IRELAND IN REBELLION

SYLVAIN BRIOLLAY

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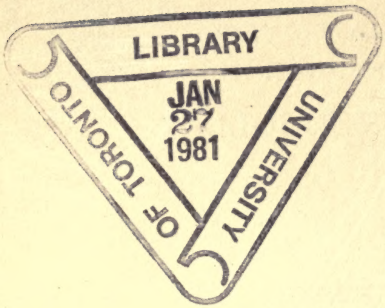

TO THE MEMORY
OF MY MOTHER

PREFATORY NOTE

L'Irlande Insurgée, of which the present volume is a translation, first appeared in the form of articles for the "Revue de Paris" and "Le Correspondant" during the winter of 1920-1921. The French edition was published by Messrs. Plon-Nourrit in July, 1921. The author is a distinguished Frenchman resident in Ireland since the beginning of 1919, who saw and judged for himself, noted events as they appeared in the Irish newspapers, and had many opportunities of seeing prominent members of all the Irish parties. The whole book was written before the Truce of 11th July, 1921.

CONTENTS

Ireland in Rebellion.

CHAPTER I.

I.

The present rebellion is a national revolt which is explained by Ireland's history—Reasons why it is inopportune—A brief historical account.

In 1607, after miracles of heroism and tenacity displayed in vain against the invader, the last independent princes of Ireland, those whom the English court had made Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, and whom Irish national pride still prefers to call by their old native titles, Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell, the last clan chieftains, were forced to yield, and went to die in exile. The conquest was finished ; the era of rebellions had begun.

Ten times in their subsequent history, in circumstances favourable or otherwise, with or without hope of success, in 1641, 1649, 1689, 1782, 1798, 1803, 1848, and 1867, the unyielding spirit of the defeated nation broke the prescriptive right of conquest and registered its protest in blood that its soul had not yielded. To-day again the age-long protest is raised and the present generation has set the seal of its blood on it.

But I hear you remark at once, this rising came very late ; the Great War was ended, England came

out of it more independent and more powerful than ever, Ireland stood alone. It was at the darkest hour of the struggle, in the anxious years when the empire was tottering to its foundation that such a rising would have had a real chance of success. Granted. To explain why things could not have happened otherwise, a few historical remarks are necessary.

Before the war, if one felt the pulse of public opinion in Ireland, one could feel the dull throb of anti-British feeling—slumbering, of course, and, as it were, tamed. Since 1848 and the outbreak led by Smith O'Brien, the state of chronic rebellion—with the exception of the spasmodic explosions of the Fenian movement—had relaxed and fizzled out into a constitutional opposition. For fifty years, under Isaac Butt, Parnell and Redmond, the Irish Nationalist Party appealed by constitutional methods to the Parliament at Westminster for Self-Government or Home Rule.

After many disappointments, in spite of the opposition of the Tories, in spite of the veto of the House of Lords which was at last abolished, the Home Rule Bill was finally passed on the 25th May, 1914. This, however, while satisfying the aspirations of the real Irish population, was bitterly opposed by the Orangemen of Ulster. The reader will remember that in 1688 Prince William of Orange, Governor of the Netherlands, and son-in-law of James II. of England, dethroned his father-in-law and drove him out of Ireland after the Battle of the Boyne. Now, the name Orangeman is applied to the Protestant immigrants from England or Scotland that had " settled " in the north-east corner of Ireland and around Belfast, who take as their watchword the name of the Prince of Orange, the conqueror of the Stuart and Papish

King. Subsequent events proved that the Home Rule Act, though passed into law, could not prevail against the all-powerful will of that minority.

II.

Orange rising against the Home Rule Act (1911-1914) —*Weakness of the Liberal Government.*

As early as 1912 the Orangemen of Ulster had signed a covenant or agreement, by which they undertook to resist—by force of arms if necessary—any Act of Parliament that aimed at breaking the Union which was established between England and Ireland by the fraud of 1800. Moreover, they felt they had at their backs (otherwise their threats would have been a piece of harmless bluff) the powerful Conservative opposition in England, where a covenant similar to that of Ulster was signed in 1914. Open preparations were made for civil war. Sir Edward Carson, the leader of the Orange Party, enrolled his Ulster Volunteers, who were drilled by retired British officers. Generous subscriptions were given by the wealthy Tory magnates to arm and equip the men. Arms and ammunition were imported from England and Germany. In one day 50,000 rifles and 2,000,000 cartridges, consigned from the Waffenfabrik at Hamburg, were secretly landed at Larne and taken away before the police had time to intervene. The Belfast people declared publicly that rather than fall under the authority of the Parliament of Dublin, they preferred to appeal to the Kaiser, " Prince of Protestants."

In the face of this appeal to force Nationalist Ireland got uneasy, and already in 1913 companies of

Irish National Volunteers began to show themselves in the streets of Dublin, as if by a law of equilibrium. Redmond, still relying on Parliamentary means, continued to negotiate instead of acting, and thus arose quietly between him and his constituents a breach which became in the course of time an unbridgeable gulf.

Now, what of Asquith's Liberal Government? Cowardly and unscrupulous beyond belief, it yielded in face of the challenge hurled at it, at Parliament, at the Constitution, and is thus responsible for the present chaotic condition. Even in the spring of 1914 Asquith, under pressure from the Orange extremists, was considering county option on the question of Home Rule; that is to say, practically the division of Ireland into two regions, Orange Ulster,* which could remain under the Act of Union, and the rest of Ireland which would come under the authority of a future Dublin Parliament. This is a measure which Ireland would never accept, as it exalts the wish of a small minority—and that the foreign element in the country—over the will of four-fifths of the population.

The following summer witnessed a military incident of a serious character. Almost all the officers, with the General at their head, of the cavalry division which was stationed at the Curragh Camp, fearing they might be used to suppress the revolt of Ulster, sent in their resignation in a body. Instead of putting down this attempt at sedition, Colonel Seely, Minister for War, summoned Gen. Sir Hubert Gough to London and,

* Orange "Ulster" consists of only four of the nine counties of the province of Ulster. In the other five counties the Nationalists are in the majority.

before he succeeded in getting him to withdraw the resignations sent in, had to capitulate.*

Meanwhile, when the Irish Volunteers were landing arms at Howth the police arrived in time and fired on the crowd, killing and wounding some civilians.

III.

Ireland comes into the war—She gets irritated at the measures of distrust taken against her.

The Home Rule Act was passed into law a month after the vote was taken on it, on the 25th June. But it was perfectly clear from now on, that the resistance of Ulster, fostered and supported as it was from outside, would never be put down by an English Cabinet, and that the secession of the Orange counties, which was at first put forward as a temporary measure, now threatened to become a permanent scheme.

When the war broke out, John Redmond, in a moment of enthusiasm and forgetful of these discouraging symptoms, rushed his country in blind confidence into the war for liberty by offering the unreserved support of Ireland to the Parliament of Westminster. And at first, indeed, the Irish enlisted in large numbers.

This generosity met with a fitting reward! The Home Rule Act, signed by the King on the 18th September and entered in the Statute Book, was suspended by an Order in Council and its enforcement

* It may be remarked in parenthesis that there is no doubt that the state of political and military disorganisation caused in Great Britain by the revolt of Ulster encouraged Germany, which was convinced by Kuhlmann of England's powerlessness, to undertake the hazard of the war.

postponed until six months after the cessation of hostilities. The Nationalist Volunteers had offered to transform themselves into an Irish territorial force. Lord Kitchener, Minister for War, refused point blank. The Irish who went to the Front were denied the right granted to the Scotch and Welsh of serving in national units under their own officers, and with their own banners. The enormous Catholic majority, systematically kept in the rank and file, was officered almost exclusively by Protestants. To crown all, Sir Edward Carson, the Orange leader, who was detested by Nationalist Ireland, was appointed a member of the War Cabinet, a step which was resented by many as a personal insult and a provocation.

These reasons explain the growth of ill-feeling and the steady falling-off of recruiting. From the very beginning the extreme Nationalists had preached abstention, on the plea that Ireland had nothing to gain or to defend by the side of England, and consequently had nothing to do with the conflict. Who will deny that their words were borne out by subsequent events ?

IV.

"Easter Week"—The Insurrection wrongly attributed to Sinn Fein—What was Sinn Fein ?—Its sudden development.

Then came the outbreak of Easter Week, the rising of April, 1916. Wiser counsels were against it, but the hotheads were too quick for them and faced them with the accomplished fact. It is possible also that there was a certain amount of German agitation, for we must not forget that it was the worst period of the

siege of Verdun. Be that as it may, the Republic was proclaimed. From Monday to Saturday the rebels held Dublin against the regular army, which was receiving reinforcements daily. At last they gave way before the heavy artillery which was laying waste the centre of the city. After the surrender sixteen of the leaders were executed and some 1,500 prisoners interned or deported to England.

This unexpected and disconcerting rebellion came like a thunderbolt. The innocent optimism of the kindly Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland, was nonplussed. What was the origin of it? All of a sudden it was attributed to Sinn Fein.

"Sinn Fein"—the word is Irish and means "ourselves"—was a little group of uncompromising Nationalists, whose programme might be summed up in four words—Ireland without the English. A large number of its members had been drawn from the Gaelic League, which was founded in 1893, for the study and revival of the Irish language, art and traditions, and which had unconsciously, and perhaps without desiring it, acted as a powerful incentive to patriotism and awakened in the Irish a consciousness and pride in themselves. When they started out to fight against Anglicisation, it was difficult to stop half way. The League, carried away by its own impetus, left the academic plane and developed into a political movement for independence.

The Sinn Feiners gathered round Arthur Griffith, who expounded their policy. As early as 1905 Griffith had published a series of articles, in which he showed how Hungary had got rid of Austrian domination without using any violent methods, but by merely ignoring Austria. Inspired by this example, he

proposed that Ireland should adopt a programme of pacific non-co-operation similar to that recommended to-day by Gandhi in India.

Naturally, these ideas had the support of very few people in 1916. Serious people looked upon those who advocated them as poor jesters, hotheads or fanatics. Needless to say, the rebellion was not their doing—Griffith, who was constantly preaching passive resistance, took no part in it. It was the doing of a small composite group, which consisted of a few intellectuals with Sinn Fein tendencies of course, such as Pearse and MacDonagh, but also of some revolutionary socialists, such as Connolly, and a few survivors of the Fenian movement, such as old Tom Clarke.

However, the Redmondites thought it wise to disclaim all connection with this movement, the revolutionary tone of which frightened their modesty as successful, respectable people, and to saddle those scurvy Sinn Feiners with the responsibility for it. And then an extraordinary thing happened.

When the rebellion broke out, it surprised, shocked and horrified the bulk of the people even in Ireland. In Dublin, at most a thousand men took part in the fight, and public opinion was against them. But when it was being suppressed, individual soldiers took the liberty of carrying out some summary executions, or rather murders, and the English, with incredible stupidity, instead of ending the matter once and for all, prolonged the shootings for a whole fortnight. The condemned men suffered death with that wonderful and touching heroism which characterises the Celtic spirit, and which does more to convert such a nation than ten years of propaganda. Public opinion

in Ireland, always prone to enthusiasm and pity, underwent a rapid change, with the result that the rebellion which, from a military point of view, was a piece of folly, turned out to be a political operation of the most effective kind. Pearse and his men had not conquered England to be sure, but they had conquered Ireland. And the responsibility of Sinn Fein in the rising, to which the Redmondites tried to tie Sinn Fein as to a stake was proudly acknowledged and became a pedestal.

V.

The resistance to conscription—The General Election of 1918—*Dail Eireann.*

The "hand-picked" Convention at which Lloyd George pretended—without any sincere intention—to seek a solution of the Irish problem, did nothing to check the advance of Sinn Fein. On the contrary, by its abortive issue, it gave it a further stimulus, as the Sinn Fein Party, with intelligent caution, refused to take part in it.

From that time almost every by-election was a victory for Sinn Fein; Count Plunkett, the father of a young man who was shot in Easter week, De Valera, who was condemned to death at the same time, and whose sentence was commuted to penal servitude, headed the polls by overwhelming majorities. It was evident that the ill-feeling against England was gaining ground every day.

It was on this sorely wounded people, this restive and profoundly distrustful people, that the London Parliament, without any consideration or any preparatory measure of liberty, tried to impose conscription

in April, 1918. The whole country revolted with one accord : County Councils, Catholic Hierarchy, Labour Leaders and Constitutional Leaders.

This last blow finished the Redmondite Party. In the so-called war for the liberty of small nations, Ireland, deprived of its national rights, deprived of the Home Rule which had after all become law, English law, was supposed to endure an indignity that no other Dominion had endured—of seeing its children snatched from it without the consent of its elected representatives ! It was to shed its blood to save from the abyss a master more hated now than ever ! Its leaders had either betrayed it or allowed themselves to be hoodwinked. Whether they were dupes or traitors, they must be swept aside. The new Lord Lieutenant, a soldier, Field-Marshal French, whose only means of government were threats and violence, started his period of office by the wholesale arrest of Sinn Feiners, on the pretext of a pro-German plot, of which there never was the slightest proof. Lord French got no recruits and only succeeded in stiffening the Irish spirit.

The general election took place a short time after. Dublin Castle, with the usual intelligence that characterises it in its dealings with things and people in Ireland, had prepared the way for the elections by persecuting the Republicans, hunting down their leaders, violently breaking up their meetings, putting half their candidates or more into prison. Is it any wonder that the rebels achieved a brilliant triumph in these circumstances ? Out of the 105 seats they won 73 ; and if the constitutional party retained six, it was due to local agreements, which were made between Sinn Fein and it for the purpose of defeating

the Orange Party. The Redmondites' day was over. Opportunely for himself, if not for his followers, Redmond had died nine months earlier; at least he had not lived long enough to see the grave close over his lifework.

Some time after, on the 21st January, 1919, the Sinn Fein members, who had—without result, of course—issued summonses to attend even to their Irish colleagues of opposite convictions, assembled as Dail Eireann or Parliament of Ireland in the Mansion House, Dublin, and sent forth to all the nations of the world a declaration of independence. The nucleus of a Government was formed; De Valera, President of the Republic and Prime Minister; Griffith, Vice-President; O'Kelly, Chairman of the Dail. The initial programme of these men was to get the cause of Ireland as a distinct nation presented to the Peace Conference. In spite of the support of the Irish-Americans, they failed. As soon as the Treaty of Versailles, which recognised by implication the subjection of Ireland was completed, De Valera set out for America to combat its ratification by means of a vast campaign of propaganda.

Meanwhile their claim to set up a Government of their own came into conflict, as may be well imagined, with the machinery of the English Government, especially with the secret police. "It was not possible to take and keep as prisoners those detectives whose existence threatened the life of the Republicans."* The first revolver shots rang out, and thus began the tragedy of the guerilla war which was to unfold with

* Report of Lieut.-General Sir Henry Lawson to Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, President of the "Council for Peace with Ireland."

increasing intensity from month to month all the potential horror it contained. This was in the autumn of 1919.

VI.

Irish politics have a rhythm of their own, and yet dependent on the World War—The three main factors in their evolution: the Orange faction; the War itself; the Easter Week rising.

From this brief survey it can be seen how Irish politics since 1914 followed their own course, independent of the world war, and at the same time inspired by it. They followed it, of course, but at a distance, limping, as it were, and always late. At the beginning and during the struggle, when a general rebellion would have been so dangerous to England, Ireland was not ready nor even inclined for it. Lulled to slumber by almost seventy years of peace, bound hand and foot by the minute and hidebound organisation of the constitutional party, pre-occupied with buying back from the English landlords the lands formerly confiscated from the Irish owners, it looked as if Ireland —apart from a few small intellectual groups which had no effective influence on others—had lost the hope, nay, even the desire of liberty, and only wanted a settlement. It is true that several factors were bringing about a more and more rapid evolution in public opinion, which could not, however, keep up to the dizzy pace of external happenings. Ireland could never make up for its handicap at the start. It entered the war after the universal battle.

It remains for us to examine methodically the principal factors in this evolution.

The first incontestably, and probably the most powerful, was the blindness, whether wanton or forced upon them, of the successive English Cabinets, in the face of the Irish situation. They were repeatedly offered the opportunity of conciliating the sister-isle, of cementing a lasting friendship with it. If Asquith had had the courage in 1914, of putting the Home Rule Act into force in the teeth of the Orange bullies, he would have settled the question for a generation or two. Perhaps even, by taking advantage of the conciliatory influence of the time, he would have achieved a final settlement. If even after the Easter Week rebellion Lloyd George had been serious and sincere in assembling his famous Convention, an understanding might still have been effected. I imagine that both Asquith and Lloyd George saw this clearly, but neither of them dared or was able to act against the opposition of Orange Ulster.

The power of Ulster is fairly difficult to explain. But it is a fact that, while comprising only a fifth of the Irish votes, it is by itself more powerful than the four others. How can it be explained ? By the action of the Ulster question on English domestic politics and the reaction which made the Ulster Party a preponderant power in the House of Commons. Orange Ulster rejects on principle any loosening of the Union. When the Liberals are in power, Ulster naturally becomes the wrestling ground into which the Conservative opposition tries to lure the Government for its downfall, with the support of British patriotism. The Liberals are betraying England ! The Liberals are handing over Englishmen who wish to remain English to their worst enemies, who are also ours ! And Sir F. E. Smith crossed the Irish Sea to raise the standard

of a holy war: "To your tents, Israel!" (20th September, 1913, at Ballyclare). That is the whole history of the Orange movement of 1914. Carson, not an Ulsterman, and hardly an Irishman, was a puppet whose strings were pulled in London. The Tories purposely added venom to the Ulster question as a piece of strategy for reasons of domestic politics.

But anyone who wants devoted agents must pay them. The London politicians are inclined to give the Ulster politicians, as a reward for their services, an influence out of all proportion to the real importance of Orangeism. Take Carson as an example. Now the Ulster Orangemen, noble Lords, great landowners, big manufacturers, with a seasoning of haughtiness and Protestant bigotry, have no interest in seeing a solution, of whatever nature, of the Irish question. Nay, even they have every interest in its remaining unsolved. If they ask for a separation of the whole of Ulster, the Nationalists will be almost as strong in it as themselves: ten Sinn Fein members and five Home Rulers as against twenty Unionists and two Labour-Unionists (General Election, 1918). If they accept a referendum to determine what counties desire separation, they will have a majority in those counties, but they will number only four out of nine; Armagh, Derry, Antrim and Down. Finally, whatever the arrangement, they will automatically lose those big lucrative and influential administrative positions, of which they have practically always had the monopoly. The Ulster Orange Party is in reality a privileged trust, for which any change in the existing order of things signifies disaster. Therefore, their uncompromising attitude is not a caprice on their part, but a condition of existence. It follows that this inordinate influence, with which

we have seen Ulster invested by the swing of English politics, is now used deliberately in cold blood to prevent a settlement. Give and take. I serve you against your enemies, serve me against mine. It is, if I may say so, the most amusing game of jobbery that could be imagined.

That is what explains the rise of Sir Edward Carson, who became a Minister in the War Cabinet and whom some were recently thinking of making leader of the Conservative Party instead of Austin Chamberlain. This explains the line of conduct, at the same time inert and uncompromising, of the present Government, which is moreover full of Carsonites ; Lord Birkenhead (formerly Sir F. E. Smith), Mr. Shortt, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Denis Henry, Sir James Craig. But on the other hand it explains the rapidly growing exasperation of Irish feeling, which is tired of seeing the old machine grind eternally for the profit of an anti-Irish minority, disgusted at the refusal of justice and unfortunately convinced that there is no peaceful legal method of obtaining their rights.

Orangeism is like a foreign body, a source of inflammation and purulency for the organism in which it is concealed.

Another thing that has contributed to increase their resentment is, of course, the hopes that were raised and stimulated in a small subject nation by the spectacle of the Great War. Seeing the world rise up in arms on the pretext of defending Belgium from slavery, is it not natural that Ireland should think : " I too am a slave " ? Seeing new nations rise up, such as Jugo-Slavia, or ancient nations long buried, such as Poland, revive again, is it not natural that, at the moment of universal peace and justice, Ireland

should think that she too would rise from the tomb to the broad daylight of liberty ?

Right is a hundred times clearer in her case than in many another that has got satisfaction ; her individuality as a nation is evident, for the race is distinctive and relatively one of the purest in Europe ; the language still survives in spite of centuries of persecution ; the protest against the rule of the stranger is age-long, chronic and—leaving the settlers out of count—unanimous. Her masters themselves have recognised this and during the war were not afraid to offer her liberty in exchange for her support, an imprudence which poured oil on the fire ! How could Ireland see herself treated as the victim of an exception on the part of the Allies, and of a refusal of justice on the part of England, without a sense of revolt ?

At last a small intelligent minority was found, determined, idealistic and ready to die for its ideals, with a deep sense of the continuity of Irish history, that took advantage of the best moment—or the worst, if you will—and put a match to the powder that preceding events had piled up in the darkness.

The unexpected blow of Easter, 1916, at first unintelligible to and misunderstood by the masses, succeeded in converting them completely. It awoke in every Irishman the potential rebel which is always dormant in him. " They knew well that they would fail," said Mrs. Pearse later of her sons, " but they knew also that by fighting they would save the soul of Ireland."

If indeed these men and their friends, the MacDermotts and MacDonaghs, if those who represented the Sinn Fein idea in the movement, had really a full and clear consciousness of their action,

they certainly interpreted its meaning better than their ally Connolly, who was no doubt more obsessed by social revolution. For this reason they, rather than he, were the responsible leaders and should remain the eponymous heroes of the rising.

Let us consider then who these men were and who were their spiritual descendents.

CHAPTER II.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SINN FEIN.

I.

Its extremist idealism—Its causes: The composition of the Party—The disinterestedness of its members—Their sense of honour—The attraction exercised by Sinn Fein.

WHAT strikes one most in Sinn Fein thought is its extremist character, I mean the clear and deliberate determination to ignore what is, and to take account, nay to admit the very existence, only of what ought to be. There is nothing more foreign to the everlasting spirit of compromise and bargaining, so dear to the English. "What do you want?" say they. "Economic advantages? A better educational system? There is no reason why we should not discuss them."—"Get out of Ireland first," replies Griffith in his Manchester speech; "that is the preliminary question. We shall talk afterwards." And yet the epithet "extremist" annoys the Sinn Feiners. De Valera recently protested against it in America, quite pertinently and peremptorily. "We unreservedly claim entire liberty for our country, an old nation of independent formation; and for that we are called extremists. Were you Americans also extremists, when you did the same for your country—although it was only an English colony?" But the ring of such

an answer is unmistakable. Take from the word the depreciatory shade of meaning that it has in current parlance, give it back its literal sense, and the retort of the leader to the accusation of extremism becomes extremely extremist. In other words, if you try to get to the bottom of these men, what do you find ? Whole-hearted faith in the power of ideas, in the irresistible superiority of right. That is what explains their unflinching resolution when the victory of England in the world-war brought to a climax the already almost ridiculous disproportion in strength between the huge Empire and its tiny adversary. To realists the pass might seem desperate, but to them not at all ! What is the good of temporising, of treating, of compounding with the enemy, when it is certain that a day of absolute justice, of reparation and triumph will come ? And now, if we seek a deep-lying cause for this radical idealism, it is to be found, I think, in the composition of the party, and in the fact that Sinn Fein is a specifically Irish form of thought.

No doubt one could easily point out, in French thought during the 19th century, the same enthusiastic confidence in the power of ideas ; one might quote Quinet, Hugo, Michelet . . . But, for one thing, a certain number of French people look on them—in this respect of course—as grandiloquent simpletons ; and then, even amongst those who share this confidence, it does not imply the abandonment of a positivism tinged on occasion with irony : the thing really to be hoped for is not some messianic apparition of justice, but that the abuses of force will end by uniting higher forces against force and placing them at length at the service of right ; for what is right without might ?

