense power in that it placed an alternative policy in his hands. However, Davitt held the view that while the Land League and the 'Old National League'

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[153] NLI, Bulfin Papers, 13810 (Folder 9)
[154] *Gaelic American,* 17 Dec. 1904, p. 2.
[155] F. S. L. Lyons, 'The Aftermath of Parnell, 1891-1903' in W.E.Vaughan (Editor*), A New History of Ireland Vol VI, Ireland Under the Union 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp 95-96.

had a strong presence they did not amount to an alternative policy. Parnell, he felt, would never have attempted a policy of armed revolution.

Davitt saw Argentina as a country of infinite promise and recalled former times he spent on horseback in Australia and the United States. He declared his decision not to go back to parliament if an acceptable level of self government was granted to Ireland. This would mean the end of his active political work. Public life never appealed to him and he particularly disliked public speaking.[156]

In recalling his boyhood, Davitt mentioned that he spoke Irish with his family at home in Mayo and then in Lancashire.[157] His parents were Irish speakers. The Gaelic Movement was all important, he felt, and he was enthusiastic about future endeavours for the language and literature of the country. There was work to be done by Irish scholars in translating the vast collection of Irish manuscripts so that the world might see what Ireland had done for civilisation and literature. There were many ways of serving Ireland, he believed. Davitt related to Bulfin his experiences on a recent visit to Russia.[158] He had been impressed with the warm nature of the Russian character that made the visitor feel at home. His meeting with the novelist Tolstoy left a lasting impression and he found him to be earnest, idealistic and a friend to Ireland.

For Bulfin, the meeting and interview with Davitt himself was memorable and he was reluctant to take his leave. The account of the interview reached a wide audience and was published in the *United Irishman,* the *Gaelic American* and the *Southern Cross*. The interview highlighted Bulfin's strengths as an experienced journalist and interviewer. It illustrated Davitt's growing sense of disillusionment as a parliamentarian and highlighted Bulfin's concern for Ireland's future.

Conclusion

Bulfin's visits to Ireland in 1902 and 1904 were to help determine and strengthen his future decisions and commitments. By settling his family in Ireland he was making it inevitable for himself to do likewise in the future. His travels by bicycle

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[156] Laurence Marley, *Michael Davitt, Freelance Radical and Frondeur* (Dublin, 2007), p. 243.
[157] Carla King, *Michael Davitt* (Dundalk, 1999), p. 10.
[158] TCD, Michael Davitt Papers, Ms 9647, DA, pp 1-9 (Details of Davitt's interview with Tolstoy)

in almost every county gave him a direct experience of all that was happening in the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of the country.

His observations about deforestation, depopulation, communications, the land question, emigration, education and the Gaelic League provided a personal overview of Ireland in the early years of the twentieth century. The world he depicted was essentially that seen through the eyes of a returned exile heightened by strong nationalist sentiments. His analysis and judgements were coloured by a patriotic fervour, a passionate concern for Ireland's future and an opinionated approach to most subjects. His interpretation of Ireland's economic situation was that of Arthur Griffith's and the traditional nationalist's view of the time. At times his comments were flavoured with an excess of nationalist rhetoric and a moralising tone. His visit allowed him to play an active role in the work of the Gaelic League in Ireland. He was also able to participate in the evolving stages of the Sinn Féin philosophy. It also allowed him to consolidate his friendship with Arthur Griffith and Douglas Hyde.

As editor of the *Southern Cross*, Bulfin had already established himself as a prominent leader with the Irish community of Argentina. He was now being acknowledged in Ireland as a significant figure at this important stage in the development of the Gaelic League and the evolving stages of the Sinn Féin philosophy..

Chapter 7

Between Two Continents

In October 1904, Hyde was recovering from a serious illness and wrote to Bulfin before his departure for America. He wished him well in New York, but advised caution and restraint in his approach, saying 'As you are strong be merciful.'[1] The two men had different temperaments and Hyde was aware that Bulfin's passionate nature could lead him to challenge and dispute with vigour and force. He had already informed him of Yeats' successful lecture tour in America, visiting Harvard and other universities.[2]

Bulfin had a number of reasons for his visit to New York. He was ambitious for his literary work, particularly his fiction, short stories and articles and felt it would be best to meet his publishers in person. There was also the question of contacting literary agents who could help in the promotion of his work. His wife, Annie, was convinced that the United States could provide him with new opportunities and that a visit to the publishing houses would enable him to establish a network of contacts. He felt that it would help 'to lay the foundation of a bit of a name so that I can go back again afterwards.'[3] It was also his intention to lecture at a number of venues in New York. He was confident that he could present a series of lectures based on the subjects ranging from 'Ireland through the Eyes of a Returned Exile' to 'Life in South America.' He had prepared these topics in depth and had lectured on them with ease and conviction in Ireland and Argentina to appreciative audiences.[4] He was looking ahead at the prospect of a future lecturing tour in America.

By the end of the nineteenth century most of the great American publishing houses were well established. Doubleday, Page and Company was one of the leading and well established publishing firms in America. After his unsatisfactory experience with his English publishers Bulfin had turned to the American market. The New York publishers had high standards and Frank

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[1] Douglas Hyde to William Bulfin, 15 October, 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers Ms 13810 (Folder 14)
[2] Douglas Hyde to William Bulfin, No date, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 14).
[3] William Bulfin to Fr. Dolan 29 Jan 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13812, pp 158-159.
[4] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13804 (Folders 1-13)

Doubleday was to claim that 'I should never undertake to advertise a book unless I was certain that the public ought to read it.'[5] It was the stated philosophy of the company that publishing was of central importance in the life of the community and that it was:

> An instrument for promoting the social democracy, for advancing primary education, technical training, scientific agriculture, the improvement of the country life, sanitation and for emphasizing in the growing mind the dignity of American citizenship.[6]

Not only did the company publish books but it also published a number of major journals including the *World's Work* and *Everybody's Magazine.* There was a great demand for reading material in the closing decade of the nineteenth century and the influence of these publications on American culture was considerable. Reading books in general was never as popular in America as it was in the period 1890 to 1910.[7]

Bulfin had been in constant contact with his publishers in New York. They had failed to find a publisher for his novel and returned the manuscript copy to him.[8] However, *Everybody's Magazine* had published a number of his short stories and was intent on publishing more in a series in successive numbers of the magazine.[9] They encouraged him to write more and felt there was a real interest in North America in stories set in the Pampas depicting a very different culture and way of life. One of his stories 'El Reservao' received much praise from the critics.[10] The stories 'Failure of Marriage', 'Don Goyo' and 'Quemazon' were also published.[11] Other stories such as 'Gente', 'The Failure of Marriage at El Bandido', 'The Fame of Don Estaban' were also published. In February Bulfin received a letter from *Everybody's Magazine* praising his stories and promising to welcome him warmly to New York.[12] He had been advised once again about certain weaknesses in some of the stories; an over insistence on detail and plots

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[5] John Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States, Vol ii, The Expansion of the Industry 1865-1919* (New York and London, 1975), p. 327.
[6] Ibid., p. 326.
[7] Ibid., p. 674.
[8] Paul Reynolds (Literary Agent)to William Bulfin, 25 Aug 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 1)
[9] *Everybody's Magazine* to William Bulfin 19 May 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 1)
[10] M. M. Huntington to William Bulfin 29 Aug 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 1)
[11] J. Cosgrove to William Bulfin 29 May 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 1)
[12] J. Cosgrove to William Bulfin 18 Feb 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers Ms 13817 (Folder 1)

that were too long. However, there were real strengths as well in his writings and he had 'a fine field and no one else impinges upon it.'[13]

However, John Cosgrove, editor of *Everybody's Magazine*, wrote attempting to dissuade Bulfin from coming to New York for the purpose of negotiating with publishers. He felt that the journey would be 'a waste of money as stories are accepted on their face value and the presence of the writer does not help very much.'[14] Bulfin decided to ignore this seasoned advice because he was intent on the American market and felt it necessary to be present in order to discuss details with publishers. At one point he wrote in a spirit of anger to Cosgrove in relation to payment and acknowledgement for his stories.

> I wrote to you twice from Ireland but you did not answer.....I like to write stories. I am not depending on it for a living, of course, or I should starve. But I ask what encouragement is there in the way I have been treated to write the stories and send them to you.[15]

Bulfin had received payment from Doubleday, Page and Company for some of his stories at the rate of $300 for four stories at an earlier stage.[16] Bulfin was pleased with this amount. He had also submitted a number of articles for publication. His article entitled , 'Gaucho's Day's Work', appeared in the journal *World's Work* and Doubleday paid him $120 for it.[17]

It was November 1904 when Bulfin arrived in New York. This was his first visit to the city and he was struck by how much it contrasted with Buenos Aires. Both were modern cities, but New York was on a different scale. In a series of articles entitled 'Under the Star and Stripes' published in the *Southern Cross* he outlined his first impressions of the city and the countryside about it. Visiting the countryside between Boston and New Jersey, he noted the woodlands and bare hills and the level of farming activity, which consisted mainly of corn raising.[18] He noted also that the homesteads were lightly constructed and 'open for the world to see.' The tradition of hunting or 'gunning' was very much alive and was part of the family and community way of life.[19] The end of November, he observed, brought gradual changes with the fading of the Indian summer into

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[13] J.Cosgrove to William Bulfin 9 Feb 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers Ms 13817 (Folder 1)
[14] J. Cosgrove to William Bulfin, 27 Aug. 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 1)
[15] William Bulfin to J. Cosgrove, 1 July 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 2).
[16] Henry W. Lanier to William Bulfin, 22 Aug 1901, NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 1), p. 7.
[17] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 1)
[18] *Southern Cross*, 20 Jan. 1905, p. 14.
[19] *Southern Cross*, 27 Jan. 1905, pp 13-14.

winter, the falling leaves, the arrival of the first frost and the inevitable fall of snow.

New York under snow highlighted varied aspects of the lives of its inhabitants, both positive and negative. Bulfin was struck by the way in which the citizens cooperated with the schemes to clear the roads and paths of snow. However, he also observed:

> The snow fiend searches New York to its very core and discovers its luxury and misery, poverty and wealth, want and satiety. Never so much as during a spell when the city is snowbound. You see the gulf which separates the masses and the millionaires and the sharp contrast between the conditions of life of the very rich and the abjectly poor ... Under my feet , so to speak on the sidewalk, with their heads to the wall of the building and their feet towards the street, lying on the grating, were scores and scores of homeless men, who were stretched there to catch the heat from the floor of the basement, hundreds of them...Around the corner, there were splendid squares, stately avenues, all glistening in the snow... fine ladies from the theatres, jewellery and costly furs ..[20]

He could see clearly the extremes and inequalities that existed and how people were prisoners of fate and chance. His advice to the potential visitor to the city was to be on guard for the extremes of cold. Otherwise, he concluded the visitor will suffer:

> The Grippe has taken you in hand and you are in for an attack of a kind of glorified influenza which will prompt you to say awful things about New York as a winter resort.

His words proved prophetic and he was to feel their impact before he left New York. It is interesting to note that at this particular time in the United States the major causes of death were the Grippe (influenza), tuberculosis, diarrhoea, heart illness and strokes. Bulfin was to acknowledge later that this was the first serious collapse in his health and that it left a legacy of physical weakness.[21]

Davitt had written him a number of letters of introduction that would facilitate access to various Irish groups in New York.[22] Long before the Gaelic League was founded in Ireland in 1893, there were a number of Gaelic societies in

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[20] *Southern Cross*, 3 Feb. 1905, p. 7.
[21] Letter from William Bulfin to John Devoy, 14 Aug. 1907 in William O'Brien & Desmond Ryan (Eds), *John Devoy's Postbag 1871-1928*, Vol ii (Dublin, 1948), pp 358-359.
[22] Michael Davitt to William Bulfin, 7 Oct. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 9).

the United States.[23] In 1881, Michael J. Logan published the first edition of *An Gaodhal*, a monthly bilingual journal in Irish and English. *An Gaodhal* published a list of more than thirty Gaelic societies that were functioning in the United States.[24] At a meeting in May 1898, representatives of thirteen Irish language societies came together and founded the League. On the 2 November officers were elected and the Gaelic League of America was formally established in New York.[25] By 1904 the Gaelic League was well established in America and had several strong branches in New York. Bulfin had been invited to a number of branch meetings in order to address the members. J.M. Wall of the *New York Daily News* had alerted him to the ongoing internal disputes that were damaging the Gaelic Societies in the United States.[26] It seemed that they had never united fully under the Gaelic League banner and there were many rivalries and tensions over issues of power and control. One of his first talks was to the Harlem Gaelic Society and it proved to be very successful.[27] His talk presented in strong light the impact of the Gaelic League in Ireland and Argentina. He stressed the role Argentina had played in terms of promotion and fund raising. He also made a presentation at the Murray Hill Lyceum in December 1904.[28]

John Devoy, founder of Clan na Gael and editor and proprietor of the *Gaelic American,* was an important key link for visitors from Ireland. Bulfin had been in correspondence with him and on his visit he became a member of the Owen Roe Club of Clan na Gael. On the 26 November he delivered an address to Clan na Gael at the Brevoort Hall, New York and concluded by saying: 'it was not by talking that the martyrs did their noble work for Ireland.'[29] On a raw November evening while at a Gaelic League meeting at an Uptown part of New York he met Devoy for the first time. He was struck by his intellectual vigour as he talked about Kickham, John O'Leary, Parnell and Davitt. Bulfin felt it 'was like being behind the scenes of history to listen to him.' Later he visited him in his office at the *Gaelic American* and after a long and detailed interview he concluded:

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[23] Una Ní Bhoiméil, *Building Irish Identity in America, 1870- 1915, The Gaelic Revival* (Dublin, 2003), p. 32.
[24] Ibid., p. 35.
[25] Ibid., p. 51.
[26] J.M. Wall to William Bulfin, 6 Dec. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 32).
[27] *Irish American,* vol i, No 65, 10 Dec. 1904, p. 4.
[28] John J. O Leary (New York) to William Bulfin, 2 Dec. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 25)
[29] *Gaelic American*, 19 Feb. 1910, p. 5.

> With one or two exceptions, all the real history makers that I have met were men of great simplicity of manner and John Devoy is one of the simplest of them all. Some of them had even in middle age the zeal and freshness of youth and he had this gift in marked degree. He had seen much history in the making and has made some of it himself. And he speaks of it all as if it were a tissue of reminiscences from his schoolday escapades. The keen edge of his enthusiasm has never dulled...he strikes you as being a man who would run that beetling forehead of his against stone walls and batter them down.[30]

Bulfin's estimate of Devoy was shared by many, but sometimes with a different emphasis. *The Times*, in later years, was to present a more daunting picture. In reviewing his life and times it concluded that Devoy was 'the most bitter and persistent, as well as the most dangerous enemy of this country, which Ireland has produced since Wolfe Tone.' It outlined his endeavours, both in Ireland and America, to engage in conspiracies for the establishment of the Irish Republic. It detailed his role in relation to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, John Boyle O'Reilly, Michael Davitt and Patrick Pearse. As editor of the *Gaelic American*, it argued that he had 'kept the Fenian ideal alive in America.' In all it viewed Devoy as one of the most influential and successful of all Irish Republican agents.[31]

In the issue of 10 December, 1904 of the *Irish American* there was an account of Bulfin and his forthcoming lecture in Carnegie Hall. It stressed his positive qualities, particularly as an author and orator, making reference to his proficiency in Spanish and Italian. Readers were advised to be present for the lecture as the subject was of major interest to Irish nationalists and as this would be the speaker's last appearance in New York before his departure for Ireland.[32] During Bulfin's stay in New York the *Gaelic American* published a detailed account of the interview he did with Davitt the previous September.[33] J.M. Wall, the New York journalist interviewed Bulfin and had prepared a profile of him due for publication.[34] Bulfin was the guest speaker on Sunday at the Manchester

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[30] *Southern Cross*, 15 Dec 1905, p. 20.
[31] *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1928 p. 28.
[32] *Irish American*, 10 Dec. 1904, p. 4.
[33] *Gaelic American*, 17 Dec. 1904, p. 2.
[34] J.M. Wall (New York Press Club) to William Bulfin, 13 Nov. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 30)

Martyrs Celebration in the Breevort Hall and Wall accompanied him to the meeting.[35]

Bulfin was in contact with the editor of the *New York Daily News* and had been interviewed by the paper. He was invited to take over editorial duties for the day of the presidential election results.[36] Bulfin had clear and strong views on the role of America and the question of policing the world.[37] Wall informed Bulfin of the extent of infighting among the Irish in New York with particular reference to Richardson, the editor of the *Gael.* Richardson, he argued, had inflicted damage on Maude Gonne, the Irish Literary Society and the Gaelic League in the United States.[38] At the concert and dance hosted by St Brendan's Branch of the Gaelic League in the New Hall at 98th Street and Fifth Avenue, Bulfin met again with John Devoy.[39] Plans for the lecture in Carnegie Hall were under way and the meeting was being advertised in the media and at masses.[40] Bulfin received much praise for his correspondence in the *New York Daily News*.[41]

J.M. Wall interviewed Bulfin who was staying at Father Dolan's presbytery on the Upper East Side of New York. He wrote a detailed flattering profile of Bulfin for the *New York Daily News* in order to introduce him to his readers.[42] He outlined Bulfin's career to date, referring to his role as editor of the *Southern Cross* and his work on behalf of the Gaelic League and the Sinn Féin Movement. His picture of Bulfin in a room scattered with leaves of papers caught the sense of almost compulsive activity. While admiring the achievements, he did not fail to convey the fuller picture and noted 'much nervous energy ...talks rapidly and thinks rapidly...A man who does things.' He concluded that such spirit was 'the paramount concern of the age.' Behind this tribute one could detect Wall's understanding and grasp of his subject's true character. He could see the levels of compulsion that were there.

The results of the American presidential election were announced in November 1904 with the Republican candidate Theodore Roosevelt was declared

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[35] J.M. Wall to William Bulfin, 24 Nov. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 32).
[36] NLI, Bulfin Papers NLI
[37] *Southern Cross,* 3 Feb. 1905, p. 13.
[38] J.M. Wall to William Bulfin. 6 Dec. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers Ms 13810 (Folder 32).
[39] Michael O'Reilly to William Bulfin, 11 Nov. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 26).
[40] Johh J. O'Leary to William Bulfin, 2 Dec. 1904 NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 25).
[41] M. Power to William Bulfin, 19 June 1905, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 27)
[42] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13803 (Folder 8)

an outright winner. Roosevelt had endorsed the Monroe Doctrine, the policy of the Big Stick for South America. Bulfin challenged this policy and argued that this amounted to international police power and that it would negate the rights of other countries.[43] America did not have the right to arbitrate over other countries and certainly not South America. Bulfin was alerting governments in Latin America to the dangers posed by the Monroe Doctrine, particularly as it was now supported by President Roosevelt.

He was scheduled to speak at Carnegie Hall on 18 December, 1904 and his lecture was entitled 'Irish Nationhood and how it can be Achieved'. [44] However, he fell ill and suffered a very severe attack of the grippe. The lecture took place, but Bulfin was hampered greatly by his illness. The *Gaelic American* gave front page coverage to his lecture. Bulfin, in his lecture, stressed his belief that Irish nationalists were demanding complete freedom for Ireland. He felt it was essential to promote every national asset. In a far ranging approach to his topic he concluded:

> It was not simply an agrarian problem. The language was the very spirit of the nation and if we were to establish the Irish language in its proper place in the national economy, the national spirit would grow stronger. We must organize other sources of national reconstruction, namely, Irish Art, Irish sociability, Irish pastimes and Irish culture in its widest sense. A sense of self sufficiency will be necessary for the reconstruction of the nation.[45]

Although this was intended to be the high point of his visit to the United States, he was hampered by the sudden attack of the grippe and his lecture had to be shortened.

John Quinn, the Irish American lawyer and patron of the arts, was also an important figure in relation to visitors from Ireland, who wished to make contact with the political, social and cultural world of the United States. Bulfin was put in contact with Quinn who helped by introducing him to various publishing firms. They had much in common and discussed ancient Irish sagas, the Irish Ireland movement, the prose of Lady Gregory and the poetry of Yeats.[46] It was Quinn who had promoted and organized Yeats's successful lecture of

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[43] *Southern Cross*, 3 Feb. 1905, p. 3.
[44] *Irish American*, 10 Dec. 1904, p. 8.
[45] *Gaelic American,* vol i, no 67, 24 Dec. 1904, p. 1.
[46] B.L. Reid, *John Quinn and his Friends, The Man from New York* (New York 1968), p. 65.

America in1903.[47] Bulfin described him as 'a giver of gifts with a wondrous hospitality.'[48] He placed his home, library and offices at Bulfin's disposal. Quinn was a supporter of the Irish Ireland Movement and always maintained that *Rambles in Eirinn* was his favourite Irish travel book. He wrote to Bulfin wishing him a safe journey back to Ireland and reminding him that Hyde would be very welcome in America. He also promised to help Bulfin in publishing his articles in New York.[49]

On his return to Ireland, Bulfin was warmly welcomed and concern was expressed for his health and well being. P. Ó Dálaigh of the Gaelic League wrote saying:

> I am delighted to know that you are back amongst us again. I regret to learn that you have been unwell. I was under the impression that you were absolutely impregnable.[50]

His return journey from Dublin to Buenos Aires allowed him to note his observations about Liverpool, La Pollice, La Rochelle, La Coruna, Vigo and Lisbon.[51] His readers also received a vivid account of the remainder of the journey as he visited St Vincent, Pernambuco, Bahia, Rio and Montevideo.[52]

Bulfin had met the Gaelic League activist, Máire de Bhuitléir, when he was in Ireland. She was eager to act as Irish correspondent for the *Southern Cross* and Bulfin was pleased to accept her offer as it gave him the means to keep his readers up to date with what was happening in Ireland.[53] Her articles began to appear on a regular basis and they focused mainly on the progress of the Irish Ireland movement. One of her first articles outlined all the work that had been done and all the achievements made during the year 1905.[54] Another article concentrated on Arthur Griffith's achievements to date and the development of the Sinn Féin Movement.[55] Her accounts were flavoured with lively and enthusiastic descriptions of meeting, events and Gaelic festivals like the

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[47] Ibid., p. 16.
[48] *Southern Cross*, 26 Jan. 1906, p. 13.
[49] John Quinn to William Bulfin 20 Dec. 1904, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 28)
[50] P. Ó Dálaigh to William Bulfin, 6 Jan. 1905, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder).
[51] *Southern Cross*, 3 Mar. 1905, pp 13-14.
[52] *Southern Cross*, 10 Mar. 1905, pp 13-14.
[53] Maire De Buitléir to William Bulfin 28 Oct. 1903, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 5)
[54] *Southern Cross*, 11 July 1908, pp 6-8.
[55] *Southern Cross*, 21 July 1905, pp 20-21.

