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Sommario/riassunto	Paul Cullen (1803–78) was the outstanding figure in Irish history between the death of Daniel O’Connell and the rise of Charles Stewart Parnell. Yet this powerful prelate remains an enigmatic figure. This new study of his career sets out to reveal the real nature of his achievements in putting his stamp so indelibly on the Irish Catholic Church. After several years spent in Rome, at a time when the papal states were under constant attack, Cullen was sent back to Ireland as Archbishop of Armagh and subsequently of Dublin. He had been charged with reorganizing the Catholic Church in his native country—a task which brought him into conflict with the authorities, many of his fellow-bishops and frequently nationalist opinion. The first Irishman to be made a cardinal, he played a leading part in securing the declaration of papal infallibility from the First Vatican Council (1870). Cardinal Cullen has not generally been well treated by historians. A brilliant scholar, whose intelligence was never underestimated by

contemporaries, he has been dismissed as an 'industrious mediocrity.' A tough-minded, indefatigable political tactician, he has nevertheless been described as a world-denying spiritual leader. Cullen was the most devoted of papal servants, yet he was accused of 'preferring the principles of Irish nationalism to the opinions of his friend Pius IX.' Generations of Irish nationalist historians, however, have taken a different view, seeing the leading Irish churchman of the nineteenth century as a tool of the British government. In *Paul Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism*, Desmond Bowen shows the true purpose of Cullen's mission. An Ultramontanist of the most uncompromising type—'a Roman of the Romans'—neither the aspirations of the Irish nationalists nor the concerns of British governments were of primary importance to him. The mind and accomplishments of this most reserved and complex of men can be understood only in his total dedication to the mission of the papacy as he interpreted it during a time of crisis for the Catholic Church throughout Europe.