That is, I think, the particular shade of average French opinion, fairly tinged with criticism.

Here people are of a different cast. Their belief is an intuitive and direct act of the will, of the imagination, of love ; it is one of those mental forms that they produce quite naturally, more akin to feeling than to ideas, to poetry than to logic ; in which the thought is forcible in proportion to its lack of clearness and easily stirs up the unconscious powers of the soul ; at bottom it is a religious state.

Hence, for them, there is between justice and might, not a harmony to be realised in the long run, but immediate and substantial identity : " The peoples that went into the Great War," said Mr. Robert Brennan, one of the official propagandists of the Party, one day, " fought against militarism and for the liberation of small nations ; that secures the liberation of Ireland."—" That reasoning is right in the abstract," I objected, " but the very fact of the war has revived the old tendency to come to decisions by force ; besides the nations, either satisfied or weary, have withdrawn naturally enough into their selfishness, and will not readily come out again merely in the interests of Ireland ; and the attitude of Ireland to the Allies might easily injure her cause. . . ." These realist objections did not touch him even superficially ; he shut himself up in his dream in the summary notion that it was impossible for Ireland not to emerge free from the war of right.

Another Sinn Feiner was explaining that Dail Eireann, the only Government acknowledged by the Irish people, and the only one, therefore, having a right to its loyalty, was the *de facto* Government. " Oh, no ! " said I, " *de jure* if you like, but not *de*

facto ; the *de facto* Government is the one that sends its opponents to prison." No matter ; he stuck to his point. "English rule," he repeated, "being illegal, *does not exist in fact.*" He also, strange to say, overlooked the distinction between the ideal and fact.

These men are millenarians looking for the dawn with the certainty of faith, as sure of their triumph as of the rise of to-morrow's sun. It is this that makes them so uncompromising in their demands. It is this that gives them a determination beyond the reach of despair. But the mystic belief in justice is also, unless I am much mistaken, what gives their thought such a specifically Irish colour.

"The three social categories in which one finds the greatest number of 'innocents'," a disreputable banker used to say, "are officers, professors and priests." What our sharper intended as an expression of contempt might easily be made an encomium. If these men lack the capacity to defend their private interests, it is because their activity is too generally turned to higher ends. Well, Sinn Fein is almost entirely led by such men, and that is perhaps a second explanation of the idealism of the party. Mr. De Valera comes from the ranks of professors of mathematics, even less rooted to the solid ground than other professors . . . . Eoin MacNeill, the leader of the Irish Volunteers in 1916, now Member for the National University of Ireland, is one of the best Celtic scholars in Europe and Professor of Ancient Irish History at University College, Dublin. MacDonagh, who was shot after the rebellion, was an assistant in the same college and a poet of distinction. Pearse, the President of the Provisional Government, who was also shot

was trying an educational experiment in his school at Rathfarnham, just outside Dublin, in a fine park almost run wild and watered by murmuring streams, where they say that the proscribed Robert Emmet came more than once to wait under the tall trees for his betrothed, the beautiful Sarah Curran. To-day the staff of the party, about Griffith and De Valera, is composed of some lawyers, of some doctors, professors, and even students, all extremely young and correspondingly full of spirit. There are few business men amongst them, big manufacturers or bankers ; it is true that such men are always rare in the revolutionary opposition, in which politics don't pay. The National University, with its three colleges of Galway, Cork and Dublin, is going over more and more to Sinn Fein as the young generations come up—at one stroke it elected eight Sinn Feiners members to its Senate—and will become a nursery of leaders. It is not in these intellectual centres, which are both the honour and the danger of the party, that there is much inclination for bargaining and compromise; there is no one so inflexible as the man of thought who does not feel himself in the wrong.

A danger for the party, I have said, because politics, which are a business, would perhaps sometimes need men of business, and are not always compatible with trenchant doctrines. But an honour, too, because of the purity of these leaders. In acknowledging oneself at present a member of the Republican Party there is no profit to be had, nothing but hard knocks ; those who face them are plainly urged by enthusiasm only, and by devotion to an idea ; we in France have known a like happy time under the Empire . . . . Such disinterestedness compels the respect even of

opponents. Colonel Moore, to be sure, is sympathetic to Sinn Fein when, in a tribute to the men shot in 1916, he proclaims that " they would have been the flower of any nation." But then a purely English paper deplores—is it merely a regret or an insinuating invitation ?—that the young men elected to Parliament in 1918, instead of wasting their great talent in pursuit of the chimera of independence, should not use it for the economic revival of Ireland, which they would bring about in a few years in collaboration with England. Another* admires them—seventy of them—for having come without faltering through " the ordeal of money " ; they are almost all poor ; for most of them the £400 assigned to English Members of Parliament would mean comfort ; not one consented to take the obligatory oath of allegiance to the King, not one looked upon it as even a possible temptation. Each of them went back quite simply to the life he had led before the election ; one to his dissecting room, another to his office, a third to his class-room. De Valera, who is poor and does not live in Dublin, suffered the loss of time involved in railway travelling and long refused to accept a motor car. Later on, if liberty comes and power with its profits and advantages, we shall see the sharks emerge, we shall see politicians making successful deals and driving in their Rolls-Royce cars ; but at present it is a very common thing to recognise an Irish " Minister" in the cheerfully juvenile figure which flits past on a muddy bicycle, in a faded waterproof and a little cleft hat dripping under the pelting rain. No doubt that is a trifle, but it is odd and delightful.

There is a rivalry in honour between these men ;

*The Earl of Arran. *Fortnightly Review.*

that is their real bond. Recently a Sinn Fein Member of Parliament was court-martialled: a manuscript letter had been found on him when he was arrested, shortly after the murder of a D.I., proposing a boycott of the police and an effort was being made to connect the two facts. The prisoner was engaged to be married; did he fear too long a separation? Or was he expressing his real opinion? Be that as it may, he did not confine himself to proving that the letter was not by him, he added that it by no means reflected his ideas. And it was really odd to detect amongst his friends an uncomfortable feeling, a regret, almost an unexpressed censure of this "weakness." Luckily he got a year's imprisonment: that saved him.

The zest, on the contrary, with which everyone in turn, almost as a matter of course, goes off to prison, the obvious disinterestedness of the leaders, are in themselves a permanent and most efficacious instrument of propaganda. The repression which followed Easter Week, the continual aggravation of rigorous measures do the rest.

As a consequence conversions are frequent and sometimes reveal a singular force of attraction in the doctrine. For example, a young man of old Norman family, whose father, a hereditary baronet, was a Redmondite Member of Parliament, came in contact near Oxford, where he was studying in 1916, with the Irishmen deported after the rebellion; he fell under their spell and, breaking with all his connections, very nearly stood as the Republican candidate in 1918 against his own father. He is now Secretary of the Republican Embassy in Washington.

But the most remarkable case of spontaneous conversion through observing men and things is that

of Barton: a Protestant, a landlord by birth, the proprietor of a large estate in Co. Wicklow. Before the war he was one of the Irish Volunteers; at the time of the split between the Redmondite and Sinn Fein sections, he went with the former and became an officer in the English army. He happened to be in Dublin at the time of the Rebellion; he was struck by the courage and loyalty of the insurgents, of whom he disapproved; he was sickened by the repression; he began to feel that his true place could never be in the French trenches defending the Empire, but in Ireland defending his real country; he got demobilised as an agriculturist. And down on his Wicklow estate, under the influence of his surroundings, he took the leap. He stood for the elections under the tricolour flag, and was returned. Having been arrested soon afterwards and interned at Mountjoy, he effected one of those cinema escapes which Ireland delights in; for two years he was on the run, hunted down, always eluding his pursuers, appearing sometimes in a little circle of sure friends. Rearrested in the beginning of 1920, he was tried by court-martial for a speech threatening the life of the Lord Lieutenant, and sentenced to ten years' hard labour, commuted into three years of the same penalty. He is now in Portland Prison, wearing the regulation prison clothes, shaved, reduced to the insufficient fare of the establishment, with the right to one letter and one visit every four months, living amongst convicts. And one feels that the evolution of a Barton is only a type that must be multiplied by hundreds; what appealed to him carries away all the generous, slightly madcap, romantic youth of Ireland; in such a country they are the mass.

II.

The power of illusion in Sinn Fein—It is, to a certain extent, necessary for the people, and even for the leaders.

There is, naturally, in the idealism of Sinn Fein, and especially in its uncompromisingness, an enormous element of illusion. Patriotic feeling cannot be aroused to such a pitch of tension without a little chauvinistic blindness ; so that in this party, in which a socialism with humanitarian pretensions is very strong, one commonly meets types of men who are both wild internationalists and passionate jingoes. They see nothing but their village. They would set fire to Europe to cook their Irish egg. Their compatriot, Bernard Shaw, ridiculed this trait in them with his cruel wit : " When the peace conference of the universe opens," he said, " you will see an Irishman get up first and cry : Ireland, gentlemen. . . " A true criticism : for men of this stamp Ireland is the centre of the world, and up to a certain point that is natural ; what is not so natural is to believe that the rest of humanity take the same view. The most painful truth for them is that the Irish question should be almost unknown in Europe and—what is indeed disgraceful—a matter of indifference to public opinion.

In Dublin one hears it currently said : " The Irish in America will bring about, if not war, at least a state of permanent animosity between the United States and England ; the Irish in Canada and Australia will one day be strong enough to threaten the Empire with disruption ; if the Senate at Washington has just

rejected the peace treaty, it was to get rid of Article X., which endangers the liberation of Ireland." These assertions are so often repeated, and in such a trenchant tone, that one is on the point of accepting them as obvious. One must have lived in Ireland to understand the spell cast, in the long run, by the endless repetition of gratuitous statements. It is only when one reflects quietly over them that one sees fully the huge assumptions involved in these assertions, and that one wonders, with some anxiety, whether the Sinn Feiners themselves believe them, or are only pretending.

I think they believe them. They are the victims of their own spell, as well as its workers. The concert of assertions engenders faith. And then they are of a race more prompt than prudent, more ardent than critical ; they have the spirit of illusion in their blood. And this spirit of illusion, by a short side-path, joins the unfailing optimism, the enthusiastic idealism just mentioned, and, by another one, the inclination to anticipate facts, to believe that act and idea coincide. An Irishman whom one day I brought to book for this answered : "You are quite right, but remember that if we had not had that faculty of illusion, Ireland would have died, because she would have despaired in the three hundred years that she has been keeping up such an unequal struggle." A fine and melancholy answer, and heavy with sad truth ! Yes, this readiness to believe what they wish for is born within them, but it is necessary for them ; they believe what they say, but if they did not, they would still have to pretend. Would the rebels of 1916 have fought as they did, if their leaders had not announced the illusory help of the Germans ? Would the country in 1918

have voted as it did, if the leaders had not promised to win liberty ?

Thus, the popular imagination had to be directed towards two immediate poles : independent representation of Ireland at the Peace Conference, and when that had failed, the campaign against the treaty in the United States. Happily for the leaders, the second object seems to have been pretty well achieved ; otherwise, what outbursts of disappointment their return would have caused, what unpopularity they would have incurred ! Not that it is very clear what substantial advantage Ireland gets from the rejection of the treaty : if America stands aloof from the concert of nations, one may equally well argue that the control of the Empire is thereby strengthened, and with it, the chances of subjection for Ireland. But the masses of the people are less exacting ; what they see is that England has got a set-back, and that is enough ; De Valera can come back to Dublin. Only that now another goal must be set in view, another fence to clear, so as to keep the country going until the next occasion. By the force of circumstances, in order to induce Ireland in her exhausted and feverish state to continue to stiffen in her rebellion, Sinn Fein is driven indefinitely to repeat this whole-hog policy. And I am sure that some of them feel what I say—I have seen Mr. De Valera in American photographs looking so care-laden, so sad, borne down as it were by the sufferings and disappointments of a people—some feel it, whose logic is surer or whose information is wider, or again who, travelling hither and thither on propaganda work, get outside the Irish closed chamber and sees the true proportions of things. " That may be," said one of them to me on another occasion, " but

even if they feel it, they will never say it." For my part I will add : least of all if they feel it. And you see what a strange thing Sinn Fein is, a mixture of bluff, self-suggestion, and faith almost unanalysable, and so very Irish !

Besides, as I have also been told, would not analysis and too clear a consciousness of things be dangerous, even for the leaders ? Would not these things cut at the root of their energy ? What do those who pride themselves on this lucid disillusionment do for the cause ? Nothing, because they say there is nothing to do. A fine excuse for standing still, but an easy attitude to take up ! Yes, easy and more meritorious is that of the young leaders who, perhaps, without hoping for any immediate or precise result, and having, some of them, the courage to hold out no such hope, give such answers as these to the questions of their men : " Ask me no questions. I know nothing. Do your duty ! When will freedom come ? I don't know. Do your duty ! Obey orders ; don't pay fines ; go to prison ; don't ask questions. Do your duty ! Perhaps you will get the reward. Perhaps it will be your children, or your children's children. No matter. Do your duty ! " It is true, these words ring finer.

III.

The moral forces—The love of glory—The spirit of sacrifice—The mystic belief in right—The sense of historical tradition—The essential identity of Sinn Fein and of constitutional nationalism.

And now, what are the mighty moral forces that dictate such words to these young men ? Motives of a personal order, and others that are wider. Amongst

the first is certainly glory, every shade of it, from juvenile vanity to the love of glory in its highest sense. Just think of it ! the majority are not thirty, or only just ; they have won, over grey beards, over the most solidly constructed network of political organisations, the completest, most intoxicating victory ; and it is Sinn Fein, this doctrine of Roman sternness, which, out of yesterday's obscurity made them the leaders of to-day ; they must at least prove themselves worthy ! Saint-Just, also, remember, was terribly serious : he was twenty-five years old.

Then there is the emulation in honour between them, of which I have already spoken. Ireland is not very big. The staff of Sinn Fein forms a circle which, when all is said, is rather narrow, in which everyone knows everyone else. One does not want to do less than one's neighbour and, if possible, one would like to do better. One does not want to lose caste in the eyes of one's sisters, of one's fiancee, or more generally, in the eyes of the women. For the women, as you can imagine, play an important role in this little band. One of them was explaining to me one day how useful to the cause it was, and how good for the men's spirit, that they in their corner should maintain, instead of an enervating femininity, a serious and manly tone, heroic at need. Whereupon, the conversation having turned on Corneille, my interlocutor professed to enter into the reasons that Pauline at length discovers for loving Polyeucte. So spoke Madame Roland.

Besides, these young men have love of glory, pure and simple. In little Irish shops, side by side with popular ballads, one sees on postcards and in prints the picture of Pearse or of Connolly, or De Valera photographed in Volunteer uniform. On Irish chimney-

pieces MacDonagh firmly closes his protruding lips; young MacDermott has the grave and straightforward air, the pure features that remind one—if I may venture to compare a Saxon with him—of the fine face of Lord Grey. Irish girls carry in their prayer-books, printed in a leaflet, the names of the sixteen martyrs (Casement is not forgotten) who fell for Ireland after Easter Week. I suspect these young men of being ready to do a great deal to have their portrait on the chimney-pieces and in the shops, and consoled beforehand, in case risks should run high, by the thought of their memory too living in the prayer-books.

But, besides this love of glory, which after all is a common human feeling, one perceives in them something less accessible because it is more Irish, something like the spirit of sacrifice. No doubt, this partly comes from the religion with which their education and their whole race are impregnated, but there is in it something else more peculiar to them. The fact of being weak in numbers and resources, of being even doomed to annihilation, would not be a reason for giving up the game; *on the contrary,*

> 'Tis better to have fought and lost
> Than never to have fought at all.

Such was the inscription that MacBride—another of those shot in 1916—had put on his flag when twenty years ago he led an Irish Brigade to the help of the Boers. The Irish soul does not so much sing of might or triumph in its poetry, even in its remote epics, as it loves to celebrate, to pity, to mourn, the outcasts or the defeated victims of a just cause; its heroes are Deirdre and Naoise, the Sean-Bhean Bhocht

Lord Edward and Robert Emmet. Ireland has a sort of despairing tenderness for misfortune. And even though the sacrifice of these young men was to be useless, it is but an added reason why they should make it.

But it will not be useless. For—and this contradicts what I have just said, but, with human beings, and particularly Irish human beings, to contradict is not to exclude—they have the clear consciousness that there is not, in this respect, a single sacrifice that does not bear fruit. The death of Pearse and his comrades made Sinn Fein into a great party ; months of imprisonment makes more recruits than a hundred speeches ; every act of repression increases their strength ; the example of self-devotion is the strongest means of propaganda in existence : these are truths of experience on which they put their finger every day and which every day mysteriously whisper to them : Courage.

It is evident that we have already passed out of the region of personal motives ; here a wider feeling, to some extent a public feeling, comes into play. Yet another, of the same order, buoys them up, the mystic belief in justice which makes them assimilate, and even confuse, right with fact, and whether it is reasonable or not, gives them unimaginable energy. Lastly, and above all, these men believe that they are acting in the direction of their history, continuing a tradition.

" It may be truthfully asserted that the youth of Ireland, in every generation, is instinctively separatist, that its dream is to draw the sword, and that, consequently, every generation produces the material for a separatist movement. That being so, the question

of the acceptance by a given generation of a separatist movement reduces itself in practice to that of the formation, at the right moment, of an openly separatist movement; and in practice also it is possible to attract any generation in Ireland from moderation to a separatist movement, if the separatists succeed in creating a public, attractive, and practicable policy."

The thought is perfectly exact, even if the expression is weak. What does the history of Ireland tell us? Up to the flight of the Earls, a war persistently kept up, for centuries, against the English invader. After the surrender, when a regular conflict had become impossible, risings and plots, Phelim O'Neill in 1641, Sarsfield in 1691, the Volunteers in 1782, the United Irishmen in '98, Emmet in 1803, Young Ireland in 1848, the Fenians in 1867. Every time that a moderate constitutional effort is endorsed by the people, in the time of O'Connell, of the Tenants' Rights League, or of Parnell and Redmond, it is only a second-best policy, to fill a gap, and because a more radical movement has just been crushed. The rebellion of 1916 verifies this law of alternation. Thus the Sinn Fein leaders know themselves to be the legitimate heirs of those great legendary names which make every true Irish heart beat with pride: Sarsfield and Wolfe Tone. Who can express the strength given them by this sense of historical continuity? And yet, this sense in them is neither as deep nor as wide as it should be; they scoff pitilessly at Redmond, his imperiousness in Ireland, and his timid credulity at Westminster; no doubt they force the note consciously in the party interest and to contrast their methods with his; but anyhow, that is their feeling.

They despise in O'Connell his respect for legal forms. Judgments that are both hasty and unjust! Would not O'Connell's propaganda have been brought to a full stop in early Victorian England but for his absolute respect for legality? And is not the Act of Emancipation, as its name indicates, the breaking of a link in the chain? As to the Parliamentary see-saw method invented by Parnell, did it not produce certain advantages, now insufficient but substantial in their day, such as the redistribution of the land among the farmers, thereby even preparing the ground for bolder followers? Redmondism and Sinn Fein, hostile brothers, if you will, but less hostile than brothers, different expressions of the same old national spirit.

I admit all the grievances brought against Redmond; I admit that, infected by thirty years spent in the Parliamentary atmosphere, he had become a professional politician, tyrannical here, backboneless there, and that by dint of not daring frankly to declare the ultimate objects he pursued, he ended by being uncertain about them himself. But at bottom these objects were the very objects of Sinn Fein. If he was content with Home Rule, it was because it seemed to him impossible in his time to aim at more; but for him too, whether he admitted it to himself or not, the solution was merely provisional. Let us not forget the clear words engraved on Parnell's monument: "No one has the right to put a limit to the march of a nation; no one has the right to say to his country: Thus far and no farther. We have never tried to fix an ultimate limit to the progress of Irish nationality, and we never shall." Where the constitutionalists want to proceed by stages, the Sinn

Feiners prefer to rush the denouement: that is the whole difference.

When Redmond, in 1914, demanded special brigades in which the Irish troops, commanded by Irish officers, should go and fight under the green flag, did not this particularism foreshadow the separatist movement? When he called on Parliament to withdraw all British troops from Ireland and to entrust its defence to purely Irish contingents, did he not tend, consciously or not, to produce the nucleus of an army of national defence, available *against any enemy*? The War Office perceived this when it persistently refused—and, from its point of view, it was right. Have I not read that Ireland was wrong in refusing to fight side by side with the allies, but for this singular reason that she would now have 400,000 trained men ready? The truth is that the supreme vision of Redmond was the very dream of Sinn Fein; scratch any true son of Ireland and you will find the same aspiration, perhaps latent, but living, in the bottom of his heart.

An old lady, a large landowner in the West, disquieted about her rents in the revolutionary atmosphere created by Sinn Fein, had been hurling the major excommunication against it for two hours by the clock. The conversation changed and turned on English rule: never did Griffith abuse it as vigorously as she did upon the spot. A Redmondite, a former Member of Parliament, very anti-German, who made his son enlist in the British army at the very outbreak of the war, admitted to me: "When I see a company of English soldiers passing in the streets of Dublin, I can't help myself, I clench my fists, I have to go away. And I can't bear any longer to see my son

in khaki." These people do not, perhaps, understand themselves, but their feeling is, in its essence, as clear as that of Sinn Fein.

And it is the growth and spread of this feeling throughout Irish-Ireland that explains the continual shifting of the old nationalism towards Sinn Fein. Even about Redmond, and often beyond him, there were men like Joe Devlin, whose vision was rather daring and whose speech was rather rough for the occupants of seats at Westminster; there were men like Shane Leslie, who considered Home Rule only as a stage, and hailed in advance the younger men who should outstrip it; there were men like Ginnell, who were to pass boldly over to Sinn Fein. And to-day, if it is true that Sir Horace Plunkett—formerly an Irish Unionist M.P., think of it!—still admits that Ireland should remain within the Empire, what difference *in feeling* do you find between one of his bitter philippics and an address of Griffith or De Valera?

No, the only questions which separated Redmond from Sinn Fein—putting aside, of course, personal jealousies and ambitions, which in Ireland, as much as elsewhere, and more, are the scourge of public life—were questions of method and expediency. When Sinn Fein sees things from a little farther off so that its view will be less short-sighted, and fragmentary, it will be juster and will recognise that Redmond and his party also have their place in the line of Irish history, and that if it is in conflict with them it is really because it is complementary to them. It will then feel, more completely than it now does, that it gathers up the various threads of tradition, and it will draw fresh strength from the consciousness that

it brings together, reconciles, unifies, and incarnates all Irish aspirations after liberty. For it is useless to mince words, if at bottom Sinn Fein means independence, under that name or some other, in act or in dream, consciously or unconsciously, the whole of National Ireland is Sinn Fein.

CHAPTER III.

THE IRISH REPUBLIC.

I.

The Irish Republican Army—Thwarting of British power by force—by propaganda—Results obtained in the middle of 1920.