Oireachtas.[56] Towards the end of 1905 her novel, entitled *The Promised Land*, began to appear in serial form in the *Southern Cross*.[57]

Bulfin's editorials in the *Southern Cross* began to address the question of President Roosevelt and the Monroe Doctrine. Roosevelt, as a strong and popular president, argued for the necessity of intervention if the situation warranted it. Bulfin campaigned for a solidarity among South American countries in the face of possible encroachments and intervention from the United States. He rejected Roosevelt's claims that South American countries were in debt to European bankers. The money was, he said, borrowed from 'European speculative bankers.'[58] He felt that Roosevelt was wrong in saying that 'money lent by private speculators is money owed to governments.' It was important, he felt, for every newspaper and publicist in South America to alert people to the dangers inherent in the Monroe Doctrine and to protest against it. He argued that the President's policy was unconstitutional:

> The imperialist policy initiated instituted by the late President and followed by Mr Roosevelt is not compatible with the constitution of the United States and it would be well for all concerned if it were abandoned.[59]

However, in February 1905 *The Times* observed that Roosevelt had presented a more reasoned statement of the proposition laid down in December. He was now maintaining that 'any action may be taken which is not in the shape of interference with the forms of government or despoilment of territory.'[60] Not all of the press in Argentina shared the stand taken by Bulfin in the *Southern Cross*. The *Standard* of Buenos Aires could see certain justifications for Roosevelt's corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. The situation in Venezuela placed the United States in a dilemma from which the only practicable escape was the course recommended by Roosevelt. An editorial in the *Standard* that perhaps America 'could be trusted to perform a mediatory function in a disinterested way.'[61] The *Buenos Aires Herald* acknowledged that US declarations had 'created a universal sensation, especially those referring to South America and the

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[56] *Southern Cross*, 28 July 1905, p. 6.
[57] *Southern Cross*, 3 Nov. 1905, p. 15.
[58] *Southern Cross*, 23 Aug. 1905, p. 14.
[59] *Southern Cross*, 26 Jan. 1906, p. 13.
[60] *The Times*, 17 Feb. 1905, p. 3.
[61] *Standard*, 17 Feb. 1905, p. 4.

application of the various states of the Monroe Doctrine.'[62] However, it noted that Roosevelt had been elected president by a large majority and that he had received a strong national mandate for his foreign policies. His Democratic opponents had presented a policy of non- intervention, but were dismissed by the American electorate. Roosevelt's policy had clearly proved the more attractive option.[63] Roosevelt himself was to say:

> I continued Mr Mc Kinley's policies, changing and developing them and addressing new policies only as questions before the public changed and as the needs of the people developed....I was not primarily concerned with following on his footsteps, but in facing the new problems that arose.[64]

In August 1905 the *Standard* responded to the developing situation in relation to South America and stated:

> If the United States will undertake to compel such governments as that of Venezuela to comply with their contracts and treaties, there can be no doubt that all foreign powers would joyfully accept as international any aspect whatever of the Monroe Doctrine.[65]

As late as July 1907 the *Standard* in reviewing the situation in Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica, concluded that Lord Salisbury was right to recommend a non-intervention policy on the part of Britain in relation to the recovery of debts.[66]

Bulfin's combative style of journalism continued to lead him into conflict with various groups and individuals in Argentina. He challenged Our Boys Bookshop (Buenos Aires) to present a financial account of its dealings for the period 1901 to 1903.[67] The Ladies Society of St Joseph, managers of the shop, resented his comments and it was decided not to sell the *Southern Cross* in their shop. For Bulfin this amounted to a boycott of his paper and he pursued the matter until the ban on the paper was lifted. He felt that right was on his side and presented a strong legal defence of his views.[68] He was also in conflict with individual members of the Christian Brothers. In the correspondence pages of the *Southern Cross,* Thomas Hughes, a Christian Brother demanded a public apology

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[62] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 1 Jan. 1905, p. 4.
[63] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 25 Jan. 1905, p. 8.
[64] Maurice Garland Fulton (Editor) *Roosevelt's Writings* (New York, 1920), p. 66.
[65] *Standard*, 15 Aug. 1905, p. 3.
[66] *Standard*, 23 July 1907, p. 3.
[67] *Southern Cross*, 11 July 1905, pp 14-15.
[68] *Southern Cross*, 21 July 1905, p. 15.

from Bulfin. He accused him of misrepresenting him in the paper by suggesting that he was collecting money under false pretences. Bulfin refused to make an apology and insisted that Hughes was misleading the Irish community of Argentina. With or without letters of authorization, it was not right for him to engage in a fundraising enterprise, when he was aware that the Christian Brothers would not be coming to Argentina. As an editor and journalist, Bulfin demanded high standards of himself and others.

Bulfin decided to explore the interior of Argentina and to make his way westwards to the Andes Mountains and the Chilean border. On one level this was prompted by the spirit of adventure and enquiry. Again it was to provide evidence of his tendency to push himself to extremes. However, he was keen to provide his readers, particularly those living on the eastern half of the country, with a detailed account of the people, places and events in the Andes region. During June, July and August of 1905, there was a series of articles in the *Southern Cross* entitled 'Under the Andes'. Bulfin and his party decided to explore the Andes region and to report back their findings. As always with Bulfin his observations were to embrace as full a picture as possible and to include aspects from the topography to the cultural aspects of life. He was motivated by a sense of adventure and a desire to present a picture of life in the Argentine interior to readers of the *Southern Cross*.

The province of Mendoza was sparsely populated, one inhabitant per square kilometre, with a total population of 116,136 in 1906.[69] Bulfin was a member of a travel group and saw this particular journey as an 'expedition'.[70] As a travel writer he was keen to experience all aspects of the country and in variety of conditions. His account of the almost Arctic conditions in the heavy snow highlighted the raw and primitive world of the Andes.[71] His own early experiences among the Gauchos on the ranches of the Pampas were to influence his focus and point of view. In southern Mendoza he encountered the Gauchos of that region and noted the harsh primitive nature of their lifestyle.[72] The shepherds herded cattle, sheep and goats and were paid $12 per month. They slept out of doors in all weathers. In the Pampas, he recorded the Gauchos were paid $30 to

[69] *Review of the River Plate,* vol xxviii no 845, 7 Feb. 1908, p. 331.
[70] *Southern Cross*, 2 June 1905, pp 13-14.
[71] *Southern Cross*, 14 July 1905, pp 20-21.
[72] *Southern Cross*, 28 July 1905, p. 20.

$40 per month. The Gauchos under the Andes wanted nothing but 'the saddle life and the wilds.' In this very wilderness the pumas, he observed, were the main predators and could 'kill fifty sheep at a time.' Alongside this he could see that the mule was the 'unrivalled steer' and the most valued animal of all. Family life was close and insulated in the remote regions and there was 'no longing for Buenos Aires and the world outside."[73] Food of a very different kind such as "chaya de choique", a meal of ostrich meat, was to be part of the experience.[74]

His encounters with families in the remote regions made him conclude that they were self sufficient and had no longings for the city life of Buenos Aires.[75] Bulfin and his party exposed themselves to the full rigours of their adventure from sleeping under the stars to enduring frost bite in extreme weather conditions.[76] In reviewing his travels under the Andes he concluded:

> We tracked every wild thing of the desert excepting the tiger through the scrub and shot gallinetas del monte, hares, aguiluchos and an ostrich. We toiled across the heavy leagues between the Trin-Trica range and Nahuel and two strings of cattle crossing the trail far ahead, on the run from the Andine gorges down into the grassy plain eastward of the snow belt.....You fancied you could see to the very edge of the world itself. The billowing masses of the Andes were partly in shadow where the unlighted snow took a faint bluish tinge low down the slopes, but along the crestline there flashed a wealth of red and amber and opal and blazing silver, as if the summits were bathed in the very radiance of the throne of god. It was like a dream of highest heaven. [77]

By contrast other travellers to the Andes were not prepared to expose themselves to the same endurance test as Bulfin and his party. In her travel journal of 1881, Marian Mulhall recounted her experiences in her travels between the Amazon and the Andes. Her experiences were different to those of Bulfin and this influenced her comments and observations. Her party discovered the murdered bodies of all the inmates of a remote post house, the result of an Indian raid and this resulted in her saying that 'this was the most anxious day I ever spent in South America.' [78] For her there remained the possibility of further Indian raids. She was also conscious that many had died in their travels in the Andes because

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[73] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug. 1905, p. 20.
[74] *Southern Cross*, 18 Aug 1905, p. 18.
[75] Southern Cross, 11 Aug. 1905, p. 20.
[76] *Southern Cross*, 18 Aug. 1905, p. 18.
[77] *Southern Cross*, 1 Sept. 1905, p. 6.
[78] Ibid., p. 126.

of the 'puna', an affection of the lungs arising from the rarefaction of the air.[79] Near Mendoza she noted the ruined farmhouses, the evidence of the earthquake of 1861. She admired how Mendoza itself had risen from its ruins and was again a thriving place even though nine tenths of its inhabitants had perished in the earthquake.[80] Near the Inca's Bridge in the Andes she and her party encountered engineers, who were investigating the route for the new railway between Mendoza and Chile.[81] Like Bulfin, she was impressed with the panorama of the Andes and described what she saw:

> Looking westward, we saw the central chain of the Andes like an immense wall from which some of the peaks rose up in dark and frowning majesty relieved at intervals by snow wreaths.[82]

In his travel journal of 1915, J.A. Hamerton described his journey by Transandine Train. He admired the 'fresh and attractive town of Mendoza with its streets newly built entirely since the earthquake of 1861.'[83] While noting the verdant foothills of the Andes, he did not share Bulfin's enthusiasm for the overall vista and found the scenery to be 'by no means sensational.'

Meanwhile, the *Southern Cross* had consistently campaigned for the teaching of the Catholic religion in Argentine Primary schools and was pleased that the Province of Santiago del Estero had made it obligatory to do so. However the Liberal press, including *La Pensa*, viewed this as a retrograde policy and claimed that it was unconstitutional. This was refuted by the *Southern Cross* who argued that according to the Argentine constitution the Catholic religion was to be recognised in a practical way and this would include the education of young children. It argued that:

> The overwhelming majority of Argentine children are Catholic and the religion given them by the state might well be Catholic. The minority has rights and those rights should be respected. The Catholic religion should not be forced down the throats of the non Catholic schoolchildren. But neither should the Catholic children of the country – in other words 90% at least of the children on the rolls of the state schools - neither should they we insist be denied Catholic state education because there

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[79] Ibid., p. 135.
[80] Ibid., p. 127.
[81] Marian Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and the Andes* (London, 1881), p. 136.
[82] Ibid., p. 133.
[83] J.A. Hamerton, *The Real Argentine, Notes and Impressions of a Year in the Argentine and Uruguay* (New York, 1915), p. 447.

> may be in every school of three or four hundred pupils, one or two or a score or more who are not Catholic. The tail should not wag the dog.[84]

In April the bishop of La Plata issued a pastoral dealing with the question of education in Argentina and the *Southern Cross* published a major part of it.[85] The *Southern Cross* also claimed that Argentina needed a Catholic university and a Catholic national daily paper to rival *La Prensa* and *La Nacion*.[86]

In January 1906 the *Southern Cross* gave a full and enthusiastic account of the first annual convention of Sinn Féin in Ireland. The convention took place in the Rotunda Rooms, Dublin and the opening address was given by Arthur Griffith. The account included detail of the constitution and aims of the new movement.[87] Following editions of the paper gave prominence to Griffith's speech and its importance for the new movement.[88] By March 1906 the *Southern Cross* was pleased to report that 'the Sinn Féin movement was forging ahead in Ireland.'[89] In June 1906, Bulfin warmly welcomed the new Irish paper *Sinn Féin* edited by Arthur Griffith and judged it to be the independent exponent of Irish Ireland philosophy. Its precursor, the *United Irishman*, had published many of Bulfin's articles. Its first editorial detailed the policy of the Sinn Féin movement, referring to the importance of the Hungarian experience. The *Southern Cross* placed itself fully behind the new paper and promoted it by forwarding the names of Argentine subscribers.[90]

By contrast *The Times* saw the growth of Sinn Féin as ominous and in a lengthy editorial sought to warn the Liberal Government of England of the impending dangers. It traced the seeds of the new movement in Ireland, the stages of its development and viewed with alarm its possible future impact. It noted:

> Out of the non-political Gaelic movement which boasts of its rapid success in de-Anglicizing Irish society in all its parts, an organization has sprung up, during the past few months under the name "Sinn Féin"- that is "Ourselves Alone"- which, embodying anti-English passions and objects in their most outrageous and extravagant form, has uncompromisingly denounced the Parliamentary policy of Mr Redmond's caucus.....The conception of "Ourselves Alone" by this new

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[84] *Southern Cross*, 8 Sept. 1906, p. 4.
[85] *Southern Cross*, 6 Apr. 1906, p. 20.
[86] *Southern Cross*, 17 Nov. 1905, p. 15.
[87] *Southern Cross*, 12 Jan. 1906, p. 18.
[88] *Southern Cross*, 12 Jan. 1906, p. 19.
[89] *Southern Cross*, 2 Mar. 1906, p. 3.
[90] *Southern Cross*, 1 June 1906, p. 16.

> school of Irish Patriots, has, however, expanded far beyond the limits of the Hungarian example. It has not only proscribed the presence Of Nationalist members in the House of Commons at Westminster as treason to Irish nationality, but it has established the "Dungannon" clubs...now spreading rapidly in other parts of the country and even in London...they have entered an arrangement with a Press Agency for circulating news of the progress of the cause in Continental newspapers....The anti-enlistment campaign has been pushed on vigorously of late- applauded by Nationalist journals. "Enlistment is the worst form of emigration"- wrote the *Freeman's Journal*....A "National Council of three hundred members is to take place, though not authorized by law, of an Independent Irish Parliament...[91]

The Times insisted that action should be taken against the rise of the Sinn Féin Movement. It concluded that the Liberal politicians of England could no longer persist in 'shutting their eyes to this disintegrating system' and that a major response was now needed to 'the larger policy of the Sinn Féin movement and the separatist passions of which it is the expression'. Michael Davitt died on Wednesday 30 May 1906.[92] In his tribute to Davitt, Bulfin outlined his life and achievements mentioning his 'belief in the ultimate triumph of freedom in every land.' He viewed him as a democrat, a political economist and that 'behind the stern, cold and self contained appearance there was an affectionate man.' Like John Devoy, he felt that Davitt had to face opposition in carrying the New Departure into effect. He had not always agreed with Davitt's policies of recent years, but his admiration for him remained undimmed. In New York Clan na Gael passed a motion of sympathy in honour of his memory and stated:

> Whereas difference of opinion as to the utility of Parliamentary agitation which for many years have separated us from him without any lessening of our confidence in his good faith , integrity and sincere patriotism seemed to be approaching a definite settlement through his unselfish and patriotic efforts..[93]

John Devoy, writing in the *Gaelic American*, argued that Davitt's life did not serve to prove that constitutional agitation was more efficacious in obtaining reforms for Ireland than physical force. He claimed that Davitt had given many years to constitutional agitation, but in his final years reverted to his early Fenian philosophy.[94] He argued that Davitt was by nature an agitator and a preacher of

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[91] *The Times*, 15 Jan. 1906, p. 9.
[92] *Southern Cross*, 1 June 1906, p. 12.
[93] *Southern Cross*, 13 July 1906, p. 13.
[94] *Southern Cross*, 20 July 1906, p. 3.

ideas. He felt that 'his warm impetuous temperament and impatience of difference of opinion unfitted him for the difficult role leaders play in modern times.' Bulfin was in agreement with Devoy's estimate. In an obituary to Davitt in *La Nacion* it was stated that the Fenians committed the Phoenix Park Murders. Bulfin corrected this error and pointed out that it was the Invincibles who were responsible for the murder and not the Fenians.[95] A requiem mass for Davitt was held in the San Telmo Church in Buenos Aires.[96] The *Southern Cross* noted that his will gave clear directions as to his choice of burial place: 'If die in Ireland – to be buried at Straide, if in America to be buried with my mother, if in England to be buried in Ireland.'

The Times, however, described Davitt as 'the most resolute and implacable enemy of the connection between Great Britain and Ireland that has appeared in modern times.'[97] In outlining his career it focused on his quarrels with the clergy, his anti-Parnell stance and what older Unionists called 'his bitter and dangerous part in the anti-English agitation.' It referred to him as a journalist 'with a ready, if somewhat rough pen', who had contributed not only to Irish, but to British, American and Colonial newspapers. His books, it was claimed, were 'too manifestly partisan to be worth serious study.' It acknowledged that his temper, 'with all its faults, was free from any trace of meanness or hypocrisy.' It concluded:

> These qualities made him singular and while they were a cause of constant unease in his colleagues, they inspired in his opponents a feeling not far removed from respect.

Bulfin suffered a severe attack of rheumatic fever on 7 June, 1906 while staying at the estancia of his sister in law, Mrs Farrell, in Mellincue. He had returned from Mendoza suffering from a severe cold contracted while camping out. The attack which had been pending for some months came with considerable violence, but he was fortunate to be under the good care of Dr D.J. Leahy of Melincue and Dr Frend of Rosario.[98] However, Bulfin suffered a serious relapse, was confined to bed and the situation was described as grave. At one stage the doctor pronounced the case as hopeless. His convalescence took several months

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[95] *Southern Cross*, 1 June 1906, p. 13.
[96] *Southern Cross*. 15 June 1906, p. 12.
[97] *The Times*, 31 May 1906, p. 11.
[98] *Southern Cross*, 6 July 1906, p. 13.

and his recovery was slow and uncertain. However, Bulfin had a strong constitution and this pulled him through the crisis.[99] There was much concern for his welfare from his family, colleagues and friends and it was hoped that the stages of his convalescence would be rapid and satisfactory. His wife Annie travelled to be with him and to help nurse him back to health. In September of that year the Editor of the *Review of the River Plate* met Bulfin in Rosario and noted:

> We had the pleasure of meeting Mr W. Bulfin, editor and proprietor of the *Southern Cross*, in Rosario last week. He is gradually recovering from his long severe illness. He has yet to make up a considerable amount in weight, but this will come during the trip to Ireland he intends making, so as to thoroughly recover his strength.[100]

Over the years of Bulfin's wife, family and friends had expressed concern for his health. From his early days as editor of the *Southern Cross* he had worked long hours in order to secure the future of the paper. He was now placed in a more demanding situation than ever. He was between two continents: his wife and family were in Ireland and he was still based in Buenos Aires as editor of the *Southern Cross.*

His illness came as a warning that he would have wished to ignore. He reflected on the situation:

> Half dead from feasting and being lectured and advised and receiving kindnesses of a thousand sorts from friends, yet willing to live after all, for the goodness which the world holds…I am writing now just because I cannot keep from it. The doctors tell me I should be idle, but I have been idle for months now and have exhausted all the prescribed means of killing time.[101]

His wife Annie and his friends in Ireland, including Douglas Hyde, had always expressed fears that his heavy workload would injure his health. He now had to acknowledge that their fears were well founded and was later to confide in letter to John Devoy:

> I am nearly all right again. I have scarcely been well since I saw you. It was the first great break up of my health ever got – that grippe in New York. I suppose I have been weakened by long years of overwork.[102]

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[99] *Southern Cross*, 3 Aug. 1906, p.13.
[100] *Southern Cross*, 28 Sept. 1906, p. 10.
[101] *Southern Cross*, 9 Nov. 1906, p. 13.
[102] William O'Brien & Desmond Ryan, *John Devoy's Post Bag, 1871-1928*, Vol ii 1880-1928, pp 358-359.

