

A Biographical Sketch of John Kells Ingram

Gregory Moore*

John Kells Ingram was one of the most respected and versatile Irish scholars of the nineteenth century. It is therefore strange that only a handful of economists are today aware of him, while still fewer are acquainted with his writings. References to Ingram in the specialised literature are also slight. At most he receives a brief perfunctory comment as an historical economist within a more general discussion of the English historical school - itself only a small research field.

This minor recognition is further deflated by charges that Ingram was unoriginal, lacked an understanding of technical economics and was surpassed in importance by other members of the English historical school.¹ However, even if these charges of dilettantism and unoriginality could be substantiated they should not be used as an excuse for the cursory treatment given to Ingram. He played an important role in the propagation of unorthodox methodology when the methodological debate between the historical economists and the orthodox school was at its height. This is of vital interest to any historian of thought for the following reasons:

- (1) the *Methodenstreit* preoccupied English economists for nearly twenty five years;
- (2) it forced the orthodox economists to both clarify their position and to practise what they preached;
- (3) it had important ramifications for policy at the turn of the century, especially in relation to the debate on protection;
- (4) it gave enormous impetus to the development of sociology and economic history as separate disciplines; and
- (5) the process of diffusion and the acceptance or rejection of unorthodox views is important to such significant topics as paradigm changes, research programmes, ideological bias and the sociology of economic schools.

The aim of this biographical sketch is to restore J.K.Ingram to his rightful place in the history of economic thought. It will also fill a gap in the literature, as Ingram's role as an historical economist has never been told in any detail. Indeed, apart from a recent brief overview by G.M.Koot, the only pieces on Ingram are incomplete memorials written soon after his death.² One, written in 1907 by C.Litton Falkiner, was the product of an address to the Dublin Statistical Society and is mainly concerned with Ingram's role in that Society.³ Another, T.W.Lyster's 1906 account, was written for a library association and is no more than a chronology of Ingram's life and works.⁴ Finally, Edgeworth's short but beautifully written obituary of Ingram in the *Economic Journal* really only describes his relationship with mathematics.⁵

Ingram's lineage may be traced back to Scottish Presbyterians who settled in

Ireland in the seventeenth century. Of this line the only ancestor of discoverable note was J.K.Ingram's grandfather, who established a linen factory and is said to have raised a corps for the Volunteer Movement known as the Lisdrumner or the Mountmorris Volunteers. It was also this grandfather who converted to the Established Church and therefore broke the family's Presbyterian tradition.⁶

John Kells Ingram himself was born near Pettigo in the county of Donegal on July 7th in the year 1823.⁷ He was the first of five children born to the Rev. William Ingram and Elizabeth Cook. The father was a curate and must have been a relatively well educated man, as he had obtained a scholarship to Trinity College, Dublin, in 1790. His influence over the young John Kells, however, could not have been great, as he died when the boy was six. The mother, on the other hand, had a marked and recognizable role in shaping her eldest child's character, particularly by imbuing the boy with a lasting love for the classics. In one of his poems, "A Filial Tribute", he describes his favourite images and artists of the ancient world before stating:

My Mother! thy laborious widow'd days
Have won for me these boons - ah, ill repaid
By this my heartfelt, but too tardy praise.⁸

At an unusually early age Ingram was sent to Dr.Lyons' School at Newry, where he published various stories and papers in the school journal. In 1837, at the age of fourteen, he moved on to Trinity College, Dublin, obtaining first place in the entrance exam.⁹ Although such a youthful entrance did not imply genius by the standards of the day, it was still no mean feat as the average age at which boys came up to Trinity at that time was seventeen.¹⁰ In 1838, after failing in the previous year, Ingram was a successful candidate for Sizarship.¹¹ Sizarers were students at Cambridge or Trinity College of limited means who, on the results of a special examination, paid reduced fees and performed menial duties. Fortunately for Ingram the humiliating status and conditions associated with this social position had diminished by the 1830s.¹² In any event, the possible inconveniences proved to be surmountable, as Ingram received a first in mathematics by 1842.¹³

Ingram was to hold posts within the walls of Trinity College throughout his professional career. However, his first attempt to become tenured failed when, in 1845, he narrowly came second in the closely-contested examination used to select fellows. Although this earned him the prestigious monetary award, the Madden Prize, it was nevertheless a set-back for Ingram. Fortunately it was a momentary one, as in the following year he was elected a fellow after another rare fellowship became vacant.¹⁴

In 1847 he played an important role in the foundation of the Dublin Statistical (later Statistical and Social Inquiry) Society. Over the next century this Society, which had sprung to life partly in response to the Famine, provided valuable economic information concerning the state of Ireland.¹⁵ Ingram's membership is of special interest to our sketch, as it indicates his close contact at an early age with the political economists of the slightly unorthodox Dublin School.¹⁶ In fact Whately, the first holder of the Drummond Lectureship in Political Economy at Oxford and the founder of the Political Economy chair at Trinity College, became president of the new society, while the then current holder of the Trinity College chair, W.Neilson Hancock, was the main force behind the foundation of the Society.¹⁷

Of course Ingram's exposure to this school of political economy could very well have started from an even earlier age, as Isaac Butt and J.A. Lawson were lecturing when Ingram was a student. Ingram was also an acquaintance of Hancock's prior to the formation of the Society - both of them taking firsts in mathematics in 1842.¹⁸ The year 1847, however, marks Ingram's first recorded involvement with political economy. It was also around this time that Ingram, now a fellow, participated as an examiner for the five-yearly appointment of the Professor of Political Economy. Among those economists who filled the chair during Ingram's lifetime were Hussey Walsh, John Elliot Cairnes, Arthur Houston and C.F. Bastable.¹⁹