In May, 1918, Lord French was appointed Viceroy of Ireland ; Mr. Shortt, later on replaced by Mr. Ian MacPherson, became Chief Secretary ; and with them began the system of military repression which still continues. In December the Irish people, although half the Sinn Fein leaders were in jail or hunted, voted by a three-fourths majority for an independent Republic. On the 21st January, 1919, the Sinn Fein deputies still at liberty, assembled in Dail Eireann, or the Parliament of Ireland, proclaimed the independence of the Irish Republic. Vain elections, empty proclamation upon which the British Press exhausted all its irony ! At the moment the situation was very clear ; on the one side the realm of facts, all serious folk, the force and majesty of the Empire ; on the other feeble, wordy exaggerations, dreamers or practical jokers, governments of phantasy and comic opera cabinet ministers. Since then it would seem that the work of Sinn Fein, whose results began to appear especially in the first six months of 1920, has tended to belie the beautiful parallelism of this specious

contrast and to align on its side, too, a certain number of facts.

The attempt made in December against the life of Lord French was like a warning stroke of a bell. But in spite of the revolver shots which were already ringing out in the streets of Dublin it was still possible, at this period, to believe that these were the unconnected attempts of isolated terrorists. To-day there is no longer room for mistake ; we have to recognise in these incidents the opening of a campaign long-thought-out and deliberately pursued to combat and progressively paralyse English power in Ireland.

To this end Sinn Fein had at its disposal the Irish Volunteers. It will be remembered that they had been formed in the autumn of 1913 as a set-off to the Ulster Volunteers of Sir Edward Carson. Their effective strength must have varied greatly. When Redmond had—vainly—proposed to Lord Kitchener to take them over *en bloc* as an Irish Territorial Army he estimated their numbers at 100,000 ; those of them who are to-day actually carrying out guerilla tactics against English troops cannot exceed a few thousands, but naturally, these thousands are picked fighters. In any case the constitutional leader had never looked kindly upon the creation of such troops, evidently by no means parliamentarian in outlook, and liable to easily slip away from his control. After some time, however, he had formed so high an estimate of their strength that he endeavoured to capture it for his own profit by putting himself at their head. It can be well imagined that his efforts to assist British recruiting soon became intolerable in this young and ardently anti-English milieu. He and his friends, excluded from the direction of the Volunteers, were

replaced by others of more definitely radical views like John McNeill, professor of Early Irish History in the National University, who was appointed Chief of Staff.

MacNeill's intervention prevented the Volunteers, except in Dublin, from taking part in the rising of Easter, 1916, of which he disapproved. The framework remained therefore almost intact. But as the repressive measures adopted by the Castle made themselves more felt, anti-English sentiment increased in depth ; and the parallel, but distinct organisations, like the Citizen Army of revolutionary workers, or the Irish Republican Brotherhood—the heirs of the old Fenians —tended more and more to merge into the Irish Volunteers. The latter, once forged and made perfect in the fire of battle, exchanged their former title for that of the Irish Republican Army, a name more fitting for the state of war which, on the admission of the English themselves, then existed in Ireland.

Where was this army to find recruits ? A few everywhere—from workers, students, peasants, clerks. " The captains of volunteers," says Sir H. Lawson, an English Lieutenant-general, " appear to have been almost always quite young men, farmer's sons for the most part, some of them schoolmasters, most with what for their class must be considered a good deal of education, ignorant, however, of the world and of many things, but, as a class, transparently sincere and single-minded, idealists, highly religious for the most part, and often with an almost mystical sense of their duty to their country. These men gave to the task of organising their volunteers their best in mind and spirit. They fought against drunkenness and self-indulgence, and it is no exaggeration to say that, as

a class, they represented all that was best in the countryside.

" They and their volunteers were trained to discipline, they imbibed the military spirit, the sense of military honour, etc., and then, as now, they looked upon their army as one in a very real sense an organisation demanding implicit obedience and self-abnegation from rank to rank.

" The Irish Republican Army seems to be particularly free from ruffians of the professional type, and the killings of police and others, sometimes under circumstances which evoke our horror, were almost certainly done by members of the I.R.A., acting under military orders—young men imbued with no personal feeling against their victims, with no crimes to their record, and probably then shedding blood for the first time in their lives."

These men were evidently much less formidable on account of their weapons or their numbers than by reason of their moral exaltation, and the active sympathy in which the population, almost without exception, enveloped them. " Behind their organisation there was the spirit of a nation," says General Lawson—" of a nation which was certainly not in favour of murder, but which, on the whole, sympathised with them and believed that the members of the I.R.A. are fighting for the cause of the Irish people." Thanks to this support from the masses there are few traitors, and these few are promptly unmasked and punished, while, on the other hand, there is an incomparable secret service, since a whole nation in sympathy gathers information for " the boys " and thwarts at every turn the crushing superiority of English power.

This power, besides the regular army, consisted of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary, of about 2,000 and 10,000 men, respectively. The D.M.P. is really a police force comparable to our policemen, at least as regards the majority of its members; and, for these latter, life has remained bearable. A suspension of hostilities, tacit and perhaps official, exists between them and Sinn Feiners. The political detectives of the G Division, the " G-men " as they are called, alone in every sense of the phrase, find it hard to live. . . . As for the R.I.C. the French reader should not be deceived by the peaceful word, Constabulary. The force has nothing in common with our good *gendarmes*, good-natured lads, loved and esteemed by the peasant whom they protect from the marauder and the vagabond. The R.I.C. is armed to the teeth: rifle, bayonet, revolver and of late, grenades and machine guns. Carefully recruited from men of exceptional physique who undergo at the Central Depot, at Phœnix Park, several months' physical and " moral " training, and always at the orders of the military authorities, the force is as much occupied in the political surveillance of the country as in the repression of crimes and misdemeanours.

Scattered in little groups of from six to ten men under a sergeant, even in the smallest villages in Ireland, the R.I.C. envelops the whole country in an immense net with narrow meshes. For fear of weakness or collusion with the population, no member of the force is ever stationed in his own county. What makes the R.I.C. more efficient and in troubled times more effective is that the men (if not the officers) are in the proportion of 95 to 100 Irish—genuine Irish

Catholics. Familiar by birth with the habits and character of the people, speaking Irish in areas where Irish is useful, possessing in addition the courage and pugnacity of the race, they are the most dangerous arm of the Empire in Ireland. But for them the English army would be like a huge body deprived of eyes and feelers, blinded and impotent. This is the arm which had to be destroyed first. The attempt was made by violence and persuasion together.

By violence: Shootings previously sporadic have become more and more frequent, one should say regular, and in spite of the silence of Sinn Fein on the question of responsibility, these acts are obviously regulated by a superior authority. The putting-away of policemen is a daily item in the news columns of the Irish papers; at least a hundred have perished since the beginning of the year, twice as many have been wounded. Hoey, one of the cleverest and bravest sleuths of the D.M.P., was killed at the door of the police headquarters by a revolver shot fired from the other side of the street by a marksman whose skill bespoke training. Some weeks later (at 6 o'clock in the evening), another detective, Barton, was killed in the same manner fifty paces further up. Two or three detectives who were following up an inquiry into the latter's death were successively killed or wounded—one, Wharton, was shot in the midst of the throng turning out of Grafton Street. A high official from Belfast, Assistant Commissioner Forbes Redmond, was sent to encourage the police, who were losing heart; three weeks after his arrival in Dublin the unfortunate man, going to dinner to his hotel, was killed point blank. In every case the attacker escapes —impossible to capture. One day I was speaking

of these murders to a lady who would not harm a fly. " Poor boys," she said, with a sigh of pity. I thought she was thinking of the victims. She continued : " Such fine lads ! obliged to do such work." There you have Irish feeling on the subject.

In the country and in the towns of the South and West—Cork, Tipperary, Thurles, Limerick—attacks follow one another in more rapid succession, often successful, almost always unpunished. It would be a simple matter to give names and dates : to what purpose ? The story is always the same, an R.I.C. patrol is passing along a road, from behind a hedge or a wall, from a bog hole, comes a volley of bullets ; those who are not hit fly, the others are deprived of their arms, the wounded generally well treated. Even sleep, behind the doors and armoured windows of the barracks, in spite of barbed wire and machine guns—is not safe nowadays. Almost every night small isolated barracks in the country are attacked. The materials for the attack are slender, the success variable, but the tactics are at least, clearly conceived. Telephone and telegraph wires once cut and roads blocked with tree trunks, a well-sustained fire keeps the defenders under cover ; some bold spirits endeavour to place sticks of gelignite against an angle of the building so as to blow it in on the heads of the besieged. For the past year each side has tried to introduce some niceties into this rather severe and simple scheme ; the barracks have been provided with wireless apparatus or Verey lights, the Volunteers have discovered a plan of throwing on to the roof cans of burning petrol—on both sides grenades and heavy bombs have come into play. Irishmen against Irishmen—and here lies the saddest element in the situation

—have fought gallantly in both the French and the English sense of the word. In a northern village whose name I have forgotten, ten constables resisted all night and surrendered only when six of their number had been wounded and two others swallowed up in the burning building. More than once, on the other hand, after surrender, the victors have given full honours and every attention to a valiant but defeated foe.

Side by side with these exhibitions of chivalry certain executions have been carried out with merciless fury—in cases where the man belonged to the political secret service. One of these, three days after his arrival in a village in the West was fired at and missed. He fled, taking refuge in a house. The assailants searched from cellar to loft in vain. Hearing a lorry full of police passing by the house, the searchers hid and waited in silence. After a moment, as all became quiet, they catch, towards the kitchen, a faint sound of repressed breathing. They go to the cupboard, find their man, drag him out and shoot him against the wall.

Thus, not far from Tralee, the sergeant who in 1916 had arrested Sir Roger Casement was done to death; so too at Lisburn D.I. Swanzy, accused of connivance at the assassination of MacCurtain, late Lord Mayor of Cork; so too perished Col. Smyth. Smyth was a rough soldier who had lost an arm in the war, and who, since his entry into the R.I.C. had acquired a reputation for being energetic—to excess. Sent to Cork to raise the morale of the police, he was accused, on the evidence of four constables who had resigned from the Force, of having, in the barracks at Listowel, made a speech in which he urged his men to shoot

civilians at sight. " As for those who are on hunger strike, let them die "—he is reported to have said, " and the sooner the better." Some days later he was surprised in the smoke room of his club and shot dead on the spot. Judge Alan Bell—despite his title of Judge, he was nothing more than a police officer who had spent most of his career in the secret service —was entrusted with an enquiry into Irish banks, with a view to discovering traces of Sinn Fein deposits ; one morning, on his way from Kingstown to Dublin, his tram was stopped, Alan Bell forced to alight, and then killed outright.

Thus we see that the trade has its risks—ever on the increase. Henceforward, no policeman is sure of his next hour. It is a hard trial for men gripped by constant dread of a peril which is obscure, intangible, withering. An intense propaganda, and it will be seen one which was easy to carry out, was also brought into play to increase the demoralisation of the Force. The most rigorous boycott—and the Irish, who are its inventors—know how to wield the weapon, ostracised the " Peelers."* It was forbidden to sell them anything whatever ; they had, therefore, to commandeer food. It was forbidden even to speak to them ; girls who were weak enough to tolerate their company had their hair cut off as a sign of infamy. One day, even, it is said that some savage, remembering the

*Popular nickname for the R.I.C., who were raised in Ireland by Sir Robert Peel. Sometimes this boycott led to tragic mistakes. A Limerick Sinn Feiner, James Dalton, had been talking to policemen —he had even spent a night in their barrack. Accused of spying, he demanded a Dail Inquiry. He was killed one night by a revolver shot. The following morning the Dail decision establishing his innocence arrived. The poor fellow left thirteen children.

cruelties of former times, threatened to slit ears. And then among these poor R.I.C. men there were many who knew that their friends, their relations, their brothers, were with the patriots whom they were tracking. The contempt in which, as traitors, they were enveloped stifled them. It was a far cry now to the time when it was said that the ambition of every Irish farmer was to have one son a District Inspector of Constabulary and another a Bishop.

A year ago a sergeant and some constables, after curfew, halted a pedestrian: "Who goes there?"

"Hello, Sergeant; you really ought to recognise me—it was you who arrested me and brought me to Mountjoy last winter."

"Oh, to be sure! Excuse me, Doctor! But, look here—allow us to see you home—you might be worried by the patrols."

And the doctor goes off escorted by his guard of honour. On the way the conversation naturally turns to politics. Before his men, and certain, therefore, that he was expressing a common thought, the sergeant explains with a touch of Irish drollery.

"Do you know, all the same, you Sinn Feiners ought to be rather popular in the Force. After all, only for you they would never have given us the new scale of pay—100 per cent. increase, Doctor. What! Resign? Any time you like—get us jobs! I have three children. Bob, here, has eight, Liam eleven. We must live. I spent my last leave with my eldest brother, who inherited my father's farm. He taunted me with wearing the King's jacket, and urged me to throw it off."

"Patrick," I asked, "suppose I do, will you give me half the farm? I heard no more about it, Doctor."

Everyone laughed. It is easy to grasp the viewpoint of men who speak in such a way.

In sum, demoralising influences operate upon the Force from two converging directions ; the men have had to bear the tortures of fear, they have been made ashamed, and their consciences have been roused. Thus, pestered and buffeted from all sides at once it is long since they began to yield. From January, 1920, efforts were made to strengthen, by English recruits, a corps already contaminated by Republican sympathies. Resignations followed—at first isolated, then more frequent, then almost in solid groups. The *Irish Bulletin* for 21st June, 1920, chronicles with satisfaction more than 100 resignations for the month, 150, counting sergeants, officers and magistrates. On the 16th July, Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland, announces that since January 1st 250 men have left the Force. Even inside the Force the old spirit of blind discipline was being worn down ; some men protested against the duties imposed upon them ; a certain constable, Brennan, who, since he refused to resign, was dismissed, carried on a campaign to have the R.I.C. shorn of its warlike character and restored to its only real function—the suppression of criminal or civil offences. Quite lately, we had a rumour, denied by the Castle, re-asserted by the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*, that one morning in the Phœnix Park Depot 140 men had thrown off the uniform and left the barracks, refusing to any longer prosecute their fellow-countrymen for "political opinions."

We must not underestimate such starts of conscience. Remembering that a great number of these poor fellows had 10 or 15 years, some 25 or 30 years' service, that

they are risking their dependants' daily bread and abandoning the certainty of a pension for their old age—we can measure the strength of sentiment which impels them.

It is the same sentiment, dormant but ever ready to be aroused, which at the call of Sinn Fein has almost absolutely dried up in Ireland recruiting which was once flourishing, and in distant India, at the receipt of news from home, caused a mutiny in a battalion of the Connaught Rangers.

Gradually the R.I.C. thus intimidated, decimated, worked upon, began to lose its efficiency, patrols could no longer go out at night—it was a useless risk. Soon they began to evacuate the small lonely barracks and to concentrate on the towns, to avoid the weakness of dispersion. It was like the slow retraction of an octopus which regretfully withdraws its hazardous tentacles, and first by night, then even by day the countryside (save for four or five counties in Ulster) fell altogether under the sway of Dail Eireann. Henceforth there were two Governments in Ireland: the Irish Government which controlled the *Catholic* countrysides, and the English, master of the towns, and even in the towns its supremacy was hotly contested. Numbers of Sinn Feiners "wanted"—a pretty phrase—by the police went calmly about their business, certain that in the streets or even in daylight not a policeman would dare lay hands on them. It was only at night—in case their houses should be surrounded and searched by a section of regular soldiers—that they ran some risk by sleeping at home. Hence the number of men "on the run"—always moving and never caught. Universal connivance protects them. A G-man sent to make enquiries about the

murder of Forbes Redmond, when challenged by the witness, whom he was interrogating to prove his identity, preferred to leave, discomfited. "I have a wife and two children," quoth the poor man.

On the other hand the Viceroy and the higher officials could not leave the Castle—itself fortified like a first line blockhouse—except in the midst of armoured motors and lorries full of soldiers. The attempt of 20th December had nearly cost Lord French his life. The Lord Lieutenant, returning from Roscommon, had left the train at Ashtown Station—a safer place for him than the Dublin terminus, Broadstone, intending to proceed by motor to Phœnix Park. Warned by their incomparable secret service, the Volunteers attacked at an elbow in the road with gunfire and grenades. But for a providential delay in the arrival of the train, which upset their plans, it is beyond doubt that Lord French would have been killed. When it became clear that he was escaping a young 2nd Lieutenant, Martin Savage, jumped boldly out on to the road a bomb in hand, straight in front of the speeding car. He fell instantly under the bullets of the escort. On another occasion in spring, a high police official, Assistant Inspector General Roberts, R.I.C., when leaving Amiens Street Station by motor was met with a hail of bullets under the railway bridge, and by good luck escaped with a wound in the neck. A little later, Mr. Frank Brooke, hated for the memories which he had left in his county as Deputy Lieutenant, was killed in daylight in his office at Westland Row. Each time the assailants disappeared unmolested. There remained a modicum of truth in the disgruntled exaggerations to which in its ill-humour the *Morning Post* gave vent: "The British Government has been

beaten—it only remains for it to be deposed by Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein has become so powerful that the higher civil officials and Lord French himself have been and are besieged in the Castle and in the Vice-regal Lodge."

II.

The Triumphant Elections of 1920—Propaganda Abroad—Financial Resources—Attempts at Economic Organisation.

The Irish did not rest content with these military gains—indispensable as a first step towards supplanting British power in Ireland. There now appeared a broad and complete plan which they tried ably and methodically to put into operation. Dail Eireann having become a *de facto* power gradually assumed the functions of a regular Government. Its power was increased by the Municipal Elections of January, 1920, followed by the County Council Elections in June. In both of these, Sinn Fein, with its ally, the National Labour Party, literally swept the country. With the idea of reducing the majority obtained by the Republicans in the General Election of December, 1918, England had introduced a rigorous Proportional Representation Act; the triumph of Sinn Fein was only the more crushing. In the towns and cities, 77 per cent., in the counties 80·9 per cent. of the votes were cast for independence. Out of 699 seats on the County Councils Unionism now held only 86. Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Sligo elected Republican Corporations. Nay, even the sacred "North-east corner" was entered. Tyrone and Fermanagh, two of

the six so-called Unionist counties voted against Partition. For the first time since the days of King James the Mayoralty of Londonderry by 21 votes to 19 was captured from the Protestant settler. Carried forward on a wave of universal enthusiasm, the Republic was settling down.

Abroad it had kept its agents who, though left on the door-step by the Peace Conference, had remained to continue their propaganda. After various ups and downs, Messrs. O'Kelly and Gavan Duffy, Irish Envoys at Paris, who had been at first repulsed because of the fervour of the Anglo-French Alliance, finally, by taking advantage of a certain bitterness begotten of English selfishness, succeeded in interesting French public opinion in the fate of Ireland. Victory helped France to forget that during the war Ireland had, with all its strength, really played the enemy's game. M. Marc Sangnier, a Paris Deputy, gave a lecture in favour of Irish Independence which attracted much attention. The Paris Press which had always refused to accept the communiques of the *Irish Bulletin*, ceased to pin its faith to the accuracy of Reuter's versions of events in Ireland. We know that when first questioned in the House of Commons about the Irish Delegation at Paris, the English Government declared that it had nothing but contempt for the ridiculous activities of Mr. Gavan Duffy. The expulsion of the same Gavan Duffy from Paris, two months later, showed that the London Ministry had changed its mind. At the beatification of the Venerable Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh, beheaded in London in 1681 for high treason, Mr. O'Kelly, who had been sent to Rome to receive formally the Irish Bishops, seized the opportunity for holding, in the Eternal City,

a purely Irish function, which must have been profoundly distasteful to England.

In America, Mr. De Valera, after having used all his energies to have the Peace Treaty rejected (on account of Article 10, which sealed the fate of Ireland) failed in his efforts to persuade the Republican and Democratic Conventions to make the Irish Question an issue at the Presidential Election. On the other hand, despite the unfortunate split between himself and certain Irish-American leaders, like Judge Cohalan, and the old Fenian, John Devoy, he made a wonderful success of the floating of the "Irish Loan."

It was in this way that the new and still formative State secured for itself resources, more necessary to it than to any other, to strengthen it and to finance the struggle. For the moment it was impossible to levy regular taxes. They, therefore, asked for public loans of £250,000 in Ireland, and £1,000,000 in America, where at all times Irish revolt has found solid financial backing. On the bonds it was stated that interest at 5 per cent. would begin to run six months after the evacuation of the island by the Army of Occupation. Naturally, in Ireland, public appeals, applications, or purchase of shares were held to be offences, punishable by imprisonment. In spite of everything the loan was a success. Ireland gave £150,000 more than the amount asked for; America, instead of £1,000,000 furnished 10,000,000 dollars. These large sums, on deposit for the most part in the United States beyond the reach of seizure by the English, gave the Dail certain means of action. The offensive began by an effort to dry up Irish sources of revenue to the British Treasury. To upset the making out of assessments, on Easter Monday, anniversary of the Rebellion,

Income Tax offices were burned, more or less over the whole country. The County Councils, now manned by Republicans, refused to furnish surveyors with any indications which might be of assistance in the assessment of income tax. As a final blow there was some idea of issuing an order to refuse income tax to the English and pay it to the Dail—but the difficulties are such that, so far, no such action has been taken. If ever the order comes, it will be issued simultaneously all over Ireland, and first attempted in the country areas where its execution is easiest. Legal action, seizures of goods? The seizures would run into tens of thousands. And then who will buy the goods, houses, lands, or cattle, seized by the British Treasury. Nobody. Some will be prevented by patriotism, others by fear. Export the cattle to England? Who will drive them, move them on the railways, ship them? Nobody. We can see what embarrassing situations may confront England in dealing with the solid passive resistance of a whole population. Well wielded, passive resistance is a dangerous weapon.

The Republican Government, although in the hands of pure intellectuals, barristers, professors, journalists, students, was far from forgetting economic problems. It recalled the tremendous wave of prosperity which, under Grattan from 1782 to 1798, had marked the short period during which Ireland had enjoyed a half-freedom. It instituted a "Committee of Inquiry into the Resources and Industries of Ireland," which did good work and might have done better if, despite its purely economic character, it had not been interfered with as seditious. In the Town Hall, Cork, one day the meeting was broken up at the point of the bayonet. Another day, Mr. Darrell Figgis was within

an ace of being hanged out of hand by an English officer hopelessly drunk and irresponsible. A sergeant was actually bringing up a rope when Colonel Moore, a veteran of the Transvaal war, and now a member of the Commission of Inquiry, fortified by his rank as ex-Colonel of the Connaught Rangers, providentially intervened just in the nick of time. Amid such incidents, tragic or comic, the Committee continued its labours on fisheries, mines, peat, coal, water power, railways, harbours, and established to a certain degree the real state of the natural resources of Ireland. Thus forestalling the coming dawn of Liberty, preparing with all its might, the Dail was at least now better qualified to forbid emigration, whose slow drain seemed to be recommencing this summer.

III.

Republican Justice—Dangers of Anarchy—Police—Arbitration Courts—Settlement of the Agrarian question.

But the most interesting assumption of sovereignty and to my mind the most effective against English authority, was the creation of a purely Irish judicial machine—police and judiciary. The matter was urgent for, obviously, a country is not stirred to its depths by a revolutionary crisis, as this one has been, without the dregs tending towards the surface. Under cover of general disorder brigandage pure and simple had made its appearance, attacks by footpads in towns hitherto the safest in Europe, armed highway robbery, private revenge in the guise of political executions. Under pain of going down in impotence and dishonour

the Republican movement owed it to itself to put an end to anarchy. The Volunteer organisation supplied the force—in men and officers—nor must we ignore—and here lies the real reason of such constant triumphs—the support of unanimous assent. Robbers were arrested ; the proceeds of their thefts, sometimes very considerable, restored to the rightful owners ; other delinquents were put in prison for a few weeks, sometimes till they had promised on their honour to be of better behaviour, others were treated to the " cat-o'-nine-tails," others banished for a period from their own county, and the guiltiest criminals were condemned, wittily enough, to be deported—to England.