Bulfin planned to spend some time in the Camp and then to make plans to go to Ireland. He would then visit the south of France. In all he would hope to spend three or four months in Ireland.[103]

In May 1906 the *Southern Cross* alerted its readers to the growing presence of freemasonry in Argentina. Bulfin viewed the Masonic Order as a major threat to the Catholic Church.[104] A number of important world leaders were members of the Order, including President Roosevelt, who was initiated as a mason in January 1901.[105] As far as the freemasons themselves, they held the view that the Church of Rome had become their most bitter foe. Their records showed that a number of Papal Bulls had been issued against them since 1738 and that Pope Leo XIII had spoken out strongly against them in 1892 in a bid to destroy freemasonry.[106] The Masons claimed that 'Freemasonry the world over, however, stood for political and religious freedom. It was not at war with the Catholic Church....Look at the Catholic Church's record on war.[107] In September 1906 the Masonic Order, in responding to the question of French Free Masons and the Church, published a document recalling:

> The declaration of Pope Leo XIII against the principle of liberty of conscience and affirming that Freemasonry, respecting all creeds as it does, will always oppose, in spite of all calumnies, any attempt to restrain or stifle human thought.[108]

Not all newspapers in Argentina shared Bulfin's antipathy towards Freemasonry. The *Review of the River Plate*, an influential financial journal, was pleased to notify its Masonic readers of the regular meetings at the Masonic Temple in Buenos Aires and encouraged people to attend.[109] The same paper devoted a full supplement in honour of Charles Trevor Mold, a former District Grand Master and Grand Superintendent for the Argentine Republic. The supplement detailed his Masonic career and achievements.[110]

The Knights of Columbanus, a Catholic organisation, was founded by an Irish priest Father Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, Connecticut in 1882. It

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[103] *Southern Cross*, 5 Oct. 1906, p. 10.
[104] *Southern Cross*, 4 May 1906, p. 2.
[105] Delmar Duane Darrach, *History and Evolution of Freemasonry* (Illinois, 1954), p. 408.
[106] Ibid., p. 267.
[107] Ibid., p. 267.
[108] *The Times*, 21 Sept. 1906, p. 3.
[109] *Review of the River Plate*, vol xxvii No 833, 15 Nov. 1907, p. 1229.
[110] *Review of the River Plate*, vol xxvii no 838, 20 Dec. 1907, p. 1509.

was established because Catholics were excluded from unions and men's organizations. It was intended that it would provide an alternative to Catholics to membership in a Masonic Lodge, as freemasonry had been discouraged by the hierarchy. In September 1906 the *Southern Cross* extended a warm welcome to the foundation of the society in Argentina. Bulfin viewed the society as a strong Catholic organization and felt the need for 'a virile Catholic opinion in Argentina.'[111]He felt that its presence would serve as an effective deterrent to the growth of freemasonry. In September, the Argentine Grand Orient Order of the Free Masons had been refused legal recognition by the Attorney General on the grounds that he viewed it as a 'political society.' The *Southern Cross* expressed satisfaction at this verdict because it viewed the society as 'a bitter enemy to the National church and a danger to the State.'

The *Southern Cross* announced in its 12 October 1906 edition that Pope Pius X had honoured Bulfin by awarding him the Cross 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.' This decoration, the Order of St Gregory the Great, was founded by Pope Gregory XVI on 1 September, 1831 for the purpose of honouring laymen who rendered special service to the church. Pope Pius X reformed the Order in 1905 so as to adapt to the new circumstances of the church and society.[112] It was conferred mostly on public men and men of letters 'whose championship of the church has been of a nature to bring them conspicuously into the notice of the Vatican.' There are five pontifical Orders of Knighthood and the Order of St Gregory takes fourth place.[113] The selection of the candidate for the honour is at the request of the bishop of the diocese.[114] In Bulfin's case it was Archbishop Espinosa of the Diocese of Buenos Aires who sponsored him.

The accompanying diploma was in Italian and translated as follows:

> The Holy Father has been pleased to give the Cross 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontife' to Mr William Bulfin in testimony of gratitude for devotion and fidelity shown to the Church and its Supreme Head. The Cardinal Secretary of State has the pleasure of forwarding the diploma and the said Cross so that it may be worn on the breast like other decorations. 30 June 1905.[115]

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[111] *Southern Cross*, 7 Sept. 1906 p. 12.
[112] Peter Bander Van Duran, *Orders of Knighthood. Awards of the Holy See* (Buckinghamshire, 1985), p. 53.
[113] Ibid., p. 56.
[114] Ibid., P. 113.
[115] *Southern Cross*, 12 Oct. 1906, p. 13.

The diploma and decoration had arrived several months earlier, but due to a number of factors, including Bulfin's illness the ceremony of conferring had been delayed. It was noted that Bulfin, editor of the *Southern Cross* and Fr Yorke, editor of the *San Francisco Leader* had both been honoured with Papal awards. Both men were ardent Irish nationalists and it was claimed:

> Those who think to conciliate the highest-placed ones of the earth by adopting compromising tactics apologising, so to speak, for their own existence and for that of their country may have been startled to find that two of the most fearless upholders of the irreconcilable spirit of nationality had been awarded, unsought for, unasked for, by the greatest of earthly powers.[116]

As editor of the *Southern Cross*, Bulfin had always been determined to honour the philosophy of the paper's founder. Michael Dinneen, the former editor, had said:

> Allow no man to do or say anything against our religion and allow no man to do or say anything against Ireland. No matter who he is, hold him up.[117]

Bulfin expressed the view that he hoped to meet Dinneen again one day -'that brave and stern Irish soul again and tell him that we had kept our word.'

On Wednesday, 14 October 1906, Archbishop Espinosa conferred the Papal cross at a public ceremony in Buenos Aires and Bulfin responded with a speech in Spanish. He spoke of the causes which the *Southern Cross* advocated and defended without bigotry or malice, of how the Catholic Church, Argentine national interests and Irish sovereign independence were always his major priorities. He felt that the honour conferred was not meant so much for him as for the Irish Argentine community represented by the *Southern Cross*. In the evening a special banquet was held to celebrate Bulfin's achievement.[118]

Bulfin's wife, Annie, had travelled from Ireland to be with him in Buenos Aires during his lengthy recuperation from his illness. The severity of his illness prompted him to make a will and in it he left total control of his property, assets and the *Southern Cross* to his wife, Annie. The terms of the will indicated strongly his regard for his wife and the respect he had for her judgement.[119] He

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[116] *Southern Cross*, 19 Oct. 1906, pp 14-15. (From *Irish Rosary*, August 1906)
[117] *Southern Cross*, 5 Dec. 1906, p. 22.
[118] *Southern Cross*, 26 Oct. 1906, pp 12-13.
[119] NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13814 (Folder 2)

had now decided to return to Ireland for a period of three or four months as part of his convalescence. He sailed from Buenos Aires and arrived in Dublin on the evening of November 23, 1906.[120] Although it was a cold winter's evening, he could still remark that 'the lights of the Liffey are jewels to the homecoming exile'.[121] He was critical of the North Wall docks and remarked that it was 'the vilest landing stage in the world.'

During his stay in Ireland he was conscious of the growing enthusiasm for the Sinn Féin Movement.[122] There were many requests for him to speak at both Sinn Féin and Gaelic League meetings, but he had to decline many of them due to his state of health and lack of time.[123] Meanwhile, the Abbey Theatre staged *The Playboy of the Western World* in January 1907 resulting in protests and riots. *The Times* reported that the views of the national theatre and those of the Gaelic league and the Sinn Féin Party on the subject of liberty and criticism have once more come into violent conflict. It quoted the press statement made by Yeats in response to the riots:

> When I was a lad Irishmen obeyed a few leaders, but during the past ten years a change has taken place... for leaders we have now societies, clubs and leagues; organized opinion of sections and coteries have been put in place of these leaders, one or two of whom were men of genius. Instead of a Parnell, a Stephens or a Butt, we must obey the demands of commonplace and ignorant people.[124]

Unlike Bulfin, Yeats was not prepared to have either the Gaelic League or Sinn Féin as his mentors.

One of Bulfin's main concerns during this visit was to negotiate the publication of his book entitled *Rambles in Eirinn*. This book was to consist of a collection of his newspaper articles based on his travels around Ireland in 1902 and 1904. His publishers, Gill and Sons, Dublin insisted that the book should not exceed four hundred pages and that it should be accompanied with maps and photographs. They also decided to edit the purple passages and place more emphasis on the topographical aspects of his accounts.[125] The book was published in July 1907 and met with enthusiasm, particularly in nationalist circles. It

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[120] *Southern Cross*, 21 Dec. 1906, p. 23.
[121] *Southern Cross*, 18 Jan. 1907, p. 13.
[122] *Southern Cross*, 8 March 1907, p. 5.
[123] S. Ó hUadaigh to William Bulfin, 11 Feb. 1907, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 24).
[124] *The Times*, 30 Jan. 1907, p. 6.
[125] Michael Gill to William Bulfin 17 Jan. 1907, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13817 (Folder 1).

received favourable reviews from the nationalist press and journals and very soon a second edition was published. An early review of the book in October 1907 from the *New Ireland Review* praised it and agreed with Bulfin's conclusions about Ireland. It noted how 'he chronicled in vivid sketches the impressions, sad and sanguine, which the business man and the patriot felt rising commingled within him.' It felt that the author had 'an acute critical mind controlling a strong imaginative power.'[126] The reviewer also was pleased with some of the positive observations and recommendations made by Bulfin, particularly in relation to the Congested Districts Board. Another contemporary review expressed the opinion that it was 'a good, genial volume' with a professional layout and production.[127]A later review in *The Catholic Bulletin* in 1913 concluded:

> It is the endless variety of passion, pain and pathos, of regret and longing, of triumph and defeat, but overall and through all an unswerving faith in the future of his country that make the contents of Senor Bulfin's book sink deep down into the mind and heart of the Irish reader."[128]

With the passing of time, Bulfin's book became a classic and by 1937 it was publishing its eight edition. Eoghan O'Neachtain translated the book into Irish with the title *Cam-Chuarta in Eirinn*. In reviewing this new translation, it was noted that the book was selling well among 'a judicious public.'[129]

Time was also to bring with it a greater variety of responses to Bulfin's book. In reflecting the philosophy of the Irish Ireland movement, it found its way into many traditional Irish homes. Extracts from the book were included as reading material for children attending the national schools of Ireland. In 1948 the author Benedict Kiely noted that 'the book will always be valuable because it tells us so much about himself (Bulfin) and about the Ireland he saw and spoke to in the early years of the century.' He noticed that the book 'switches from present to the past and from pleasantry to anger as all good travel books should.' He was impressed with the author's terms of reference and felt that 'his great enthusiasms were for places where the usual tourist had not penetrated.'[130] In 1982, Patrick Callan commented on the author's 'selective recall of Irish history, folklore and

[126] 'Rambles in Eirinn' in *New Ireland Review* vol xxviii no 2, October 1907, p. 125.
[127] 'Rambles in Eirinn' in *Irish Monthly* vol xxxv, Oct 1907, p. 591.
[128] R. Fullerton 'A Ramble through Rambles in Eirinn' in *Catholic Bulletin*, vol iii, no 6, June 1913, p. 447.
[129] 'Cam-Chuarta in Eirinn' in *Catholic Bulletin* vol xxvii, no. 4 1937, pp 303-304.
[130] Benedict Kiely, 'The Man from the Pampas' in *Capuchin Annual* (1948), pp 433-435.

legends, his pungent journalism and his sense of the missionary zeal of the returned exile.' He concluded that 'he was his own encyclopaedia Hibernica.'[131]

However, by the end of the century with the changing course of Irish history Bulfin's book had received certain negative responses. In his study of literary travellers in Ireland, Martin Ryle (1999) reached his own conclusions about what he terms the 'combative anti-British nationalism of William Bulfin.'[132] He accused him of ignoring the counties of Cork, Kerry, Clare and Mayo, because 'he was hostile to tourism, with its purely spectatorial pleasures.'[133]He claimed:

> The topography and descriptive modes of *Rambles in Eirinn* are determined partly by negative impulse – to erase from the represented landscape the mark of West British tourism and to mount a rhetorical attack on the material and cultural power of landlordism.[134]

However, Ryle was prepared to admit that Bulfin succeeded in conveying a real sense of the midlands and that 'few travel writers have given such a good sense of how Ireland looks away from the Atlantic West.'[135] In his study of Jews in twentieth century Ireland, Dermot Keogh felt that the portrayal of the pedlar in *Rambles in Eirinn* 'illustrated the prejudice towards Jewish pedlars of both himself (Bulfin) and his contacts in Longford and the midlands.'[136] Cormac Ó Gráda agreed with Keogh and viewed it as 'a classic example of anti-Semitism in Ireland.'[137]

On the 14 March 1907, Bulfin and his wife Annie were on the return journey to Argentina. Their children remained in Ireland. Eamonn was at school at the Dominican College, Newbridge. Mary was at a convent school in Tournai, Belgium and the Aileen, Anita and Catalina were students at the Sante Union Convent in Banagher.[138] They left Liverpool and broke the journey at La Rochelle in order to travel through France to Lourdes. Bulfin provided readers of the *Southern Cross* with vivid and detailed accounts of his travels and observations in France. Again he noted the importance of the rail system for every country in the world and felt that, even though they were state owned in France, the same

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[131] Patrick Callan, 'Rambles in Eirinn', *Studies* Vol lxxi no 284, Winter 1982, p. 391.
[132] Martin Ryle *Journeys in Ireland, Literary Travellers, Rural landscapes, Cultural Relations* (Great Britain, 1999), p. 5.
[133] Ibid., p. 116.
[134] Ibid., p. 115
[135] Ibid., p. 111.
[136] Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Cork, 1998), pp 55-56.
[137] Cormac Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce* (New Jersey, 2006), p. 180.
[138] *Southern Cross*, 5 Apr. 1907, p. 10.

problems remained in relation to punctuality, cleanliness and accommodation.[139] He was able to provide his readers with clear pictures of the architecture and history of La Rochelle and Bordeaux.[140] In the wine region of Bordeaux, he observed that the best wine was for export and this led him to remark on one of the interesting ironies in the world of commerce:

> Commerce presents us with many surprises. For example, if you want to find Argentine mutton at its sweetest you must eat it at an English restaurant, for the best meat is exported. If you want to find the best Youghal lace you must follow it to Paris. And likewise if you want to find the wine of the Garonne at its finest you must not look for it in the restaurants of Bordeaux. The best of it goes away.[141]

Bulfin's destination was Lourdes and its Marian shrine and he was not disappointed. Lourdes, for him, consisted of the old historic town with its chateau and the new Lourdes with its grotto, hotels, railways, and newly planted groves. He was impressed with the sense of reverence and devotion that was present near the grotto'.[142] However, he was critical of the number of stalls that were selling goods and souvenirs of the grotto.[143] In a series of articles he detailed the story Bernadette and the apparitions, outlining the conflicts and obstacles that had to be overcome before the Catholic Church sanctioned the shrine as authentic. He was clearly convinced that the apparitions had taken place and his visit confirmed his faith in the shrine as a place of sanctity. As a pilgrim, he felt honoured to join with the other pilgrims who had helped to make Lourdes one of the major Catholic pilgrimage centres of the world.[144]

Not every editor or newspaper was to share Bulfin's convictions about Lourdes and its story of apparitions and miraculous cures. In a detailed article (September 1898) on the shrines of France, *The Times* remained sceptical and dismissive. The article outlined the stories attached to the various shrines and was critical of the claims that had been made in relation to apparitions and miracles. Of Lourdes it presented a negative and unappealing account. It claimed:

> The town of Lourdes is the starting- point for a 30 mile journey up one of the noblest and most exquisitely beautiful mountain gorges in the world ...but Lourdes has found a more profitable business than that of

[139] *Southern Cross,* 10 May 1907, p. 14.
[140] *Southern Cross*, 31 May 1907, pp 15-16.
[141] *Southern Cross*, 17 May 1907, p. 14.
[142] *Southern Cross*, 26 July 1907, pp 13-14.
[143] *Southern Cross*, 9 Aug. 1907, p. 14.
[144] *Southern Cross*, 6 Sept. 1907, p. 14.

> guiding tourists into the mountains. Street after street consists of shops full of nothing but "objects of piety" and views and souvenirs of the famous shrine, or hotels and restaurants for the accommodation of pilgrims....a trade in bottles of "eau de Lourdes" is carried on with all parts of the world...the cures of blind and deaf people seem more easy to prove than others. Nevertheless, like the rest, these cures demand often long investigation.....the official chronicler is careful to say that he only uses the word "miracule" in a very wide sense; that only Holy Mother church can declare an event to be a regular miracle...One man will accept every cure as a case of direct supernatural intervention. Another will dismiss the whole thing as priestly fraud.[145]

The Pyrenees attracted many visitors and Bulfin was keen to explore the mountains. Hilaire Belloc, Victor Hugo and Mark Twain were among those who were drawn to this vast mountain range that acted as a border between France and Spain and ranged from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Belloc, while appreciative of the splendour of the Pyrenees, was critical of Lourdes and referred to it as 'that admixture of the supernatural accompanied by detestable earthly adjuncts.'[146] Likewise, F. Hamilton Jackson noted the location of Lourdes was magnificent but also admitted 'not being attracted in the least by the special reputation of the place.'[147] Bulfin observed that there were no roads, only pathways over the chain of peaks. He was struck not only by the natural beauty of the place but also by the lives of the inhabitants. His account of the shepherd's life there was somewhat romanticized and idealized. He pictured it thus:

> I would say that these inhabitants of the French valleys of the Pyrenees are among the happiest of mankind. They live in an earthly paradise. They are free. The soil is their own. They are industrious and their work is carried on under such favourable conditions that there must be a special in doing it for its own sake. The weather during most of the year is delightful- genial, bright, clear, bracing. Rheumatism and consumption do not trouble them much. I made enquiries and found the ratio of practicing doctors per thousand inhabitants was low. The people die generally of old age, which is an incurable malady- no dejection, no sullenness, no rags - no rush, no hurry in their work.[148]

Bulfin held that the shepherd in the Pyrenees was nearest to the ideal in nature and concluded his observations by presenting for his readers a profile of a shepherd's daily life in the valley of Argeles. His shepherd was dressed in

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[145] *The Times*, 3 Sept. 1898, p. 13.
[146] Hilaire Belloc, *The Pyrenees* (London, 1909), p. 312.
[147] F. Hamilton Jackson, *Rambles in the Pyrenees* (London, 1912), pp 113-114.
[148] *Southern Cross*, 13 Sept. 1907, p. 13.

'corduroys, dark blue jacket, bright red handkerchief about his neck, no dog as yet, whistling and talking to his flock of sheep...'[149]

However, in contrast with this, Jennifer Speake, in her study of travel literature, claimed:

> Romantic travel writers thus often placed reality as a reflection of their own desires or states of mind and the poverty of the Pyrenean peasant is almost totally absent from the travel literature of the period, which often evokes a rather artificial Arcadia.[150]

The region had suffered from a steady decline in population, particularly, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Bulfin should have been aware that many the French immigrants in Argentina were from the Pyrenees and had come there in search of a better life. Bulfin's romantic ideal was not shared by all. Victor Hugo recorded the simple but harsh living conditions in a typical Pyrenean cabin that he encountered in his travels: 'one room... open partitions...straw for a bed...neither table nor chair... brook flowed through it... mules...calves..this one room contained a whole world.'[151] However he described the majestic mountain ranges at Gavarnie as the "coliseum of nature."[152] In his study of the evolution of peasant life in France, Eugen Weber presented the reality of the primitive and Spartan lives of the shepherds and landless peasants of the Pyrenees. He captured a typical situation. He described the home of a shepherd in the year 1888 as 'about one metre high, dry stones, a small heap of potatoes, a sack containing a loaf, fat and salt'. His meagre diet was limited to potatoes and milk.[153]

Bulfin and his wife, Annie returned by rail to La Rochelle and set sail for Argentina on 31 March arriving in Buenos Aires on Monday 22 April. It was remarked that he was returning in much better health.[154] Very soon he became aware of the ongoing state of tension that was growing between the two English language daily newspapers, the *Standard* and the *Herald*. The editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, Leopold Grahame, was taking a lawsuit against the editor of the

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[149] *Southern Cross*, 20 Sept. 1907, p. 14.
[150] Jennifer Speake, *Literature of Travel and Exploration* (New York, 2003), vol 2, p. 987.
[151] Victor Hugo, *Alps and Pyrenees* (London, 1898), p. 325-327.
[152] Ibid., p. 339.
[153] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen, The Modernization of Rural France* (California, 1976), p. 14.
[154] *Southern Cross*, 19 Apr. 1907, p. 14.

Standard, John Mulhall, on a charge of libel.[155]The *Buenos Aires Herald* accused the *Standard* of engaging in a campaign of vilification over a period of two years by attempting to link Leopold Grahame's name to series of financial scandals.[156] In spite of an appeal, the *Standard* lost the case and Grahame claimed that there was 'no danger of the Buenos Aires Herald being prevented from maintaining its position as the recognized journalistic organ of the British community in this republic.'[157] The defence council for Grahame stated that his client's only crime was that he 'is a successful journalistic competitor.'[158] Very little coverage was given to the law case by the *Standard*, but it did attempt to dismiss and make light of the final verdict.[159] The *Southern Cross* had found itself in conflict with both papers over the years and had confronted them on a number of issues particularly regarding Irish nationalism and Catholicism. According to Oliver Marshall, the conflicts that were generated between the English-language press in Latin America had much of their origin in the competition for sales as the circulation figures were quite low.[160]

In October 1907 a branch of the League of the Empire was founded in Buenos Aires and it met with opposition from the *Southern Cross*. Bulfin argued that Irish exiles in Argentina should not associate themselves with it and he viewed it as another attempt to Anglicize them. He noted that a number of Irish Unionists were at the meeting and were elected on the committee. His belief was 'let us first have Ireland free and let us not implicate ourselves in the League of the Empire.'[161] His views were not shared by the *Buenos Aires Herald* nor the *Standard.* Both papers informed their readers well in advance of the proposed foundation of the branch with details of its aims and constitution. The aims were: (1) To bring British Subjects resident in the Republic together and to keep them in touch with the mother country. (2) To impart and foster the growth of qualities i.e. responsibility, duty, sympathy and self-sacrifice. (3) The diffusion of knowledge. (4) Social reunions and the celebration of national festivals.[162] Both papers agreed

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[155] *Southern Cross*, 19 July 1907, pp 12-13.
[156] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 5 July 1907, p. 5.
[157] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 18 Oct. 1907, p. 7.
[158] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 22 Oct. 1907, p. 7.
[159] *Standard*, 17 Oct. 1907, p. 9.
[160] Oliver Marshall, *The English-Language Press in Latin America*, p. iv.
[161] *Southern Cross*, 25 Oct. 1907, pp 13-14.
[162] *Buenos Aires Herald,* 4 Oct. 1907, p. 4.

to publish a provisional list of nominations for vice-president and councillors in advance of the first meeting.[163] Intending members were also reminded of the first public meeting that was to take place on 15 October.[164]

Both papers reported favourably and encouragingly about the first meeting and gave it full coverage. There were almost eighty leading British residents present in St John's Church Hall. A committee was elected and it was decided to affiliate the new branch with the parent stem in London.[165] The *Standard* provided its readers with a brief history of the League of the Empire from its foundation in London in 1901, stressing the non-political and non-sectarian philosophy. It outlined the details of a meeting that took place in May 1907 in the offices of the *Standard* in order to set up a provisional committee in Buenos Aires to draw up the necessary rules and regulations.[166] Clearly, while Bulfin discouraged the Irish community in Argentina from associating with the newly formed branch of the League of the Empire, the *Standard* and *Buenos Aires Herald* welcomed it and presented a positive picture to their readers.