Over this period Ingram began to study law at the Trinity College Law School. This was initially on a part-time basis, but in 1846 he took it up more intensively.²⁰ According to Lyster this was because Ingram was thinking of becoming a barrister if he was not dispensed from a fellow's obligation to take Holy Orders.²¹ These studies are of particular interest to our sketch, as it was in this period that doctrines soon to be associated with the name of Sir Henry Maine were being diffused through the law discipline. It is therefore possible that the similarity between some of Ingram's economic views and Maine's principles of law were the product of these years. It should also be noted that the sway which Maine had over Ingram's friend and fellow historical economist, Cliffe Leslie, may have been an additional avenue by which Ingram was influenced.²²

Ingram's versatility as a scholar was revealed in these early years. Indeed he achieved more before he was thirty than most would achieve in their lifetime. He became secretary of the Dublin Philosophical Society and, within the space of five years, 1842-1847, presented some twelve papers to this society, many of them being published. Their themes ranged from Mexican antiques to geometry and differential calculus. He was elected to the Royal Irish Academy in 1847, an institution whose role was to advance the studies of 'science, polite literature and antiquities'.²³ In 1850 he was awarded an M.A. degree and soon afterwards a Bachelor and Doctor of Law. Finally, in 1852, at the age of twenty nine, he became the first Professor of Oratory and English Literature (the Erasmus Smith chair).²⁴

Ingram was also a member of the mathematical committee of the Philosophical Society - no mean feat given the mathematical reputation of Dublin University at that time. Together with his first in mathematics and the mathematical papers he presented to the Philosophical Society it may be concluded that Ingram was no dilettante in the subject. Edgeworth sheds further light on Ingram's mathematical worth in his short obituary for Ingram in the *Economic Journal*:

Like many among the mighty ones of old at Trinity College, Dublin - like Graves and Salmon and Rowan Hamilton - he combined pursuits elsewhere almost irreconcilable, literature and higher mathematics. Salmon in his *Higher Plane Curves*, makes honourable mention of Ingram's contribution to the branch of mathematics. The great Macculagh is said to have grudged Ingram to letters. The still greater Hamilton, as appears in his published correspondence, used to submit his mathematical thoughts to Ingram. One of Ingram's surviving colleagues recollects his having said, "Nothing has ever been to me such a source of intellectual pleasure as pure geometry".²⁵

Considering the censures levelled at Ingram for his later claim that there was no role for mathematics in economics, these observations are important. They prove

that he was at least not criticising a system of knowledge which he did not understand. Edgeworth, who did so much to introduce mathematical analysis into economics, simply concluded that it was remarkable that a man with such knowledge could denounce Cournot and Jevons, and "belittle the use of mathematics in economic reasoning."²⁶

Strangely, it was not Ingram's early academic achievements which first brought him public recognition, but a poem entitled "The Memory of the Dead" which he published anonymously in 1843. It first appeared in *The Nation*, a mouthpiece for the Young Ireland Movement, which sold 10,000 copies when 1000 copies was a highly respectable figure.²⁷ Calling on contemporary Ireland to remember the 1798 revolutionaries, "The Memory of the Dead" became a famous revolutionary lyric. MacDonagh and Robinson, writing in *The Oxford Book of Irish Verse*, go so far as to claim that it was a link between the rising of 1798 and the rebels of later generations.²⁸ Brown, on the other hand, wrote in *The Politics of Irish Literature* that it "...had such frightful seditious power that in due time it sent Duffy to jail; and the author, John Kells Ingram, a Dublin doctor, did not acknowledge his brain child until fifty seven years had passed".²⁹ Brown is also quick to defend the quality of such works, suggesting that they were meant to be sung and in song a dominant musical tempo takes command over poetic rhythm, so that "poetic indelicacies can not only be permitted", but may actually act as an enhancement.³⁰ In any event the poem became entrenched in Irish culture and became one of Ireland's many substitute national anthems - it even rates a mention in Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Although not formally acknowledged by Ingram until 1900, the authorship of the "Memory of the Dead" was always an open secret. Carlyle, for example, referred to Ingram as the author of the Repeal Song "True men like you men" - a line from the poem - when they met in 1849.³¹ Ingram, however, although not embarrassed by his own youthful nationalism and fiery sentiments, was later to state that the poem was too extreme to represent his views.³² In fact, Carlyle also mentioned that Ingram's views had already changed by the time of their meeting.

"The Memory of the Dead" was neither the first nor the last of Ingram's efforts as a poet - he had published "Two Sonnets" in the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1840, and he was later to write many semi-autobiographical poems which were published collectively in *Sonnets and Other Poems* (1900). But although S.A. Brooke and T.W. Rolleston suggest, in *A Treasure of Irish Poetry*, that these later sonnets "seem to carry with them the air of great literature, and they make us regret that their author has given us too little verse, and that little so late", they rarely appear in anthologies of Irish poetry.³³ Hogan, in the *Dictionary of Irish Literature*, goes further by stating that as a literary man Ingram "is remembered only for his poem 'The Memory of the Dead'",³⁴ whilst MacDonagh and Robinson in *The Oxford Book of Irish Verse* state that this one poem is "his only memorial in death".³⁵

It was also as a young man that Ingram first became enthused about 'positivism', or, more specifically, 'Comtism'. Like most of his generation of scholars, the young and impressionable Ingram was introduced to positivism through the writings of J.S. Mill, and in particular by his *A System of Logic*, published in 1843.³⁶ We may therefore speculate that Ingram's exposure to these fashionable principles occurred some time in the forties. His contact with Comtism proper, however, came later. Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive* appeared in six volumes over the period 1830-42.