Above the police, who were generally in charge of the officer commanding the local Volunteers, were established courts. The main difficulty, naturally, was to ensure the execution of the verdicts. At first, litigants who had recourse to these courts, agreed in writing to abide by the decisions, and not to appeal to the English. Then, in extreme cases, the Volunteers were always available to enforce the judgments of these "Arbitration Courts." Above all, over these bitter quarrels of self-interest, there hovered an atmosphere of Irish brotherliness, a feeling that it would have been too degrading to appeal from the justice of one's own countrymen to that of the foreigner. If you would measure the depth of patriotic feeling in those simple souls—farmers, day labourers, shepherds—imagine a French peasant losing one of these lawsuits into which he brings such fierce passion, and depriving himself of his own free will of a chance to reverse the decision. When one reflects on the decrees of these Sinn Fein Courts, in reality illegal, precarious, and dependent for their validity on the triumph of the

Republican cause, one cannot but be touched by the confidence placed in them by these poor people. We constantly return to the same point—Republican justice derives its strength from the fact that it is not submitted to unwillingly, but accepted and loved as a proud token of freedom—and that here as elsewhere every heart beats in unison.

After humble beginnings, having, so to speak, insinuated itself into the remote western districts, this judicial organisation promptly took root all over Nationalist Ireland. In June in 24 out of 32 counties Republican courts were functioning. Who were the judges ? Volunteer officers, teachers, doctors, business men who enjoyed general confidence for their special qualifications or their patriotism and uprightness. Almost always, and in a Catholic country one feels what a moral guarantee this is for the parties—the president is a priest. The procedure was simple but imitated from English forms and regularly observed ; soon, in certain districts, the Bar came over to the Sinn Fein courts and pleaded officially therein.

A Protestant Unionist lady, a landowner in Co. Meath was harassed by the peasants round about who wished to compel her to sell her land. She complained in succession to all the regular authorities. The District Inspector of Constabulary confessed that he was powerless. Elsewhere she was told that even in her own interests she would do better not to persist in her complaints. " I take the risk upon myself," said the obstinate lady. In the highest quarters she found only silence, inertia, perhaps impotence. In despair she applied to the Republican court, in a few days the case was tried, the peasants nonsuited, and the lady's peace of mind restored

Besides the young Republic had need of all the confidence enjoyed by these Arbitration Courts to settle deftly but with no show of weakness the agrarian question which, in a country like Ireland, is the most dangerous for a new Government. The problem occurred in certain parts of the country as acutely, as hotly, and with as much display of violence as in the days of Parnell and the "Land war." To give free rein to the despoiling instincts of the peasantry meant going down into anarchy ; to curb these instincts too roughly entailed risking the loyalty of the masses.

In some cases it was an English landlord holding huge tracts of land and living amid poor wretches who did not own even an acre, who refused to divide his estates. Against such an enemy—an enemy by class, by religion and by race, any weapon was good. One morning on his way to the hunting field in a motor car, Captain Shawe-Taylor, a big horse breeder, was held up by a tree thrown across the road and shot dead. A steward who, after having been warned, persisted in administering his master's estate, met the same fate near Galway. Sometimes the executions took on the character of primitive bestiality, which recalls French peasant revolts—Chouans and Jacques. A herd refusing to obey an order to abandon his master's cattle was surprised, tied to a tree and savagely beaten with stones and sticks. These, however, were outstanding outrages ; nocturnal disturbances, threatening letters, burnings of hay and corn, fences levelled, cattle driving for fifteen or twenty miles—were common features of the campaign. One instance will show to what degree of tyranny the peasants were gradually arriving. A group interviewed a landlord at his own house to insist that he should put his land

up for auction. "And in the name of what law do you make these demands?" the spokesman was asked. Quick came the jeering reply, "In the name of Shawe-Taylor's law."

Worse remains to be told. In districts where for thirty or forty years the land had fallen into Irish hands, the labourers turned against the farmers in actual ownership of the land. They protested against holdings of three, four, or six hundred, or a thousand acres of agricultural or pasture land, whilst others were restricted to the acre that went with the labourer's cottage. The movement became so violent that even the Church was not spared. One day the Bishop of Clonfert received a visit from a group of parishioners, who, with all due deference, offered to purchase portion of the episcopal estate; without haggling, with true Christian charity, the Bishop wisely gave way. Worst of all, in the poverty-stricken West, where circumstances make these disputes still more bitter, farmers and cottagers alike were jealous of a neighbour's acre more or less, conflicts became more and more acrimonious, and the men of Clare do not hesitate to shoot. Failure to smooth over these dissensions—which the Castle must have regarded with no displeasure—meant that the Republic would see a pit dug between the possessing classes and the proletariat, and thus the national movement would be swallowed up in the bog of social revolution.

We find the echo of this very uneasiness in the proclamation issued to their constituents in the name of the Dail by certain Members: Austin Stack, Pierce Beasley and Lynch in Kerry; Father O'Kennedy in the name of the absent De Valera in East Clare; Brian O'Higgins in West Clare. "After the victory

has been won," said O'Higgins, " the Dail will do everything to give justice to all, so that no Irishman will have to go to seek a livelihood far from his native land. For the moment anyone who thinks that he has just titles to land, now in the hands of another, is invited to state his case in writing to the Registrar of the District Court already established in West Clare.

" But this must be clearly understood, any individual who, after to-day, continues an endeavour to enforce his claims, to give rise to disputes, to write threatening letters in the name of the Republic to a fellow-countryman, must be aware that in so acting he is defying the wishes of the representatives elected by the people and is injuring the national cause."

One feels that it is the voice of a big brother remonstrating with a rowdy youngster. The disorder had to be checked, but only by persuasion and by an appeal to the good-will of the people. Such was the thorny problem which Sinn Fein appears to have successfully solved. Not, of course, that the land war disappeared in a single night as if by magic; unlucky landowners woke up now and again to find, or rather not to find their cattle, driven twenty or thirty miles away. Notwithstanding such acts, many disputes have been settled by agreement. For example, the London *Morning Post* for May 13th tells us how the Land Committee of Carrick-on-Shannon, having heard claimants and owners, arranged for the breaking-up of four big grazing farms in the neighbourhood of the town.

I have sought in vain for the principles on which the judges arrange the disputes. Doubtless they simply set aside principles and trusted altogether to

common sense and equity, and to their personal sense of justice. This method, which to French minds, steeped in Roman classical traditions and enamoured of order and rules, seems so unjudicial and so dangerous was perhaps the only plan which could succeed in circumstances so exceptional, and with a people more swayed by generous impulses than impressed by legal forms, men, if you will, still in a primitive condition. They did their best and the simple notion, quite new in Ireland, that the judges were really "doing their best," tended among rough, impulsive men to soothe angry passions. Again, success, as we have repeated so often, was due to unanimous good-will.

Each case was decided on its merits, no limit, maximum or minimum, was placed upon individual holdings. In sparsely populated counties with big ranches, the farmer was allowed 100, 200 or 300 acres. In congested and poor areas in the West small morsels of land were often subdivided. Full account was taken of the size of families.* If a purely legal question arose in the absence of an Irish code it was decided in accordance with current usage, that is to say, English law.

If the Court decided that a farm should change hands, the value of the disputed holding was determined by experts, and the amount paid over to the outgoing occupier. In most cases, as the result of this bold but reasonable policy, settlements were reached.

Sometimes the unsophisticated Westerners conceived plans for dividing up the land, so simple, so impracticable, that they amounted to sheer robbery, and

* Perhaps also with the *arrière pensée* that in the event of a revision by the British those holding under Irish Law would be practically undisturbed.

claims made were impossible to satisfy short of civil war. One day I was told a court delivered judgment against the unanimous petition of a village in Co. Mayo. The villagers went home, dug trenches and waited. The situation was serious. Launch an attack ? Irishmen shed Irish blood in the face of the enemy ? Was it possible to pass over this defiance of Irish law —still in its infant stages and so frail that any blow delivered against it might well mean its collapse. A delightful combination of wisdom and energy conquered. For a week the rebels were let alone. Then one evening, when they had been lulled into a false security, the Volunteers entered the village by surprise, arrested two leaders (who were deported for three months) and extracted from the others a promise to be good boys for the future. Thus a situation which might have taken a grave turn ended (without the firing of a shot) amid handshakes of reconciliation. With such delicate empiricism did the Dail seek to fulfil the first duty of every Government—the keeping of peace between its citizens.

IV.

Intensification of Armed Action—The Irish Labour Party to the Rescue—England at Bay.

We have seen that the Irish Government had gradually extended its activities into every domain : political, economic, financial and social. But it must not be forgotten that none of these things would have been possible but for military activity. A young leader said to me one day with striking correctness, " The Republic had crystallised around the army."

Conscious of the important part played by force, the Irish endeavoured to have it, as much as possible, on their side. We have already told how, on Easter Monday, dozens of Income Tax offices had been burned. On the same day (all over Ireland) the barracks evacuated by the retreating R.I.C. were given to the flames. To-day, more than 500 are in ruins. Encounters between Volunteers and police or soldiers became daily more frequent and on a larger scale. There was no lack of effectives : 120,000, 150,000, perhaps 200,000 men, practically the whole male population capable of bearing arms in Nationalist Ireland, the best men fighting, the others conspiring to help them. The leaders congratulated themselves that the resistance to conscription had preserved for the service of the nation so many young men, who otherwise would have been left to rot in the marshes of Flanders. Soon, in face of the growing menace, the numbers of regular troops increased steadily. The English army from 36,000 men rose to 40,000, then to 60,000. Artillery, tanks, armoured cars, aeroplanes followed.

Naturally there was no idea of coming out into the open against such forces : it was essential to deliver sharp strokes, sudden, swift and successful, and disappear—as the English officers contemptuously called it, " Act the Sinn Feiner "—in a word let speed make up for strength. Hence, according to counties, the unevenness in efforts and in triumphs of the Republican Army ; its value depends almost entirely on the brains and energy of the local officers. Arms were the main thing lacking, and above all, they were very unequally distributed. There was a good supply in Dublin in spite of daily searches. In certain parts

of the country they were sadly wanting. Although England had alleged German or Bolshevik aid, many of the weapons were the old muskets landed six years previously for the expected struggle against Carson's Ulster Volunteers. No matter, the element of surprise would have to replace armaments.

Besides, the English troops sent over to Ireland, were not, in general, of the best quality. The old pre-1914 professional soldier, calm, steady and well drilled, had fallen on the plains of Mons or in the trenches of Ypres. The recruits had neither their endurance, coolness nor energy. Having joined up in the hope of pleasant or at least peaceful garrison duty, one may suspect that they were by no means delighted to be sent to Ireland. On the other hand, numbers of Irish ex-soldiers, trained by four years' warfare, had passed into the ranks of the Sinn Feiners. These circumstances explain many things.

One day a patrol of Scotch cyclists came upon some young men playing bowls : the players stood along each side of the road and as the soldiers passed they were suddenly pounced upon and disarmed to a man. On another occasion a squad of coastguards near Queenstown was besieged and surrendered. Again, in Dublin, twenty-five or thirty soldiers in charge of an officer on duty at King's Inns beheld their sentry surprised, and were themselves forced to put up their hands : without a shot fired all the rifles and two machine guns were captured. Sometimes, naturally, things did not go so smoothly ; the orders are, as far as possible, to leave no prisoners in enemy hands. I have heard it stated, possibly without foundation, that Martin Savage was finished off by Irish bullets. But when a coup is brought off

successfully, need one describe how jubilantly the news is received by the Irish crowd, so sportive, so eager to be amused, so enamoured of prowess and daring, so imbued with hatred and contempt for the heavy, brutal Saxon, so Celtic, too, in its need to jeer, to defy authority, and giving vent to all these mingled feelings in wild outbursts of enthusiasm. " Daring raids. Amazing attacks," say the placards of the evening papers in O'Connell Street, and off goes your Dubliner with a chum, victoriously waving his " Final Buff," *chatting, shouting, bursting into laughter, with, all the time, a light shining in his eyes.

Towards the spring the Republican ranks received a powerful support, that of the labour organisations, which, with singular blindness, England had hoped to see impede the National movement by standing aloof. Had England forgotten that in 1916 James Connolly and the Citizen Army had fought in the front ranks of the insurgents. To begin with, the dockers at North Wall, Dublin, refused to unload munitions of war; others at Queenstown, declined to assist the landing of one thousand Scotch soldiers ; then the railwaymen all over Ireland refused to run any train which carried armed police or soldiers. It was useless to replace the recalcitrant drivers by Royal Engineers ; the rails would have been blown up. A strike is a formidable weapon when it has public opinion behind it. The weaklings among the strikers were very few ; as a body they felt strongly on the question, and then men who had been dismissed received substantial benefits, besides, the few " blacklegs " were severely dealt with, as for example, the driver and firemen

* Last edition of the Dublin *Evening Mail.*

surprised on their engine by Sinn Feiners and tarred from head to foot as a public example.

The Irish Labour Party even permitted itself the delicate luxury of putting the English workers on toast. Five labour delegates, led by Henderson, had visited Ireland towards the end of January, 1920, made formal protests against British oppression, and on their return to England passed votes of sympathy with the Irish cause. Moreover, at this precise moment Clynes and his followers were carrying on a vigorous campaign against the despatch of munitions to Poland. The Irish, therefore, asked for the support of these disinterested moralists, the sworn enemies of war and militarism, who from the lofty heights of principle rebuked the imperialism of bourgeois governments. Could any request be more natural ? Following the example of their English brethren, were not Irish workers every whit as justified, nay, even more justified in holding up bullets and bombs destined for the consumption, if one may use the word, not of strange and distant Bolsheviks, but of their own neighbours and fellow-countrymen. The result was a visit—brief—to Dublin, then an attempt to drag things out ; finally, a meeting at Liverpool which adopted a meaningless involved resolution, wavering between two by no means reconcilable things—Liberal principles and English interest. Anyhow, the outcome was that the British Labour Party coldly abandoned their Irish brothers to struggle as best they might against the Army of Occupation.

Then it became a question of who would hold out longest. Armed policemen board a train, the crew refuse to proceed, whereupon the policemen make themselves at home, drink, sleep and make merry in

the carriages for several days. At another place a picket under special orders waits for a chance to get into the first train that stops at the station. Thus, by slow degrees, all communication is cut off, especially with the West—a train only gets to Kerry or Limerick every three or four days. All other means of transit are availed of, especially motor cars. Extraordinary scenes occur in the stations—Dundrum, a small country station—three R.I.C. with a sergeant, forty infantrymen in full war equipment under an officer. A train slips along the platform and stops. The four policemen get into a compartment—the guard gets out of the van—so all the actors are in position. A gentleman comes up.

"You're not going on, Jack?"

"Not a foot, sir."

"You will be dismissed, Jack."

"I know that, sir."

"Come and have a drink?"

"Certainly, sir."

They proceed to the bar. Meanwhile, a young man with nothing about him to indicate his importance, save the instant obedience which he commands—he is the commandant of the local volunteers—exerts himself to make order out of chaos, regulates the despatch of the passengers, women first, to the nearby town of Tipperary. Side cars and motors have been procured, and each individual goes off in his turn, as he is told. Two commercial travellers, pressed for time, and unchivalrous, try by heavy tipping to get away first. They are taken off their car—the first shall be last. The big guard reappears flushed and happy. All the time, in the background, beside the fixed bayonets, the British officer stands

against the wall, inactive, ignored, inexistant and seemingly bored: symbol of the British army, powerful in men, more powerful still in armaments, which vainly seeks for an obstacle to crush, and finding nothing strikes in the empty air. " Another general rising ! " said a volunteer officer ; not at all ! Give them a chance of wiping us out with their guns ? No, thanks ! But one, two or five years' guerilla war—as long as they like—till they yield.

Thus, born of force and realised by force, like the legendary fighter who regains his vigour by touching the earth, his mother, the Republic came back to force, there to gain renewed strength. All things considered, in view of the slender materials at its disposal, we cannot withhold our admiration from the results achieved. Ireland, seemingly in a mad moment, had undertaken to take up arms against the enormous British Empire, now increased in prestige and weight by the war, and alone, weak and diminutive as she was, she had kept her word. She was like a briar in which a third of the British Army got uselessly and ingloriously entangled. And then, by simply ignoring his sullen governess, like the philosopher who proved the existence of motion by walking, the " ungovernable Celt " had proved by practical demonstration that he was able to govern, and able to govern himself. Thus he had deprived British claims of their sole altruistic pretext and reduced them to reasons of State.

But I cannot too often repeat that all this had been gained by moral cohesion, by the soaring efforts of a nation where all hearts beat as one. In this country, where love for the motherland is all the more ardent and tender as the motherland is smaller, stranger and sadder, the masses, with their Celtic enthusiasm and

their idealism, which almost ignores realities, responded magnificently to the call of race and nobly fought, resisted and suffered. As to the *marais*—the timid neutrals, good people wrapped up in their own small affairs and unheeding the urgings of conscience—it would be useless to deny that they were brought into line by sheer force. A pleiade of leaders had given the example by word and deed. And now, once again, Kathleen Ni Houlihan, the poor old woman who wanders along the roads, driven by the stranger from her cottage and her four green fields, had found strong young men ready, as before, to give their lives for her once more, the strength of the spirit had held out against the powers of the flesh.

For England at bay now remained only two extreme courses ; to yield to the manifest and general desire of the Irish people, a desire which was now shown to be realisable because in fact it had been realised, a desire that England herself by her own war aims had proclaimed in advance to be legitimate ; or ruthlessly bereft of any pretext to flaunt before the eyes of the world or with which to deceive her own conscience—the sword.

It was the month of August.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ENGLISH REACTION.

I.

English Temporisation—The Counter-offensive let loose.

BRITISH patience—or carelessness—had been for long prodigious. Up to the rising of Easter 1916, the Irish Volunteers were indulging publicly in military drill, without any thought on the part of Birrell, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, of the necessity for intervention. In 1919 uniformed Volunteers were often seen on the streets of Dublin, and on St. Patrick's Day, 1920, houses were decorated with Republican tricolour flags. Is it not of its nature inconceivable that a Government in France should tolerate analogous manifestations ?

Towards the middle of 1920 the English, through their happy-go-lucky imprudence, had reached the edge of the precipice. The Sinn Feiners had invaded in turn all the Government Departments of administration, justice, etc. ; they had won the country districts from the Royal Irish Constabulary, and the municipal elections in June increased their boldness. Their very triumphs, and the fear they inspired, were the cause of the brutal counter-offensive, chiefly military, which the English opened in August.

I open the note-book in which I enter with docility, day by day, political events in Ireland. Suppression

of newspapers, proclamations of meetings or fairs, arrests, sentences, escapes, strikes, shootings. . . . The thought of extracting a clear and simple description of the whole, from all that mass of jottings, fills one with discouragement. The measures taken, in all their details, lie across and on top of one other, entangled in one other. It is like a powerful and awkward boxer getting punishment from a feather-weight, scientific, quick and determined; the big fellow, without any preconceived tactics, receives blows, blocks them, returns them as best he can with his great maladroit fist. That is what has happened here. It is very English. It is the eternal British *wait and see*, the famous empiricism so much admired by Taine; in a word, it is the same lack of constructive imagination which makes the English take things as they happen, from day to day, without foresight or prevention; which makes them fight the symptoms without investigating the causes, which makes them, to put it frankly, disinclined to understand. This lack of curiosity produces a certain mental slowness. For years the English organism, under-developed in its brain, and relying on its nervous system to give it warning, has not grasped the imminence or the greatness of the peril. It knew itself to be so incomparably superior to its diminutive adversary! So for a long time it acted negligently, without application or sequence, as you chase away by a reflex action the gnat which is tormenting you. Why bother more about it? Besides, there was the hope that the trouble was ephemeral, that it was a crisis without a morrow, this Irish malady which was attacking Britain's health. Finally, with the obscure depth of instinct, England felt that in refusing to use her

strength to its uttermost, she was at a disadvantage indeed, but a disadvantage which gave her morally the incomparable advantage of not being, before the world, in open and avowed warfare with a member of what was called the United Kingdom.

She kept up this attitude as far as she could. But she felt the abscess growing worse. From month to month it absorbed new forces, without any sign of healing, but only of the contrary. One fine morning England wakes up with the sensation of not feeling really well, a hitherto unknown sensation in which scandalised amazement, terror and suppressed anger are mixed together. And from the day when, for the first time, she takes alarm, she reacts with an energy and a fear that are all the greater for her long delay. As the adversary does not wilt, she braces her muscles to the measure of this unexpected resistance. A more telling blow brings on a more violent return. And, little by little, indignant of not getting the upper hand more quickly, she reaches the stage of blind fury of battle. The causes of quarrel, the possible remedies, have left the field of consciousness. She strikes.

Besides, even if the team that guides her have cooler heads, and do not see red so easily as the others, how could those men act otherwise, dominated as they are by the General Election ? That election, brought about by Lloyd George on the morrow of the Armistice, in the flush of victory, revealed the nation's withdrawal into itself, its egoism exasperated by war and danger. It sent to Westminster a compact majority of 400 Tories, caring only about one thing in the world, English interests, conceived in a most unyielding and one-sided fashion. And at present, like Gœthe's

sorcerer, ensnared by spells of his own that he cannot control, the Prime Minister, a victim of his excessive astuteness, a slave for the moment of the Jingo passions he himself lets loose, may see the dangers of the path he has entered upon—it doesn't matter; he must continue in it, or bear the consequence of immediate fall.

How shall we reproduce in words this angry obstinacy of battle, this growing violence of blows, above all, this action and reaction of the two combatants on each other? If that is missed, and not made real to the imagination, the life of the struggle is unfelt. If we hammer away at showing the chronological interdependence of facts, we shall get lost in a chaos of little glimmering events, and the clearness gets all blurred. We want a method somewhere between the two.

II.

Parliamentary Measures—The new Home Rule Bill—Emergency Legislation—The projected Education Bill.

The principal Parliamentary activity directed against Ireland was the discussion of the new Home Rule Bill. In 1914, it will be remembered, the Ulster Orangemen, through the weapon of revolt, reinforced by military sedition and Tory connivance, had forced Asquith in his weakness to mutilate his scheme of Home Rule. Even in that mutilated form, its application had been deferred in September till the Greek Calends, till six months after the end of the war. But the hour was at length about to strike when it was to become automatically effective. Just then it was

decided to propose another *scheme* which included, in the first place and definitely, the repeal of the Bill *already passed*. In October, 1919, a Cabinet Committee was formed to draw up the new scheme. It did not include a single Irishman. On the other hand, along with Mr. Bonar Law, who in 1914 had signed the agreement between the Ulster Orangemen and the English Tories, the Committee counted among its members Mr. Walter Long, First Lord of the Admiralty ; Mr. Short, Home Secretary and formerly Chief Secretary for Ireland ; Colonel Sir James Craig, Parliamentary Secretary of the Admiralty ; Lord Chancellor Birkenhead, who, when he was called F. E. Smith, had earned in Belfast the nickname of " Galloper " Smith—in fine, the General Staff of Carson at the time of the Ulster revolt, who had since made their way to place and power.

We can imagine what sort of Home Rule would be elaborated by a committee thus composed. Its scheme, sent to the Cabinet on the 11th November, described by the Prime Minister to the House of Commons on the 22nd of December, received the finishing touches on the 28th February. Partition was imposed on Ireland ; the six famous Ulster counties (of which two, Tyrone and Fermanagh, had voted Sinn Fein in January), got a Parliament of 52 members ; the other twenty-six counties got a Parliament of 128. Over both was a higher council of 40 members, 20 from Ulster and 20 from the rest of Ireland ; the North-East, a quarter at most of the population, and divided in opinion, had in it a representation equal to that of the other three-quarters. Finally, Ireland was to have henceforth in the House of Commons 42 members instead of 105. There

followed an interminable and almost exhaustive enumeration of matters which London excluded formally from the scope of the Home Rule Bill.