In October 1907 the *Southern Cross* published a letter from a Mr William Joyce who expressed the view that the Sinn Féin movement was the only real alternative for Ireland's future. He felt that a meeting should be called in Buenos Aires in order to discuss the matter in full.[167] Bulfin supported this, encouraged subscriptions and a meeting was arranged for December. It was noted that branches of Sinn Féin had already been organized by Irish Americans in the United States.[168] In November the *Southern Cross* presented its readers with full details of the aims, philosophy and constitution of Sinn Féin.[169] Readers were encouraged to attend the first meeting and were informed that 'The *Southern Cross* believes in Sinn Féin as it believed in the Gaelic League. We wish to aid those who are on the right course.'[170] The objects of the new branch in Buenos Aires were (1) To carry on propaganda in favour of the Sinn Féin policy. (2) To collect funds for the Sinn Féin Movement in Ireland. (3) To further, by some plan

[163] *Buenos Aires Herald,* 13 Oct. 1907, p. 4 and *Standard*, 13 Oct. 1907, p. 13.
[164] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 8 Oct. 1907, p. 5 and *Standard*, 15 Oct. 1907, p. 13.
[165] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 16 Oct. 1907, p. 7.
[166] *Standard*, 16 Oct. 1907, p. 9.
[167] *Southern Cross*, 25 Oct. 1907, p. 14.
[168] *Southern Cross*, 8 Nov. 1907, p. 13.
[169] *Southern Cross*, 22 Nov. 1907, p. 5.
[170] *Southern Cross*, 29 Nov. 1907, p. 3.

of action, to be decided upon, the sale of Irish manufactured goods in this country and increase trade between Ireland and the Argentine Republic. Neither the *Standard* nor the *Buenos Aires Herald* supported Sinn Féin and did not provide any coverage for the new branch in Argentina.

Response to the advance publicity was good and it was reported that 'many people would travel from the camp to come to the meeting.'[171] The meeting took place on 11 December, 1907 in Buenos Aires and was attended by three generations of the Irish community in Argentina. William Joyce was voted to the chair. Bulfin was called on to address the meeting and to explain in full the Sinn Féin policy. In his detailed account he referred to Sinn Féin's policy of self reliance, the growth of the Gaelic League, the spread of the Irish language and of the possible industrial, commercial and financial rehabilitation of Ireland. He read out a cablegram from Arthur Griffith in Dublin congratulating the newly formed Argentine Sinn Féin branch. The meeting elected William Joyce as president, Rev J.M. Usher as vice-president and a council of fifteen members. In all it was felt 'to have been an enthusiastic and representative meeting.'[172] However there were dissenting voices in the letters column the following week from those who had reservations about the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin. Bulfin felt that they were misrepresenting the tone of the meeting and sought to reassure them of the positive impact of the two movements. He was always conscious of the possibility of disunity among the Irish and made every effort to prevent it.[173]

The *Standard*, however, remained wary of the growth of the Sinn Féin Movement. It felt that it that the new movement was undertaking the government of Ireland in place of the viceroy's government. It noted that the elected officials of County Councils, Boards of Guardians and local authorities were 'all members and even officials of Sinn Féin.' It viewed this situation as 'illegal'. It expressed concern at the possible outcome and observed that it did 'almost seem as if a strong attempt (assisted by money from the United States) is being made to render English government impossible in Ireland'.[174] However, the first meeting of the newly elected Sinn Féin Council was held in Buenos Aires by the close of

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[171] *Southern Cross*, 6 Dec. 1907, p. 13.
[172] *Southern Cross*, 13 Dec. 1907, pp 13-14.
[173] *Southern Cross*, 20 Dec. 1907, p. 2.
[174] *Southern Cross*, 11 Aug. 1907, p. 3.

1907.[175] At the meeting it was announced that Gerald Foley of the *Southern Cross* would act as agent for the *Sinn Féin* newspaper, which was the official organ of the movement. Bulfin, himself, pledged his full support and was determined to foster the Sinn Féin philosophy in Argentina by means of his writings, lectures and fundraising.

Conclusion

Bulfin's visit to New York was only a qualified success. He did succeed in making contacts with publishers and literary agents and obtained their good will and cooperation. His lectures were well received, although hampered by a bout of illness. His meetings with John Devoy and John Quinn enabled him to connect with the various strands of the political and cultural world of Irish Americans. His interviews and lectures were reported in the *Gaelic American* and the *New York Daily News*. In all he was satisfied that he had managed to make some progress in establishing himself on a certain footing that would facilitate future possibilities for publishing his works and engaging in an extensive lecture tour in the United States.

On resumption of his duties as editor of the *Southern Cross,* he confronted the policy of the 'Big Stick' advocated by President Roosevelt in his corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in relation to South America. His campaign was intended to stir the press in Latin America to alert all politicians and citizens to the potential danger of American imperialism. Michael Davitt and John Devoy had left lasting impressions and he paid tribute to both men and their respective legacies. The *Southern Cross* gave full coverage and analysis to the formation and growth of the new Sinn Féin movement in Ireland. Bulfin was prepared to promote and fundraise for the new movement.

His accounts of his experiences in New York, the Andes and France, indicated his strengths and weaknesses as a travel writer. He could capture in vivid detail the landscape and lives of the people and was a keen observer of all he encountered. However, there was the recurring tendency to colour his observations by his own opinionated convictions. In the midst of all his work and travels illness struck and left with it a legacy of enfeebled health. Working long

[175] *Southern Cross*, 20 Dec. 1907, p. 7.

hours as editor of the *Southern Cross* and living between two continents had cost him his health.

He campaigned against the growth of freemasonry in Argentina and welcomed the establishment of the Knights of Columbanus, a Catholic lay organization, that he felt would act as an alternative to the Masonic Order. Bulfin also continued his campaign for the inclusion of the Catholic religion in the state schools of Argentina. His consistent and long-term endeavours on behalf of the Catholic Church were recognized by the Vatican and he received the papal award of the Knight of Saint Gregory. His third visit to Ireland was a bid to enable him to regain his health, to rejoin his family and to negotiate the publication of *Rambles in Eirinn*. The book met with a positive response and was to become a classic of Irish travel literature.

A branch of the League of the Empire was established in Buenos Aires and it was supported by the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald*. However, the *Southern Cross* campaigned against it and claimed it was an attempt to anglicise the Irish community in Argentina. Meanwhile a branch of Sinn Féin was founded in Argentina and Bulfin gave it his full support. He emerged as one of the key figures in its formation and entered fully into the spirit of furthering its aims through the means of editorials, articles, lecturing and fundraising.

Chapter 8

Old and New Horizons

The year 1908 marked Bulfin's twenty fourth year in Argentina. He was to spend the final two years of his life divided between Argentina and Ireland. On the 1st February 1910, Bulfin died suddenly at his residence in Derrinlough, Co Offaly. His unexpected death came after a crowded two years of endeavour in both Ireland and Argentina. It prompted questions about the nature of his commitments, domestic, professional and political. What were the circumstances that led to such an untimely death? How did he spend the last two years of his life? Were there new challenges and unknown horizons?

In 1908 all the issues that had dominated his life remained before him. However, there was a growing sense of urgency and important decisions about the future had to be made. On the domestic level, he had to secure the future for his wife and children. This would mean deciding to resettle in Ireland. His commitment to the *Southern Cross* was stronger than ever and he was determined to strengthen the paper's position in Argentina. As the crusading editor he renewed his campaigns in relation to what he saw as the important issues; the defence of the Catholic Church, the role of the Irish in Argentina, national questions in Argentina, the Gaelic League, Sinn Féin policy and a number of economic, social and ethical questions. Bulfin remained entrenched in his views and commitments and, if anything, became more zealous in his pursuit of his ideals.

Bulfin continued to campaign on a number of central issues. The role of the United States in relation to Latin America was to remain one of his recurring concerns. From January 1908 the *Southern Cross* had begun to modify its campaign in relation to the United States and the Monroe doctrine. Bulfin was now advocating that 'Latin America should recognize the wisdom of lining up the two Americas so as to preclude the possibility of European advances.'[1] It was felt that the Argentine

[1] *Southern Cross*, 3 Jan. 1908, p. 13.

Republic could not afford to have a dismissive attitude to the United States and that a'wedlock of the Monroe Doctrine to the Argentine Doctrine' was essential. Meanwhile the *Standard* took a different view and held that:

> The United States always reminds us of a big bear. You can fool with it, play with it, tease it – up to a point and then it puts its paw down – as a small child we once knew said – "thump". There is one thing about the Monroe Doctrine and that is the United States do recognise their responsibilities with regard to these central American States. Both Columbia and Venezuela are behaving just like spoiled children and the States will do well to play the part of benevolent uncle for Columbia's and Venezuela's own good.[2]

An important admission was made by the *North American Review* in relation to how the United States the political state of the South American countries. In an article entitled 'Some Fundamental Misconceptions concerning South America', it claimed:

> The first and most serious mistake into which we have fallen has been judging the life of those nations by the play of their party politics. The constant shifting of government policy due to the ephemeral character of party combinations has created an impression of instability which a more careful analysis of the situation fails to justify.[3]

In a memorandum of 29 Dec 1902, Luis Maria Drago, Argentina's Foreign Minister stated:

> In a word, the principle she could see recognised is that the public debt cannot occasion armed intervention not even the actual occupation of the territory of American nations by a European power.[4]

This fundamental principle became established as the Drago Doctrine. Drago was conscious of how European expansionists might use official intervention to collect public debts from unstable American governments in order to conceal attempts to gain territory. The Drago Doctrine was adopted by the United State at the Hague Convention in 1907.[5]

In August 1908, in an attempt to collect debts, the Dutch blockaded Venezuela with their ships but were prevented from landing. This was reported by the *Saturday Review* of 22 August 1908 and reprinted in the *Southern Cross:*

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[2] *Standard*, 11 Apr. 1908, p. 3.
[3] *Southern Cross*, 7 Feb 1908 p. 14
[4] Harold F. Peterson, *Argentina and the United States 1810-1960* (New York, 1964), pp 258-259.
[5] Crammond Kennedy, 'The Drago Doctrine' in *North American Review* Vol 176, No 619 (July190), pp 614-622.

> Here we have the Doctrine of Drago at work. It really is pretty thick that a European Power may not collect its own debts and settle up affairs with an independent state without asking leave of Uncle Sam. This comes of the United States taking all of South America as its sphere of influence. Uncle Sam is, perhaps, not to be blamed for trying on his game of bluff. America thinks that their Monroe Doctrine is going to keep Europe off America: one day it will provoke some power to fight the US when Americans will wish the doctrine had never been heard of.[6]

Bulfin argued that this view was in line with British foreign policy and that American and Latin American statesmen should take note of it. He supported the stand taken by President Castro of Venezuela and felt that Latin America and its publicists should be sympathetic to him.

The *Buenos Aires Herald* reported that the representative of the United States had concluded a year and a half tour of South America, which had enabled him to foster closer relations between the United States and their 'closest neighbours'.[7]

Commenting on the position that America had placed herself in relation to world politics, the *Southern Cross* concluded:

> No nation can assume the responsibilities of a world power cheaply. The price has to be paid; and the price is militarism.[8]

Bulfin noted that President Roosevelt had modified his views in relation to Latin America and that a change in policy had taken place. This change, it was felt, was due to a number of factors including the development of natural resources in Latin America, the impact of the Drago Doctrine and the part played by representatives from Latin America at the Hague Conference, particularly Brazil and Argentina.[9]

Quoting from the *North American Review*, the *Southern Cross* noted the impact of the Drago Doctrine in aiding President Castro of Venezuela in the ongoing crisis. The Drago Doctrine stated clearly: 'that force should never be used to bring about the settlement of contractural obligations, but that creditors should be remitted to the courts of the debtor's country.'[10] The *Review* insisted 'under all the circumstances

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[6] *Southern Cross*, 25 Sept. 1908, pp 13-14.
[7] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 11 Feb. 1908, p. 6.
[8] *Southern Cross*, 27 Mar. 1908 p. 13.
[9] *Southern Cross*, 15 May 1908, p. 12.
[10] *Southern Cross* 5 June 1908, p.14.

there is nothing for the State Department at Washington to do but express regret that president Castro is as he is and to wash its hands of him.'

The *Southern Cross* carried an interesting article entitled 'A Prophecy about Latin America' that claimed:

> The United States have trod their own way to democratic goodness. These countries (Latin America) must find their own way too. It may be longer, more bloody, more trying than the North American road, but it must be found by South American genius.[11]

Conscious of the need for diplomatic gestures, Mr Root offered the following review of the situation to his listeners at a state banquet in New York:

> The far greater part of the distrust or ill feeling of the South Americans towards the United States comes from the haughty and disdainful conduct of the North Americans in their relations with the Latin Americans, who are polite, gentle and endowed with a vivid imagination.[12]

Meanwhile, the 19th Eucharistic Congress was held in London from September 10 to September 14 in 1908.[13] These large assemblies were organized by the Catholic Church for promoting devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. In 1881 the first international congress was held in Lille in France and thereafter at various centres in France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Israel, Italy and Malta.[14] With the exception of Jerusalem, the first eighteen congresses took place in Catholic cities.[15] A pastoral letter from the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster indicated the Eucharistic Congress to be held in London had as its main aim the promotion of the adoration of the mass and that it was an act of reparation for the English Reformation. The programme was announced and it included a Eucharistic procession in the neighbourhood of Westminster Cathedral with the Host to be carried in a gold monstrance by Cardinal Vannutelli, the Papal legate.

Bulfin was critical of the reporting in Argentina of the Eucharistic Congress that was held in London in September 1908. He claimed that from the tone of the press

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[11] *Southern Cross,* 26 June 1908, p. 13.
[12] *Southern Cross,* 5 Mar 1909, p. 13.
[13] *Annual Register1908*, p.195.
[14] *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Second Edition, United States of America, 2003), p. 433.
[15] Carol A. Devlin, 'The Eucharistic Procession of 1908: The dilemma of the Liberal Government' in *Church History*, Vol 63, No 3 (September, 1994), p. 408.

and the tenor of the telegrams the following might be implied; (1) That there was a reverence shown to the Blessed Sacrament. (2) That huge crowds attended. (3) That there was a real sense of English freedom and a broad sense of toleration. In actual fact, he claimed, that the opposite was the case. He outlined how Asquith, the British Premier, approached the Archbishop and suggested the omission of the Blessed Sacrament in solemn procession on the grounds that it might provoke public disorder. The real reason, he argued, was that the French Government had made strong representation maintaining that England would be acting against the spirit of the entente cordiale in tolerating in London a public manifestation of Catholic devotion that would be suppressed in Paris. This was the major factor, he insisted, that prevented the Blessed Sacrament being carried in procession through the streets of London. According to some cables 100,000 attended, while other cables suggested the figure of 150,000. Bulfin concluded that England's response to the whole event showed a sense of intolerance.[16]

However it must be remembered Asquith had also to contend with the pressure from a number of Protestant societies, who argued that the carrying of the Host and the wearing of their vestments in the streets by priests and ministers of religious orders was illegal. They maintained that a breach of the law could lead to a breach of peace and disturbance on the streets.[17] Lord Ripon, the Lord Privy Seal, was the only Catholic in the Cabinet and requested by Asquith, the new prime minister, to convey the government's decision only four days before the event. Ripon did so but then he resigned his office saying 'I cannot totally desert my own people and be responsible for such treatment as they have received.'[18]

Bulfin's views were not shared by the press in Argentina or England. The *Buenos Aires Herald* felt that in 'wisely conforming to a request or suggestion of Mr Asquith, the premier, the Eucharistic Congress has decided to relinquish the idea of carrying the Holy Sacrament in the procession which will take place to morrow (Sunday) with a view to avoiding the disorder which might have resulted from carrying out the

[16] *Southern Cross*, 18 Sept. 1908, p. 14.
[17] *Annual Register 1908*, p. 196.
[18] Keith Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (Britain 1993), p. 126.

original intentions.'[19] The *Standard* felt that the Congress had proved to be a very successful propaganda exercise for the Roman Catholic Church.[20] It did concede that politics and the invocation of a sixteenth century law proved instrumental in prohibiting the Eucharistic procession through the streets of London.[21] The press in England regarded the procession as unwise and approved of the intervention of Asquith, but stressed that it had come very late.[22]

In an article entitled 'Catholicism in England' the *Buenos Aires Herald* commented on the Eucharistic Conference and its significance. It claimed that:

> The Eucharistic Congress is a distinctly Catholic euphemism for what non conforming creed would designate a Thanksgiving Conference. This is what the Catholic Church sees the present instance. Catholicism of to-day is not so uncompromising on minor points. Churches have ceased to quibble over trifles or strain at provoking gnats. In a scientific age the exegesis of faith must be modified. It is recognised here and in England that religion as a whole must stand or fall on broad issues. Pope Pius X chose England for the Congress .....assured of hospitality and a courteous hearing.[23]

Point for point Bulfin refuted the claims made in the article. It was not, he argued, a Thanksgiving Service, but rather a proclamation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Nor, he contended, would the Catholic Church defer to popular trends or modify its doctrinal beliefs. He also believed that the Pope selected England knowing that the presence of the Eucharistic Congress there would prove to be a challenge to public opinion and policy.[24] In her study of the dilemma, Carol A. Devlin concluded;

> This incident illustrates the persistence of religious extremism as a disruptive force in British politics and the muddled manner in which H.H. Asquith's government dealt with crises. In spite of the growing trend of secularism, militant Protestantism continued to agitate against Catholicism by resurrecting archaic laws restricting Catholic rituals.[25]

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[19] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 13 Sept. 1908, p. 9.
[20] *Standard*, 13 Sept. 1908, p. 8.
[21] *Standard*, 15 Sept. 1908, p. 8.
[22] *Annual Register 1908*, p. 195.
[23] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 9 Sept. 1908, p. 7.
[24] *Southern Cross*, 25 Sept. 1908, pp 14-15,
[25] Carol A. Devlin, 'The Eucharistic Procession of 1908: The dilemma of the Liberal Government', in *Church History*, Sept 1994, p. 407.

Father Michael Quinn wrote to the *Southern Cross* defending the Sinn Féin movement against charges made against it by the *Hiberno Argentine Review*. He refuted the claim that the movement had been condemned by the Catholic Church and reassured readers that it was not anti-clerical.[26] Arthur Griffith wrote and insisted 'that the *Daily Sinn Féin* will come to purify the moral as well as the National atmosphere which the daily press of the country have poisoned for years'. [27] The letters page of the *Southern Cross* was dominated by the controversy over the article on 'Catholicism in England' and both Father O'Grady and Father Ussher were critical of the policy of the *Hiberno Argentine Review* in relation to Catholicism and the Sinn Féin movement.[28]

Meanwhile in his message to the people, the President of Argentina reviewed the state of the country. He acknowledged that against a background of prosperity there were many political problems and social ills. Bulfin claimed that there was 'a need for sane and patriotic legislation.'[29] The growth and expansion of the Pampa region, with its increasing population and developing railways, called for a central controlling authority. The *Southern Cross* recommended that it was of vital importance that its citizens be entrusted with its administration and that the president should make his next selection from the capable men living on the pampas.[30]

Ever the crusading editor, Bulfin led a major campaign against the White Slave Trade in Buenos Aires. It was, he declared, more active than ever and innocent girls were decoyed from Europe by specious inducements to their ruin. It was a major crime and nothing was being done to confront it. He argued that a number of groups were to blame including the maritime authorities, the port officials and the police. He felt that the press in general had chosen to ignore the problem. In his analysis of the situation he concluded:

> But while we tolerate certain evils it can be said of us that our success is ill deserved and that our prosperity is tainted. And of these evils, "White

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[26] *Southern Cross*, 16 Oct. 1908 p. 15.
[27] *Southern Cross*, 26 Sept. 1908, p. 13.
[28] *Southern Cross*, 6 Nov. 1908, pp 14-15.
[29] *Southern Cross*, 15 May 1908, p. 13.
[30] *Southern Cross*, 12 June 1908, p. 13.