He then delivered a set of lectures in 1847 which were published in 1848 under the title *Discours sur l'Ensemble du Positisme*, in which he proclaimed 'positivism' as the religion of humanity. According to Henry Dix Hutton - a Dublin barrister, positivist, economic commentator and close friend of Ingram - it was not until these lectures were republished as an introduction to *Politique Positive* in 1851 that John Kells became fully immersed in the new philosophy.³⁷ Soon afterwards he announced his conversion to the new religion and in 1855 he visited Comte himself. For the rest of his life Ingram subordinated other interests to the cause of 'positivism'. This so-called religion's near-monopoly over Ingram's life after 1851 is best described in his own words:

When the philosophical doctrine rose into the Religion of Humanity, I became fully convinced that it was what mankind wanted in the spiritual sphere. Whilst I endeavoured to acquire and maintain the acquaintance with various forms of intellectual activity required for the proper discharge of my academic functions, as well as demanded by the culture of our epoch, I was content to renounce the work of production in the several special departments which I might perhaps have cultivated with a certain degree of success, and to devote the greatest part of my time and mental energy to obtaining a thorough knowledge of what appeared to me more necessary for the world than any results I was likely to attain in the particular fields of contemporary research.

He further stated that:

No creed seems to me so effectually to destroy the 'refuges of lies' by which our partiality for ourselves leads us to excuse our misdeeds and shortcomings. I have found it to pronounce the demands of duty in such a way that they cannot be mistaken or eluded. And it appears to me to be alone capable of social efficacy; in particular, no otherwise than through its extension can the moral unity of mankind be ultimately realised.³⁸

But perhaps the most personal revelations on the subject are found in his autobiographical poems:

When closed my song charm'd boyhoods dreamy days,
 Began austere Science to invite
 My spirit, seeking everywhere for light.
 I learned the line and surface to appraise,
 And star and planet fix'd my serious gaze.
 Then did I yearn to reach a spectacular height,
 Whose cloudless vantage should command the sight
 Of Man's whole world and all his works and ways.
 For guidance thither long I sought in vain,
 Till he I count the chief of those who know
 Taught us such mount of vision attain,
 Seven golden stairs ascending from below
 Eager I sprang his sacred lore to meet,³⁹
 And sat a grave disciple at his feet.

This aspect of Ingram's life seems naive today. When talking of 'positivism', for example, he would often refer to Comte as "The Master". There is also the story told

by Mahaffy, wit and scholar, who claims to have interrupted Dowdson and Ingram conducting a positivist prayer meeting and singing positivist hymns.⁴⁰ But Ingram was never more serious than when it came to this set of religious beliefs. He was, however, quite careful not to express clear hostility to Christianity while a fellow.⁴¹ Moreover there was no evidence that Ingram ever attempted to undermine the faith of his pupils.⁴²

Another source of intellectual influence was Ingram's travels. Even in the Victorian period, with its great strides in communication technology, such treks could radically change a person's beliefs. Ingram's friend Henry Dix Hutton, for example, was greatly impressed by the land reform legislation in Germany after witnessing it first-hand. Consequently, Hutton worked hard to introduce it into Ireland.⁴³ Considering his later anti-absolutist stance such chances for comparative observation may have had a similar impact on Ingram. He made four continental trips (in 1850, 1855, 1866, and 1890), passing through Germany, France, Hungary, Austria and the Low Countries. He also went on an extensive Irish walking tour in 1866 in which he is reported to have shown a keen interest in the attitude of the country people towards the landlords and Government.⁴⁴

Meanwhile Ingram's academic career continued to advance. While Professor of Oratory and English Literature he published his lectures on Shakespeare (1863) and Tennyson (1866). Then, in 1866, true to his versatile reputation, he resigned this position to become the Regius Professor of Greek. Moreover, outside these professional duties, and despite his preoccupation with positivism, Ingram was involved with a string of scholarly groups and institutions. He participated in the re-establishment, and later became vice-president, of the College Historical Society - a fiery organisation which was twice expelled from College grounds during its lifetime. He was involved in the creation of *Hermathena*, a journal still in existence, which published pieces on Literature, Science and Philosophy by members of Trinity College. Ingram himself published articles in it ranging from 'Notes on Greek and Latin Etymology in England' to 'Bishop Butler and Mr Mathew Arnold'. In addition Ingram became at various times Vice-President, President and Secretary of the Royal Irish Academy; a Trustee of the National Library of Ireland; the Librarian of Trinity College; Commissioner for the Publication of the Ancient Laws and Institutions; the President of the Statistical Society; a Senior Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College; a Visitor of the Dublin Science and Art Museum; the Vice-Provost of Trinity College; and the President of the Dublin University Shakespeare Society.⁴⁵ During his involvement in this last society Ingram delivered a paper on the light and weak endings of Shakespeare's verse. This apparently important paper "established a new and decisive test of the chronology of Shakespeare's plays".⁴⁶

In the midst of these various activities, Ingram launched his methodological attack on orthodox political economy. We have already noted his involvement, with Hancock and Whatley, in the establishment of the Statistical Society. However, although he regularly attended meetings, it was not until 1863 that Ingram made a major contribution to this society, when he presented a paper entitled "Considerations on the State of Ireland".⁴⁷ In the following year he delivered another paper comparing the English and Irish Poor Laws, which was published in the Society's Journal as an appendix to the 1863 article.⁴⁸ This was followed by a silence on economic matters until 1875, when he presented a paper on the organization of

charity, which also had a follow-up article in 1876.⁴⁹

Considering the anomalous characteristics of Ireland - the subject of these articles - it is surprising that these early writings do not contain more unorthodox premises and precepts. Ingram argued that on the whole emigration was not a drawback to Ireland; it was the outcome of wage differentials and a cheaper means of transport, and it gave rise to higher standards of living both to those who stayed and to those who left. It was, in Ingram's words a "natural effect of natural causes; and that, therefore, to lament it will be no more effectual than to lament the flowing of the tide."⁵¹ He did however suggest that it would not alone solve Ireland's problems. For example, in response to the increased competition and rising wages facing the Irish agricultural sector, Ingram suggested that small farmers should be turned into labourers to allow for larger, more efficient, estates; he also called for greater security for capital. Finally, in the paper on charity, Ingram declared that while charity organisations should be overhauled to prevent their misuse, they should also be less mechanical and more sympathetic in their dealings with welfare recipients, particularly in the light of special knowledge.⁵²

