**Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland**

The problem between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland started a long time ago. It is more political than religious. For centuries the English had tried to gain control of Ireland. Until the 16-th century, England controlled only a small area of Ireland around Dublin. English rulers, including King Henry VIII (1491-1547), Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) and Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) gradually conquered the whole of Ireland. The last area to resist the English was the province of Ulster, in the north of Ireland, but in the end the Irish were defeated.

In 1910 the British Government offered Ireland a mild form of Home Rule - full self-government in regard to purely Irish affairs. Opposition was at once started in Ireland. It was backed by the generals of the British Army's troops in Ireland. The Irish patriots formed their own military organizations of the Irish Volunteers, drilling troops for a fight. The Labour Party in Ireland established the Irish Citizen Army. The Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army jointly started preparation for an insurrection. The set date was Monday of Easter Week, 1916. Although the uprising was a failure, it laid the foundation for another stage of the fight for freedom. In 1921, an independent Irish state was set up, that is the Republic of Ireland. In the north of Ireland six counties were dominated and controlled by Protestants, who refused to join the new Irish state. These six counties stayed part of the UK and are now called Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland is a very beautiful place. It is a land of mountains, rivers and lakes. It has a rugged coastline and one is never more than half an hour away from the coast by car. The people of Ireland have always been known for the stories and myths. They say that giants used to live on the Antrim coast, north of Belfast. One giant, Finn McCool, the commander of the king of Ireland's army, fell in love with a woman giant in Scotland. He wanted her to come to Ulster so he started to build a bridge, the Giant's Causeway, so that she could walk across the sea.

**Vocabulary**

area - пространство

defeat - наносить поражение

Home Rule - Гом Руль

back - поддержать

troops - войска

Volunteers - "Добровольцы"

drill - строевая подготовка

insurrection - восстание

uprising - восстание

failure - неудача, провал

independent - независимый

county - округ, графство

giant - великан

**Questions**

1. When did the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland start?

2. How did it develop?

3. How long did it take England to conquer Ireland?

4. What was offered to Ireland in 1910?

5. What is Home Rule?

6. What was the reaction of the Irish patriots to Home Rule?

7. What happened in Ireland in 1916?

8. When was an independent Irish state set up?

9. What is called Northern Ireland?

10. What kind of land is Northern Ireland?