> Slavery" is one of the worst, because one of the most odious, most dishonourable and most corrupt.[31]

The *Review of the River Plate* agreed with Bulfin and spoke out strongly against the existence of the white slave trade in Buenos Aires. It reminded its readers that a bill was presented before Congress the year before. Nothing had been done and it remained with the committee. The city of Buenos Aires was known throughout the world as the one in which the trade thrived the most. Two societies had been formed to bring about the abolition of this form of slavery. It remained a growing problem as the situation had now reached 'alarming proportions'.[32]

In her study of the problem, Donna L. Guy traced its origins in Argentina and noted that:

> At the tenth meeting of the international Abolitionist Federation held in Geneva in 1908, Sir Percy Bunting, director of the *Contemporary Review*, blamed the Buenos Aires system of municipally licensed bordellos for allowing white slaves to operate in Argentina. According to Bunting, one had only to look at the nationality of registered women to realise that prostitution was controlled by the international traffic and there it is fed by the houses that receive these women and live off their sexual commerce. As early as 1877 almost 50 per cent of prostitutes registered for the first time were foreign born. Between 1889 and 1901 they grew to represent 75 per cent. White slavery seemed to accompany licensed prostitution in Argentina.[33]

For Bulfin the existence of white slavery in Argentina remained a major issue and he continued to campaign against it. It was, he felt, a national and ethical question that needed an immediate resolution. He supported the newly founded society for the abolition of white slavery. *La Nacion* reported that Buenos Aires was looked upon as 'one of the best markets for the sale of women.'[34] Bulfin was critical of the liberal attitude of the paper claiming that it indirectly contributed to the moral climate in Buenos Aires.

He persisted in his opposition to the growth of freemasonry in Argentina and noted that the *Buenos Aires Herald* had outlined the ongoing dissension in the ranks

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[31] *Southern Cross,* 17 Apr.1908, p. 13.
[32] *Review of the River Plate,* Vol xxix No 888, 4 Dec. 1908, p. 1423.
[33] Donna l. Guy, 'White Slavery, Public Health and the Socialist Position on Legalised Prostitution in Argentina, 1913 – 1936' in *Latin American Research Review*, Vol 23, No 3 (1988) p 62.
[34] *Southern Cross*, 1 Jan. 1908, p. 2.

of the organization. It would appear that there were many obstacles and difficulties in finding a successor to the late Trevor Mold, the Grand Master in Buenos Aires. Bulfin never lost an opportunity to mock what he termed the 'secret brotherhood of the Square and Compass'.[35] Meanwhile the *Review of the River Plate* continued to promote the meetings of the Masonic Order in Buenos Aires.[36] However, it was critical of the progress made by the Empire League. It argued that the British community had done little to prepare for the Argentine Centenary Exhibition that was approaching. The Empire League was only representative of about 500 persons from a community of 20,000 persons. The British community in Argentina remained disunited and the Empire League had failed in its original aim to bring the people together. It was now necessary for real efforts to be made for the British community to be properly represented in the forthcoming celebrations of 1910.[37] The *Buenos Aires Herald* presented its own critique of the situation. It accused the Empire League of disregarding older institutions and also of treating the Anglo-Argentine community as a solid entity. It argued that an effective league should be a union-a confederacy-and that component parts should be in harmony. It declared:

> We firmly believe in the ultimate success of the Argentine Branch of the Empire League – but our belief is subject to one condition which in the briefest terms is: consolidation of the community on common grounds for a common purpose, unity of settlement wherever the flag flies.[38]

The *Standard* also continued to promote the League of the Empire by giving notice and accounts of its meetings.[39] By contrast, the *Southern Cross* continued its opposition and remained critical of the League.

One of Bulfin's other major campaigns was to promote educational reforms in Argentina. He advocated that it was essential to correlate the primary to the secondary, the secondary to the normal and the technical and all three to the university. Educators must be placed in control of education. It was essential, he argued, to improve the morale and status of teachers. He was convinced that:

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[35] *Southern Cross*, 10 Jan. 1908, p. 12.
[36] *Review of the River Plate* Vol xxviii, No 846, 14 Feb. 1908, p. 429.
[37] *Review of the River Plate* Vol xxix No 87, 14 Aug. 1908, p. 399
[38] *Buenos Aires Herald*, 28 Aug. 1909, p. 4.
[39] *Standard*, 7 Feb. 1908, p. 7.

> We must respect learning. We must open to the educationalist a career in which the highest honours are to be won and to which men of supreme intellectual distinction may be drawn.[40]

La Prensa campaigned for major changes in the system of Secondary Education in Argentina advocating that: (1) A law was needed to protect the interests of Secondary Education. (2) A board of Secondary Education be established that would be manned by College directors and educationalist and not by politicians. The *Southern Cross* supported these recommendations.[41]

Bulfin's crusading zeal for reform extended to many aspects of life including the role of the press. He chose to term it the 'tyranny of the newspaper'. The press in Argentina, as elsewhere, was a powerful weapon that could be used for positive or negative purposes. As an editor and practicing journalist he was aware of the dangers. His plea to fellow journalists was forceful and compelling. He addressed them with a certain platform rhetoric which carried its own conviction:

> Brethren of the Press; the tyranny of the newspaper must pass. It plunges nations into wars and draws tribute from the devastation it has caused. ... Liberty of the Press, forsooth! Liberty to slaughter liberty. Liberty to impose its will. Liberty to be obscene, or venal, or braggart or fawning or scurrilous according to its caprice or malice or greed. It denounces all other tyrannies in turn or at once as the case may be, but it is silent about the tyranny exercised by itself. It drags into the light of publicity the secrets of state as well as the scandals of the brothel....It has the first word and the last word.[42]

The *Southern Cross* congratulated *La Prensa* on being one of the great newspapers of the world and paid tribute to its increasing prosperity. However, given that it had many readers among the Irish Argentines, it recommended that the paper should include a few telegrams about Irish affairs as a way of showing recognition.[43] The Buenos Aires branch of Sinn Féin appointed a press committee in order to see to the important task of distributing relevant information in Argentina.[44] His views on the Press Club were consistent with his sense of what the role of newspapers should

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[40] *Southern Cross*, 5 June 1908, p. 12.
[41] *Southern Cross*, 22 Jan. 1909, p. 13.
[42] *Southern Cross*, 22 May 1908, p. 12.
[43] *Southern Cross*, 24 July 1908, p. 13.
[44] *Southern Cross*, 3 July 1908, p. 15.

be. He was in favour of the journalists coming together as a social group, but was wary of notion of a power group being formed that would give the press more power than it should have. There was, he felt, the danger of the tyranny of the press.[45]

The Sinn Féin movement was gaining support among sections of the Irish community in Argentina. The correspondence pages of the *Southern Cross* carried requests relating to the *Sinn Féin* newspaper.[46] A number of correspondents recommended that the paper should devote more space to the matter of Irish industry in order to encourage exiles to invest in various projects. It was also suggested that there should be more information provided about lands for sale and that this might induce people to re-settle in Ireland. Another correspondent expressed concern for the future of the Irish-Argentine community. He argued that the community could not hope to remain wholly Irish and 'that the Anglicisation of our community should be arrested by the gradual substation of the English language by the Spanish language.'

Extensive coverage of the Sinn Féin movement in Argentina continued in the *Southern Cross* and the paper acted as a fund raising agent.[47] In response to the *Catholic Sun* (United States 29 Nov 1907) who criticised Sinn Féin on the grounds of anti- parliamentarianism and anti- clericalism, Bulfin pointed out that Sinn Féin was no longer seen as anti- clerical.[48] At the Sinn Féin meeting in Buenos Aires, the committee resolved to send a letter to *La Prensa* in response to an article written by its London correspondent, who claimed that Sinn Féin was anti-clerical. In the letter the committee stated that Sinn Féin 'is not only not anti-clerical but that it is absolutely non-sectarian and that the end which it has in view is simply the complete independence of Ireland'.[49]

The *French Catholic Review* and *Germania* expressed clearly their views on the rise of the Sinn Féin movement. *Germania* stated:

> Certainly looking at the poor results the Irish Parliamentarian policy has been able to achieve, Parliamentarianism seemed a bad investment for Ireland and by no means the best fighting method to secure her resurrection. We can

[45] *Southern Cross*, 5 June 1908, p. 13.
[46] *Southern Cross* 10 Jan. 1908, p. 15.
[47] *Southern Cross*, 17 Jan. 1908, p. 13.
[48] *Southern Cross*, 29 Jan. 1908. p.12.
[49] *Southern Cross*, 6 Mar. 1908, pp 12-13.

> easily understand how the young generation turns to the new doctrine. The Irish are beginning to understand that the money expended in keeping up a Parliamentary party in London might be better spent at home.[50]

The satirical poem by Alice Milligam entitled 'To a lady Bountiful' illustrated for Bulfin the reality of attempts to 'kill Home Rule with kindness.' The poem referred to Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Lord Lieutenant and her gestures to the Irish people. Alice Milligan justified the poem by her claim that 'in the old times in Ireland to take gifts meant to render allegiance. We desire to retain the independence of our people and our country.'[51] Bulfin noted that the *Irish News* in St Louis in the United Stated was lending its support to the Sinn Féin movement.[52] There was constant reassurance in the *Southern Cross* that Sinn Féin branch in Buenos Aires was active and that there was much work to be done.[53]

Bulfin had decided on a policy of promoting trade between Ireland and Argentina. In this he was at one with the philosophy of Sinn Féin. However, his enthusiasm led to an unfounded optimism and he failed to grasp the problems inherent in such a policy. As part of this policy of promoting Irish industry, Bulfin gave full coverage to the publication of '*Thom's Directory of the Manufacturers and Shippers of Ireland for the year 1908*'. The *Southern Cross* carried a detailed description of its contents with information about Irish, statistics and industries and concluded that 'Ireland has many more industries than we thought.'[54] His advice to manufacturing and exporting circles in Ireland was that they must provide a full range of goods for potential buyers in Argentina and that samples were not enough. It would, he felt, be essential to send out experts to Argentina in order to understand the possibilities of the potential market.[55] Advertisements for Irish products began appearing in the *Southern Cross*, particularly for Irish whiskey.[56] He decided to provide a permanent directory in the *Southern Cross* of Irish manufacture on sale in

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[50] *Southern Cross*, 17 Jan. 1908, p. 18.
[51] *Southern Cross*, 28 Feb. 1908, p. 18.
[52] *Southern Cross*, 5 Mar. 1908, p. 12.
[53] *Southern Cross*, 28 Feb. 1908, p. 15.
[54] *Southern Cross*, 17 Apr. 1908, p. 14.
[55] *Southern Cross*, 1 May 1908, pp 13-14.
[56] *Southern Cross*, 1 May 1908, p. 17.

the Argentine Republic.[57] The 'Directory of Irish Manufacture on sale in Argentina' appeared in the *Southern Cross* and included goods such as Jacob's biscuits, soap, matches, Guinness, soda water, floor polish, Irish ham, bacon and whiskey.[58]

As part of the campaign a constant series of advertisements in relation to Irish manufactured goods appeared in the pages of the *Southern Cross,* particularly in relation to machinery, tweeds and whiskey.[59] Continued efforts were made to promote the sale of Irish manufacture in Argentina and the *Southern Cross* declared itself neutral in relation to one Irish product and another wishing to give all 'a fair field'. It was happy to declare:

> Our free directory of Irish manufactures imported into this country is at the disposal of all importers. ...We intend to go ahead with our general propaganda. We shall not be satisfied until there are scores of ships upon the seas bringing to these shores direct from Irish factories the manufactures turned out by Irish industry. [60]

However, the campaign met with very little success. Irish woollen manufacturers reported that they were disappointed that they had not received large orders from Argentina. Bulfin pointed out that the fault was theirs, because they had not met the Argentine market half way. It was not sufficient to send out samples to potential buyers. He recommended that they should:

> (1) Study the market and send out an expert. (2) Sell direct to Argentine buyers and quote fair prices (3) Face the credit question properly and not expect Argentine importers to meet their bills against invoices on delivery. British and Continental mills and exporters were giving six months credit. Irish manufacturers would have to do the same. It was important that the All Ireland Industrial Conference, which was due to take place in Galway the following year, should take note of these recommendations.[61]

Clearly Bulfin was convinced of the importance of this particular campaign, but he may well have over estimated his own grasp of the difficulties and obstacles that were to be overcome. There were many obstacles to the success of this campaign and it

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[57] *Southern Cross*, 10 July 1906, p. 14.
[58] *Southern Cross*, 7 Aug. 1908, p. 21.
[59] *Southern Cross*, 24 July 1908, p. 14.
[60] *Southern Cross*, 4 Dec. 1908, p. 14.
[61] *Southern Cross*, 8 May 1908, pp 13-14.

may well have been beyond the scope of Bulfin's capabilities. The export and import situation in relation to Ireland and Argentina needed a more realistic analysis. As with a number of his endeavours, his strong convictions could cloud his judgement. Good intentions were not enough to mount a successful marketing campaign.

He persisted in advocating the importance of the status of the Irish community in Argentina. In an article entitled 'What Irish-Argentines Should Do', Bulfin argued 'a community must stand or fall by its traditions'.[62] He felt that Irish-Argentines should concern themselves with the welfare of Ireland. Is it possible, he contended, to justify filial neglect if one leaves honourable parents in disgrace and tries by ignoring their misery to cut a figure in the world? Likewise, he argued, is it possible for a race to receive respect from the peoples of the earth by turning the cold shoulder to the homeland in its suffering? The Argentine Centenary celebrations presented a challenge to the Irish community and it was important they played a prominent role in honouring the occasion. The *Standard* and *Buenos Aires Herald* did not place emphasis on the distinctive role of the Irish community in relation to the celebrations. By contrast Bulfin urged that the Irish should present themselves in terms of their own heritage and not as British subjects.[63] On this issue as with many other ones, he found himself at odds with the English language press in Argentina.

It was necessary, Bulfin felt, that a broadly based group should be responsible for the role that the Irish community were to play in the Argentine centenary celebrations. Therefore he was opposed to decisions that had been reached by a Ladies Committee to erect a statue to Father Fahy as a gesture to the centenary celebrations.[64] It was, he felt , essential to have a public meeting embracing rich and poor, town and camp, in order to reach a representative consensus regarding the Irish contribution.

For Bulfin the campaign to preserve the Irish identity in Argentina had to be fought on many fronts. The Civil Registry persisted in recording people of Irish birth as "Ingleses" or "Britanicos" and also refused to receive Irish Christian names unless

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[62] *Southern Cross*, 17 Jan. 1908, pp 12-13.
[63] *Southern Cross*, 10 July 1908, p. 14.
[64] *Southern Cross*, 2 Oct. 1908, p. 14.

translated into Spanish. He fully supported the resolution of the Buenos Aires Branch of Sinn Féin that stated:

> We immediately approach the General Executive Officer of the Civil Registry and ask him to send out instructions to his subordinates reminding them of the obligation they are under of respecting the right of Irish people who wish to be noted down as such in public documents.[65]

One of the pressing issues was the question of the naturalisation of foreigners and a new bill was brought before Congress for consideration. According to the new bill all foreigners who had been sentenced for crimes or who have been expelled as active anarchists from any other nation do not come under the law. That meant that an Irish Nationalist, for example, outlawed in Ireland because of his loyalty to his country, is not a criminal.[66] Bulfin agreed with the sentiments in the new bill.

The question of the future destiny of the *Southern Cross* was a recurring source of anxiety for Bulfin. He was anxious to secure the paper's position in Argentina and felt it necessary to take steps to consolidate the roles of management and contributors. Over the years the English language press in Latin America had to fight hard to contend with many forces in order to sustain readership. Bulfin was passionately concerned with maintaining the *Southern Cross's* reputation for Nationality and Catholicism. He confided in his friend Sean Kenny (Sean Ghall);

> It would make me turn in my grave, Sean Ghall, if it proved traitorous to the Green or the God of our fathers. I shall die in peace when I know it will keep a straight keel.[67]

The *Southern Cross* continued with its support for all endeavours that promoted the cause of Irish nationalism. It congratulated the *Peasant* newspaper as it had completed the first year of its existence. It was the successor of the *Irish Peasant*, which had been suspended after Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh (1887-1924), had taken an action against it over the question of educational policy. Bulfin defended the *Irish Peasant* against the claims of Cardinal Logue. He argued that the

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[65] *Southern Cross*, 7 Aug. 1908, p. 15.
[66] *Southern Cross*, 3 July 1908, p. 13.
[67] *Sinn Féin*, 6 May 1910, pp .5-6.

paper stood for freedom of Catholic thought and speech in national and social matters. His convictions in relation to Catholicism did not mean that he had to defer to the hierarchy. He argued that the Cardinal had no jurisdiction in this area and could not claim infallibility in the matter. He was not prepared to defer to the Catholic hierarchy in matters concerning Irish nationality and claimed:

> We are glad that the air is clearer and that the younger churchmen, bishops and priests are beginning to take heart of grace and to stand for the principle that it is no part of their duty to run contrary to currents of national thought which tends to wash slavish submission to English rule for ever out of the Irish mind.[68]

The *Southern Cross* endorsed the Sinn Féin policy with its emphasis on anti-enlistment in the British army for Irishmen, passive resistance, self reliance, the constitutional right to ignore the Act of Union, active roles in County Councils, depriving England of millions of taxation and the rendering of English law inoperative in Ireland. This was further reinforced in the correspondence columns of the newspaper.[69] The policing of Ireland came at a great cost. In fact the Liberal Government had added the sum of £40,000 to the annual cost and the police force was increased by 400 men. In reviewing the question of crime and security the *Freeman's Journal* observed:

> Ireland has practically the same population as Scotland; it has less than one fourth of the serious crime of Scotland; it has double the police force.[70]

Meanwhile the North Leitrim Election was contested by Sinn Féin in March 1908

resulting in victory for the Irish Parliamentary Party with 3,103 votes and defeat for Sinn Féin with 1,157 votes. Even though it supported the Irish Parliamentary Party, the *Freeman's Journal* was prepared to admit that it was significant that 1,157 Irish people had voted in favour of abstaining from the parliament of England.[71] The North Leitrim election results had a major impact on various groups in Ireland. The fact that 1,200 people of Leitrim voted for Sinn Féin has opened the eyes of all parts of

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[68] *Southern Cross*, 28 Feb. 1908, p. 13.
[69] *Southern Cross*, 13 Mar. 1908, p. 14.
[70] *Southern Cross*, 27 Mar. 1908, p. 13.
[71] *Southern Cross*, 27 Mar. 1908, p. 16.

Ireland. Unionists are searching their hearts and their organ the *Irish Times* devoted an editorial to the situation stating:

> The size of Mr Dolan's minority... All elements were against Sinn Féin...1,157 nationalists in a single Nationalist constituency have passed a sweeping vote of censure on the party which claims to speak and act on their behalf...there is the conviction that the nationalist parliamentary party is injuring rather than aiding the best interests of the Irish people... Sinn Féin wants the utter abolition of Parliamentarianism....With all its extravagances the Sinn Féin Party stands for the discouragement of religious bigotry, for enlightenment and liberty in education, for industrial development on the lines of self help and intelligent enterprise and, above all, for the cooperation of creeds and classes for the promotion of common national interests. Widely separated though they are in their political opinions, Unionism and Sinn Féin have something in common.[72]

In a lecture under the auspices of Sinn Féin in New York, the Irish artist John B. Yeats, father of William Butler Yeats, concluded his observations about the people of Ireland with:

> Alas they have been slaves so long that they are still slaves in thought and cannot bear to see a fellow slave step out of the ranks. It is the presence of these unsuccessful men amongst us that produces that constant division and discord which mars every Irish enterprise.[73]

It was announced that Home Rule was no longer a pressing issue and the *Southern Cross* took the view that the Irish Parliamentary Party was foolish to have formed an alliance with the English liberal Party.[74]

Reporting on the Sinn Féin Convention of September 1908, the *Southern Cross* noted that only three years had passed since the movement was formally launched. It was felt that no movement since the union had grown with such rapidity and achieved so much constructive work. Edward Martyn had retired as president in order to concentrate on his literary work. John Sweetman was elected president and Arthur Griffith and Bulmer Hobson as vice presidents.[75] Bulfin defended Sinn Féin on the charge 'of the old calumny of anti clericalism' and reported for his readers that

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[72] *Southern Cross*, 17 Apr. 1908, pp 17- 18.
[73] *Southern Cross*, 24 Apr. 1908, p. 19.
[74] *Southern Cross*, 1 May 1908, p. 13.
[75] *Southern Cross*, 2 Oct. 1908, p. 7.

that three Irish priest were now on the executive committee of the organisation.[76] Bulfin was determined that his paper would serve the interests of Sinn Féin and was prepared to use it as a vehicle of propaganda for the party.

In endeavouring to keep readers informed of events in Ireland, photographs of the new Parnell monument in Dublin appeared in the *Southern Cross* and the merits of the statue were assessed. The statue, designed by Saint Gaudens, was to be placed at the foot of a seventy foot obelisk. Bulfin felt that the pose chosen was not typical of Parnell and that the obelisk itself would spoil the perspective of O Connell Street, which had already been disfigured by Nelson's Pillar. For Bulfin the monument failed to portray Parnell as the self contained but determined leader of the Irish people. At the Liffey end stood Foley's great statue of O'Connell in majestic repose and splendid dignity. Yet O'Connell and oratory were synonymous; not so with Parnell. The O'Connell movement was 'a magnificent and dramatic display of eloquent and irresistible reasoning.' The Parnell movement was 'a triumph of tactics.'[77] Bulfin was convinced that a book by Cunningham Graham entitled 'In Memory of Parnell' gave a more accurate reading of the personality of Parnell. It was at variance with the conception formed by Saint Gaudens as shown in the somewhat theatrical pose of the extended arm.

