

deputy there, reported to her on the situation in southwestern Ireland. Why is Ireland in so miserable a state? Whose fault is it? How does Sidney differentiate the Irish from the English? Does his report justify English involvement in Ireland? Would Ireland be fit for Gilbert's own colonial policy (document 4.1)? Irish opposition to English colonization in Munster provoked harsh martial law by Gilbert, acting as Sidney's subordinate. Gilbert reportedly ordered "that the heads of all those ... which were killed in the day, should be cut off from their bodies and brought to the place where he encamped at night ..., so that none could come into his tent for any cause but commonly he must pass through a lane of heads which he used *ad terrorem*."⁵ Perhaps unsurprisingly, such state terrorism did little to settle the island; nevertheless, Gilbert was rewarded with a knighthood in 1570.

As touching the estate of the whole country ..., like as I never was in a more pleasant country in all my life so never saw I a more wasted and desolate land, no not in the confines of other countries where actual war hath continually been kept by the greatest princes of Christendom; and there heard I such lamentable cries and doleful complaints made by that small remain of poor people which yet are left, who (hardly escaping the fury of the sword and fire of their outrageous neighbors, or the famine which the same, or their extortious lords, hath driven them unto ...) make demonstration of the miserable estate of that country. Besides this, such horrible and lamentable spectacles there are to behold as the burning of villages, the ruin of churches, the wasting of such as have been good towns and castles, yea, the view of the bones and skulls of your dead subjects, who, partly by murder, partly by famine, have died in the fields, as in truth hardly any Christian with dry eyes could behold. ... Surely there was never people that lived in more misery than they do, nor as it should seem of worse minds, for matrimony among them is no more regarded in effect than conjunction between unreasonable beasts. Perjury, robbery and murder counted allowable. Finally I cannot find that they make any conscience of sin and doubtless I doubt whether they christen their children or no, for neither find I place where it should be done, nor any person able to instruct them in the rules of a Christian; or if they were taught I see no grace in them to follow it.

4.4 *Earl of Essex, "The State of Ireland, as it appeared... during the Rebellion" (1599)*⁶

The Irish situation remained complex to the end of the reign. In response to the O'Neill rebellion, Robert Devereux, earl of Essex (1565–1601) had been

⁵ T. Churchyard, *A Generall Rehearsall of Warres* (London, 1579), sig. Q[iv].

⁶ H. Harington, ed., *Nugae Antiquae: Being a Miscellaneous Collection of Original Papers in Prose and Verse; Written...by Sir John Harington* (London, 1779), 2: 294–303.

sent across the Irish Sea to command an immense force in 1599. According to Essex, which Irish problems are to be found within the Pale (the “Englishry,” some 30 miles around Dublin), and which problems are endemic outside the Pale? Is the English failure in Ireland one of government or one of cultural awareness? Do the English want assimilation? How do the English and Irish in Ireland interact? Do these selections suggest the situation had changed between 1567 and 1599?

The chief causes of want [lack] of reformation in Ireland arise,

1. From the [Protestant] Churches for the most part, in general, being decayed so as the laws of God are not in any good sort or order therein ministered.
2. The good instructions delivered to governors from England, not put into execution. ...
3. No shire halls, nor other places fit for the ordinary administration of justice there.
4. No circuits nor quarter sessions there kept, as becometh.
5. The disorders of soldiers not punished. ... <no. 6 missing>
7. The joining in marriage, fostering, and allying of the [Gaelic] Irishry with the [Anglo-Irish] English subjects.
8. No English laws or orders put in execution, or administered in Irish countries, where the English do govern.
9. No restitution made to the subjects of the Pale for any spoils on them committed by the Irishry.
10. The selling of horse armor, weapons, munition and furniture by the English subjects to the Irishry, and paying of great customs and duties in the Irish markets by the English subjects.
11. The great want of English tenants throughout the Pale.
12. The want of armor, weapons, munition, and furniture by the subjects of the Pale, and want of skill for lack of exercise, how to use English weapons ...
13. The want of schools throughout the Pale, either to learn younglings the English tongue, or to instruct the elder sort in rules of humanity. ... <no. 14 missing>
15. A number of idle people – horsemen, kern [poor Irish foot soldier], galloglass [Irish armed retainer], and such like, with their followers, and dependers – do live traveling the Pale, and consuming the poor inhabitants thereof in eating their meat and drink. ... <nos. 16–18 missing>
19. Item, The borderers of the Pale bringing up their children after the savage and Irish manner, setting them at liberty at the age of sixteen years, or thereabouts, with companies of kern, to live unbridled by the spoil.
20. The not using English apparel and English behavior by many great gentlemen on the borders, of English birth.

21. Item, The maintaining of Irish harpers, rhymers, bards, poets, and such other their likes, in the Pale together, proving that the Irish behavior is too perfectly learned. ... <nos. 22–24 missing>
25. Item, The using to parley by borderers with the Irish neighbors privately ..., and joining with them in great league of friendship; by means whereof the secret service, intended by governors on their appointments, have been... made known to the rebels. ...
26. Item, Loose, idle, and naughty people of the Irish countries, by whom the subjects are most offended, are not answered for, nor brought in by the captains or chieftains of the Irish. ...
27. The relieving of the Irishry with *aqua vitae* [distilled alcohol], made plentifully in the Pale, and to them conveyed as well in time of peace, as during their rebellion. ...
28. Item, The want of good laborers, handicraftsmen, and artificers. ...
29. The black rents [blackmail] and tributes, paid by the English subjects to the Irish neighbors, doth weaken the subject, and strengthen the enemy very much.
30. Item, The hue and cry not followed in form of law, on any robbery or spoils committed by the rebels. ...
31. Item, The spiritualities and temporalities [bishops and nobles] do not maintain the number of men appointed them by the laws, for the defense of the realm, to the distrengthening thereof.
32. The sheriffs and under-sheriffs of the English counties do use to accompany themselves with kern and suchlike Irish helpers, in ... doing of their offices. ...

For all which abuses and defects there are many good laws; yet such hath been the negligent execution of them, that they are at this time little regarded; therefore no hope of reformation, until the said laws are executed, or such as shall be thought necessary, without respect of persons.

4.5 Elizabeth's Reply to the House of Commons's Demand for Mary's Execution (November 24, 1586)⁷

During the last Tudor reign, the longer Elizabeth stayed unmarried, the clearer it became that the line of her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots (b. 1542, reigned 1542–67, d. 1587), would succeed her. But first Mary had to survive her own troubles in Scotland, borne not only of a realm torn between Protestant and Catholic, but of her own turbulent personal life. That turbulence culminated in the murder of her first husband, Lord Henry Darnley (1545/6–67) by the man she married as her second, James, earl of Bothwell (1534/5–78). In 1567, the dynastic problem posed by Mary Queen of Scots

⁷ [R. C.], *The Copie of a Letter to the Right Honourable the Earle of Leycester* (London, 1586), 23–8, 32.