Even in the Commons, the Bill received a rather frigid welcome on December the 22nd; the very enormity of the farce was irksome. In many circles, by no means Irish, there was a hue-and-cry against it. The *Times* protested against the division of Ireland, as being a natural perpetuation of hatred, and also against the shabbiness of the financial proposals. The *Irish Times*, a Dublin Unionist organ, wrote on the 18th February: "The Bill has not been conceived in the true interest of Irish settlement. No section of the Irish people has been consulted in regard to it. . . . The unnatural policy of Partition is necessarily fatal to the peace and prosperity of Ireland. The Bill has no partisan in any sphere outside Downing Street." In vain did Mr. Asquith, during his electoral campaign at Paisley, Dr. Bernard, Provost of the Protestant University of Dublin, the Catholic Hierarchy of Ireland, the Anti-Partition League of Southern Irish Unionists, all vie with each other in condemning the bandy-legged and misshapen project. What did it matter? The Ulster Council, assembled on the 10th March, thought the measure of 1920 better than that of 1914. "Ulster is safe," said they. On the 1st of April, in the Commons, Sir Edward Carson deigned to declare that, while he preferred the *status quo*, he would not resist the Bill. As for Sinn Fein, during the parturition of the monster, let us do it this justice, it was content to smile. It recalled simply that on the 13th February, 1917, the English Prime Minister, according to the secret report of Sir Horace Plunkett, had said to the Irish Conven-

tion: "It is vain at present to propose Partition. We must accept the unity of Ireland as a whole. Any other idea would lead to failure." That declaration of yesterday was a measure of the sincerity of to-day.

For the whole year Parliamentary activity in regard to Ireland was confined to staging this cadaverous Act. Granted that the Bill was stillborn, that none of those interested wanted it, not even those loyal to England—all that was to be ignored. "It is for the Irish," said the imperturbable Lloyd George on the 1st of April (symbolic date?), "to give flesh and bones to the Home Rule Bill." On the 3rd August he repeated to Devlin, a Nationalist member for Belfast, who questioned him ironically, that he would put the Bill through. Devlin, as is known, at the end of his patience, rose and left the House at the head of the seven Irishmen who still sat at Westminster, so that the Parliament that was to strangle the last liberties of Ireland might at least be absolutely empty of Irishmen. At the end of September five or six hundred notables, chiefly of the constitutional party, met in Dublin at a "Peace Conference," to consider certain modifications of the Act to be submitted to the Prime Minister. Notwithstanding their pacificism, they ended by discovering that the Bill was unworkable, no matter how it might be amended. But that is perhaps why it is so precious. It blocks the way to every settlement, and Ulster requires nothing more from it. "The Bill," wrote *Truth*, "is the true obstacle to all agreement. But Carson has promptly informed all whom it may concern that the Government has given him undertakings, contained in the Bill, and that he, Carson, will not allow himself to be fooled. He is the master of the situation."

It was, therefore, practically a case of voluntary insolvency on the part of the Cabinet and the Commons. Meanwhile Ireland remained under the Castle, that is to say, the Viceroy, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the Commander-in-Chief of the British troops in the island. They were armed with unlimited powers, first by the Defence of the Realm Act, next in August, 1920, by the Restoration of Order (Ireland) Act, and finally in December by the proclamation of Martial Law in certain districts.

An Act, passed at a moment's notice by the two Houses, one section of which among others suppressed juries and substituted for them courts-martial, provoked a scandal of a rare kind in the Upper House. A Privy Councillor, Mr. A. M. Carlisle (not an extremist by his title !) rose under stress of his emotion and declared to their Lordships that the Bill might kill England, but not Ireland. Then he left the Chamber.

The most diverse measures, direct or indirect, brutal or insidious, were devised to put the strait waistcoat on insurgent Ireland. One of the most innocent in appearance was the Education Bill of Chief Secretary MacPherson. According to his scheme, the three divisions of education, till now half independent and half Irish, were to give place to an all-powerful triumvirate of British Civil Servants, of whom the Chief Secretary was to be one. On the occasion of this Bill considerable increases were to be made in the salaries of the teachers, who just then were being paid a starvation wage. Those teachers, especially those engaged in secondary education, had often headed the national movement. Pearse was one of such, and MacDonagh ; MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, was another. Thus it was of capital

importance to devise a handle of power over them. The malice consisted in connecting reform of education with that of salaries; and MacPherson made that point clear to a delegation of the secondary teachers: No Act, no money. He gave them a choice between obedience and misery. Already discussions started among them; just as in every other affair, and with greater reason in this one, there were Don Quixotes and Sancho Panzas. But the resistance of opinion was being organised against a measure which necessarily tended to deprive the Church of its traditional control of education. On the 10th December the Bishops gave it their veto, all-powerful in such a matter. On the 13th the County Councils followed suit. There came a rain of protests; then, in April, MacPherson fell from office and his Bill remained in suspense.

III.

Economic Measures—State of Siege and stoppage of business in the Counties—Progressive restriction of Transport—Flax and Skins—Crown Grants.

Other more open measures were directed against the country; economic pressure, for example, which the English themselves would feel more than anything else, whose power, therefore, they understood, overrated perhaps, and had no inclination to forego. Since the preceding autumn whole counties had been placed in a state of siege as a punishment, implying the complete stoppage of public business. The farmer could not sell his stock or his potatoes, nor his wife her milk and eggs. In October, 1919, proclamations forbade the Cashel market, the Nenagh, Carrick-on-

Suir and Clonmel fairs, the Thurles pig market. Things went so far that in December some County Clare landlords (far from being Sinn Feiners, need I add ?), Colonel Tottenham, Sir Michael O'Loughlin, Lord Inchiquin, protested publicly as follows :—" Out of fifty-one fairs only two have been permitted. Such prohibitions do not diminish the number of murders by one, but they ruin and exasperate the country." A deputation of magistrates approached Captain Williamson, the Commanding Officer at Tipperary, with a similar purpose. He replied that " the Tipperary fairs did not interest him in the least ; all he had to do was to send the soldiers to help the police." Some hours before the time for its opening, the Aonach, or Irish fair, held at Christmas in the Dublin Mansion House, was suddenly proclaimed.

Meantime the Motor Permit Order had been issued. Henceforth nobody could drive or possess an automobile without an authorisation, which the police granted or refused without the possibility of appeal. A strike in protest, not without violent incidents, followed among the drivers, and lasted till February, two months, without bringing about any amendment of the position. Apparently justified by the necessity of keeping motors from the Republican army, whose supply of them has since never failed, the order was a measure that could become Draconian in its application. For instance a taxi owner, MacDonnell, of Virginia, Co. Cavan, was refused any sort of permit by the police, and further was told to sell his cars within a month to a person approved by the inspector. What could that mean but ruin for the poor man himself ? As for difficulties about transport for manufacturers, traders, even doctors, in a country of which

80 per cent. of the electorate were suspect, I leave them to the imagination.

Besides, all the means of transport were to be hit one after another, and it is easily understood that every blow had a heavy effect on business. In the springtime the railwaymen refused to carry soldiers, police or munitions in the trains. Hundreds of them were suspended, and there were times in July when the West was without connection with the rest of the island. Recently under pretext of trouble, the English Government forbade the American transatlantic liners to put in at Queenstown, thus cutting off all direct sailing between the United States and Ireland.

Hostility to the prosperity of the country showed itself still more crudely, and the *Irish Times* on the 10th February protested against it. The flax cultivators of Ulster, for instance, saw themselves compelled to sell their crop at £290 a ton, while the English planters sold inferior flax at £600 ; according to the *Morning Post*, the Irish flax would have fetched £720 in the open market. Again, the export of skins was permitted, but only to Great Britain, when the Continental prices would have been almost double ; the import of skins was forbidden.

Grants used to be given by the Crown to certain bodies, such as the municipalities ; not through generosity, no need to say, as Irish taxes far more than compensated for the sums returned. After the January elections the town councils, all practically Republican, refused to submit their accounts to the Government auditors. London replied by suspending the grants. The blow was severe ; for Dublin alone it was a matter of £200,000. It became necessary either to cut off the midday meals of school children, to turn out of

doors consumptives and incurables, etc., or to double the city rates, which were already enormous. And granted a people as patriotic as you please, that would always be an unpopular pill. In other places things were worse. At Ballinasloe, through lack of funds, the lunatic asylum committee, presided over by the Bishop of Clonfert, decided to set the harmless lunatics at liberty, and threatened to release, on the 10th October, those affected by homicidal mania. Whom did the threat concern in the end but the Irish population? This time the Castle had the right end of the stick, and to the complaints addressed to them by the Dublin hospitals, Sir Hamar Greenwood, who had been Chief Secretary since April, replied with an inflexible smile.

IV.

Military measures—Gradual suppression of all civil liberties—Wholesale arrests and deportations—Increase of army of occupation—Courts-martial—"Agents-provocateurs"—Murders by the police.

Limitation of receipts and increase of expenses were the two means by which the economic pressure was worked. The military pressure had never ceased since the rebellion of 1916, not even at the armistice, which had brought no peace to Ireland.

There was a new measure according to the caprice of each day; suspension of newspapers, the *Cork Examiner* in September, 1919 (the forty-second paper thus treated), the *Freeman* in December; proclamation of meetings; gradual suppression, at first local, and then absolute, of organisations expressive of anti-English opinion, Dail Eireann and the Gaelic League

in September; the Dublin City and County branches of Sinn Fein, the Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan (Women's League), in October. At the end of November the same organisations were suppressed throughout the country. Later there was an inquiry to discover the deposits the Sinn Fein party might possess in the banks.

All the time the police, now protected by the military, were investing houses at night and making raids and searches in them. At Limerick, Galway, Cork, above all at Dublin, the swoops followed each other; on the 12th December 40 men were arrested and deported by order to Wormwood Scrubbs prison, near London, 9 others on the 13th, 30 on the 2nd February, 19 on the 5th, 5 more on the 6th. By the 9th February 80 Sinn Feiners had been carried off, and 60 deported. An enormous number were sought for, and were on the run.* And on the 9th March, 1920, the *Irish Bulletin*, drawing up a roll of honour, could write that out of 73 Republican members elected in 1918, all were or had been in prison or were sought for except nine, six of whom had always been on foreign diplomatic missions. The official headquarters of the party was at various times raided, then emptied out, closed and sealed; the Sinn Fein Bank was suppressed; even the offices of a purely Irish insurance company, *the New Ireland*, were closed on the 3rd January.

London naturally sought with all its power to

* Alderman Thomas Kelly, Lord Mayor-elect of Dublin, had been one of the first deported. He was an elderly man, an expert in Local Government, but a Pacifist, of quiet disposition and poor health. He lost his reason as a result of the distress he suffered in prison, and in spring he was released; but he has not since recovered his reason. The other prisoners in Wormwood Scrubbs, whose number mounted to more than a hundred, were released, like other internees at Mountjoy, after sensational hunger strikes.

reinforce its garrison in numbers and spirit. The police force was raised to 14,000, its cost of maintenance to almost *a tenth of the total Irish revenue*, nearly three and a-half million pounds out of thirty-seven millions. The army was visibly increasing. On the 23rd October in the Commons Mr. Winston Churchill gave its numbers as 55,000, costing £210,000 a week ; the profusion of engines, tanks, machine-guns, aeroplanes, doubles its strength to-day. Even the fleet went on duty ; warships were anchored in Queenstown, Galway, Derry, and Dublin Bay.

And as the advantage remained with the Republicans in attack, initiative, and patriotism, as the army and police confessed themselves powerless against the guerilla warfare, new and worse blows were given. Heavy sentences were inflicted on Sinn Feiners ; six months on McCabe, a member of the Dail, for propaganda in favour of the Irish loan ; three years' penal servitude on Barton, another member, formerly a British officer, for threats in a speech against the Viceroy ; two years'penal servitude on Terence Smith, for possession of a revolver ; six months in jail on Patrick Devane, for having in his possession the official Volunteer organ, and so on. There were kidnappings of children, such as that of little Conors of Greenane, who was put away for two months in the Phœnix Park, and then released after six interrogatories, somewhat deranged by terror. There were ferocious executions, like that of Michael Darcy of Cooraclare, who threw himself into the Shannon when pursued. As he was drowning, four peasants, running to his aid, were fired on by the police, and the man sank when his strength was exhausted.

Prices, and enormous ones, were put on certain

heads, £10,000, for instance, for the murderers of Forbes Redmond. Spies were at work, like Quinlisk and Byrne, who were found duly shot. Last September Arthur Griffith, the Vice-President of the Republic, surrounded by Sinn Fein leaders, received a certain Hardy, who declared himself ready to reveal a depot of English arms that might be seized. He wanted to see the Chiefs, and asked if those present were they. Then came a sudden dramatic effect; Griffith began quietly to read out Hardy's record, a liberated convict let out prematurely by some mysterious influence from Belfast jail, an *agent-provocateur* who was seeking to make the acquaintance of the heads of the Republican army in order to tempt and betray them. As for the pretended leaders of Sinn Fein present, they were journalists, American, Spanish, French, even English, specially summoned to see the betrayer unmasked before them. An edifying scene about which the English Press, with rare exceptions, did not breathe a word.

And now rage overcame the British forces, and the struggle degenerated into vendettas, the police replying to Sinn Fein attacks by attacks on Sinn Feiners. At Cork on the night of the 19th March, 1920, a group of men fired point blank on Professor Stockley, of University College, an Irish Protestant who had become a Catholic and a Sinn Feiner, an alderman of the city. Seeing him fall they thought him dead and went away. By a miracle not a shot was effective. But the next day at two o'clock in the morning some men of tall stature, probably the same ones, entered the house of Lord Mayor MacCurtain, dragged from him the baby he held in his arms, riddled him with bullets, and broke his skull with butt-ends of rifles. The

Coroner's inquest left no doubt that the criminals were police, but not one of them was interfered with. Some English organs, and the Prime Minister himself, tried to insinuate that MacCurtain being too moderate, had been a victim of Sinn Fein extremists * ; but to a challenge of the Bishop of Cork, and another of Griffith, demanding an impartial inquiry, there was never a reply. At Thurles on the 29th of March, MacCarthy was killed in similar circumstances ; again there was no attempt at a serious investigation.

Let us join to these murders (not morally, for the circumstances are different, but politically, which is all that concerns us), the decision new in itself, to permit the death in prison of Lord Mayor MacSwiney and the eleven Cork internees who were on hunger-strike. It is, I think, only a particular case of a more general decision, which took a long time to be arrived at because it needed some appetite to stomach it, but which now seems really to have been taken, namely, to get rid of the national leaders, no matter how.

Another indication of it : at the end of September a man named Lynch, well known in the West as a judge in the Republican courts, fearing for his life, fled to Dublin and put up at an hotel. That very night police and military, revolver in hand, surprised the porter and asked to see the register ; then they went up to Lynch's room and shot him dead. The next day an official report stated that Lynch fired first.

* Thus when the British authorities (cf. *Le Temps* of the 22nd September) establish a difference between " moderate " and " constructive " Sinn Feiners of the Griffith type, and the extremists who would terrorise them, the Republican propaganda sees immediately a sinister *arrière-pensée* in this distinction, an unexpected one in truth.

A good many signs, too numerous to relate, pointed to the contrary. The most remarkable was that General Sir Nevil Macready, the Commander-in-Chief, who was given new powers on this very point by the Restoration of Order Act, forbade specially in this case the legal Coroner's inquest, and reserved the inquiry for military judges. Suspicion deepened in face of this obvious wish to smother all evidence. It would always be easy to fire on people, and to say afterwards, without having really to give any proof, that they began it.

A recent interview of the General was not calculated to dissipate that impression. "It would be necessary to shoot about fifty individuals," said he, "and then order would be restored." Many think the game is now on, and some, who hitherto might have allowed themselves to be arrested without resistence, are no longer so disposed. If they must die—as well defend themselves. That was what was done by two men who were discovered in Dublin on the night of the 10th October; they shot the two officers in charge of the raid, and succeeded in making good their escape.

V.

General Measures—"Carsonia" set up and armed against Ireland—Reprisals.

In any case these proceedings, no matter how energetic and desperate—they were, in a sense, of the nature of expedients—were insufficient to bring about a decision. The strength of Sinn Fein, militarily so weak, lay in popular connivance. More ample and general means had to be found, proportioned to the

dimension of the peril. Hence the double idea of applying penalties to the Irish population as a whole, and for calling on the whole of another class of the population for support.

The Unionists of the South and West, swamped by the Irish and compelled to consider their feelings, could not be counted on. But the Ulsterites were there, a compact block of five or six hundred thousand souls. They were alarmed to see the large Catholic families supplant them little by little in the counties. "These people breed like rabbits," remarked a Protestant notable, frightened and disgusted, to a French correspondent. They were maddened by the disastrous January elections, and asked for nothing better than to rush to arms. And arms they had, for the penalties for keeping them, though crushing in Republican districts, became merely a trifle of five shillings fine for the loyalists. From the English point of view that is intelligible.

And so the riots began in Derry, and lasted, with periods of calm, during May and June. The casualties were twenty dead and forty-five wounded. That is, as far as can be known, for in such cases it may well be imagined that each party hides its losses.

Questioned by Commander Kenworthy, M.P., Mr. Denis Henry, Attorney-General for Ireland and Unionist member for Ulster, replied that they were aiming at the disarmament of "the disloyal portion of the population." To disarm the Irish, to arm the Orangemen, to restore, in fact, the whole immigrant minority to its ancient role as a garrison, such was the plan. It was thus Sir Edward Carson understood it; and the tone at once imperious and contemptuous of the Cabinet, of the discourse he pronounced on the 12th

of July, the commemoration day of the Battle of the Boyne, showed to what point he felt himself master of the people in London, supported as he was by Conservative influence and English Jingo sentiment.

So, after the curtain-raiser in Derry, the great spectacular drama was staged in Belfast. The Catholics, outnumbered by three to one, were thrown out of the shipyards by the other workers, and their homes burned. Sometimes shots came from the ruins, a powerless effort at vengeance on the part of some desperate man. Every night the rifles were cracking in the Irish quarter. The last week of August was the most tragic. Carson's people, well armed and organised, hunted down their badly-equipped enemies, brandishing all the time immense Union Jacks on which the military, called in to establish order, obviously would not fire. At the beginning of September there were 58 dead, more than 600 wounded, and damage done to the extent of a million and a-half pounds. From time to time the man-hunt would start again, like a badly extinguished fire. Seven thousand workmen, of whom a thousand fought in the war, were out of work.

Sir James Craig, who is an Ulster member, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, has paid in a public speech his compliments to his gallant fighters ; and the beloved city saw itself immediately released from the Curfew, which remains strictly imposed on the others. That is because it has done the service expected of it, affirmed its function as an English outpost, given a lesson to the Irish, above all, put a mask of civil and religious war on the exercise of naked force. Soon Sir Ernest Clarke was

appointed an Under Secretary in charge of Ulster affairs, with his residence in Belfast ; for the moment that was all of the Home Rule Bill, not yet passed, that was really translated into fact. Further, it was projected to enrol in Ireland " without distinction of creed or politics " (*sic*) such citizens as were disposed to maintain order and serve under the command of police officers. The pay was to be ten shillings a day. Already, according to the *Irish News*, 37,000 have enlisted, and 10,000 are to follow.* That amounts in fact to the setting-up of " Carsonia " as a distinct State, with an army and an administration, and the office of jailor to the rest of Ireland.

There remained the second part of the programme, the infliction of penalties all round on the Irish population, seeing that particular ones had such a poor effect.

In truth, and instinctively, police and soldiers had had recourse to such measures for a good while already. On two separate occasions during the night of the 20th January, 1920, they had sacked parts of Thurles to avenge the death of Constable Finegan. At Limerick on the 4th of February the troops, being hissed, according to one report, but according to themselves, being attacked, opened fire without warning ; two people were killed. At Dublin on the 22nd March soldiers returning from the theatre were booed by the crowd, and a few scuffles took place. Shortly after the arrival of the men at Portobello Barracks a picket suddenly sallied forth with a machine-gun

* At Lisburn 200 of these volunteer police, learning that five Orangemen had been sentenced to three months for pillaging Catholic houses during the August riots, resigned in protest.

and fired on the crowd. There were two killed and an unknown number wounded.

But these acts were half reflex, and only recently became a system associated, rightly or wrongly, with the name of Sir Nevil Macready. At first they became excessively frequent, happening at Miltown-Malbay on the 17th of April, at Limerick the 21st of May, at Fermoy (for the second time) and at Lismore the 29th of June, in retaliation for the kidnapping of General Lucas, at Limerick again the 1st of July, at Tipperary the 2nd, at Cork the 3rd, at Tuam the 21st. When Dr. Gilmartin, the Archbishop of Tuam, asked the Castle for inquiry and protection, Sir Nevil wrote in reply that as the sack of Tuam had been done by the police, it did not concern him!

The police besides had changed a good deal in composition and spirit, through internal influences as well as external action of authority. Old R.I.C. men to the number of nearly 300 had been killed or wounded since the 1st of January; a good many others were resigning every month through fear or shame. Those that remained were the worse sort, I mean the least Irish at heart. The efficiency of the force diminished, its hardness increased. On the other hand the London depot filled the gaps with Englishmen, notably soldiers demobilised and without work. Thus composed, the police changed in character, and forfeited all Irish sympathy. Their pay was enormous, seven pounds a week. Such men, regarding the "Irish campaign" as a job that took them out of poverty, were ready for anything, and enraged by any danger of losing their position.

Other reinforcements were arriving, instalments of assistance amounting provisionally to nine thousand

men. They were the Auxiliary Police Force, all ex-officers, and the "Black-and-Tans," so named familiarly because, through lack of uniforms, they often wore, along with the R.I.C. cap and black jacket, some khaki article of equipment. Whether it be true, as rumour goes, that they were recruited from a special *milieu* for a special task, I do not know. But at any rate, in a few weeks they made a solid reputation for terror; and, as naturally happens, people attributed to them all the cruelties exercised in a country where violence has been let loose, uncontrolled, and increased by fear.

There were men torn from their beds, dragged out to the fields, flogged, beaten with the butt-ends of guns, sometimes wounded by shots. In certain cases, notably those of Tom Hales and Patrick Harte, prisoners were put to the torture in the strict sense. There were those four Republicans who, at Belfast, on the 28th of September, after the murder of two R.I.C. men, were made get up and, guilty or not, no matter, were shot at their own door. There was Constable Hugh Roddy of Tuam, who had resigned in disgust after the sack of the town by his colleagues on the 21st of July. He was at first taken from his bed in the middle of the night, flogged and sent home; a second time he was treated in the same manner and threatened with death if he did not leave Tuam within four days, being, as his torturers remarked, "a shame to the R.I.C."

But, above all, there were the reprisals all round, extended and systematised. As a matter of fact, strike where you will, you won't make a mistake; the whole country is Sinn Fein. So towns and villages are set fire to, Fermoy devastated four times, Lismore,

Bantry, Cobh, Ballylanders, Limerick, Tuam, Ballaghadereen, Balbriggan, Tullow, Galway, Trim; how many others!