In September 1908 Scoil Éanna, St Enda's, was opened in Dublin by Patrick Pearse, editor of An *Claidheamh Soluis*. The school was inspired by the Pearse's vision of education in terms of a broad based and experimental curriculum. It also fostered the philosophy of the Irish Ireland movement with its emphasis on the history, culture and language of Ireland. Bulfin's son, Eamonn, was enrolled as a boarder along with the two sons of Eoin MacNéill, Vice President of the Gaelic League. The teachers included Thomas MacDonagh, W. J. Pearse and Joseph Clarke. It provided a wide range of subjects including Irish, English, French, German and Italian. The *Southern Cross* wished it a long and successful career.[78] Pearse was

[76] *Southern Cross*, 2 Oct. 1908, p. 7.
[77] *Southern Cross*, 17 Apr. 1908, p. 14.
[78] *Southern Cross*, 18 Sept. 1908, p. 3.

encouraged by the positive response from notable families in Irish-Ireland circles.[79] Reports from St Enda's in Ireland were encouraging, with forty boys in the senior school and thirty boys and girls in the preparatory school.[80] Bulfin claimed that St Enda's was the most important happening in the interests of Gaelic Nationalism that had been done in Ireland since the foundation of the Gaelic League.[81]

In the Spring of 1909 Bulfin had decided to return to Ireland and to settle there for a time in order to explore new directions and horizons. A picnic was organised for Bulfin and his wife, Annie, to mark their proposed visit to Ireland to visit their children. His son Eamonn was at Scoil Éanna and his daughters at the convent school in Banagher.[82] A notice appeared in the *Southern Cross* indicating that 'during the absence of Mr Bulfin the general direction of the policy and administration of the *Southern Cross* is exercised Rev L.E. MacDonnell and the editor will be Gerald Foley'. It was Bulfin's wish to be continually associated with the paper and he stated:

> It is my hope to be part of the *Southern Cross* for as long as I live. During my absence I shall be its general European correspondent and regular contributor.[83]

Bulfin remained in close contact with the *Southern Cross* from the time he left Argentina and was in receipt of all important business matters relating to the progress of the paper. Items of news, business accounts and details of important events and decisions were forwarded to him on a fortnightly basis. Important decisions were made by him and he was still in control of the paper, even at a distance.[84] Bulfin had set himself the onerous task of keeping a newspaper going in Argentina while pursuing other interests in Ireland. Again he was unwisely making excessive demands on his own mental and physical reserves.

His arrival in Ireland was greeted with a warm welcome and he was heralded as a harbinger of good fortune. *An Claidheamh Soluis* described him as:

> A new force in our midst...a strenuous and racy personality...editor of the *Southern Cross*...Che Buono is back in Ireland and it seems like an omen of

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[79] Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Patrick Pearse. The Triumph of Failure* (Great Britain, 1997), p. 115.
[80] *Southern Cross*, 6 Nov. 1908, p. 3.
[81] *Claidheamh Soluis*, 13 Jan. 1912, p. 5.
[82] *Southern Cross*, 2 Apr. 1909, p. 15.
[83] *Southern Cross*, 9 Apr. 1909, p. 13.
[84] Bernard Eiff to William Bulfin, 8 May 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 1)

> success in the University fight that we are to have the aid of his brilliant, fearless pen....Céad Fáilte roimh a bhaile.[85]

Bulfin also undertook his role as Irish and European correspondent for the *Southern Cross* with a strong sense of commitment. His accounts began to appear on a regular basis.[86] Further accounts of his rambles in Eirinn began to appear in the paper.[87] In October 1909 Bulfin received a letter from his friend Henry Kenny (Sean Ghall) praising him for a recent article about his return visit to Belfast:

> Your delightful Belfast article was the crown I longed for....I knew its results would be to make the four seas of Ireland learn the lesson of Belfast's work for Gaeldom and know that great heart. Moreover it atones for the cropper in your "Rambles" which every Uladh Gael I met was grieved at. We cannot afford to lose men, true men, we must not speak slightingly of one spot of Old Eirinn in our fight for freedom....In patriotism, as in mathematics, it is an axiom that 'the whole is greater than the part'.[88]

The Irish University Act 1908 intended to remove some of the grievances of Irish Catholics in regard to higher education. It allowed Trinity College to remain as it was and created two new universities out of the existing institutions, one was Queen's University Belfast and the other was the federal structure, the National University of Ireland, composed of the two former Queen's universities of Cork and Galway, together with the University of Dublin that had grown from Newman's institution in the nineteenth century.[89] The new universities, established by the Act of 1908, came into existence in October 1909. The question of the importance of the Irish language in the new National University in Ireland began to be a central issue for the Irish Ireland movement.[90] A sustained campaign for compulsory Irish for university entrance was vigorously carried on by the Gaelic League.[91] Bulfin gave it his full support. The Gaelic League in Argentina passed two resolutions in relation to the new university in Ireland. (1) That any new university set up in Ireland should be Irish in the same sense that Oxford and Cambridge are English. (2) That a faculty of Irish

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[85] *Southern Cross*, 18 June 1909, p. 14.
[86] *Southern Cross*, 18 June 1909, p. 19.
[87] *Southern Cross*, 16 July 1909. p. 3.
[88] Henry Kenny to William Bulfin, 13 Oct 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 17)
[89] F.S.L. Lyons, 'The Developing Crisis, 1907-14'in W.E. Vaughan (ed.) *A New History of Ireland. Vol VI ,Under the Union. II 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), p. 124.
[90] *Southern Cross*, 9 Oct. 1908, p. 2.
[91] *Annual Register 1909*, p. 277.

Arts should be instituted and the Irish language be made an essential part of the curriculum.[92]

One of the contentious issues in Ireland was the question of the teaching of Irish in Maynooth University. According to *An Claidhheamh Soluis*, the Maynooth president had induced Irish bishops to dispense with the study of Irish at the university. It was felt that this could be a permanent measure.[93] The Gaelic writer Father Peter O'Leary, writing in the *Leader*, claimed that the Irish language was winning and that those who felt the League was anti-Clerical or too Catholic should join it and see for themselves.[94] Dr Michael O'Hickey, professor of Irish at St Patrick's College, Maynooth was one of the leading protagonists in the campaign to have Irish as a compulsory subject for matriculation in the new university. A detailed account of O'Hickey's views in relation to Irish and the new university appeared in his pamphlet entitled *An Irish University or Else*. Essentially he saw the situation in these terms 'It is a war between Ireland and West Britain'.[95] The paper was first read at a meeting of the Literary Society, St Patrick's College, Maynooth on 11 December 1908. O'Hickey's pamphlet entitled *The Irish Bishops and an Irish University* contained his major charges against the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland.[96] He charged the bishops with (a) having more political power than their counterparts in other Catholic countries.(b) that they were supporters of the Whig Party.

There were various responses to the question of compulsory Irish in the university. Bulfin was loud in his criticism of the press and claimed that *The Times*, the *Irish Times*, the *Outlook*, the *Observer*, the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Yorkshire Post* were hostile and unsympathetic to the case for the language. He insisted that the '*Manchester Guardian* alone demanded justice for Irish in the university'.[97] The *Manchester Guardian* gave full coverage to the debate and

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[92] *Southern Cross*, 29 May 1908, p. 13.
[93] *Southern Cross*, 7 Feb. 1908, p. 4.
[94] *Southern Cross*, 1 May 1908, p. 3.
[95] Rev Michael P. O'Hickey, *An Irish University or Else* (Dublin, 1909), p.9.
[96] Rev.Michael P.O'Hickey, *The Irish Bishops and an Irish University* (Dublin, 1909), p.3.
[97] *Southern Cross*, 9 Apr. 1909, pp 5-13.

presented a positive response to the case for compulsory Irish.[98] By contrast The *Scotsman* presented a clear, strong and negative response and argued:

> Ireland is a land of paradoxes. One of these is the manner in which the average Irish nationalist manages to combine an intense hatred of what he terms "coercion" with a most enthusiastic ardour for compulsion. Put boldly the position taken by Nationalists and their organisations is – We claim the right what we like ourselves and to compel others to do what we want. It is part of a larger movement, which any persons in the country who are still inclined to give Home Rule to Ireland would do well to take note of. That movement has for its object the raising of a division between things Irish and all things British, even in the use of the English language. It is an indication of a desire on the part of Nationalists to set up Ireland as a distinct and separate Nationality with a deep rooted antagonism to Britain.[99]

The hierarchy of the Catholic Church, supported by Redmond and Dillon, the leaders of the Parliamentary Party, however, were opposed to compulsory Irish principally on the grounds that it would drive those who did not have the required language qualification to Trinity College with its protestant ethos.[100] The *Irish Times* supported the Catholic hierarchy and gave full coverage to their claims. It went on to add that:

> It is clear that the Senate will have to be on its guard against its hands being forced by the efforts of Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League to create the appearance of a local demand for compulsory Irish which at present has no substantial existence. [101]

However, Father Christopher Yorke, editor of the *San Francisco Leader*, gave a lecture entitled 'Irish and the new University', and argued that 'The Senate is not Ireland's choice. It is the choice of the British government'.[102]

In reviewing the Cuchulainn Pageant which was performed by the pupils of St Enda's, Bulfin took the opportunity to pay tribute to Patrick Pearse's ideal of education and to contrast it with the conventional system presented in the primary schools of Ireland. He also challenged the senators to reconsider their approach to the question of compulsory Irish in the new university and recommended that:

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[98] *Manchester Guardian*, 11 Feb. 1909, p. 6.
[99] *Scotsman*, 10 Dec. 1908, p. 6.
[100] Tony Crowley, *War of Words, The Politics of Language in Ireland 1537 – 2004* (Oxford , 2005) p. 144.
[101] *Irish Times*, 22 Jan. 1909, p. 9.
[102] *Southern Cross*, 12 Mar. 1909 p. 3.

> Instead of trying to prevent its inevitable advance or seeking to keep aloof from it, the National University of Ireland should meet the new order of the state with faith and courage and declare itself at once for essential Irish.[103]

However, news arrived that Dr O'Hickey had been deprived of the Chair of Irish at St Patrick's College, Maynooth. He was accused of disloyalty and betrayal for writing the pamphlet 'An Irish University or Else'.[104] Bulfin supported O'Hickey throughout the campaign and both men established a close bond with each other.[105] The correspondence between O'Hickey and Bulfin indicated that a trust and friendship had grown between them and that O'Hickey valued his support.[106] The Irish Argentine supporters of O'Hickey requested that Bulfin was to present him with a gold pen as a mark of their respect and admiration for him.[107]

In his study of the situation Tony Crowley concluded:

> One of the respondents to the campaign against the Irish Matriculation requirements was the Maynooth Professor of Irish and prominent Gaelic Leaguer, Fr Michael O'Hickey, whose contributions to the debate were at best intemperate, at worst damaging. Commenting on the objections to compulsory Irish, O'Hickey asserted "To be opposed by the colonists is one thing we are accustomed to; to be opposed by a section of our own, no matter how worthless and degenerate, is not to be endured." The tenor of O'Hickey's comments led to a demand for his resignation from his chair by the hierarchy, a demand which when refused was followed by dismissal.[108]

Reporting on the case of Dr O'Hickey, the *Southern Cross* felt that recent events would strengthen the Gaelic League and would give an impetus to the Irish language.[109] The controversy over Dr O'Hickey continued and uncertainty prevailed as to whether he had been dismissed or not.[110] According to the *Daily Sinn Féin* of 11 October 1909, a historic meeting took place in the Mansion House, Dublin and Bulfin was one of the guest speakers. His message was clear and strong:

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[103] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 31 July 1909, p. 4.
[104] *Southern Cross*, 23 July 1909, p. 3.
[105] Lucy McDiarmid, *The Irish Art of Controversy* (Dublin, 2005) p. 67.
[106] Ibid., p. 67.
[107] Gerald Foley to William Bulfin 17 June 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13815 (Folder 1)
[108] Tony Crowley, *War of Words, The Politics of Language in Ireland 1537 –2004* (Oxford, 2005), p. 145.
[109] *Southern Cross*, 23 July 1909, p. 14.
[110] *Southern Cross*, 13 Aug. 1909, p. 14.

> The onslaught upon the study of Irish made under the auspices of the Intermediate Board, like that threatening under the auspices of the so called National University is due to the fact that the declared and secret enemies of the national language believe or hope that Irish Irelanders are not sufficiently in earnest about their principles to resent such aggression as it should be resented. It is the duty of the students, schools, parents and the workers of Irish Ireland to show that they are in earnest.[111]

One of the continuing challenges facing Bulfin was essentially a literary one. His first novel 'Man of the Pampas', which was set in Argentina, had been rejected by his American publishers. His second novel, 'The Rose of Esker', was set in Ireland had been completed but there is no record of it being submitted for publication. It remained unpublished. The novel had not proved to be a successful genre for him and his tendency for rambling narrative and description was in evidence also in the second novel. He was more successful with the short story. His American publisher continued to publish his short stories in the *Everybody Magazine*. In reviewing his present situation he noted:

> I have not done much speaking since I came home and have had to decline many invitations. I never care much for speaking and like it less and less as I grow older. Anyway, I have been very busy with my literary work and have months of hard work ahead of me with a programme of stories, articles, reviews etc. however, I am very comfortably settled here with my books and that is really half the battle.[112]

While he continued his endeavours, he was beginning to feel that recognition for his literary work was eluding him. His poem 'The Song of Roisin Dubh' was published posthumously in the *Gaelic American*.[113]

Bulfin was presented with a number of options in terms of his future in Ireland. His return to Ireland did not mean a world of limited horizons, but rather the reverse. He still held on to hopes of a lecturing tour in America and was in continued correspondence with the Irish American, John Quinn, concerning the possibility. Bulfin underestimated the difficulties and challenges that a lecture tour would entail. Quinn was far more realistic and advised him to prepare well in advance. He felt that

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[111] *Daily Sinn Féin*, 11 Oct. 1909, p. 3.
[112][112] William Bulfin to Senor J. E. Bowen ,7 Sept. 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 1)
[113] *Gaelic American*, 26 Feb. 1910, p. 2.

it could prove successful provided Bulfin had the assistance of a good agency or tour manager. He insisted that:

> If you come here lecturing I think it would be easy to get you invitations for some of the colleges – Colombia University, Harvard, Yale, the University of Chicago, the University of Michigan, the Twentieth Century Club and the Book and Play Club in Chicago – but your appeal would be more especially to the Irish Americans and the agency that I mentioned , I think, would be best....On second thoughts I think that lectures on Latin America would be very interesting for many of the colleges that I have spoken about.[114]

Bulfin had prepared a series of lectures on topics dealing with the economic, political, social and cultural life of Ireland and Latin America. He had already lectured on these subjects in Ireland, Argentina and to a limited extent in New York. It was still a distant horizon that he wished to explore in the future.

There was also the possibility that he could apply for the chair of Spanish in the new university. He had worked for a time as a lecturer in English at the Salvador College in Buenos Aires. As a fluent Spanish speaker and with his lecturing experience, many of his friends in the Gaelic League tried to persuade him to apply for the position. Although attracted to the idea of such a position, Bulfin felt that he would not prove to be an eligible candidate. In this he was probably wise. He decided to postpone making a decision until the following year. His response was tentative and he said 'next year the situation could change and I could change my mind.'[115]

Members of the Sinn Féin party felt he would prove to be a strong candidate for the party in King's County in the forthcoming general election in 1910. It was argued that 'If you did agree to represent a constituency of your native county, your return would be certain.'[116] Bulfin declined the invitation and wrote:

> While saying all this from my heart and confirming my determination to have no part in Parliamentary politics or in anything savouring of such still I am deeply and truly grateful to you.[117]

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[114] John Quinn to William Bulfin 4 June 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 1)
[115] William Bulfin to Padraig Ó Dálaigh 1 Nov. 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 1)
[116] James Rogers to William Bulfin 28 Dec. 1909, NLI Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 29)
[117] William Bulfin to P.J. Keohane 3 June 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 138111 (Folder 1)

Other members saw him as a possible Vice President, if not leader of the party. His own inclination was to work in the field of journalism and this was to decide his future direction. In writing he held firm to his convictions and indicated his preference:

> I am much obliged to whoever did the honour of proposing my name for the Vice Presidency of our movement. But I cannot accept. In writing for the *Daily Sinn Féin* I shall try to do my part to help the good cause. But for various private reasons I cannot take any office and am therefore unable to allow my name to go forward at the coming convention.[118]

Bulfin was also proposed as a candidate for election to the non-resident executive of Sinn Féin but this he also declined stating 'I regret that the same reasons which obliged me to decline the honour of the presidency oblige me to decline this.'[119]

Helen Kelly, in her study of the Irish in Argentina, felt that Bulfin's reluctance to take up political office may well have come from his sense that his role was essentially that of the writer and journalist and not that of the politician.[120] Bulfin defined himself as a journalist. His serious illness in1906 had weakened his health and this may well have been one of the factors influencing his decision. He may well have lacked a sense of personal political ambition. It is also important to bear in mind Bulfin's lifelong scepticism and disdain for the political world. In his examination of the presence and impact of the Irish community in Argentina, Thomas Murray noted the lack of strong and steady leadership. He remarked:

> It is no easy matter to influence our people; they are proud, more than a little egotistical, somewhat suspicious, unaccustomed to real party politics and leadership.....this is the greatest want of the Irish people at the present time....they amount to little or nothing in the public affairs of their own country or in the protection or advancement of their own business interests...as a body they are wealthy and more numerous than the English than the English, the Germans or Americans...the Irish Argentines need a mental revolution.[121]

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[118] William Bulfin to Aindrias Ó Broin, 11 Aug 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 1)
[119] William Bulfin to Aindrias Ó Broin, 16 Aug 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 1)
[120] Helen Kelly, Irish 'Ingleses': The Irish Immigrant Experience in Argentina, 1840 – 1920. Ph.D. Thesis, 2007, Department of History, Trinity College Dublin, p. 234.
[121] Thomas Murray *The History of the Irish in Argentina,* pp 496-497.

He concluded that Bulfin had the necessary qualities to lead the people and that all his endeavours had won the respect and admiration of the Irish community in Argentina. He contended:

> Bulfin was one of the sanest and most successful who took the matter up...the people were gathering to him. He had a real ability and seemed to have got to understand how to use it, but he had only commenced, commenced well, when death intervened.[122]

Thomas Davis had always been a source of admiration and inspiration for Bulfin. There were certain parallels in their lives. Davis was editor of *The Nation* and wrote on political, historical, educational, cultural, social and literary topics. Like Bulfin, he was a keen critic and reformer and a strong defender of the Irish language. He could claim 'a people without a language is only half a nation'.[123] Yet, as with Bulfin, he knew very little Irish. Both men declined to play an active political role in the causes they espoused. Davis was challenged on this reluctance and it was put to him that:

> You but half serve your country when your services are confined to the pen only. You have capabilities, if you had the courage of serving her as a speaker. Why not do it? Your usefulness and influence would be tenfold increased once you took up that position. Why not do it?....Act as becomes a man, the time and the circumstances.[124]

For Davis and Bulfin it was not a question of courage. Like Bulfin, he had no personal political ambition. A political role would have demanded that he attend parliament at Westminster and this was not acceptable to him. Like Bulfin, he was convinced that he could best serve with the pen. Along with this there was Bulfin's deep rooted scepticism concerning the role of politicians. As with many public men, Bulfin resisted full scrutiny and retained a certain enigma.

In October 1909 the Gaelic League invited Bulfin to consider himself as a possible candidate for the editorship of *An Claidheamh Soluis* and he deliberated on the offer. The offer appealed to him and he asked for time to consider it. He was aware of the difficulties involved and the following reservations made him hesitate:

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[122] Ibid., p.496.
[123] James L. Ahern, *Thomas Davis and his Circle* (Waterford, 1945), p. 22
[124] John Neylon Molony, *A Soul came into Ireland, Thomas Davis 1814-1845* (Dublin, 1995), p. 295.

(1) I am afraid of the language question. It is morally certain there would be a phenomenal kick on the part of some cradle speakers if a man who did not know Irish was to hold such a position in an Irish newspaper.

(2) There are many more issues and side issues connected with the movement about which I know little or nothing.

(3) It is not at all certain that in some circumstances I should not find myself at variance with the Coiste Gnó (Gaelic League Business Committee).[125]

Bulfin also felt that his appointment might meet with opposition and he feared this would damage the paper and the movement. He was grateful for the encouragement and support from Eoin MacNéill, but concluded that 'I know my own limitations' and, therefore, he needed further time to consider the matter. His intention was to consult further with Eoin MacNéill and to be guided by him.

A daily paper had long been a cherished objective of Arthur Griffith and after the North Leitrim election he decided to take steps to establish it. Máire de Buitléir had written to Bulfin expressing her own convictions about the necessity of a daily paper:

> We are greatly handicapped by not having a daily paper to voice Sinn Féin policy. How often we wish that you and Mr Griffith of others like Seamus McManus and Mr Pearse were running a Dublin Daily. You'd make things hum. It is impossible to fit any Sinn Féin news into any of the Dublin Dailies.[126]

On the 26 August 1909 the Sinn Féin Annual Congress was held in Dublin and Bulfin was the delegate from the Buenos Aires branch. In his report, Bulfin included details of the agenda, balance sheets and resolutions taken. He noted that Sinn Féin had suffered a setback during the previous year and indicated the causes:

> (1)The lack of a daily newspaper. (2) The lack of funds to carry out a Spring propaganda. (3) A kind of reaction consistent upon the loss of the North Leitrim Election....The lack of a daily organ of the press has been at last filled by the *Daily Sinn Féin* ....The journal will have serious difficulty to continue with in the beginning owing to want of sufficient capital, but if it succeeds in turning the corner, as personally I think it will, its future will be brilliant....The Sinn Féin movement has yet to appeal to the masses of the

[125] William Bulfin to Padraig O'Dalaigh 1 Nov. 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 1)
[126] Máire De Buitléir to William Bulfin 27 January 1906, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 5)

people, but it is steadily, if at times slowly, gaining and the prospects for the future are decidedly bright.[127]

He concluded his report by appealing for more funds from the Irish Argentines to enable the Sinn Féin movement to carry out its work.