It was not until 1878, when Ingram delivered a paper as the President of the Statistical Section of the British Association, that his unorthodox methodological stance was clearly and publicly outlined. The paper, entitled 'The Present Position and Prospects of Political Economy', censured orthodox political economy for isolating the facts of wealth from those of other social phenomena, including ethical questions; for its inability to make useful policy prescriptions; for wrongly using the direct deductive process; and for the absolutist nature of its precepts. The intricate and pregnant arguments embodied in this short paper require a separate article and so will not be entered into here. The result, however, was that Ingram proposed, as a corrective measure the following:

- (a) the creation of a new science of sociology which would subsume political economy and operate along Comtist lines;
- (b) greater use of a historical inverse deductive method similar to the process suggested by Comte and fully outlined by J.S. Mill in *A System of Logic*; and
- (c) the recognition of the relativity of knowledge.⁵³

On the strength of this address Ingram became associated with what was called the English historical school. Indeed, along with his friend Cliffe Leslie, who was also a graduate of Trinity College, Ingram was seen as the leader of the English historical economists. Many also believe that Ingram's address opened, or at least greatly facilitated, the methodological debate between the historical and orthodox economists - a debate analogous to the famous *Methodenstreit* between Menger and Schmoller.

The impact of this short address may be gauged by its reception and by the demand for the limited number of publications. The paper was distributed via three channels: (i) in *The Report of the Forty Eighth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, London, 1879, pp 641-648; (ii) as an article in the *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, 1878, Vol VII; and (iii) as a separate pamphlet printed by Longmans & Co., London, 1878. It immediately created a stir in Britain, becoming a point of reference for public lectures, periodical articles and discussion at scholarly societies. Litton Falkiner claimed that it "not only com-

mandated at the moment the admiring attention both of his immediate hearers and of the wider audience of economists at home and abroad, but which may fairly be said to have profoundly affected the subsequent course of economic investigation."⁵⁴ Indeed its subject matter also became the focus of attention in three other important addresses at the British Association - by Sidgwick (1885), Cunningham (1889) and Bastable (1894).⁵⁵ It also no doubt contributed to J.N. Keynes's influential work on economic methodology, *The Scope and Method of Political Economy*. But, of course, not all of the reaction was complementary - Sidgwick's response was particularly damning. The review of the speech in *The Times* was also guarded even though it recognized its importance - it declared that "although we may be inclined to dissent from some of his criticisms and conclusions, we cannot but welcome so thorough and unsparing discussion by so competent a hand of the most accepted theories of Political Economy."⁵⁶ But the most detailed and negative response came from Robert Lowe, who had earlier made his views on economic methodology known in his famous parliamentary exchange with Mill in 1868. Writing in the *Nineteenth Century* soon after Ingram's *Address*, Lowe criticises Ingram's proposals in a highly sarcastic tone, claiming among other things that sociology had yet to prove its worth and that induction was riddled with problems.⁵⁷

The reception in Germany, on the other hand, was nearly all positive. This is not surprising given the predominance of the historical method in that country. The *Address* was translated in 1879 by H.V. Scheel, a member of the German historical school, and was recommended to the publisher by J. Conrad, editor of *Bruno Hildebrand's Jahrbucher fur Nationalökonomie und Statistik*.⁵⁸ T.E. Ely, the controversial American economist, was a student in Germany at the time and remembers the reaction amongst the academic community:

It was felt that this address marked the beginning of a true progressive movement and signified a warmer and juster appreciation of the work which had been going on in Germany and other countries.⁵⁹

The reception of the *Address* in America also deserves mention. At the time of its publication the younger American academic economists were very much under the influence of the German Historical School. They therefore enthusiastically endorsed Ingram's scholarly text as an example of what they called 'the new economics'. Ely suggested that the resulting diffusion of Ingram's philosophy helped set in motion forces which culminated in the formation of the American Economic Association in 1885. Indeed the Association recognized the services of Ingram by making him an honorary member in 1891.⁶⁰

Ingram's next major comment on political economy was an address to the Trades Union Congress in 1880 entitled 'Work and Workman', in which he applied his new approach to a practical problem. He concluded that labour should cease to be viewed as a commodity like cotton, because the worker has needs and feelings.⁶¹ He suggested that because the "principal source of human happiness generally, lies in the exercise of the domestic affections", the industrial chiefs, in an attempt to improve the working class's lot, should not only provide adequate wages and education, but should also ensure that each family has a well-regulated home.⁶² A reduction in the number of hours in the working day would be one method to meet this end. These suggestions of course ring with Comtean overtones. The address was translated into French and published in Paris in 1881.⁶³

Throughout the eighties and nineties Ingram also contributed many biographical sketches of political economists and articles on economic-related subjects to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy*. Two of these contributions, 'Slavery' and 'Political Economy', were later extended and published as books, the latter contribution as *The History of Political Economy* in 1888.⁶⁴

The History of Political Economy was chiefly an historical economist's view of the history of economic thought, and was a major success for Ingram. Comprehensive histories of economic thought were still rare at this time. So much so that E.J. James, who wrote the preface to the 1907 edition, described Ingram's *History* as "the first serious attempt by a properly qualified English writer to present a view of the progress of economic thought".⁶⁵ More recently Hutchison, in one of the few modern references to Ingram, placed his work alongside those of Cliffe Leslie, Ashley and Toynbee for raising "scholarly and intellectual standards".⁶⁶ The book was also innovative in its systematic overview of unorthodox and foreign economists. Indeed, for many pages it reads like a long bibliography of non-English writings with an accompanying commentary. It should also be noted that the book was one of the first 'histories' to carry the theme that different theories are relevant to different historical periods because each epoch had a different underlying economic and social structure. In general methodological terms, however, the book was for the most part an elaboration of the views set out in Ingram's 1878 *Address*.