The sack of Balbriggan may be taken as typical. One afternoon District Inspector Burke was killed, and his brother, a sergeant in the R.I.C., seriously wounded. During the night came the lorries of Black-and-Tans. The streets were swept by rifle fire indiscriminately, doors and windows were smashed with bombs, bombs were thrown into rooms. Thirty houses were duly sprinkled with petrol, and set ablaze in a moment; it was impossible to make provision to meet the fire, for everybody that appeared was the signal for renewed firing. To the appeal of a woman who was caretaker to a place about to be burnt they replied characteristically enough: "We are not barbarians. We bear no ill-will to women. But that is a factory and must be burned." And it was. Prisoners were brought to the police barracks; some of them were well treated, offered cigarettes and released, they knew not why. Two of them, Gibbons and Lawless, were kept, and were found on the pavement next morning, their bodies riddled with bullets and bayonet thrusts. One of them was found with his head well bandaged, a proof that he was wounded a first time, treated by a competent person, and later, who knows, perhaps in the morning, taken again and finished.

After Balbriggan the English newspapers, not merely the Bolshevist *Daily Herald* or the extreme Liberal *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily News* or the *Westminster Gazette*, but *The Times*, the *Evening Standard*, the *Observer* were breathing fire and flame. "Frightful story of Bashi Bazouks . . . Turkish Terror-

ism . . . puts a blot on the English name all over the world! We need not envy to-day the Huns in Belgium!" General Sir F. Maurice went one better and commiserated the troops who were given such a task. As for Macready, in an interview with an American correspondent—the gallant General is decidedly unhappy in his interviews—he declared candidly: "There is actually no other means of punishing or repressing crime, and it is only human that the police should act on their own initiative." That *it is only human*, so indulgent and almost encouraging, raises fresh storms, and Macready and Greenwood are summoned to London. Meanwhile Miltown-Malbay, Ennistymon, Lahinch, two days after Balbriggan, are set on fire; three civilians, of whom one was only home on holidays, were killed; the child of one of them disappeared. Then Trim, Ardrahan, Ballinagare, Mallow, Tubbercurry blazed in their turn; bombs were thrown into houses in Galway and into the City Hall in Cork.

VI.

Concentration of Efforts—What was thought to be the last Assault—The Descent into Hell—Chaos.

Just as a fit and healthy organism instinctively eliminates, by the normal play of its nature, the toxins that menace its health or the neighbours that trouble its well-being, so England little by little, without noticing it exactly, entered into more and more violent reaction against the inflexibly rebellious subject. I remember having seen at Roscoff, in a glass case in the Delage laboratory, octopuses devour-

ing live crabs that were thrown to them. The crabs did not seem to relish the adventure ; but the octopuses would, I imagine, have been very much astonished if the question of decency were raised. Here, in like manner, let us not look for moral values ; the phenomenon is of biological order.

The mighty monster felt, with stupor and indignation, its prey still stirring and trying to escape. It clapped down its paw, that is all. The guerilla fighters vanished, impalpable once their deed was done. Sixty thousand soldiers and fifteen thousand police cannot finish them. Well then, we'll attack the nation, press down on it till it smothers and cries for mercy. The Boers held out for three years against the English army, but not for six months against the concentration camps. What was there to fear ? Europe, devastated, powerless, divided, occupied with the egoism of misery, in rebuilding its ruins ? Or America ? Its coming President, Harding, compared Ireland to a yellow colony, and exclaimed : " I should no more permit myself to give England advice concerning Ireland than I should permit her to give us advice concerning the Philippines." Decidedly, there was nothing to fear. To it then ! And they set to.

So the moment has come. The machine is fitted up, set in motion, and its pressure hourly increases to crushing point. The forces driving it, stirred from their depths, multiply their power by their very simultaneity and convergence. And along with the concentration of effort, we see everywhere the decision to get finished with it.

Ulster is watching in arms.

Social order is intentionally destroyed. British justice no longer exists owing to the abstention of

those amenable. For some weeks past the Republican tribunals have been regularly invaded and dispersed, as at Navan, Wexford, Claremorris, the judges arrested, the lawyers sent to prison. Some months ago the Volunteer police had often, without hindrance, taken the place of the others who had failed. Now they are hunted, their members condemned for usurpation of functions. Having to choose between an order independent of them and disorder (for Ireland will not have *their* order), the English choose disorder, and according to the spirit of their system they are right. Insecurity reacts on credit, on the volume of business, and is a powerful though indirect means of breaking down the economic strength of the country. They know that so well that they exaggerate the insecurity, and give it all the publicity they can, for instance in Great Britain and America.

At the same time, as though by chance, the railway dispute, which London allowed to stagnate, suddenly enters on a critical phase. Sir Eric Geddes, the Minister of Transport, arrives in Dublin with an ultimatum. Either the railwaymen must carry on the trains the troops and munitions the Government sees fit to send by them, or the companies will be deprived of the Imperial subsidies, which means for them unconditional death. At once the scenes of last summer are renewed, police in the carriages, trains held up, personnel dismissed. Paralysis would ensue in a few days, if the railwaymen had not the sense to yield.

And with the same object, namely, the progressive extinction of all life, the destruction continues. The very name of reprisals, decorated as it is with an idea of summary justice, is a ruse that can deceive nobody. There is no question of retaliation, but of a meditated

and ripened plan to strangle finally the vanquished who refuse to yield. There is something automatic in the sequence ; attack on a constable, sack of a village. They are playing on velvet. *The King can do no wrong*, hence the Crown never pays except as an act of grace, and even in those cases, whatever compensation the Courts grant to the sufferers will come in the end from Ireland's pocket. Besides, the burnings are not haphazard, but selective. It has been noticed already ; a factory is not spared, because a factory destroyed means numbers out of work and families without bread. The police pay special attention to creameries—more than fifty of them have been destroyed—for a creamery in ashes implies that tens, sometimes hundreds of families around are vitally affected. So the armed forces, under pretext of reprisals, with a meticulous regard for consequence, with unerring aim, never cease from striking at the sensitive, painful and vital point.

They have come now besides to dispense with pretexts ; without any revenge to gratify, and merely to inflict chastisement, they punish political opposition by ruin. They burnt the apothecary Moloney's shop because he was a member of Dail Eireann, and the bakery belonging to the sisters-in-law of Tom Clarke, who was executed in 1916. There have been cases where a man's house has been burnt because his son had escaped from the police. Sometimes the punishment extends to a whole region. In Roscommon the incendiaries, driving around with cans of petrol in Crossley lorries, set dwellings, chiefly farmhouses, ablaze according to their caprice. As for ricks of hay and straw, and cornstacks not yet threshed, a blackened heap marks where they stood by the way-

side. One or other of two things must happen ; either the people losing patience and growing desperate, will reply by open rebellion, and then the army will wipe them out in a few days, *or their wretchedness

* Thus we read without excessive astonishment this strange message in the *Daily Express* as early as the 28*th of November*, 1919 : " It is almost a hope of the authorities and the greater part of the (English) population that an outburst of violence will soon happen. A new campaign of assassination seems about to commence. Lord French's life is in danger. An attack on Dublin Castle is expected."

The manœuvre is clear. It is so clear, it awakes such grave suspicions even, that I prefer to leave their expression to an English source. " There are strong proofs," says the *Times* of the 30th of November, 1919, " that there exists a powerful conspiracy against the prospect of peace in Ireland. . . . The progress which the Committee on Home Rule are said to have made towards a frank solution of the Irish problem are doubtless far from welcome to those elements which in Ireland regard any departure from the *status quo* as a menace to their privileges and interests. It would suit the plans of the obstructionists much better if Sinn Fein Ireland were itself to wreck the project. It is difficult to believe that the repressive measures so tardily taken are not *the deliberate development of an intrigue*. . . . We fear that the Executive in Ireland has acted, with or without the complicity of members of the Cabinet, *to arouse in Ireland such a state of feeling, if not of rebellion, that a settlement may become impossible*. That there could be a shadow of justification for such a fear is in itself intolerable ; as for the execution of such a plan, it would be a betrayal not only of the English people, but of the credit and honour of the English name throughout the world."

Complicity within the Government, sanguinary undercurrents of thought, those are questions morally grave, but politically subsidiary, if our business is merely to study the essence of events, and not their modes. So without insisting too much, let us content ourselves with stating the existence of a manœuvre in three notions. The first was the suspension of the Home Rule Bill in 1914 ; the second was during the respite of the Cabinet Long-Shortt Committee on Home Rule, and the voting and enforcing of the so-called Home Rule Bill, when repression was increased step by step, in the hope of general or sporadic disorder ; the third was the reaching of the conclusion that the Celt is ungovernable except by force, and the starting again, without changing a pin, of the old machine that has been grinding for centuries to the profit of the Orange minority. And indeed it needs no great imagination to stage the farce. It was exactly the same as the one Pitt

will increase day by day, till they finish by yielding. In either event the game is won beforehand.

And then from week to week there is growing evidence of a thing that must one day bring the exasperation of the masses to exploding point, and that thing is arbitrariness. No more justice, no more rules to bind you, but also none to protect you. Each one feels himself abandoned to the discretion of irresponsibles, police that are good-natured or ferocious, soldiers drunk or sober, who may do to you what they will, and be almost sure never to be called to account. Every day brings its contingent of facts which seem incapable of being surpassed, and which the next day surpasses.

A court-martial sentences to three years' penal servitude Father Dominic, a Capuchin, ex-chaplain to Lord Mayor MacSwiney, and also ex-chaplain with the English Expeditionary force at Salonica. His crime was a *private letter*, seized in a raid, in which he approved of the murder of fourteen secret service officers who were killed in Dublin, on a Sunday in last November (1920). (Lawson Report, p. 3).

Henceforth the courts-martial condemn to death as a rebel every insurgent taken with arms in his hand. The student, Kevin Barry, captured in an ambush, is the first to be hanged in Mountjoy Prison, and before putting on the execution cap, he declares on oath that he has been tortured for the purpose of extracting revelations. A little later Cornelius Murphy of Cork is shot for being found carrying a revolver.

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played for the United Irishmen—a series of provocations that brought about the rebellion of 1798, then suppression of Irish autonomy by the Act of Union. There is nothing new under the Irish sky.

Then again at Cork six young fellows, who remained in the hands of the soldiers after a fight, are shot in pairs, at intervals of a quarter of an hour. And finally, six others, on the most shaky testimony in the case of two of them, are hanged in Dublin, also in pairs, at intervals of an hour—with the hope, I suppose, that the last would flinch at the test. . . . If not, why this luxury of torture ?

Martial Law is in force in the South, and punishes with death, not only the mere possession of arms, but the giving of assistance, food or shelter, to the rebels. So a mother who gives a meal or a bed to her outlawed son may be made to face the firing squad. Civilian guards are forcibly raised in disturbed districts, compelled to go unarmed on night rounds about the villages in order to surprise and report the preparation of ambushes, for which they are held responsible ; that means spying on their own for the foreigner, under pain of death ! On lorries that are liable to attack, the soldiers carry about as hostages persons who have neither been tried nor sentenced, who are simply known and taken for their political opinions. Colonel Moore, an old man, was thus brought as a living shield about the streets of Dublin. The Volunteer chiefs reply by asking from their central organisation permission to shoot the enemy at sight.

Encouraged or tolerated—the choice of words requires some subtlety, " but a mass of public declarations makes it evident that they have received a little more than tacit approval " (Lawson Report, p. 2)—the irregular police put to their credit more and more surprising exploits. And stranger still, the cadets of the Auxiliary Force, though all officers, seemingly go as far as the Black-and-Tans.

One night the whole central and commercial part of Cork goes ablaze. Three million pounds vanish in smoke. The fire is started simultaneously in several places during Curfew hours, when none can go about but the Crown forces. The commission of inquiry sent over by the Labour Party collects overwhelming testimonies by the dozen; no matter, Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, denies obstinately in the Commons that the burning was the act of his men. Nevertheless, General Strickland, Chief Officer Commanding in Cork, being officially charged to establish responsibility, sends in his report. This report is hardly to be suspected of Anglophobia, and yet the Cabinet refuses to publish it. Why? Some time after, the Commanding Officer of the Auxiliaries in Cork is relieved of his post. Again why?

But in spite of all the efforts to drive it to the bottom the mud inevitably rises to the surface. General Crozier, the Commander of the Auxiliaries under the higher authority of General Tudor, who is head of the entire police force, sends in his resignation one fine morning. The wherefore is a mystery. Soon, however, the cat is out of the bag. Twenty-six cadets charged with looting at the time of the sack of Trim, had been dismissed by him. Having gone for demobilisation to the depot in London, they appealed and intrigued, and Tudor, acting perhaps on higher orders, but in any case over Crozier's head, restored them to their units. A resounding scandal.

Besides that, repeated incidents show what sort of men have got into the corps. One evening two young men whose innocence is acknowledged, and who are released from the Castle after Curfew hours, ask for

safety to be brought home under escort in a military lorry. Both are brought to the suburb of Drumcondra and shot at the corner of a wall. After weeks of denial, two officers of the Auxiliary corps stationed at the Castle have to be arrested on a charge of murder.

A cadet named Harte, at the head of a patrol, meets on the road in broad daylight Canon Magner, a Cork parish priest, 73 years old, accompanied by a young farmer. Revolver in hand, he throws the old man on his knees, makes him undergo an examination in that posture for a quarter of an hour, and then blows out his brains ; after that he mortally wounds the other. Impossible to suppress the story owing to the number of witnesses. Harte, on being court-martialled is declared insane, put out of the reach of justice, and disappears as through a trap-door. It cannot be said with certainty of him that he incurred the least punishment, no more than it could of Captain Bowen Colthurst, who committed the same crime in the Sheehy-Skeffington case during the rebellion. He is merely an indiscreet fellow noiselessly withdrawn from circulation.

One night at Limerick, Mayor Clancy and his predecessor O'Callaghan, called to open their doors, are shot dead. Clancy's wife is wounded in trying to defend him. The expedition was a safe one, since the inhabitants may not have arms in their houses under pain of death.* But who carried it out ? The trade

* The stories recorded above may appear to the reader extravagant and improbable. I am glad to be able to quote this testimony of M. Ludovic Naudeau, sent to Ireland by the *Temps* and the *Illustration*, which have never passed for Anglophobe or revolutionary organs : " Let us put it briefly ; there are happening to-day in Ireland a whole series of facts such as my pen described eighteen years ago, when I was relating the ferocities endured by the Mace-

mark seems to be the same as that of the murderers of MacCurtain, the Lord Mayor of Cork, or of those who more recently murdered Father Griffin, a young priest who was summoned one evening on a sick call, and found some weeks afterwards in the mud of a bog. The Castle sees none the less in O'Callaghan and Clancy merely Sinn Feiners who were victims of their own moderation, assassinated by the terrorists of the party. But Mrs. O'Callaghan, questioned by the District Inspector about the identity of the criminals, replies that he ought to know them better than herself. As for a deposition, as she wrote in a letter to the Press, she would make it willingly before a jury of her fellow-citizens, but not before that travesty of justice, a military court of inquiry. Nevertheless, Sir Hamar Greenwood, with a serenity and ease that no longer bother even about saving faces, but merely speculate on the complacency of the House, confines himself to coolly repeating that there is not the least evidence of guilt on the part of the Crown forces.

Monseigneur Baudrillart, in a recent address, has called Ireland, " the crucified nation." It is indeed all that can be said. The average of killed on both sides varies between fifteen and twenty a day. When things have come to that pass, it may be said that all appearance of government has vanished ; it can only be called a butchery. And acts of violence,

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donian population, then groaning under the yoke of the cruel Turk. When the Ottomans set fire to the villages where Bulgarian *comitadji* had been, was there any limit to our conscientious indignation ? Is it possible that in a country governed by our illustrious ally, by that noble England that has set all peoples the example of democracy, the traveller should witness such scenes ? Methods of frightfulness, like those employed by the Teutons in Belgium, cannot for long be approved of by British citizens " (*Illustration*, 5th March, 1921).

murders and bloodshed, though more trying to the reader's nerves, are not the worst thing for the patient. The worst, I repeat, are the burnt houses, the ruined harvests, the blazing factories, the people in the street that can no longer earn their bread. That punishment is the equivalent of the ancient torture of cutting off the hand of a robber at the wrist, the hand that would work no more. . . . And Ireland, dumb, impassible, stupefied by blows, one might say, into insensibility, descends towards chaos.

National resistances, especially of peasant peoples, can be conquered by no other means. The country has to be destroyed and the people deprived of food. Ireland is treated like the Moroccan *douars* whose flocks are raided, like La Vendee trampled on by the "infernal columns," most of all like Ireland in 1798 by those regiments whose own head, the honest Cornwallis, was ashamed of them. And fundamentally there is either folly or some measure of disloyalty in feeling astonishment or scandal in regard to such things. Conquest is conquest, force is force, and the idea of assigning a limit to them, once they are employed, has not a shadow of common sense. The least measure of coercion against hearts in revolt bears the seed of the worst atrocity that will ripen if they persist. At Amritsar General Dyer opened fire with his machine guns ; 400 Hindoos were killed, 1,000 or 1,200 wounded, but all movement was strangled in the embryo. Thereupon the Government, while profiting by his act, struck him out of the list of officers, and the Commons denounced him. Now that is either silly or pharisaical. But the Lords glorified him, and that is something lucid and honest. So when the *Spectator* cries, in connection with Ireland, "Shoot,

but don't argue," when the *Morning Post* clamours for reconquest, no matter how "disagreeable" the means to be contemplated, one feels a sort of relief mingled with an austere joy. One gets away at least through the blunt openness of those proposals, from the pathos and contradictions in which the moderate English Press is wallowing, and the intelligence gets a savour at last of the pleasure of understanding.

Ireland has the garrotte on its neck, and the stick is twisting the cord with the inexorable power of soulless things. And this is why the moment is so unique and so engrossing ; if London has the stomach —no other word will do—to go on with the present dragonnades, it seems to its mind impossible that Ireland, starved, beaten and strangled, will not be reduced after some time.* And then there will be, once more, for a generation or two, the great silence of despair, perhaps the beginning of the end. If London cannot, or dare not, continue the dragonnades, it must yield. These dragonnades were the only really efficacious mode by which force could reduce the country ;* and the Irish, on their side, will not let go

* "It is unquestionably in this belief that the Government ordered the reprisals all round, or shut its eyes to them. The most presumptuous among its members thought that about a month of this policy would have the desired effect" (Lawson Report, p. 4). Unfortunately, it is now nine months and more since the English counter-offensive was started, and its only appreciable effect has been to make things inexpiable, without getting in any way near a military decision.

* "What can we do ?" said a captain to me at Limerick. "It is certainly a melancholy task, and we do it without joy. But reflect that every day English officers and soldiers are immolated. Now if there is an incontestable truth, it is that the *vast majority of the Irish population are tacitly the accomplices* of those who assassinate us. They facilitate their movements, they conceal them, they give them information, they wish for their success. That granted, since it is extremely difficult for us to capture the *francs-tireurs* who

the bone. Within the Empire or not, that is not the real question. Ireland should be given back to the Irish ; and the Unconquerable, on whom Elizabeth, Cromwell, and Pitt have each cast their shovelfuls of clay, would issue once more from the grave with a light in her eyes.

What of to-morrow ? The gods alone know. But the omens are dark. Sir West Ridgeway, a former Under Secretary for Ireland, takes the trouble of writing to the *Times* to recommend reprisals. " There must be reprisals," but let them be regulated by the command and not by the men. And towards December the system comes officially into force. At Carnarvon on the 10th of October, Lloyd George excuses or justifies the excesses that have been committed, and makes us suspect that worse is coming. Asquith insists on conciliation, and Carson speaks of him as though he were a traitor. And if the past may enlighten us, I recall the words of an English Liberal that Paul Dubois quoted fifteen years ago : " The Irish are only trying to worry us, just as the Poles try to worry the Germans."* And he was a Liberal.

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attack us unexpectedly, the only method at our command is *to inflict suffering on the masses*, slyly hostile to us, from which they are recruited, from which they obtain their resources and means of action, and whose champions they are. *We must resolve on that, or clear out"* (Inquiry of M. L. Naudeau, published in the *Illustration*, 25th February, 1921). I like to quote this testimony because of its almost naive honesty. It reveals in an expressive and striking manner the codified and general character of the reprisals, the national character of the rising, the fundamentally desperate character of the measures the English have tied themselves to. Like a good soldier, who is merely an irresponsible agent for carrying things out, the witness leaves aside the moral and the political question.

* Paul Louis Dubois : *l' Irlande contemporaine*, Introduction. p. 6.

CHAPTER V.

CALCULATION OF PROBABILITIES.

I.

Lloyd George—He understands the situation—But, a prisoner in the hands of Conservatives and Orangemen, he parades his intransigeance—Forced duplicity of his attitude—His desire to negotiate nevertheless.

THUS for four years Ireland answers oppression by armed revolt, England answers revolt by terror; a somewhat desperate decision. Is an agreement, then, impossible?

On the English side, certainly, the Prime Minister seems rigid and more and more uncompromising. But he is never simple, especially when he most seems so. This man who in the last twenty years has made the complete round of the political clock, is too intelligent not to understand the Irish Question, even if he pretends not to. Lately when his Parliamentary interests of the moment did not forbid such comprehension, he expressed that problem in striking terms:

> "Centuries of pitiless repression and of brutal injustice, centuries of insolence and outrage have driven hatred of British rule into the very marrow of the Irish race. The one unsurmountable fact to-day is that Ireland is no more reconciled to British rule than she was in the days of Cromwell" (7th April 1917).

And even yet to-day, heated as he is by the struggle, he sometimes, with imprudent petulance, allows the truth to escape. When on 26th July last Sir Edward Carson and the Duke of Northumberland, at the head of a delegation came to him and represented the trouble in Ireland as a symptom of an international conspiracy against the Empire, he answers gravely—for his manners are above reproach—that they are perhaps right, but at the same time he recalls, as if in spite of himself, that Ireland has ancient grievances which must be remedied by granting her a reasonable degree of freedom within the Empire. Only—he wants to remain Premier.

Assuredly this Welshman, who does not even belong to the English Church, is, on many points, far removed from the Tories whom he caused to be elected in December, 1918 ; but even more than their leader he is their instrument and their prisoner ; let him cease to obey and they crush him. These hidden sentiments sometimes appear on the surface ; sometimes the rumour runs that Lloyd George, impatient at his present subjection, would not be sorry to hold other elections, on the Irish question, or on labour troubles ; sometimes various surly people inquire sullenly if England will one day cease to be the prey of Scotch and Welsh, and the English get a chance. On both sides the marriage is solely one of reason but nevertheless a marriage.

Now, these Tories are the same who in 1912-1914 signed a convention with the Orangemen in revolt against Home Rule, and openly accepted funds to finance civil war in Ireland ; for these people, Ulster, an advanced post in a conquered country, is, so to speak, the *locus*, the touchstone also, of English

patriotism ; from a less lyric point of view the Ulster Question is that which they use periodically, to inflame English pride and overthrow their Liberal adversaries ; between them and the Ulstermen there is a reciprocity of services, expected or rendered, which makes the alliance indissoluble. This is what justifies the *Times* assertion :—

> " We now say, without fear of truthful contradiction, that Mr. Lloyd George is the self-constituted prisoner of the forces associated with the name of Sir Edward Carson, not because he admires or believes in the ideas they represent, but because he is persuaded that, were he to flout them, they could expel him from office " (11th October, 1920).

And one can believe that Sir Edward Carson, conscious of this force, makes it felt. The tone in which he speaks to the Government, a government, note, which he supports and claims to respect, is quite simply astounding :—

> " If you are unable to protect Ulster against Sinn Fein machinations I shall take the matter into my own hands. I will reorganise at all costs, and notwithstanding the consequences, my Ulster Volunteers. I hope you have got that pretty clear. I hate words without action " (12th July, 1920).