Arthur Griffith claimed that that a *Daily Sinn Féin* paper was essential, because daily propaganda was more effective than weekly.[128] The target figure of £8,000 was necessary to ensure the establishing of the paper. It was felt that the Sinn Féin movement was being handicapped by a hostile daily press. It was being suggested that a *Daily Sinn Féin* paper would prove to be a crucial organ for the movement in Ireland. The Buenos Aires branch promised its full support and advocated that readers should invest in shares in the paper to the value of £50.[129]

It was reported that an attempt had been made to suppress the Sinn Féin stamp, because the stamp was being sold and used to start a nationalist daily paper. This was to be the first daily newspaper of its kind since the union and it was claimed that the British government did not want this.[130] Fundraising for the new *Daily Sinn Féin* began in earnest in the *Southern Cross* and many appeals were made to readers.[131] They were reminded that Griffith's *United Irishman* was founded in 1899 with a capital of £50.

Arthur Griffith had seen the effectiveness of the daily press in the North Leitrim by- election and this had made him more determined. The weekly *Sinn Féin* had found it difficult to defend itself against attacks from its daily competitors. He raised funds from a variety of sources, about £4,000 of the £8,000 required.[132] However Sinn Féin opinion on the paper was divided.[133] He persuaded the Sinn Féin Executive to agree to the plan even though they viewed it with apprehension.[134] They felt it was

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[127] William Bulfin to Fr. M. Quinn, Secretary of Buenos Aires Branch of Sinn Féin 6 Sept. 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13811 (Folder 1)
[128] *Southern Cross*, 14 Aug. 1908, p. 13.
[129] *Southern Cross*, 7 Aug. 1908, p. 15.
[130] *Southern Cross*, 21 Aug. 1908, p. 14.
[131] *Southern Cross*, 28 Aug. 1908, p. 7.
[132] Carlton Younger, *Arthur Griffith* (Dublin. 1981), p. 35.
[133] Richard P. Davis, *Arthur Griffith and Non-Violent Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 1974), p. 66.
[134] P.S. O'Hegarty, *Sinn Féin, An Illumination* (Dublin and London, 1919), p. 37.

an inopportune time as the funds of Sinn Féin had been depleted in order to defray the expenses of the election.[135]

The first issue of the *Daily Sinn Féin* appeared on Monday evening 23 August 1909 and was greeted to official silence by the press of Dublin. It went on sale at a cost of a halfpenny and its staff included The O'Rahilly and Arthur Griffith.[136] As secretary of the Sinn Féin Publishing Company, Sean T. O'Ceallaigh recalled his reservations about the project. He was conscious that enough money had been gathered to start the venture but not to sustain it. There was no working capital and no proper team, even though its contributors included W. M. Kennedy, Seamus O'Sullivan, Grace Gifford and the O'Rahilly.[137]

The *Daily Sinn Féin* ran as an evening paper from 24 August 1909 to 22 January 1910 and it might well have paid its way had Griffith's capital not run out.[138] Griffith edited both the weekly and the daily paper. The weekly came out on Thursday and the daily was issued around 5.00pm, after which it was placed on sale in all the chief towns of Ireland. Both papers had the same format , carrying Sinn Féin news, information on the language movement, the usual Gaelic column, editorials, foreign news, reprints from the Resurrection of Hungary, statistical reports, readers' opinions, art and literary criticism, fashion commentary, pictures and cartoons.[139] It has been contended that in an attempt to widen the paper's appeal, Griffith 'adopted a conciliatory approach to the Unionists and Parliamentarians and this alienated some of his associates in the Sinn Féin movement.' It has also been argued that Griffith had made a number of business errors, including a refusal to advertise English manufactures.[140]At a meeting of the directors of the Sinn Féin Printing and Publishing Company on 5 December 1909 the following table indicated the sale figures for the two newspapers:

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[135] Ibid., p. 38.
[136] *Southern Cross*, 1 Oct. 1909, p. 4.
[137] Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, *Sean T.* (Baile Atha Cliath, 1963), p. 119.
[138] Carlton Younger, *Arthur Griffith*, p. 36.
[139] Virginia Glandon, *Arthur Griffith and the Advanced Nationalist Press in Ireland, 1902 – 1922* (New York, 1985), p. 45.
[140] Ciaran Ó Duibhir, *Sinn Féin, The First Election 1908* (Ireland, 1993), p. 93.

Table 8.1. Numbers of *Daily Sinn Féin* and *Weekly Sinn Féin* Circulated

	Daily Sinn Féin	*Weekly Sinn Féin*
Easons	13,042	2,200
Agents	11,915	1,210
Sales	4.956	270
Subs	2,400	---
Total	32,313	3,680

Source: The Sinn Féin Printing and Publishing Company Ltd., Minute Book, NLI, Ms 2139

During the week beginning 16 Jan 1910 the daily circulated 29,969 copies and the weekly only 3,413.[141] From the start the two papers were in financial difficulties that could not be surmounted.

It was said of Griffith that he never took his shareholders or readers into his confidence until the final stages of a crisis. The financial position of the paper had become critical and Griffith decided to enlist the help of Irish-Americans to rescue the situation.[142] Bulfin failed to question the viability of a daily paper and to ponder sufficiently the costs involved. Once again his judgement was clouded by his beliefs and enthusiasm. As editor of the *Southern Cross* he should have realised the difficulties that had to be surmounted in attempting to establish a daily newspaper. In November 1909 Bulfin and The O'Rahilly volunteered to travel in order to raise funds to secure the floundering *Daily Sinn Féin.* They sailed from Liverpool to New York. Essentially it was an attempt to attract American investors. On the 27 November 1909, O'Rahilly wrote to his wife, Nannie:

> I wish you would pray for success. I know of no other method of influencing it. It was pathetic leaving the office last night and realising that so much depended on what we do.[143]

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[141] Virginia Glandon, *Arthur Griffith and the Advanced-Nationalist Press in Ireland, 1900-1922* (New York, 1985), p. 45.
[142] Marcus Bourke, *The O'Rahilly* (Tralee, 1967), p. 37.
[143] Aodogan O'Rahilly, *Winding the Clock. O'Rahilly and the 1916 Rising* (Dublin 1991), p. 60

In spite of the urgency of his mission, Bulfin was still able to register with vivid detail his impressions of New York and to note the changes since his last visit in 1904. Even though his attempts at fundraising were not meeting with success, his response to the city was enthusiastic and positive. He wrote:

> New York is certainly a very considerable attempt at a village. That superb panorama which unfolds itself to the view of the traveller as he approaches the city from the bay is one of the wonders of the world. The mouth of the Hudson is one of the most marvellous waterways ever used by man. And it could not be otherwise. The tide of the world wide commerce ebbs through its ever increasing volume. In the same way Buenos Aires is passing year by year in higher degrees of sweetliness. Like New York, her importance increases not so much from her own impulse as from the vast potentiality that lies behind her. New York is changing, growing year by year, day by day. During the five years that have gone by since my first visit, it has soared skywards skyward some hundreds of feet and spread out for miles. New skyscrapers pierced the clouds and deep canyons of brick and mortar opened in vistas through the murk of the watery evening as our ship steamed to her berth.[144]

He also observed that the underground railway system, like the skyscrapers, was a child of necessity. It started in 1900 and was inaugurated during his visit in 1904. It was, he felt, impossible to describe the spirit of New York. It was that strange blend of 'Frenzied furnace and altruism, stoicism and panic, Christian Science and cancer research, organisation beside chaos, method rubbing shoulder with madness.' In all, he could only conclude that 'amazing , original, seductive - but decidedly elusive, is this New York of 1910'.[145]

For Bulfin the changes in New York were everywhere to be seen and he recorded his sense of awe in reviewing the impact of Fifth Avenue:

> But however Fifth Avenue came to exist, whatever may be its sins of deed or thought or commission or omission; there it stands to-day the high water mark of achievement in modern commercial civilisation - in many respects the most singular , in some respects the most beautiful and in nearly every respect the most luxurious street the world has ever known.[146]

It was also clear to him that it was a city that could accommodate the world of art and architecture with its many noble buildings and art galleries. Bulfin remarked that

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[144] *Southern Cross*, 11 Feb. 1910, p. 15.
[145] *Southern Cross*, 4 Mar. 1910, p. 7.
[146] *Southern Cross*, 25 Mar. 1909, pp 4-5.

'New York is like a busy man. It finds time for many things that idle men never think about. New York finds time for Art and is a liberal patron of the Arts'. [147]

Their arrival was badly timed as it coincided with appeals for money from other Irish Nationalists. They had also been instructed not to make a public appeal for funds and this militated against them. The Irish Republican Brotherhood had its own inner conflicts and divisions. It was Bulmer Hobson who was chosen by Clan na Gael in 1907 to tour the United States and explain the movement to the Irish-American community. He was considered by many Irish Americans to be the leader of Sinn Féin and he became the Irish correspondent for Devoy's *Gaelic American.*[148] All of this makes it easier to understand the lack of Irish-American support for Griffith and his *Daily Sinn Féin.*[149] Seamus Mac Manus, who was staying in New York, wrote expressing his concern and sympathy for the failure of Bulfin's mission in New America. He felt that it was just like the Irish in New York to respond in a negative way to his appeal for funds.[150] On the 20 December 1909, Bulfin visited John Devoy at his office in the *Gaelic American* and two days later sailed for Ireland.

However, the fundraising campaign on behalf of the ailing *Daily Sinn Féin* proved to be unsuccessful and Bulfin and The O'Rahilly returned to Ireland without any money. In a letter to Maude Gonne, John Quinn presented his succinct and incisive perspective on the failure of the fundraising campaign:

> Bulfin came on a wild goose chase in December to raise money to keep the *Daily Sinn Féin* on its feet. Of course he failed. They seem to think in Ireland that dollars grow on trees over here instead of leaves and that all they have to do is to land and the dollars begin to fall. Bulfin is a splendid man, one in a thousand - with a heart as big as a tree and I saw a good deal of him. A daily paper is a big undertaking – like keeping a yacht or two or a racing stable. It is a game only for the very rich. And very rich Irishmen here, as I told you, do not interest themselves enough in Ireland to send money over for that. Raising money here for Ireland is like Rossetti said of reading Shelley's poetry – "damned hard work." You know that and I know it but the others seem not to want to know it.[151]

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[147] *Southern Cross*, 8 Apr. 1909, p. 14.
[148] Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland, Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Tralee, 1968), pp. 10-11.
[149] Marcus Bourke, *The O'Rahilly* (Tralee, 1967), p. 38.
[150] Seamus Mac Manus to William Bulfin, 23 Dec. 1909, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13810 (Folder 21)
[151] John Quinn to Maud Gonne, 31 Jan. 1910, The John Quinn Memorial Collection, Correspondence Quinn and Maud Gonne, Film made by New York Public Library, 1970, NLI, P.3.

The harsh weather conditions in New York and the onerous return journey further weakened Bulfin's uncertain health. O'Rahilly expressed his concern in a letter, 'I hope you are perfectly well and that the threatened cold did not materialise.'[152] He was also concerned to hear from Bulfin had 'so many different worries' and hoped that they would 'soon straighten themselves out.'[153] There were problems in Buenos Aires that might necessitate him to pay a return visit to Argentina. Meanwhile the fortunes of the *Daily Sinn Féin* remained critical and funds were not forthcoming in Ireland. It now became clear that only possible hope was to preserve the weekly *Sinn Féin* and to concentrate all efforts in doing so. The *Daily Sinn Féin* was doomed.[154] On 22 January 1910 the final edition of the paper appeared.

Towards the end of January 1910, Bulfin's health took a dramatic turn for the worse. The chill and fever he developed after his return from New York had led to an attack of pneumonia and he was in a critical condition at his home in Derrinlough. His strong constitution had been taxed to extremes over the years and had now reached a critical stage. Many factors contributed to the present crisis in his health; long working hours over the years as an editor and journalist, financial worries, political commitments and campaigns, onerous travel journeys, his attack of rheumatic fever in 1906 and more recently his endeavours on behalf of the *Daily Sinn Féin*. Mental, physical, emotional and spiritual exhaustion had now left him at his most vulnerable.

On 1 February 1910 William Bulfin died at his home in Derrinlough. His death, after such a brief illness, was unexpected and came as a great shock to his wife, family and friends. In both Ireland and Argentina there was a real sense of shock, grief and loss at his untimely death. William Bulfin, Che Bueno, would no more be among them. Death had intervened preventing him from seeking out for further horizons.

Bulfin was buried at Eglish parish cemetery, within two miles from Derrinlough, King's County, a few days later. The obituaries in the press in Ireland and Argentina detailed his life, work and legacy. There was the general consensus that in his

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[152] The O'Rahilly to William Bulfin, 5 Jan. 1910, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13819 (Folder 26)
[153] The O'Rahilly to William Bulfin, 9 Jan. 1910, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13819 (Folder 26)
[154] The O'Rahilly to William Bulfin, 25 Jan. 1910, NLI, Bulfin Papers, Ms 13819 (Folder 26)

relatively short life that he had attempted and achieved much. His strengths were highlighted strongly and his limitations received little scrutiny. The public man was presented with clarity and vigour, while the private man remained somewhat enigmatic. There was little or no critical evaluation of his life, works and legacy.

In his tribute to Bulfin in *An Claidheamh Soluis,* Patrick T. Keohane outlined his career and achievements. He chose to place emphasis on Bulfin's positive qualities and to present an almost romantic picture of the man. As an active supporter of the Irish Ireland movement, he argued:

> By the death of William Bulfin, Ireland has lost the leader it could least afford to spare.....standing 6 feet 4 inches tall in height and of splendid symmetry, he presented a type of manhood to rank with the knights of old....a marvellous memory....his sense of Irish history...education...advocate of temperance...at home in the cottage and mansion....In Argentina he was a veritable tower of strength to the Irish exiles of every class.[155]

Editorials in the nationalist press also stressed Bulfin's achievements. They expressed a strong sense of loss at his premature death and paid tribute to his endeavours. The *Weekly Sinn Féin* conveyed this feeling:

> Not since the morning of the tidings that William Rooney was dead has sadder news reached us than that which comes as we go to press. William Bulfin is dead – Ireland has lost a man born to teach and lead her people. Like that of Davis and Rooney, the name of Bulfin is far less familiar to his own generation than the name of any petty politician of the day. But time adjusts the balance. The patriot's name will grow as that of the politician's is forgotten. "It will be better for Ireland when she builds less politicians and more patriots." said William Bulfin as he stood at the grave of William Rooney.[156]

Further tributes to Bulfin highlighted and captured other aspects of his life and work. The editorial in an *Claidheamh Soluis* focused on the following:

> The death of William Bulfin deprives Ireland of one of her ablest men and one of her boldest asserters of her claims to national freedom....he became a journalist who was known and feared for the honour and fearlessness of his methods...he championed the cause of Catholicism...his knowledge of Irish was not extensive...he knew every period of Irish history...he was a man of great parts and lofty ideals...of affairs and men at home he was keenly critical...his own life was one of strenuous toil.[157]

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[155] *Claidheamh Soluis*, 12 Feb. 1910, p. 8.
[156] *Sinn Féin Weekly*, 5 Feb. 1910, p. 4.
[157] *Claidheamh Soluis,* 12 Feb. 1910, p. 7.

However, other tributes managed to convey a greater sense of the complexity of Bulfin's life. They did not choose to ignore the trials and challenges that faced him. As an editor and journalist he had incurred the wrath of vested interests in Argentina and he struggled to keep the *Southern Cross* in circulation. The *Irish Nation and Peasant* claimed:

> Life had tried William Bulfin severely. The new Ireland with which he came in contact of late years and to which he seemed so heroic and so young hearted ...knew little of the struggle that preceded his success in the Argentine. Much of the struggle and the enmity and misrepresentation with which he had to contend for years were of a character hard to bear....for one whose convictions were so intense and who was so brave a fighter, his was a mental atmosphere of remarkable gentleness, peace and calm.[158]

In the *Gaelic American*, John Devoy recorded his impressions of Bulfin and observed:

> He was a man of very powerful physique, over six feet in height, but it is such men that are carried off soonest by pneumonia. Mr Bulfin's death will be felt as a great loss to the Irish National cause and by Nationalists throughout the world. Bulfin prospered in Argentina but his heart was always in Ireland and it is appropriate that the ashes of such a devoted Irishman should rest in his native soil.[159]

In his account of Bulfin, the Sceilig focused on other aspects of his life and work. He argued that:

> He was like a Knight of the Craobh Rua...a strong moralist...never stopped as editor of the *Southern Cross* ... confronted the seoinin element in South America...Helped Irish priests in their mission...gave financial help to Conradh na Gaeilge...like Thomas Davis he wanted to support all those working for the benefit of Ireland...his mind was not yet really understood in Ireland...Certain people felt he was narrow in his thinking....he saw the interconnection between countries...if he had lived another ten years.[160]

The *Freeman's Journal* provided its readers with a detailed account of Bulfin's life and achievements. It ranged from his early childhood to his final years and noted:

> His experiences and observations while working on the Pampas...the romance of the wild life appealed to him but its uglier side repelled him...read voraciously, devoured poetry and romances...his *Tales of the Pampas*....his ideal of Nationality being that of Thomas Davis...a most fervent catholic... at that time the paper (*Southern Cross*) did not possess the prestige it afterwards

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[158] *The Irish Peasant and Nation*, 12 Feb. 1910, p. 5.
[159] *Gaelic American*, 19 Feb. 1910, p. 5.
[160] *Claidheamh Soluis*, 12 Feb. 1910, p.3.

> attained under his guidance...It was largely due to him that the Gaelic League was so admirably organised in Argentina and sent such splendid financial assistance to the language movement at home...William Bulfin speedily became a great force among the Catholic community of Argentina...a charming raconteur...reserved his hostility for England and the Anglicisation in Ireland.[161]

In Argentina, the *Hiberno Argentine Review* had long proved to be in conflict with Bulfin and the *Southern Cross*. The editor's response to Bulfin's death acknowledged this and admitted that:

> We have always recognised him as an able opponent, a gifted writer and a sincere lover of Ireland. Faults he had, being human, and his opinions sometimes were allowed to silence his judgments. But taking him all in all, we have to admit that in him journalism loses a brilliant exponent and a trenchant pen.[162]

While Bulfin was much discussed during his own life and for a period after his death, he was, however, largely, to fade from memory. The obituaries of the time testify to his reputation and significance. In the decade after his death, the unfolding events were significant. His son Eamonn was one of those who raised the Irish flag in the GPO during the Easter Rising 1916. His daughter, Catalina, was secretary to Austin Stack and married Sean McBride, son of Maude Gonne and John McBride, in 1926. His brother, Francis, served as a Sinn Féin TD in the Dáil in the1920s. After his death Bulfin was commemorated in a number of ways. The Gaelic League founded a cycling club and established a branch, Craobh Liam Bulfin, in his honour. Bulfin Road in Inchicore, Dublin was named in honour of his family at the formation of the new state in the 1920s. *Rambles in Eirinn* went into several editions and was popular reading, particularly among the nationalist population, during the first half of the twentieth century. Extracts from the book became prescribed reading in Irish primary school during the 1930s and 1940s.[163] A translation of the book, *Cam Chuarta in Eirinn*, was published in 1938. It is also interesting to note that the *Southern Cross*, now a monthly, is still being published.

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[161] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Feb. 1910, p. 10.
[162] *Hiberno Argentine Review* 4 Feb. 1910, p.25.
[163] Jeanne Bulfin Winder, 'Bulfin: A Derrinlough Family' in Brian Pey (Ed.) *Eglish and Drumcullen, A Parish in Firceall* (Birr, 2003), pp 221-29

Conclusion

In evaluating the various aspects of Bulfin's life, this study has explored the critical stages that influenced his destiny. It has concentrated on his public life and career. His life was relatively short but it encompassed a great deal of commitment, endeavour and achievement.

A paucity of records pertaining to the Bulfin's youth have hindered this research in giving a fuller account of the formative influences in his early life. However, a strong sense of family and home place dominated his priorities. As demonstrated from the correspondence records his loyalty to family of origin and birthplace of Derrinlough was sustained throughout his life. This was best illustrated by his sustained contacts with his family in Ireland, his financial help in securing the family home and his eventual decision to settle in Ireland. This enduring quality of loyalty emerged in his commitment to his wife and children. It can also be seen in his capacity to establish and sustain friendships with a variety of people in both Ireland and Argentina. He maintained close contact with Arthur Griffith, Douglas Hyde and members of the Irish community in Argentina. This sense of commitment to people, places and causes was always to remain with him. A passion for reading and an interest in education became a lasting feature of his life. As illustrated in chapter 1 of this study, his decision to emigrate to Argentina is best understood in the context of the links that had been forged between Ireland and Argentina during the course of the nineteenth century. A spirit of adventure and a certain pioneering spirit guided his endeavours, motivating his desire to emigrate and also many of the other enterprises in his future life.

His farming background in King's county had not prepared him for the harsh and demanding rigours of his new life in Argentina. As shown in chapter 2 of this study, life on the Pampas exposed him to extreme conditions that taxed his reserves. His capacity to endure was tested by extremes of isolation and harsh working conditions on the ranches. A tendency to overextend himself was to remain a feature of his overall life. However, his experiences on the Pampas brought him in close contact with the Irish community and this brought with it a strong sense of solidarity with them. His understanding of their lives was enriched and this gave him a stronger sense of his own identity as an Irishman. He

experienced the range of feelings and thoughts of the exile. This fostered in him a sentimental, romantic and heightened sense of Ireland. The seeds of future endeavours had been sown. His experiences with the gauchos influenced him in his role as their defender in the face of the negative prevailing forces. His sympathy with them was reinforced by the way he viewed them as displaced in Argentina, like the native Irish in Ireland. All of this was to be distilled and to find its way into his future writings in the form of editorials, articles, stories and sketches. These writings have provided evidence of his talent for conveying characters, settings and observations based on his four years working on the Pampas.