The *History's* reception in England was mixed. Nicholson, for example, believed that it had "failed to throw any light on the connection between economic theory and economic history....for the simple reason that he does not understand the theory and has never read the history."⁶⁷ Ashley, on the other hand, while recognizing the failings of Ingram's work, noted that the "appearance of the book in England was epoch making" and that Ingram was the "foremost representative in Great Britain of the anti-orthodox movement".⁶⁸ Edgeworth's judgement of the work was also guarded. On one hand he suggests that exception may be taken to some of Ingram's judgements on men and methods, in particular his claim that we might be better off by discarding Ricardo's doctrines altogether. Edgeworth also, however, suggests that those "who resent this vein of skepticism derive profit and pleasure from the narrative; as churchmen have admired the lucidity of Gibbon's chapters on the history of doctrine".⁶⁹ Finally, an unattributed piece in *Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy* claimed that the "masterly knowledge of the subject which the book displays causes only regret that the writer did not carry his labours further. The manner in which the volume is put together, presenting as it does a mere outline, where a detailed work was necessary, prevents the volume from exercising the influence on the general reader which it ought to possess. The student will find it a mine of learning which he will do well to explore."⁷⁰

In Germany, however, where it was translated in 1890, it was reviewed with praise by E. von Bohm Bawerk in *Hilderbrands-Conrads Jarbucher fur Nationalokonomie*, Volume 53, and by Cohn in *Schmoller's Jarbuch*, XIII. The translator himself stated that the work was in sympathy with the advanced speculation in political economy of German thinkers and that the original in English was marked by a very elegant style.⁷¹ Ingram's popularity outside the English-speaking world was confirmed with the books translation into Spanish (1890), Polish (1891), Italian (1892), Swedish (1892), French (1893), Czech (1895), Japanese (1896), Russian (1897) and Serbian

(1901).⁷² Students were still using it as a textbook as late as the 1920s.

After a few more Dictionary contributions and introductions to the books of like-minded authors,⁷³ Ingram moved his attention away from political economy. Such a shift in attention was perhaps facilitated by his retirement in 1899 from various offices - including his positions at Trinity College, an institution which he had served for 61 years. Free time, along with his newly won freedom to raise controversial religious issues outside of the College, permitted an extensive elaboration of his positivist principles and precepts. Indeed he published a series of positivist books just prior to and following his retirement. They included *A History of Slavery and Serfdom* (1895), *Sonnets and Other Poems* (1900), *Human Nature and Morals According to August Comte* (1901), *Outlines of the History of Religion* (1900), *Practical Morals: A Treatise on Universal Education* (1904), and *The Final Transition: A Sociological Study* (1905). He also began contributing short articles to *The Positivist Review*. These included "Positivists and Mr Chamberlain's Scheme" (March 1904); "The Crises in Scottish Churches" (November 1904); "The Worship of Ancestors" (August 1905); and "China and Positivism" (March 1906).

Edgeworth tentatively suggests that Ingram softened his attitude towards orthodox political economy during this period. He bases this conclusion on Ingram's acceptance of a place on the Council of the British Economic Association and his silence on methodological issues. Edgeworth also makes great play on a quote from Ingram's preface to Ely's *Introduction to Political Economy*: "A more humane and genial spirit has taken the place of the old dryness and hardness which once repelled so many of the best minds from the study of economics".⁷⁴ This evidence, however, is certainly not conclusive. It is possible, for example, that Ingram's withdrawal from the debate was due to his preoccupation with his self-designated task of elaborating the positivist system. Edgeworth's claims may also have been related to orthodoxy's self-confessed aim of attempting to diffuse the methodological controversy.

John Kells Ingram died in 1907 at the age of 84 after suffering from poor health. The usual polite obituaries followed, one describing him as the most educated man in Europe.⁷⁵ Less contentious was their allusion to his diversity of interests, which included literature, classics, mathematics, Irish archeology, economics and social questions.

*Gregory Moore is a Ph.D student in the Economics Department, La Trobe University. His supervisor is John King.

Notes

1. Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis*, for instance, allocates only three pages to the English historical school, of which Ingram receives no more than a one paragraph footnote. In this footnote it is claimed that Ingram "can hardly be said to have done any economic research at all.", and that *The History of Political Economy*, Ingram's major work, "is conclusive proof both of his wide philosophical (especially Comtist) and historical erudition and his inadequate command of technical economics." More specialised works present a similar account. Koot, who has become an authority on the English historical school, claims that although perhaps more popular at the time "...Ingram's intellectual contribution was both less original and less penetrating than that of Leslie's." Adelman, on the other hand, writing an account of Frederick Harrison and his