The tone is that of a non-commissioned officer to recruits, of a master to lackeys, and, not without indelicacy, throws into prominent relief the subordination of the Ministry to the Orangemen.

And it is this subordination which throws light on the Carnarvon speech (9th October) of set purpose so narrow, full of the obstinacy of unintelligent rancour, so unworthy of a statesman, so badly received besides,

by all of the Press which counts, that speech where Lloyd George now justifies, always excuses, and for anybody who can read between the lines, encourages the so-called " reprisals," or more properly speaking, the deliberately planned cruelties exercised by the troops in Ireland. His harangue is not the frank expression of his own thought ; it is a pledge, given by the unfortunate speaker, and at the same time a policy taken out against future dangers.

Thus ambiguously divided between his own comprehension of things as they are, and his state of dependence, he takes a series of equivocal steps, contradictory and, therefore, perhaps without deliberate malice, insincere. He would like to enter into negotiations, and at the same time, lays down preliminary conditions which make, as he well knows, all conference useless. As early as 1917, at the time of the Irish Convention, he understood—and said then openly—that any project admitting of the secession of Ulster from the rest of Ireland was still-born. To-day (17th August, 1920), in the House of Commons, he declares himself ready to hear any representative of Irish opinion, but on three conditions of which the first is the secession of the famous six counties. And yet he knows well that of the six counties two have since gone over to the Republic. He knows well that to-day less than ever does Irish opinion, not even that of the Southern Unionists, accept partition. But he knows still better that Carson holds the leash, and he fears the check of the curb.

And yet, nevertheless, scenting the danger to the Empire that this Irish abscess continues to be, and secretly convinced that once round a green table his superior dexterity would once again fool the simple

Gael, as it has fooled so many others, with all the natural bent of his character, the crafty Welshman, sincere in his desire to deceive, really itches to negotiate. Let him only catch them round a table, these adversaries now safe in their silence, and he will twist them round his finger.

II.

Sinn Fein prefers to fight—Necessity and, according to it, possibility of armed action—Its intransigeance has several sources : The Irish character ; Sinn Fein rigidity ; fear of the Nationalist Parliamentary Party ; the distrust inspired by England and English politicians.

But for these same reasons, acting in an opposite direction, and for other reasons also, these adversaries have little eagerness to take their places round the table. They prefer to fight.

In the first place they know too well that violence alone has turned attention to them. The strange and rather tardy discrimination which the Castle seeks to establish to-day between Sinn Fein theorists such as Griffith, who are to be encouraged, and advocates of physical force, leaders in attacks who are to be subdued, is entirely baseless if it be not a preparation to impute to the ' extremists ' the eventual suppression of the " moderates." In fact politicians and soldiers are in complete accord. Griffith knows very well that were it not for the Volunteers and their young chiefs, and the effort which they oblige England to make to maintain, as well as she can, her rule here, he himself might have spoken, written, thundered for twenty years and not even a single London Cockney

would have quivered an eyelash ; in a word, without the men who strike the man who thinks is of no avail.

What might have dissuaded the Sinn Feiners from continuing the struggle by armed force was the fear that the civil population, shockingly dragooned, would finally yield. This was the hope of the Castle. " There are," wrote Brigadier-General Blind,* " indications that the measures recently taken by the Government have had the desired effect, at least in the moderate sections of Sinn Fein, which are beginning to use their influence to stop the campaign of outrage."

" Vain expectation," say the Republicans. " After some weakening under excess of distress, the country has regained self-control, remembered that the Volunteers for whom she endures such ferocious vengeance are her sons, and henceforth each new excess of the police can only inflame hatred, without impairing endurance. As for our Volunteers themselves they are ready for far greater sacrifices. " It is not he who can inflict most that triumphs," said McSwiney, " but he who can endure most." Let us see who shall tire first. Besides are not our chances fair ? We know what a weakness we are for England, embarrassed as she is in all parts of the world, and with her right hand caught in the wasp nest of Ireland. Weariness and opposition increase as the struggle lengthens. Our guerilla war cannot be crushed by force. As for general dragonnades, either they continue and blot out the name of England from the civilised world, or they cease, and then British impotence confesses itself, and for the first time Ireland is on a footing of

* In a secret order issued to the troops three days after the sack of Balbriggan.

equality to treat with her old enemy. We prefer to fight."

Thus say the Republicans. And what they say is what they think. There is this disconcerting Irish character, which often, under pressure, reacts in the most unexpected direction, and which throughout its history shows a deliberate tendency to choose disaster rather than compromise. Certain horses, under the whip, are maddened and kill themselves.

There is the uncompromising enthusiasm of the Republican movement, where there are still many men, who without boasting, but also without compromise, refuse to consider the possibility of yielding, because they feel bound by their oath, literally unto death. The cold exaltation of courage shown by MacSwiney is not so rare in their ranks. " The English burn houses and factories ? So much the better ! that sends more young men to the army. They track us down more and more closely ; we have our backs to the wall ; what else can we do ? " And if sometimes, in an evil dream, they have the vision of the possible destruction, doubtless rather than retreat they still prefer to fall bearing arms, that at least the example may remain to " save the soul of Ireland ! " That is why Sinn Fein prefers to fight.

Moreover many reasons deter it from negotiating. First of all its spirit. The men who have worked out its doctrine and who still lead it, pure thinkers, as has already been remarked, writers like Griffith, professors like MacNeill, have in their convictions the sincerity, but also the inflexible rigidity of theorists : this is what makes them so baffling to the practical, businesslike English, whose bent is always towards opportunism and compromise ; this is what makes

them so akin to the Irish temperament, whose idealism borders on the chimerical. Before the Rising and the days of greatness which followed, De Valera, then a humble professor at Blackrock, was cycling about Connemara during the holidays with a friend. They happened to speak of Home Rule, of half-liberty. De Valera cut short the discussion. " If liberty is not entire," said he, " it is not liberty." That is the Sinn Fein spirit. There is no Irish Question. Ireland happens to be occupied by a foreign army. She is, in fact, a nation like other nations, and like them has the right to independence. The foreign army has only to evacuate the country and that is all. Where is the ' Question ' there ? Debate with Lloyd George ? Debate what ? What is there debatable in the matter ?

Besides, if Sinn Fein were tempted to forget its radical turn of mind political interest would deter it. Let it abandon principle, on which it stubbornly takes its stand, and enter the road of compromise with London politicians, and since there ceases to be any great difference between it and the old parliamentary opposition, one can no longer see why it should have swept away the latter two years ago. There remain in the country a sufficient number of demobilised politicians, very sorry to be demobilised, full of bitter resentment because they have lost on the threshold of old age, the paradise of power—there are still enough placemen, remnant of the old Redmondite organisation throughout the country, to make Sinn Fein pay dearly for the slightest weakening.

Finally and above all, Sinn Fein is deterred from negotiating by elementary prudence. There is a cruel truth which must be uttered, first of all, because

it is the truth, and then because it explains so much. In Ireland English pledges are no longer good currency. The Irish have been too often duped, tricked, deceived, fooled, so many Home Rule Bills have succeeded other Home Rule Bills and not one has been put into execution. So many solemn promises which have not been kept! Even a law passed and promulgated and annulled, defective as it was, when a danger arose that Ireland might benefit by it! That is all over. London may now bestow on them her sweetest smiles, make them her most tempting offers, in each word they scent the snare, and the sincerest Englishmen, such as Lord Grey, are to them only more profound liars. The *Irish Bulletin*, of the 9th September, perfectly voices this invincible distrust; it quotes appeals made by England to Ireland during the war, in which she promises, sometimes explicitly, freedom. "America, by the voice of her President, declares the liberty of every nation is as much to be respected as her own, as worthy of being assured. Will Ireland fight for *her* freedom? America will see to it that her rights are assured." Thus spoke England in the disorder of danger; and now. . . . No! decidedly, we play no more with cheats.

This instinctive suspicion of a whole nation is keener still when directed against individuals. Whom is one to trust in this array of politicians, so stale, that one knows by heart, in advance, all their artifices, all their knavery? From General Sir Hubert Gough in the *Star* to-day flow forth emollient homilies:—

> "The Empire cannot last indefinitely if it rests on force, and not on the consent of the governed. It must make itself loved, not hated. . . . To be disloyal is not a crime on certain occasions. If

> England be unjust or faithless towards others, or merely suspected of being so, she need not expect loyalty. That is Ireland's case to-day."

Quite so. But can this, by any chance be the same angelic general who, supporting the sedition of his officers of the Curragh Camp, and thus putting force at the service of the Orange rebels, destroyed Home Rule in 1914?

Lloyd George? He is still more double-dealing:—

> "The sincerity of the Prime Minister is more and more clouded with suspicion. Ireland in its chaos cries loudly against faith in his declarations and promises. The miners put in the van of their cause the assertion that he is not to be trusted. His dealings with the German reparation question, and then with Poland, are remembered against him,"

writes the *Times*, still implacable (18th October).

His manner of conducting a controversy makes him still more suspected. Is it sincere, is it even really clever to declare (answer to Bottomley, 18th August), that "the Sinn Feiners imagine they represent the majority of the Irish people?" Could it possibly be that the Coalition, to which the Cabinet owes its existence, does not represent, but merely imagines that it represents, the majority of the English people? Is it frank, or even clever, to persist in charging the Republicans with the murder of MacCurtain, former Lord Mayor of Cork, when everybody knows, and none better than Lloyd George, that he fell by police bullets? Beyond a certain limit, honesty would be supreme craft. And so one laughs heartily at the sarcasms of Asquith's daughter, Lady Bonham Carter:—

> "The Prime Minister is an excellent quick-change artist. He has had a fine political career, but nothing to what he would have done on the films."

But having laughed, one wonders if Asquith or his partisans can afford to mock at Lloyd George's versatility, or to give him lessons about Ireland. Asquith to-day stigmatises the policy of repression, proposes to offer Ireland practically unlimited liberty and even claims not to fear eventual Irish armaments. Six years ago the self-same Asquith was Prime Minister of England, with power in his hands. A law of Home Rule had been passed which he had only to apply; what did he do with it? To-day when he pleads for Ireland, is he playing an open game? Is it simply an opposition manœuvre, a Parliamentary trick? It is permissible to doubt.

"The Irish," the same Asquith once wisely said, "should be in a position to believe that they are faced by responsible and honest men." Obviously. Unfortunately, they can no longer bring themselves to believe it. When they look at their possible partners they see first the impassive faces of Balfour and Bonar Law; serious people, who, in a certain sense, deserve respect; they are, of course, enemies from whom Ireland has nothing to expect, but at least one knows who they are, at least they are true to themselves. After them one looks, reviews each face, and among the satellites of Lloyd George, among the Ulstermen rewarded for their services by a dizzy favour which hurries them on to honours, even among Prime Ministers, present or past—one can find only weather-cocks. This is the final reason why the Irish have no desire to negotiate.

III.

A glimmer of light—How much of Irish intransigeance is bluff?—Offers of strategical guarantees—That necessarily Sinn Fein would accept a Home Rule which was not fictitious—That Lloyd George, in order to refuse it, affects to believe Sinn Fein irreconcilable.

Is the circle then closed, an arrangement impossible, the blind alley hopelessly blind? Not yet. For this is what Irishmen may still say and do say: "You English wish to give Home Rule to Ireland. That is not what her people want; her people desire, purely and simply, that you should get out; and we, her representatives, have therefore nothing to discuss with you. But this Home Rule, an idea which is yours, and yours alone, impose it: you will see. An impregnable, logical position. Naturally London does not like this theorem; its nakedness offends her. As counterpart to her "concession" she would like to obtain pledges. But the Irish do not budge from this: "Home Rule is a purely English solution; apply it if you think fit; it is no concern of ours."

But already one sees what seems to be a glimmer of light piercing the darkness. Besides this expectancy, this almost exaggerated caution, this proclaimed indifference, is it, in its turn, very sincere? Is it not rather a feint in the closely-played poker that is going on before our eyes? For my part I do not doubt it.

Whatever, besides, may be one's judgment of them, the Republicans love their country too well not to be, more than all others, moved by her sufferings, and not to wish for them any remedy, however imperfect,

however far it fall short of their principles or dreams ; in spite of their slightly chimerical idealism, they have too great a sense of proportion not to appreciate the impossibility of subduing by mere force the enormous Empire which they may indeed harrass, but not bend nor vanquish ; in my opinion they desire then, passionately, any measure, even incomplete, of freedom.

But they will not accept a sham and a mockery as were so many previous Bills ; they will not allow themselves to be led a dance, like Butt's or Parnell's or Redmond's party, by letting themselves be trotted from Commons to Lords, and from Lords to Commons, to be presented at last with a hollow sham ; they believe that the only way of obtaining from England something which is really something, is the closed fist—and on my word, to judge by Ireland's past, they are not perhaps altogether wrong.

That is why they play this game of bluff. But as the game goes on, they gradually, and as if in spite of themselves, let a corner of their cards be seen, De Valera—and this is an act of courage for which he will eventually have to answer to the more rigid—shows himself disposed to the Cubanisation of Ireland, that is to say to the concession by Ireland to England, of the same strategical guarantees that Cuba, by the first article of the Platt amendment, assures to the United States. In an interview given to the *Gazetta del Popolo* at the end of September, Griffith cries : " Let England recognise our right to a separate and independent existence, and then the question of strategical guarantees need not be an insurmountable difficulty." In another form, slightly more veiled perhaps, this is the same proposition made by De Valera ; and if I did not fear an accusation of hetero-

doxy, I would even risk this rather free translation : " Take all your securities, military and naval ; give us the substance of Home Rule, that is to say with fiscal autonomy and no partition, and the bargain is struck."

But if you prefer, let us cease to interpret hidden thoughts—always a risky operation. Let us simply suppose that Home Rule, sincere and without trickery, is at last realised. Let us suppose that the Republicans also are absolutely sincere, when they disdainfully reject this Home Rule to-day ; let us even credit them with an honesty bordering on ingenuousness. Faced with this new situation what, at most, could they do ? Appeal to the people from whom they hold moral and material power, and ask their opinion. That opinion would not be doubtful. A political staff may be imbued with idealogy ; in a certain sense it is even fitting that it should be so. The mass of a people is not. When the Irish people would see conceded to it the essentials of freedom, liberty to learn its own language, to pursue its own ideal, above all to manage its own affairs, how can one doubt that it would accept, at least by a large majority, an amelioration, this time so substantial, of its lot ?

And then what alternative would remain open to the leaders of Sinn Fein ? Either, abandoned by three-fourths of public opinion, to persist in their absolute radicalism, to return to obscurity, or loyally to answer the fresh call of the people and continue to serve in Ireland, enjoying the liberty won by their efforts. I am dreaming ? But after the Boer War did not Botha become Prime Minister of South Africa ?

And who, even among the most extreme Irishmen, would hold that nothing had changed ; when, instead

of the dizzy kaleidoscopic procession of Scotch, Ulster and English Chief Secretaries at the Castle, one would see De Valera, or even Sir Horace Plunkett, Prime Minister of Ireland ? That is why I say that, contrary to appearances, a settlement would be possible, even easy and rapid, if the wish were there.*

Even if England, to save the self-esteem of Sinn Fein doctrinaires, and cover their retreat, were to add to the reality of Home Rule, the empty words Independence and Republic, what would it really matter to her ? Is she not accustomed to compromise about words, if not about things ? Is she not, weary of noise and trouble, about to recognise the " Independence " of Egypt, requiring precisely a few " strategical guarantees," including control of the Suez Canal ? Yes, for the realistic London Government, which has never quailed before words, it would be easy to arrange things, if the wish were there. But it is not.

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* It is peculiarly gratifying to me to find myself here in agreement with General Lawson, who is so much of my opinion that he even quotes the same historical examples : " The majority of those with whom I have conversed thought that the road to peace (between England and Ireland) was Home Rule within the Empire, with fiscal autonomy, Ireland giving the necessary guarantees for Imperial security, and that such a solution would be welcomed by the mass of Sinn Fein. It must be remembered that last year there was a considerable change from right to left in Irish opinion ; a number of people who were decided Unionists have become partisans of Home Rule, and the point on which all seem to agree is that Home Rule without fiscal autonomy is not Home Rule at all.

" If such a scheme were submitted to an Irish electoral body, abandoning, it is true, the Republican idea in favour of a monarchy more conservative and more in harmony with historical tradition, but giving to Ireland real liberty to manage her own affairs and work out her own life, Dail Eireann might say in all sincerity and honour : ' We shall accept, with deference, the decision of the Irish people.'

" There is a considerable analogy between the present situation in Ireland, and that in South Africa towards the end of the Boer War " (Lawson Report, p. 6 seq.).

It is not precisely because there is no desire to give this unrestricted Home Rule to an undivided Ireland. The tremolos of Lloyd George and Carson, modestly veiling their faces before the abhorred spectre of the Republic, have indeed no other meaning. Carson goes on repeating, " To yield ever so little to Ireland is to dethrone King George in this country."

To the Member of Parliament Kenworthy, speaking of eventual " Cubanisation " (3rd August), the Premier replies : " This proposition would imply the acceptance of an independent Republic—(*it is almost the exact opposite*)—and to that we will never consent." Finally and above all, these English statesmen, this Lloyd George who has the craftiness in guessing of a horse dealer bargaining with a peasant, pretends not to understand the meaning that behind all the array of ultra-Republican formulas, lies the offer of guarantees, and he loudly affects to believe Sinn Fein irreconcilable, entrenched in rancour, that he may have a pretext of refusing everything to Ireland*. M. Pierre Mille pretends somewhere that an English lawyer told him a very pretty and very topical story. A man accused of murder appears before the Bow Street judge. The enquiry centres on a cap, the only piece of circumstantial evidence ; if it belongs to the accused he is hanged ;

* The following is one proof among many : Dr. Gilmartin, Archbishop of Tuam, having published a message in which he asks for a truce of God, and affirms that with " real concrete Home Rule all serious conflict would at once cease," the *Temps*, which piously obeys London inspiration in all that concerns Ireland, adds at once, " It is pointed out that this Prelate here expresses a personal opinion." It is pointed out ; who points out ? The English Government, because if the legend of Irish irreconcilableness were dissipated its last pretext would crumble away. Dr. Cohalan, the very influential Bishop of Cork, has repeated with greater precision, Dr. Gilmartin's ideas.

if not, free. The man, a heavy sort of brute, hardly answers, seems not to follow the cross-examination of the witnesses, scarcely to understand that it concerns him. The witnesses clash, get mixed up, contradict each other; for lack of proof the man is acquitted. Then he, stretching his hand towards the piece of evidence, says very tranquilly, "May I take my cap?" "For," added the storyteller, "we English have that great force of never understanding what it is not to our interest to understand."

That is the meaning of the Carnarvon speech (9th October):—

> "If present opinion in Ireland were to be satisfied it would be necessary to accept separation and establish an independent Irish Republic. As for Dominion Home Rule it is no use talking about it."

And we are informed that it would imply for Ireland an Income Tax of 2s. in the pound *, a navy, the control of its ports, conscription, an army of 500,000 men; how is one to afford all that on two shillings in the pound?—which would oblige England also to establish conscription—and I know not what besides. What nonsense! At one solitary moment the cat peeps out of the bag. "Against such a proposition (that of the Republic) Ulster would have something to say." There lies the difficulty. Again we fall back on the dead point.

* The Income Tax in Great Britain is six shillings in the pound.

IV.

Chances of a settlement—The opposition in Parliament—Fear of contagious anarchy—Lassitude and sentiment of the vanity of force—Pricks of conscience in the English soul—Fear of Universal opinion.

Arrived so far, what remains to be done save to calculate the probabilities ? Save to weigh the chances of settlement, for and against ?

For ? There is in the first place the existence of an English opposition. Certainly the sincerity of Asquith or of the Labour Party is most suspect ; but that is not the question. However hollow and hypocritical be their tenderness for Ireland, they speak and agitate in her favour, and for tactical reasons must continue to do so. Assuredly also, the opposition is numerically weak, and on big questions of principle hardly secures in the Commons one-fifth of the votes. But it may suddenly and dangerously increase, if it should chance to meet, or if experience should bring it an argument which comes home to the heart or interest of the English people. And if in the last by-elections the tide of disfavour against the Coalition seems slack, the entry into line of a man so universally respected as Lord Grey, so evidently disinterested, who, despite the state of his eyes, gives us to understand that he is ready to accept the burden of power, the entry of such a recruit is of incalculable value to the opposition, and may be the beginning of a change in opinion. Coalitionists, such as Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Henry Cavendish Bentick, already manifest uneasiness.

To wage war as it is waged in Ireland is, naturally, not without disadvantages even for the stronger side.

The troops, police or regular, who feel that in a more or less underhand way they are invited to savage tasks, cannot sustain a high morale in such employment, and one must not be astonished to see them accused of drunkenness, looting, assassination,* even indiscipline. The *Irish Bulletin* asserts that on the 23rd August, at the R.I.C. Depot, Phœnix Park, 600 recruits in training mutinied against a general order of General Macready, threatening to leave the force if not given entire liberty to continue "reprisals." This, if not true, is likely. Things have been so managed that the struggle turned to a private quarrel, an endless vendetta, between people and troops; men are no longer there to execute orders, they are encouraged to take the initiative in terrorising; if now the police and Auxiliary forces have a tendency to escape from the control of their leaders, who can be surprised? The occupation of butcher has never been a good school of discipline for an army. There are Englishmen sufficiently far-seeing to become uneasy.

The same reasoning holds good for the civil anarchy into which the Government seeks to plunge the country. To suppress Republican law courts and Republican police, thereby increasing insecurity of person and property, is assuredly a powerful means of spreading suffering, lever to force surrender; but who can be sure that anarchy will remain confined to the area where it is fomented? This is the explanation of certain protests, such as that of the *Times* (21st

* Major Evan Bruce, of the "Auxiliary Police Force," is committed for trial by court-martial, accused of having stolen £75 from a creamery which had been burned down. Sir H. Greenwood told the House of Commons that of nine R.I.C. men arrested for various outrages, two were accused of murder.

August, 1920) against the suppression of Republican arbitration courts. Just at the moment England has rather serious social troubles, a really dangerous revolutionary agitation. Prussia was in a healthier condition when she inoculated Russia with Bolshevism, and yet she has not, in the end, avoided contagion. There are Englishmen who see far enough ahead to become disquieted.

Assuredly, if the Empire employs force without reserve or scruple it will finally crush Ireland under its weight. In the meantime victorious England has on hands important suspended interests in all parts of the world: Egypt, the Black Sea, Middle Asia, India; it is indeed a moment to squander £1,150,000 a month and tie down in Ireland 50,000 soldiers and 15,000 police. And this waste of men and money may last for a long time yet; at any rate it has lasted for four years, with occasional respites, and this year, a terrible recrudescence, and none can foresee the end; even if the revolt be crushed, one must anticipate for a quivering Ireland many long years of powerful military garrisons. And towards what end, after all, is this formidable effort directed? Ireland subdued does not mean Ireland conciliated.* Cannon cannot prevail against souls. Solutions based on force are in themselves precarious. Will it then be necessary to have taken so much trouble in order that, at the first great danger to the Kingdom, Ireland may rise once more ready to stab England in the back?