As a young journalist working for the *Southern Cross* in Buenos Aires, Bulfin displayed the priorities and spirit that were to dominate his career. Essentially his moral imagination was caught by the issues and events that were to the fore in the early 1890s. As detailed in chapter 3 of this research, he campaigned vigorously against abuses in relation to medicine, the law, education and the political and financial institutions. For him journalism became the instrument for influencing social reform. By degrees he saw himself as a social reformer and this crusading spirit began to dominate his writings. His approach was combative, rhetorical and fearless. As is clear from his writings he could be polemical to the point of being dogmatic. At times his didactic and descriptive style had a Dickensian flavour. An examination of the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald* has illustrated that Bulfin's views were being challenged in Argentina. These newspapers have helped to place Bulfin in the greater context of the time. Bulfin was capable of self criticism and emerged as one of his own best critics. While he recognised his limits and weaknesses as a journalist, he seemed unable to correct or modify them. However, he also displayed a talent for capturing the mores and behaviour of the people and presented for his readers the series 'Sketches of Buenos Aires', a vivid, humorous and entertaining picture of the world around them. His pen could capture the different shades of life from the serious to the playful and light-thearted.

This study has shown how Bulfin's nationalism echoed the movements and events of his time. It was in exile in Argentina that his sense of nationalism was to unfold. Exile was to influence his thoughts and feelings. As editor of the *Southern Cross*, he was conscious of a sense of mission to protect and defend not

only the Irish community in Argentina, but also Ireland itself as a nation. He fully embraced the Irish Ireland philosophy and was instrumental in the founding of the Buenos Aires branch of the Gaelic League. His efforts at fundraising and promotion met with success. The fact that he was later considered as a prospective editor for *An Claidheamh Soluis* indicated the esteem in which he was held. He also became a supporter of Arthur Griffith and proved to be an effective propagandist for the Sinn Féin movement in Argentina, America and Ireland. Sinn Féin saw his merits and nominated him as a delegate from Argentina to the National Convention in Ireland. They also nominated him as possible Vice President and candidate for Sinn Féin in the general election. An ardent admirer of Patrick Pearse, Bulfin argued that the foundation of St Enda's school was one of the most important events since the foundation of the Gaelic League. As argued and illustrated in this research he emerged as a significant figure at an important stage in the development of the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin.

As editor of the *Southern Cross* he greatly influenced the direction and impact of the paper. The articles, editorials, sketches, interviews and reports examined in this study have revealed his priorities in relation to both Ireland and Argentina. Thy have demonstrated how his thinking evolved in relation to a wide variety of social, economic and political issues over two decades. During his editorship the paper was to become more robust and more clearly defined in terms of its philosophy and allegiance. Bulfin emerges as editor who was determined to assert the founding principles of the paper, namely, to represent and serve the Irish Catholic community in Argentina. This in turn meant challenging the assumptions of the English language papers, like the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald*, whom he perceived to be dismissive of the Irish community and their heritage. As shown in chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this study, he moulded the *Southern Cross* into an effective propaganda organ for the Catholic Church, the Gaelic League and the Sinn Féin movement. He examined the role of church and state and advocated clearly defined boundaries. In line with the founding philosophy of the *Southern Cross*, he sought to defend the status and leadership of the Catholic Church. His efforts were acknowledged by the Papal award he received in 1906. At times his fervour and rhetorical style had echoes of the writings of G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc.

His return visit to Ireland in 1902 consolidated his political philosophy. An absence of over seventeen years heightened his response to the state of the country. His *Rambles in Eirinn* presented the exile's perspective on the state of Ireland in the early years of the twentieth century. As shown in chapter 6 of this research, his observations were coloured by a strong sense of patriotic fervour. He was critical of the colonial legacy that had engendered depopulation, land clearances, emigration and decline. Essentially he held to a traditional nationalist interpretation of the causes of Ireland's economic decline. His analysis of the root causes of Ireland's economic problems was not always based on a full understanding of the situation. Rather his prejudices gave him a sometimes limited picture.

Bulfin's literary ambitions were never fully realised. For all his endeavours his literary work received only a limited recognition. While aware of certain flaws in his writings, particularly a tendency to over elaborate and digress, he was unable to correct and modify the weaknesses. In spite of good reviews, his collection of short stories, *Tales of the Pampas*, did not sell well. Meanwhile, there was a consistent demand for his later short stories in America and they were published in the *Everybody's Magazine* right up to and beyond his death. His two novels, 'A Man of the Pampas' and 'The Rose of Esker' remained unpublished. However, *Rambles in Eirinn* did reach classic status and went into several editions. This is the book by which he is best remembered.

One of the ironies of Bulfin's life centres on the question of leadership. For most of his journalistic career, he focused on the importance of good leadership at local, national and international level. He argued for the vision and qualities needed in the true leader. Yet he himself had many of those qualities; vision, conviction, clarity of purpose and a capacity to lead others. Thomas Murray saw him as a potential leader for the Irish community in Argentina. He was confident, articulate and inspirational. As demonstrated in chapter 8 of this study, Arthur Griffith and members of Sinn Féin felt he would be an ideal candidate for political office in Ireland. He had proven himself by lecturing, promoting, fundraising and writing on behalf of Sinn Féin in Ireland, Argentina and America. Bulfin, however, did not see himself in such a role. He declined all offers of a political career. Like Thomas Davis, he decided to serve with the pen. He saw himself as a journalist and not a politician. It may well be that he was also

influenced in his decision by his precarious health and the reluctance to engage in the art of compromise that politics necessitated. His lifelong scepticism and disdain for the political world was an important consideration. In spite of his opinionated nature, Bulfin was conscious of his own limitations and preferences.

Certain factors helped to eclipse Bulfin from the memory of people. His writings remain as a reminder of his vision and thoughts and have helped in this study to reach an understanding of Bulfin. This research has concentrated largely on an examination of his writings in order to establish a fuller picture of the man himself. It has also presented evidence of how he was viewed by others. Much was accomplished in the field of journalism and Bulfin proved to be an effective propagandist for the causes he espoused. In spite of a very prolific career in journalism, he is best remembered by his literary works, *Rambles in Eirinn* and *Tales of the Pampas*. This may be due to the very nature of journalism itself which can be ephemeral and may not last the test of time. His literary works were to out last all his journalistic endeavours. The author endures and the journalist fades from memory.

Other factors helped to eclipse the memory of Bulfin. It is possible that his divided and fragmented stay in Argentina and Ireland prevented him establishing himself more permanently in minds of the people in the two countries. His reluctance to take up a political career may have placed him on the margins of history. The momentous events in the decade after his death may have also served to erase his impact. While this research has thrown light on many aspects of his life, nevertheless, his early death has left questions about his life and legacy unanswered. Would he have continued to refuse to play a political role in Ireland? Would he have endeavoured to extend his career as a journalist in Ireland? The first question remains open to speculation. His scepticism in relation to the political world indicates that he would never accept political office. However, it was his stated intention to continue as Irish correspondent for the *Southern Cross*, to promote the cause of Sinn Féin by writing for the *Daily Sinn Féin* and to concentrate more on his literary endeavours.

This study has presented the political, social and economic context in which Bulfin lived. It has explored the scope and limits of his responses to events and movements at the critical stages of his life. What emerges is a portrait of a man of principles and potential, who lived his life consistent with a set of

passionate and unyielding convictions. It is hoped that this research will lead to a renewal of interest in Bulfin and a fuller appreciation of the man and his writings. It should enable his admirers and detractors to gain a more objective view of his character and life. It may prompt further studies of his writings and the possibility of an anthology of his best work: a selection from his journalistic articles, editorials, lectures, short stories and novels.

Illustrations

1. William Bulfin, photograph, circa 1890s



WILLIAM BULFIN

Source: *Rambles in Eirinn* (5th Edition, Dublin, 1917)

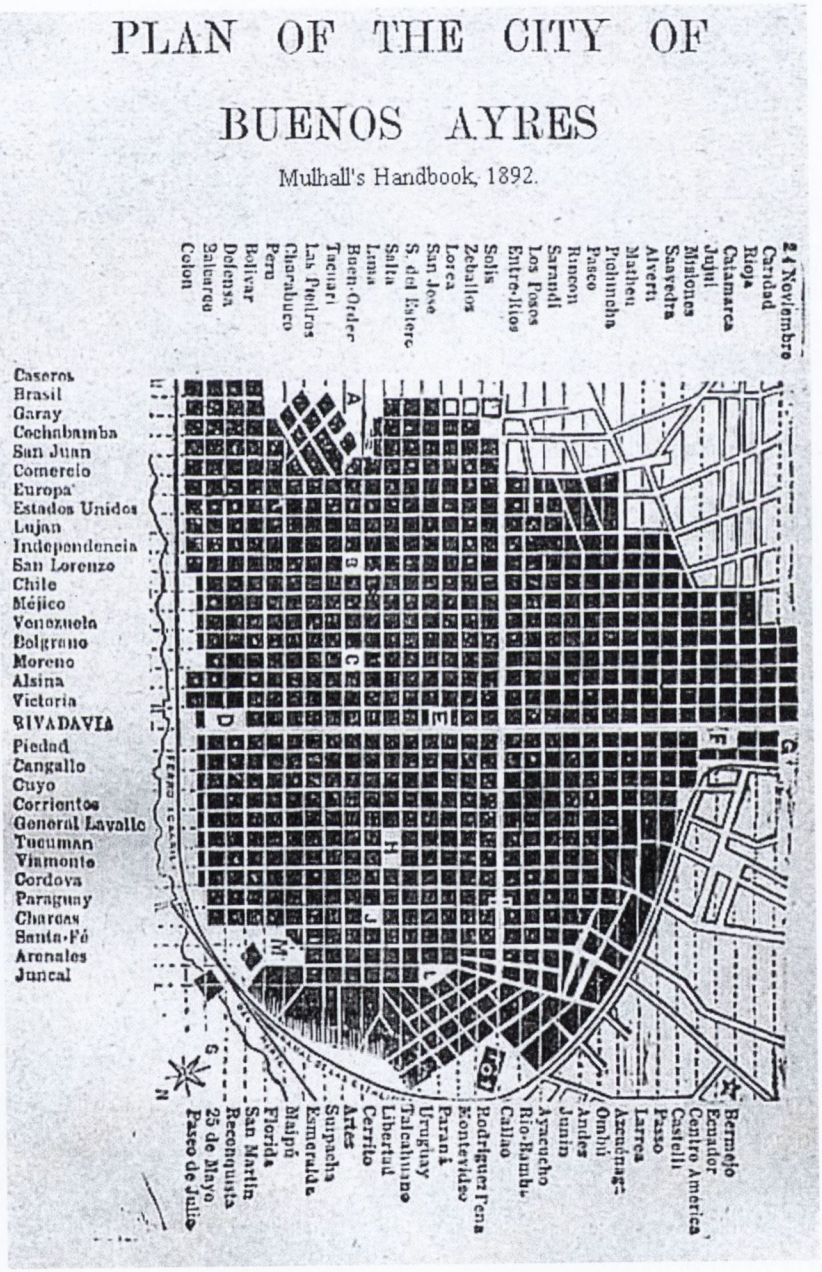
2. Bulfin's Home at Derrinlough, Birr, King's County



BULFIN'S HOME AT DERRINLOUGH.

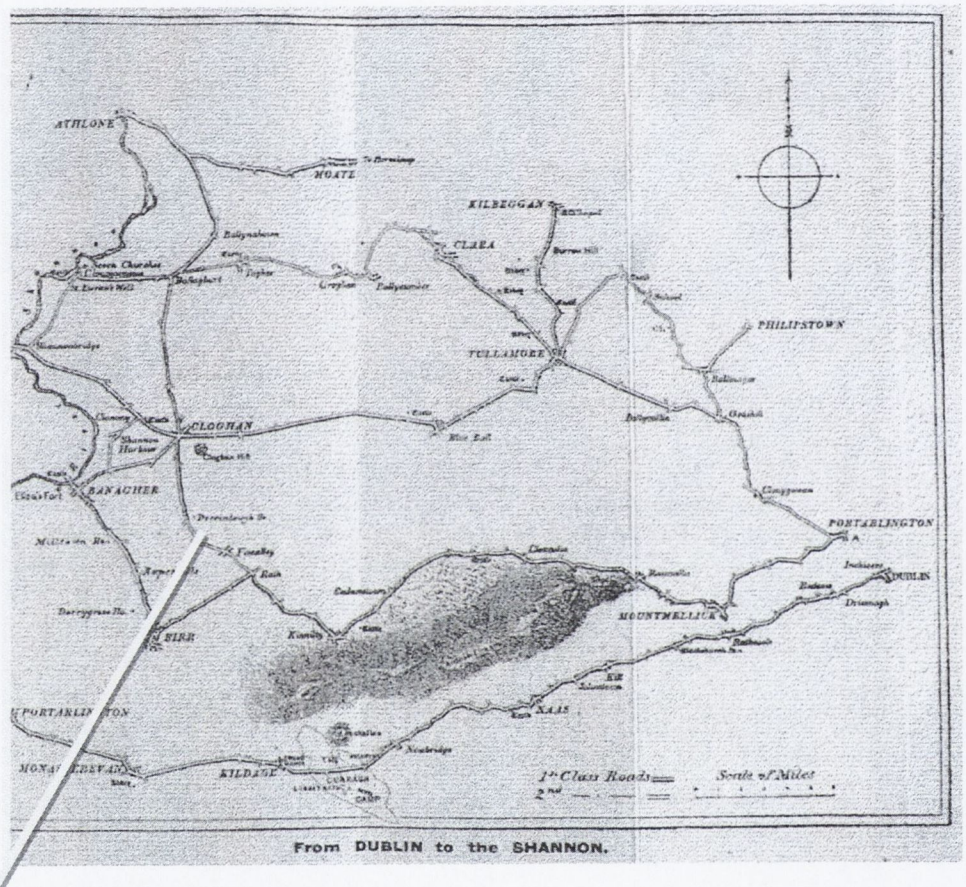
Source: *Rambles in Eirinn* (Dublin, 1907)

4. Plan of the city of Buenos Ayres, 1892



Source: M.G. & E.T. Mulhall, *Handbook of the River Plate.*

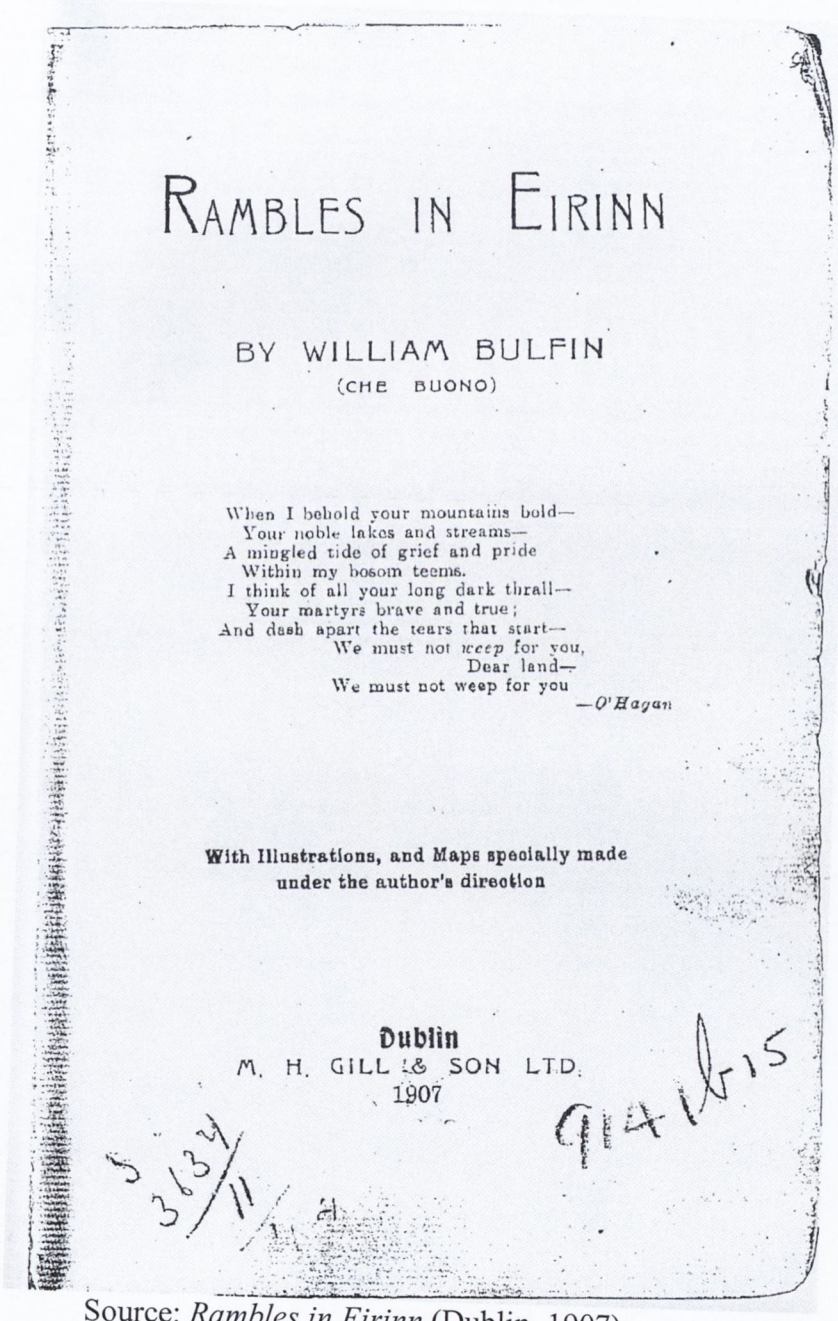
3. Map of Bulfin's cycling route, Irish midlands



Derrinlough House

Source: *Rambles in Eirinn* (Dublin, 1907)

6. Title page of *Rambles in Eirinn*



RAMBLES IN EIRINN

BY WILLIAM BULFIN

(CHE BUONO)

When I behold your mountains bold—
Your noble lakes and streams—
A mingled tide of grief and pride
Within my bosom teems.
I think of all your long dark thrall—
Your martyrs brave and true;
And dash apart the tears that start—
We must not *weep* for you,
Dear land—
We must not weep for you

—*O'Hagan*

With Illustrations, and Maps specially made under the author's direction

Dublin
M. H. GILL & SON LTD.
1907

S 3634/11

Source: *Rambles in Eirinn* (Dublin, 1907)

5. Photograph of Irish midlands taken by William Bulfin



Photo by] [Author.

"THE SMILING MIDLANDS."
Farmstead under Croghan Hill.

Source: *Rambles in Eirinn* (Dublin, 1907)

8. Front page of *Southern Cross*, 1898



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BUENOS AIRES, FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 1898

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Source: *The Southern Cross*, 25 March, 1898.

7. Masthead of *Sinn Féin Daily* newspaper, 1909


Sinn Féin
(SINN FEIN— DAILY EDITION).
DUBLIN, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1909.

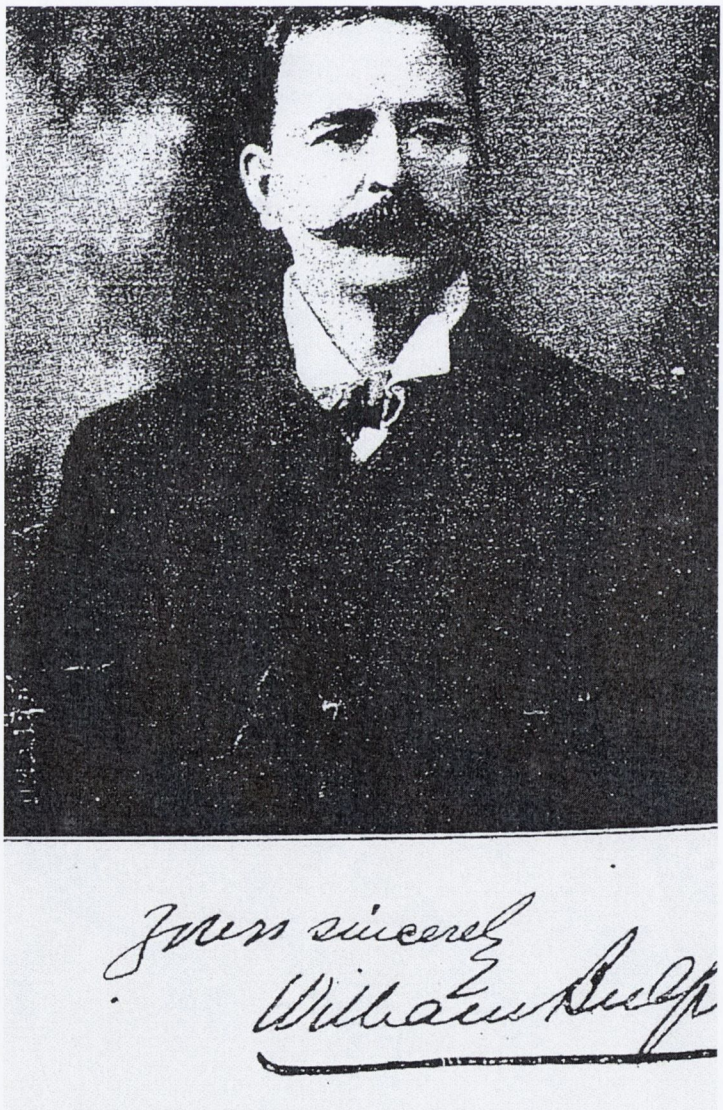
Source: *Sinn Féin Daily*, 23 September, 1909.

9. New York, 1904, the year of Bulfin's first visit to the city



Source: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

10. Signed photograph of Bulfin, c.1900s.



Source: *Rambles in Eirinn* (Dublin, 1907)

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