- 'positivist' attack on orthodox economics, claims that Ingram was totally lacking in originality as Harrison had "...published an essentially similar account of positivist ideas in 1865", thirteen years prior to Ingram's major pronouncements. See J.A.Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, OUP, NY, 1961, pp 823-824. G.M.Koot T.E.Cliffe Leslie, Irish Social Reformer and the Origins of the English Historical School', *History of Political Economy*, Fall 1975, p 314. P.Adelman 'Frederick Harrison and the Positivist Attack on Orthodox Political Economy', *History of Political Economy*, Vol 3-4, 1971-72 p 184.
2. There is a short section on J.K.Ingram in G.M.Koot's *English Historical Economists: 1870-1926*, CUP, 1987. Attention should also be drawn to Ingram's private papers which are held at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and his correspondence with Cliffe Leslie which is held at the Stirling Library, London University. Unfortunately these collections were unavailable for the writing of this sketch.
 3. C.Litton Falkiner, "Memoir of the Late John Kells Ingram", *JSSISI*, Part LXXXVIII, pp 105-123.
 4. T.W.Lyster, 'Bibliography of the Writings of John Kells Ingram, with a Brief Chronology', *The Journal of Cumann Na Leabarlann*, Vol III, No I, June 1909, PP 1-47.
 5. F.Y.Edgeworth, 'Obituary. John Kells Ingram', *Economic Journal*, June 1907, pp 299-300.
 6. C.Litton Falkiner, *op.cit.* pp 106-107.
 7. T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 5.
 8. J.K.Ingram, 'A Filial Tribute' quoted in T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 5.
 9. *Ibid* p 6.
 10. R.B.McDowell & D.A.Webb, *Trinity College Dublin*, CUP, Cambridge, 1982, p 114.
 11. T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 6.
 12. R.B.McDowell & D.A.Webb, *op.cit.* p 115.
 13. J.G.Smith, "Some Nineteenth Century Irish Economists", *Economica*, February 1934, p 25.
 14. T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 6.
 15. R.B.McDowell & D.A.Webb, *op.cit.*, p 169, and T.W. Lyster, *op.cit.*, p 7.
 16. For an outline of the Dublin School's position see: R.D.C.Black, Trinity College, Dublin, and the Theory of Value 1823-1863', *Economica*, August 1945, pp 140-148.
 17. R.B.McDowell & D.A.Webb, *op.cit.* p169; T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 7, and C.Litton Falkiner, *op.cit.*, pp 108-111.
 18. J.G.Smith, *op.cit.*, p 25.
 19. *Ibid*, p 27.
 20. R.B.McDowell & D.A.Webb, *op.cit.*, and T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 6.
 21. *Ibid*, *op.cit.*, p6
 22. Sir Henry Maine (1822-88) was an historical jurist who claimed that legal institutions evolved, and it was he who coined the slogan 'from status to contract'. In contrast to the Benthamite approach, Maine also claimed that the law should be studied and adjusted in the light of history, using a comparative approach. The influence which Maine had over Cliffe Leslie is well documented by G.M.Koot, 1975, *op.cit.*
 23. D.J.Hickey, *Dictionary of Irish History*, Macmillan, N.J., p 510.
 24. T.W. Lyster, *op.cit.*, p 8.
 25. F.Y.Edgeworth, *op.cit.* pp 299-300.
 26. *Ibid*, p 300. Edgeworth recognized that Ingram's stance was probably partly due to his following of Comte who rejected any role for abstract reasoning in the social sciences. Comte's influence on Ingram is discussed below.
 27. D.J.Hickey *op.cit.*, p 383. It also had many other avenues of diffusion. It was reprinted in *The Spirit of the Nation*, a collection of the best contributions to the periodical of that name. It was also put

- to music and translated into Latin and Irish. See T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.*, pp 18,19,21,36.
28. D.Modonagh & L.Robinson, *The Oxford Book of Irish Verse*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1959 p XIV. Hogan also alluded to the poem's importance by claiming that it lived in the consciousness of several nations. R.G.Hogan, *Dictionary of Irish Literature*, Greenwood pr, Westport, p 479.
29. M.Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B.Yeats*, Un of Washington Press, Seattle, 1972, p 63.
30. *Ibid.* p 64.
31. T.W. Lyster, *op.cit.* p 7.
32. *Ibid.* p 7, S.A.Brooke & T.W.Rolleston, *A Treasure of Irish Poetry*, p 513-514, R.G.Hogan, *op.cit.* p 306-307. Although some sources suggest that Ingram was embarrassed by the poem obituary in *The Times* (May 4 1907) quotes him as saying "You will not suppose that the effusion of the youth exactly represents the convictions of the man. But I have never been ashamed of having written the verses. They were the fruit of genuine feeling."
33. S.A.Brooke & T.W.Rolleston, *op.cit.* p 513-514.
34. R.G.Hogan, *op.cit.* p 554.
35. D.MacDonagh & L.Robinson, *op.cit.* p XIV.
36. T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 6.
37. *Ibid.* p 7.
38. J.K.Ingram, *Outlines Of the History of Religion*, p
39. J.K.Ingram, 'The Religion of Humanity XIV' quoted in T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 8.
40. R.B.Mcdowall & D.A.Webb, *op.cit.* p 293.
41. *Ibid.* p 293.
42. *Ibid.* p 242.
43. R.D.C.Black, *Economic Thought and the Irish Question*. CUP, Cambridge, 1960, p 57.
44. T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 8,9,10.
45. *Ibid.* pp 5-15.
46. C Litton Falkiner, *op.cit.* p 122.
47. J.K.Ingram, 'Considerations of the State of Ireland', *JSSISI*, Part XXVI, Vol IV, 1864-65, pp 13-26.
48. J.K.Ingram, 'A Comparison between the English and Irish Poor Laws with Respect to the Conditions of Relief', *JSSISI*, Vol IV, 1864-65, p43.
49. J.K.Ingram, 'The Organization of Charity and the Boarding Out of Pauper Children', *JSSISI*, Vol VI, 1871-76, pp 449-475 & 'Additional Facts and Arguments on the Boarding-Out of Pauper Children', *JSSISI*, Vol VI, 1871-76, pp 503-524.
50. The non-industrial societies of Ireland and India were usually held up as arguments against the general application of orthodox theories which were derived from English experience. Indeed at this time Ireland was to the political economist what Australia was to the natural scientist.
51. J.K.Ingram, *Considerations of the State of Ireland*, Vol IV, p 17. Also see C.Litton Falkner *op.cit.* p 114.
52. These largely orthodox conclusions conflict with Ingram's reputation as an economic heretic. Yet it seems that his unorthodoxy was largely confined to methodology and high theory. Ingram even advocated free trade and criticised Chamberlain's scheme for Imperial Preference at a time when most historical economists were making a stand against orthodoxy on this issue. Admittedly, however, this was done on cosmopolitan rather than economic grounds. See J.K.Ingram, 'Positivists and Mr Chamberlain's Scheme', *The Positivist Review*, March 1904, pp 49-57.
53. J.K.Ingram 'The Present Position and Prospects of Political Economy', *JSSISI*, Part LIV, 1878, reproduced in R.L.Smyth (ed), *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co, London, 1962.
54. C.Litton Falkiner, *op.cit.* p 118.