Assuredly even to-day some risks would be run in giving to Ireland freedom or partial freedom. The longer London tarries, the more bitter the rancour

* "The best method for England of securing a friendly Ireland is to have a free Ireland" (Lawson Report, p. 7).

and the deeper the suspicion ; and if England delays until she seems to yield only when weary of the struggle, it is to be feared that Ireland, then become incurably distrustful, will arm to protect by force what she will believe she holds by force, and fears to see taken from her, as in Grattan's days, by faithless jealousy. But would one not be exposed to these same dangers and to worse should force be lacking to face, at the same moment, a great exterior danger and an Ireland in insurrection ? When one is threatened with a serious operation is it not better to face it voluntarily, when one is in one's health, without waiting until obliged to by a crisis at the most unfavourable and dangerous moment ? There are Englishmen who see far enough ahead to experience this feeling of lassitude, of discouragement, and of " What's the use ? "

And finally there are others—an element that shall never be dominant in realistic or negligible in pietist Albion—who recoil before the immorality of brute force. As always with these minds so far removed from Latin limpidity, so synthetic, incapable of truly knowing themselves, egoistic and religious at the same moment, and without being disturbed by the contradiction, in short, as far from being lucid to themselves or to others, it is difficult to discern the more or less pure motives of the moral shock, how much of it is genuine aversion from evil, how much fear of opinion, how much interest nicely understood. *The Times* (30th August) declares to the Irish people that English opinion regards MacSwiney's imminent death " with deep regret and no small measure of shame " ; the Bolshevik *Daily Herald* strews flowers on his coffin ; the *Daily News* accuses Sir H. Greenwood of lying, when in the House of Commons he denies the

barbarities of the troops. In these manifestations of British feeling who shall distinguish what is sincere and what mere opportunism? But at any rate, whatever this sentiment be, and however mixed its nature, it exists and must be reckoned with.

England has always surrounded herself with such a halo of humanitarian liberalism, uttered such loud cries against all terrors, the Russian terror, the Turkish terror, the Prussian terror, the Hungarian terror, that, willy-nilly, she is partly the prisoner of her legend; even if it were only Pharisaism—and that cannot be altogether so—what does it matter? That would still be of some avail: Pharisaisme oblige. Let it not be said that I am jeering; an affectation of virtue may be the first rung on the moral ladder, and would to God that it were less rare between nations; because if hypocrisy finds it necessary to carry brutality to too great an extreme, it is the first to be made uncomfortable. Hence these alternatives of the closed fist—*debellare superbos*—and of the extended hand—*parcere subjectis*—which, in addition cost rebels more dearly than a decided and decisive repression, exercised once for all. But this lack of coherence is exactly the British spirit, hesitating between the mailed fist, to which its instinct urges it, and the world's opinion, which its prudence fears.

Powerful as she has emerged from the war, England is not, nevertheless, a colossus as massive as the Germany of yesterday, and cannot afford to run counter to universal opinion; moreover, being cleverer, she prefers to try and turn it in her favour. Such is the object of those persistent communiques, (Reuter 1st September; Sir E. Carson, interview in the *Matin*) and other of more recent articles where America and

France are adroitly reminded of Irish pro-Germanism during the war ; this is to counter-balance Sinn Fein propaganda and stifle dawning sympathy with the Republican cause. But this cleverness is indirectly yet another proof that England fears to clash with universal opinion ; and in her quarrel with Ireland she will have a good deal of trouble in keeping this opinion on her side.

Thus the liberalism—tactical or sincere—of the opposition, fear of contagious anarchy, lassitude, remorse of conscience, uneasiness for her good name, these are reasons which, in concert, would impel England to a friendly settlement. Some are yielding to them, to the scandal of the *Morning Post,* which groans that the British people itself is passing over to rebellion. Such is the *Evening Standard,* still classed as Unionist, which finally asks on the 25th July last :—

> " Can it be that the Irishman is less fit to govern himself than the Egyptian ? If the autonomy of Ireland be a danger for the Empire, is that of Egypt not ? If it is found possible to accord to Egypt an autonomy bordering on independence why this obstinate refusal to give the same to Ireland ? "

V.

Chances against settlement—Strategic value and proximity of Ireland—History—The perpetual outbidding between oppression and revolt—The Englishman's innate unconscious conviction of his essential superiority to the Irishman; victors and vanquished—That Orangeism voices this sentiment of racial pride, hence its magical power over the English mind—The Empire must crumble before the English mind renounces Empire.

Why? Because Ireland is fifty miles from the English coast and Egypt at the other end of the world. At worst a hostile Egypt could only delay, not cut, communication between London and India; and besides London has fortified itself in advance against this risk, by solidly occupying the Suez Canal. But from a hostile Ireland, lending her ports to some powerful adversary, a deadly blockade might spring. That is why, if England yields to Egypt, instead of a favourable precedent this will be for Ireland a sinister indication, an indication that not being able to hold on everywhere they loose hold there to have their hands free here.

Why? Because between them and Egypt there is as yet no history: what is forty years in the life of a nation? whereas between them and Ireland there are seven inexpiable centuries. And when one thinks it over, when one seeks to establish a hierarchy in one's ideas, one finally realises that the great obstacle to a settlement, the insurmountable, perhaps the only obstacle, is history. There are certain chains of fact that the past has bequeathed to the present, like

an immutable and accursed tradition ; generations are born into which, before their birth, this hard past breathes the soul of Cain.

Yes, the English, especially since the Tudors, have heaped up so much injustice and cruelty in Ireland that they think they have everything to fear from her, if this victim were ever to become free. They hold her, therefore, in bond. Irish resentment becomes more embittered thereby, revolt increases English distrust, distrust increases oppression ; and the infernal circle closes, and none can see how to get out. Violence of by-gone days commands the violence of to-day. An inexorable Nemesis pursues the sons of Cromwell, and in punishment for the murder of yesterday, slips into their hands, as if in spite of them, the knife with which they shall kill to-morrow.

History ! It is from it one must learn the spiritual value of Ireland for the English. She is to them what Alsace-Lorraine was to the Imperialists ; the witness and trophy, the living, speaking proof that they were and remain a master people, since here is the slave to attest it ; a proof all the more living in that the slave remains rebellious, and that in subduing her from age to age one demonstrates to one's self that one has not degenerated from conquering ancestors ; a palladium also, a palladium to the race of its strength and virtue.

All this the average Englishman does not know, does not feel ; say it to him, he would protest. But he oozes it forth. He has for the Irishman a gentle, tranquil, benevolent, established, unconscious, innate contempt. This is a thing which can neither be expressed nor discussed ; it is an axiom, a revelation, an innate idea. There is, in theatre and music hall,

a stereotype sketch of the Irishman : frivolous, talkative, inconstant, dirty, rather a good chap after all, a boaster, liar and thief ; who would contest this stereotype? it is a primary truth, it is " The Irishman."

Oh ! They recognise his merits, they even affect to give him good measure ; but so much sincerity, you see at once, only lends additional weight to the severe judgments pronounced on him :—

> "Irishmen have many splendid qualities ; but I see no signs of sweet reasonableness in them, whether they live in Ireland, or America, or elsewhere."

So writes Lord Salisbury in the *Times* (17th October) —this is the gilding, this the pill. Recently the *Sphere* devoted a page to the troubles in Ireland ; it gave, amongst others, a photograph of three small boys wearing petticoats ; " this is the West," ran the legend, " they believe they deceive the bad fairies who carry off children, but attach importance only to males." Ireland? Quite so ! Beautiful and curious country, charming folklore, population so picturesquely backward, so quaint with its primitive superstitions ; wild children ! pretty place for the holidays. Such is the tone. And so comic, with their Republic, their cardboard army and straw ministers ! their pretence of grumbling against the Empire, the most glorious Empire under the sun ! Terrible youngsters, and so noisy at times that they simply must be whipped. That is what London thinks, not even maliciously, I swear, of this unhappy country, where daily men die for freedom.

I seek in our own country a sentiment to be compared to this. Not anti-clericalism, which is much

more clearly defined, bitter, aggressive in some, and in others a rather superficial attitude. Not the anti-Semitic prejudice, which is as instinctive, but much more violent; the Englishman rather likes the Irishman, readily adopts and intermarries with him, adores Celtic animation, wit, and delight in life, celebrates Irish beauty, his favourite actresses come from Ireland and many of his writers and artists. No, the nearest parallel, product of the same reactions, would be, perhaps, with less of amused and complacent superiority, the feeling of the Roman for the Græculus, or of the Prussian for the Pole, as Sienkievicz has painted it in "Bartek the soldier." A feeling of protective superiority, turning the extreme fury and boundless indignation, when the inferior race, insolently putting itself on an equal footing with the other, bethinks itself, on regaining independence, of retaking "Posen and threatening Breslau," or of claiming Ireland for the Irish.

It is useless to reason about all this. It is a condition necessary to being, as necessary as the air one breathes, or pulsing blood. And the observer, on the other hand, experiences the little joyous shock of certitude, when he descends to these depths, because he feels he has reached the indestructible, bed-rock, the man himself. The man! beyond all humanitarian phraseology, all hypocritical morality and nauseating declamations, this is he at last, naked and in truth, incapable of knowing himself, or making himself any better, such as the accident of destiny, the blind past, have made him.

An off-set of victory is that it too often warps the victor's mind, whether the victory be the result of superiority in organisation, arms, or numbers, or of

pure chance ; at the best it would merely prove a dynamic superiority, and numerous are the incidents where it has sacrificed precious things to the grossness of the stronger side, Corinth to Mummius, the world of antiquity to the Barbarians. But it sovereignly persuades the victor that in everything he is better than the vanquished ; otherwise how could he have conquered ?

Have you noticed, in the most refined societies, which one would have considered spiritualised, how proud man is of his strength, how easily consoled for ignominy, but how horribly humiliated by the least infirmity ? Victory is the sacrament of force. For the animal that man is and remains, it is the test, the proof from which there is no appeal. How is he ever to see an equal in that other man whom he has had, inert and defenceless, under his heel ? How could he doubt that henceforth the property of the vanquished is his ? And that feeling which swells his heart with the fulness of pride, he transmits, mysteriously, to hereditary generations. His descendants shall carry it, even unknown to themselves, in the flow of their blood, in fibre of their flesh. A secret spirit shall repeat to them from age to age, that it is their tradition and duty to put in their turn, as formerly their fathers, their foot on the neck of the vanquished ; a secret voice shall repeat to them that the country of the conquered belongs, in fact and by right, to the sons of the conqueror.

In the Englishman everything cries it out, everything trumpets abroad his ingenuous faith in an evidence that only pure perversion or intellectual sadism can call into question ; everything testifies to it, as if in spite of them, even those apparently in-

significant words in which suddenly and without warning a soul peeps forth.

As an old Protestant lady, respectable and devout, bewails the troubles. " What madness," she sighs, " is this longing for secession ! How is it they can't see in the proximity of the two islands, the finger of God, Who desired to unite them for ever ? " " And if," asks a malicious little girl, " it were the Irish who had invaded and conquered England, would it still be the finger of God ? " Faced with this absurd paradox the lady remains open-mouthed.

One night, in the last few months, the police were raiding a Dublin hotel. In one room a traveller, having been questioned and searched, was about to be set free, when they found in his valise a simple business letter, but beginning with the Irish " A chara " (Dear friend). He is immediately arrested, and the officer says to him angrily : " Do you know that the Orangemen begin to be fed up with you ? " " Ah," said the other, " for three hundred years we have been fed up with them ! " Never, assuredly, had the worthy officer considered this singular point of view ; the calling into question of the conquest.

And now, just look at Carson, at these carnivorous jaws ; that is what he represents, the conquest, the victory, the triumph enduring through the centuries, the eternal joy pulsing in the veins of the master tribe, to feel itself the stronger, the greater, the better. It is not the material Ulster, itself divided in opinion, with Belfast fed by the hinterland of the three provinces, and interested in the unity of the island, that is the true obstacle to the liberation of Ireland ; the invincible obstacle is the historical spirit of the four Orange counties ; it is the inflexible soul living there

and inflexibly facing that other hostile soul, the soul of Sarsfield, of the traitor Wolfe Tone,* and of MacSwiney.

Assuredly the Ulster planters are dear to England as the German immigrants in Alsace were once to Prussia ; they are perhaps the dearest of her children. Colonists of Empire risked among the barbarians ; but if she had to lose hold of Ireland and see her favourite sons submerged in the native masses, she would weep less for them than for the bloody mirror in which she had been wont to admire her glory.

And Carson knows this well. Read one of his speeches, not those of the London Parliament, but those made in Belfast to his people. Does he speak of justice, of constitutional rights, of interests ? Little or not at all :—

> " The enemy is at your gates. You require good healthy advance guards, solid and determined to sound the trumpet and assemble the necessary troops " (12th July).

That is how he speaks. Cries of contempt and hatred of Papist heresy, of Catholic bishops, of the Irish mob, appeals, brutal to the point of beauty, to religious and racial passion, therein lies his eloquence. " He beats the Orange drum," and representing only a tribe at war, does well. Every year, at Belfast, at the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, festivals take place at which he gives vent to his most virulent invective ; milksops complain of it as a needless provocation, thrown out lightheartedly. There is no needless provocation ; what you call provocation is a

* Doubly a traitor, since Ulsterman and Protestant, he gave his life for the freedom of Ireland.

necessary and sacred affirmation, the reminder to the vanquished that they are vanquished.

Now you can understand Carson's frantic eloquence, threatening cries, calls to arms, triumphal chants whose wild accent sometimes reminds one of a scalp dance. Now you understand the fascination which, apart from all political bargaining, Carsonism exerts on the oldest, most traditional, most English England ; it is the battle of the Boyne resurrected, ever living and young ; William's English and German battalions breaking through the Irish vagabonds, the French Huguenot squadrons driving before them the Papist and Jacobite rabble, the traitor king in flight ; it is Aughrim, it is Limerick, it is—for in our modern souls hatred of the heretic survives faith itself—the victory of the true religion of the chosen nation, of virtue ; it is the certainty rooted in English souls that the English people is a great people destined from all times to empire.

Is not this pride of race the fundamental note in the poetry of Kipling—the chief reason of his immense popularity ? If it has been naturally exalted since the war by the greatness of the peril and the triumph, do you not now feel how well the Carsonite song harmonises with passions developed by victory, how it crowns souls already prepared ? Let us try to be just, or at least to understand ; to penetrate the depths of every conscience, remembering that they are only human ; and, let us admit, that to ask a great conquering nation, fresh from a deadly struggle, intoxicated by the fight and victory, to ask it to remove its claws from a prey that it has helped for centuries, solely in the name of justice, is to require from it a supernatural effort of self-conquest. If she were to

do it, it would be the eternal honour of her history ; but how can one believe that she will do it ?

Lloyd George expressed in other terms the same doubt when he said, in effect, on the 22nd December, 1919, that, to accept the liberty of Ireland the Empire would have to be beaten to its knees. What does that mean, if not that the Empire must fall before English consciousness lose faith in its right to Empire ? The failure of force alone can unmake the soul that force has made.

VI.

Conclusion—The future of Sinn Fein—The rise of Ireland during the past century makes it impossible to keep her in servitude—England can only complete the extirpation of the Irish race, or yield.

Then ?

Trust to coercion ? Anticipate that in the long run the adversary will be exhausted and that one will be able to return quietly, perhaps under the mask of a faked Home Rule, to the good old way of the good old times.

Even in this hypothesis what would be the future of Sinn Fein ? As a party, one may suppose that it would encounter a certain disaffection of the masses. The men who, having asked of the country a formidable effort, lasting several years, would return with empty hands, having made only one real demonstration, that of Irish powerlessness, would doubtless see rise against them the resentment of many ; it is the usual thing for the vanquished to blame their chiefs. On the other hand, however unanimous and violent be the national sentiment, however fostered by

historical rancour and English clumsiness, it would be impossible to think of keeping the country in a state of perpetual ebullition. Lassitude and collapse would come. Even now in a general fashion, the business world, and, it is said, quite a number of country proprietors are hostile to Sinn Fein, not certainly on questions of principle—to which they are indifferent—but because the semi-revolutionary atmosphere which it creates in the country disturbs and diminishes trade. Among Irishmen, too, there are a good number

" Who live on good soup and not on fine language,"

and for whom individual prosperity is the chief good. In short, if Sinn Fein is defeated, it might easily be gradually abandoned by all the carnal elements in the country. That is what it has to fear.

But, on the other hand, it may first of all count on that peculiarly Irish sentiment of instinctive tenderness for the valiant who fought a hopeless fight. It is this which old John Mitchel expresses with savage and corrosive irony :—

> " Success confers every right in this enlightened age ; wherein, for the first time, it has come to be admitted and proclaimed in set terms, that Success is Right and Defeat is Wrong. If I profess myself a disbeliever in that gospel, the enlightened age will only smile and say ' the defeated always are.' Britain being in possession of the floor, any hostile comment upon her way of telling our story is an unmannerly interruption ; nay, is nothing short of an Irish howl."

It is to this generous love for the unfortunate that

Germany, enveloped in the poetry of defeat, owes the persistent sympathy which she has retained here. Even defeated—I do not venture to push the paradox to the point of saying : especially defeated—Sinn Fein would seem the hapless hero who fought a good fight for Ireland, and to whom is in honour due faithful remembrance and faithful love.

On the other hand, economic prosperity, a care for which might bring about the decline of Sinn Fein, may also, on the contrary, by its very progress, keep for it the favour of the country. It is quite usual, I am told, to see to-day in the country father and son at variance politically ; the former who has lived during the time of precarious work and of the evictions, pleased to have become a proprietor, would gladly continue to enjoy peacefully what he has won ; the next generation, careless of a comfort which it has always known, and all the more ardent because no longer curbed by poverty, thirsts only for liberty.

The same results follow from education, which, besides, is so closely connected with material riches. The richer people are, the more pupils there are in the schools, and the more students in the University ; the more educated people are the more keenly do they feel that they have come of age, the more fiercely shall they claim liberty and the more shall Sinn Fein retain favour. From this point of view, and if the English mean to keep Ireland under, the setting-up of a National University (about which, indeed, they so long hesitated) was an unpardonable blunder. These are the trump cards of Sinn Fein.

And now, if we see in Sinn Fein something else and something better than the name of a party, the more vigorous because restricted, but slightly jealous,

slightly narrow as is every faction, the future is even clearer. If it be true that Sinn Fein, even more than it realises, resumes and capitalises the whole history of enslaved Ireland, if it is only the actual phase of an eternal protest, how can it die? The interests which it thwarts shall sometimes be driven to fight it, yes! but it shall always have with it the spiritual force of the nation, and in no nation has the soul, in conflict with material interests, kept such power of flight. Certainly there will be moments of flagging and of quickening in the will to fight, constitutional periods and others more violent, moments of enthusiasm and of languor. Sinn Fein may lose its very name and its deluded enemies rejoice in its death; under this name or another it shall rise again, and conquered to-day, conquered to-morrow, it finally remains, like a nation which keeps the will to live and persist in its being, imperishable and invincible. In this sense it is Ireland herself, and Ireland to-day, as three hundred years ago, refuses to accept the English conquest. The one thing that would have made her accept it would have been beneficence and superiority in the victor. Ireland sees neither.

Then?

Things cannot rest there. They get worse every day. Hostile wills clash in ever sterner conflict. The English, with the obstinacy of the race, the more resistance it meets with the more stubborn it becomes, and the more it gives way to fury, and to its faults. The Irish will no longer yield. They may have let MacSwiney die, they may deport, shoot, hang, or subdue the country by dragooning or famine, it will never be silenced save for a time. If they really desired to keep it meek and mute, they ought to have left it

in the state to which the Penal Laws had reduced it; its princes gone; its property confiscated, its religion proscribed; uncultured and with no right to seek culture; brutalised by want, and having lost even the desire of escape, finally losing slowly with its language the very consciousness of its degradation. Such men, who had arrived at the point where they spoke English to "gentlemen" and Irish to their cows "because it was good enough for the cattle," might have made good slaves. But their Church was restored to these people, and in the last century they found leaders in their priests. A beginning has been made in selling back to them lands confiscated from their ancestors, and with these lands they have recovered the dignity which results from easy circumstances and certainty for the morrow. The school has been restored to them and, yesterday, the University; each year hundreds of young men leave college who feel themselves the equal of any living man, already designated as the new chiefs and burning with what flame they have shown us; no longer restrained as were their elders of the clergy, by conservative prudence and the passion for law and order at all cost which characterise the Church. Go backwards? It is too late.

Then?

Fashion no longer favours those massacres on a large scale, which relieved such wounds by blood-letting; it would even be difficult to repeat the evictions which followed the Great Famine. But what sword or bailiff can no longer do, may be managed by indirect but surer methods. One must sometimes give ear to soldiers; their candour is refreshing after the politicians. Questioned by M. J. Marsillac of the

Journal in January, 1920, Lord French answers him good-humouredly :—

> " The history of Ireland has never changed ; trouble, repression, a period of apparent calm ; when the circle is finished it begins again. The present disorders ? That comes of having 100,000 surplus young men. For five years, because of the row, emigration has been suspended : hence all the trouble."

There you are. These chaps are kicking up a row ; they are energetic ; they might become dangerous ; if they were to rid the country of their presence, it would be pure gain for the "mother" country. And doubtless, by encouraging or creating economic conditions which leave them workless, for example, by handicapping industry, as has been so often done in the past, one might obtain without fail, and without scandal, the desired result. Then one might see returning those happy times when Ireland, peopled principally by children and old men, troubled not England's sleep, and meantime, through alternating outburst and languor, one would await long enough this death so slow in coming.

This is not the first time that the Saxons would have cleared out a troublesome population ; not a native remains in Tasmania ; hardly any in North America, and the Maoris of New Zealand are going fast. About 1801 there were 5,400,000 Irish, less than 11 million English, Scotch and Welsh ; in 1846, 8 million and a-half on one side, 16 on the other ; the proportion favoured the Irish. In 1905, after the famine and evictions, there are only 4,400,000, and the inhabitants of Great Britain number nearly 40

million. Thus, while the latter were quadrupling their numbers, the former, in spite of fecund marriages, were losing a million inhabitants ; and in the last seventy years they were diminishing by half. Another such century and the Gael will have had his day.

This plan, yesterday of destroying, to-day of displanting Celtic Ireland, proclaims itself in all past English policy ; it finds unreserved expression in the mouths of statesmen. At the time of the discussions on the first Home Rule Bill, the then Marquis of Salisbury, later on Prime Minister, said in St. James' Hall :—

> " There are races like the Hindoos and Hottentots (*sic*) who are not fit to govern themselves. As for me, I would prefer to spend Treasury money in transplanting a million Irishmen than in buying back for them the lands from the landlords."

About the same time Stuart Mill writes :—

> " When the inhabitants of a country leave it *en masse* because their Government no longer leaves them a place to live, that Government is judged and condemned."

And the cry of deliverance of the *Times*, when famines were sweeping the country shall never be forgotten :—

> " Soon the Celt will be as rare on the banks of the Liffey as the Redskin on the banks of the Manhattan."

Ireland emptied of the Irish, the diaspora of the Gaels as formerly of the Jews, dispersing their race to the four winds of Heaven ; an ancient and original culture touching or venerable, delicate or beautiful things, great memories killed ; it is not a very elegant

conclusion to seven centuries of desperate struggle sustained by a people against death ; but it is a possible one. And it can be urged in its favour that half the work is already done.

There is a solitary disadvantage, it is that the affair requires a hundred years. And during this hundred years England cannot, without having Ireland at her throat, suffer a disaster or even seem to be in danger ; is she quite safe ?

And if not, what is to be done ? Certainly, Ireland alone will never be strong enough to free herself from the English, but she is too big not to be an embarrassment to them, sometimes a danger, always a source of shame. The only method that remains to them of disarming this inexpiable hatred, and of ridding themselves of a nuisance, would be to offer, and very quickly a sincere and radical settlement, on a footing of equality between the two races. It would be to their interest ; does it seem to you that they are thinking of it ?

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