55. H.Sidgwick 'The Scope and Method of Economic Science' *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1885*. W.Cunningham, 'The Comtist Criticism of Economic Science', *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1889*. C.F.Bastable, 'A Comparison Between the Position of Economic Science in 1860 and 1894', *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1894*. All of these papers are reproduced in R.L.Smyth(ed), *op.cit.*
56. *The Times*, 17th August, p 10, col a.
57. R.Lowe, *Nineteenth Century*, November 1878, Vol IV, pp 858-868.
58. T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 26.
59. From T.E.Ely's Introduction to J.K.Ingram, *History of Political Economy: New and Enlarged Edition*, 1915, p X.
60. *Ibid.* pp XI-XII.
61. J.K.Ingram, 'Work and Workman', *JSSISI*, Vol VIII, 1880, pp 106-123. Also see C.Litton Falkiner, *op.cit.* p 120.
62. *Ibid.* p 120.
63. *Ibid.* p 124.
64. J.K.Ingram, 'Political Economy', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9th Ed, Vol XIX, 1885, pp 346-401. J.K.Ingram, 'Slavery', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9th Ed, Vol XXII, 1887, pp 129-144.
65. T.W.Hutchison, *On Revolutions and Progress in Economic Knowledge*, CUP, Cambridge, pp 236-237.
66. *Ibid.* pp 236-237.
67. A Letter from Nicholson to Keynes; copied into Keynes' Diary, 28 July 1885, and quoted in J.Maloney, *Marshall Orthodoxy & the Professionalisation of Economics*, CUP, Cambridge, p 81.
68. Quoted in G.M.Koot, 1987, *op.cit.* p 54.
69. E.Y.Edgeworth, *op.cit.* p 299.
70. R.H.Palgrave (Ed.), *Dictionary of Political Economy*, "J.K.Ingram", Macmillan, London, pp 896-897.
71. T.W.Lyster, *op.cit.* p 32.
72. *Ibid.* PP 1-47. To keep these students abreast with the more recent advances a new and enlarged edition was printed in 1915, with a supplementary chapter by W.A.Scott and an introduction by Richard T.Ely.
73. He wrote the introduction to R.T.Ely's, *An Introduction to Political Economy*, London, Sonnenschein, 1891.
74. F.Y.Edgeworth, *op.cit.* p 301.
75. *The Times*, 2nd May 1907, p 9, col F, stated that "Those who worked with Dr Ingram in Trinity College were persuaded that he was the best educated man in Europe".

Bibliography

- Abrams, P., 1968, *The Origins of British Sociology, 1834-1914*, Chicago University Press, Chicago.
- Adelman, P., 1971, "Frederick Harrison and the Positivist Attack on Orthodox Political Economy", *History of Political Economy*, Vol 3-4, pp 170-188.
- Ashley, W., 1907, "A Survey of the Past History and Present Position of Political Economy", *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1907*, reprinted in Smyth, R.L. (Ed.), 1962, *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London.
- Ashley, W., 1893, "Of Study of Economic History", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol VII, Jan, pp 115-136.
- Bastable, C.F., 1894, "A Comparison Between the Position of Economic Science in 1860 and 1894", *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1894*, reprinted in Smyth, R.L. (Ed.), 1962, *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London.
- Black, R.D.C., 1945, "Trinity College, Dublin, and the Theory of Value 1823-1863", *Economica*, August, pp

140-148.

- Black, R.D.C., 1960, *Economic Thought and the Irish Question 1817-1870*, CUP, Cambridge.
- Bonar, J., 1898, "Old Lights and New in Economic Study", *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1898*, reprinted in Smyth, R.L., (Ed.), 1962, *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London.
- Brooke, A.S. and Rolleston, T.W., 1900, *A Treasury of Irish Poetry*, Smith, Elder and Co., London.
- Brown, M., 1972, *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats*, University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Caird, E., 1887, "Political Economics, Old and New", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, pp 213-214.
- Cairnes, J.E., 1870, "M. Comte and Political Economy", *Fortnightly Review*, May, reprinted in Cairnes, J.E., 1873, *Essays in Political Economy*, Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1965.
- Checkland, S.G., 1951, "The Advent of Academic Economics in England", *Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, Vol 19, Jan, pp 43-70.
- Checkland, S.G., 1951, "Economic Opinion in England as Jevons Found It", *Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, Vol 19, May, pp 143-169.
- Coats, A.W., 1954, "The Historicist Reaction in English Political Economy 1870-90", *Economica*, May, pp 143-153.
- Coats, A.W., 1967, "Political Economy and the Tariff Reform Campaign of 1903", *Journal of Law and Economics*, October, pp 706-729.
- Cunningham, W., "The Comtist Criticism of Economic Science", *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, reprinted in Smyth, R.L. (Ed.), 1962, *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London.
- Eatwell, J. and Milgate, M. (Eds.), 1987, *New Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy*, Volumes I, II and III, Stockton Press, New York.
- Edgeworth, F.Y., 1907, "Obituary. John Kells Ingram", *Economic Journal*, June, pp 299-300.
- Foxwell, H.E., 1887, "The Economic Movement in England", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, pp 84-103.
- Hogan, R.G. (Ed.), 1979, *Dictionary of Irish Literature*, Greenwood Press, Westwood.
- Hickey, D.J. and Doherty, J.E., 1980, *Dictionary of Irish History*, Gill & Macmillan, Totowa, N.J.
- Hutchison, T.W., 1964, *Positive Economics and Policy Objectives*, London.
- Hutchison, T.W., 1978, *On Revolution and Progress in Economic Knowledge*, CUP, Cambridge.
- Ingram, J.K., 1863, "Considerations of the State of Ireland", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Dublin*, Part XXVI, Vol IV, pp 13-26.
- Ingram, J.K., 1864, "A Comparison between the English and Irish Poor Laws with Respect to the Conditions of Relief", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Dublin*, Vol IV, p 43.
- Ingram, J.K., 1875, "The Organisation of Charity and the Boarding Out of Pauper Children", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Dublin*, Vol. VI, pp 449-474.
- Ingram, J.K., 1876, "Additional Facts and Arguments on the Boarding-Out of Pauper Children", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Dublin*, Vol VI, pp 503-524.
- Ingram, J.K., 1878, "The Present Position and Prospects of Political Economy", *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1878*, reprinted in Smyth, R.L. (Ed.), 1962, *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, pp 41-72.
- Ingram, J.K., 1880, "Work and Workman", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Dublin*, Vol VIII, pp 106-123.
- Ingram, J.K., 1888, *The History of Political Economy*, Adam & Charles Black, London, (2nd Edition, 1915).
- Ingram, J.K., 1895, *A History of Slavery and Serfdom*, Adam & Charles Black, London.
- Ingram, J.K., 1900, *Outlines of the History of Religion*, Adam & Charles Black, London.
- Ingram, J.K., 1904, *Practical Morals: A Treatise on Universal Education*, Adam & Charles Black, London.
- Ingram, J.K., 1904, "Positivists and Mr. Chamberlain's Scheme", *The Positivist Review*, March, pp 49-57.
- Ingram, J.K., 1904, "The Crisis in the Scottish Churches", *The Positivist Review*, November, pp 258-260.
- Ingram, J.K., 1905, "The Worship of Ancestors", *The Positivist Review*, August, pp 177-179.

- Ingram, J.K., 1906, "China and Positivism", *The Positivist Review*, March, pp 53-57.
- Kadish, A., 1982, *Oxford Economists of the Late Nineteenth Century*, OUP, Oxford.
- Keynes, J.N., 1891, *The Scope and Method of Political Economics*, reprinted by Kelley and Mill, 1955.
- Koot, G.M., 1975, "T.E. Cliffe Leslie, Irish Social Reformer and the Origins of the English Historical School", *History of Political Economy*, Vol 7, Fall, pp 312-336.
- Koot, G.M., 1980, "English Historical Economics and the Emergence of Economic History in England", *History of Political Economy*, Summer, pp 174-205.
- Koot, G.M., 1987, *English Historical Economists: 1870-1926*, CUP, Cambridge.
- Leslie, T.E. Cliffe, 1888, *Essays in Political Economy*, London.
- Litton Falkiner, C., 1908, "Memor of the Late John Kells Ingram", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Dublin*, Part LXXXVIII, pp 105-123.
- Lowe, R., 1878, *Nineteenth Century*, Vol IV, November, pp 858-868.
- Lyster, T.W., 1909, "Biography of the Writings of John Kells Ingram, with a Brief Chronology", *An Leabarlaum*, Vol. III, No. 1, June, pp 5-46.
- MacDonagh, D., and Robinson, L., 1959, *The Oxford Book of Irish Verse*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Maloney, J., 1985, *Marshall, Orthodoxy and the Professionalization of Economics*, CUP, Cambridge.
- Marshall, A., 1897, "The Old Generation of Economists and the New", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, pp 115-135.
- McDowell, R.B. and Webb, D.A., 1982, *Trinity College Dublin*, CUP, Cambridge.
- Mill, J.S., 1843, *A System of Logic*, London.
- Murphy, A.E. (Ed.), 1984, *Economists and the Irish Economy*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin.
- Nasse, E., 1887, "The Economic Movement in Germany", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, pp 498-506.
- Palgrave, R.H. (Ed.), 1894-1908, *Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy*, Volumes I, II and III, Macmillan, London.
- Schumpeter, J.A., 1961, *History of Economic Analysis*, OUP, N.Y.
- Sidgwick, H., 1885, "The Scope and Method of Economic Science" *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1885*, reprinted in Smyth, R.L. (Ed.), 1962, *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London.
- Simon, W.M., 1963, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History*, Cornell University Press, New York.
- Smith, J.G., 1935, "Some Nineteenth Century Irish Economists", *Economica*, Vol 2, Feb, pp 20-32.
- Smyth, R.L. (Ed.), 1962, *Essays in Economic Method*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London.