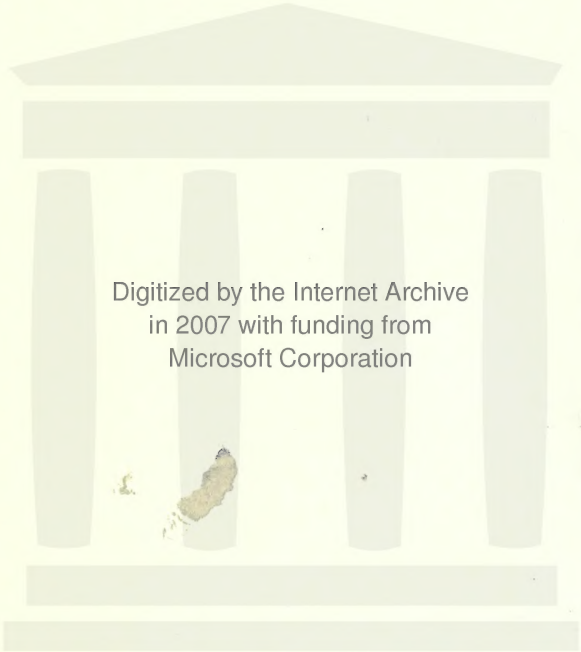

HAT THE IRISH
GIMENTS HAVE DONE

S. PARNELL KERR

With a Diary of a Visit to the Front. By

JOHN REDMOND, M.P.

MICHAEL O'LEARY, V.C.

IRISH GUARDS
AL IRISH FUSILIERS
AL INNISKILLING FUSILIERS
AL DUBLIN FUSILIERS
AL MUNSTER FUSILIERS

THE ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT
ROYAL IRISH RIFLES
THE LONDON IRISH RIFLES
THE LEINSTER REGIMENT
THE CONNAUGHT RANGERS

THIRD IMPRESSION

WHAT THE IRISH REGIMENTS HAVE DONE

WHAT THE IRISH REGIMENTS HAVE DONE

BY

S. PARNELL KERR

AUTHOR OF "FROM CHARING CROSS TO DELHI"

WITH A DIARY OF A VISIT TO THE FRONT

BY

JOHN E. REDMOND, M.P.

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD.
ADELPHI TERRACE, LONDON

First published in February, 1916
Second Impression, March, 1916
Third Impression, April, 1916

CONTENTS

MY VISIT TO THE FRONT

By John E. Redmond

I HAVE been asked to publish in some detail a narrative of my experience and my impressions during my recent visit to the front. This is an extremely difficult thing to do with any completeness, and especially in view of the fact that I must be careful not to say anything which the censor might consider it injurious to publish.

I spent a week in the British, French, and Belgian lines. I inspected, in considerable detail, one of the British great military bases, and saw the elaborate arrangements for transport of troops, munitions, and provisions. I marvelled at the enormous hangars which had been built, and at the stupendous supply of all sorts of munitions which they contained, and at the arrangements made for their daily arrival at the port and their daily convoy to the various railheads, from whence they are taken on by motor lorry to the troops.

I visited the great base hospitals, with accommodation for thousands of wounded soldiers, and with the beautiful and almost luxurious convalescent hospitals attached.

When I proceeded from the base to Headquarters, I had unique opportunities of investigating the extraordinary work of the Administrative Staff. I met the heads of all the various departments, including the

Protestant and the Catholic Director-Generals of Chaplains with the troops, Monsignor Keating and Rev. Major-General Sims. I saw one of the flying stations with its hundreds of hangars and aircraft of all descriptions. I visited every Irish regiment at the front. I saw John Ward's Navvy battalions doing the most magnificent work in making and repairing of roads. I saw the Indian troops and the Canadian troops. To describe all these things with anything like detail would be quite impossible in the space at my disposal.

My best course, I think, will be to give something in the nature of a diary.

At the base, the Colonel-Commandant of the port, Colonel Wilberforce, son of the Rev. Canon Wilberforce, Chaplain to the Speaker, was my guide, and I feel greatly indebted to him for his kindness.

When visiting the great hospitals, I had the pleasure of paying a visit to Lady Dudley, who has charge of the Australian hospital, and who has been there doing this noble work for the last fifteen months without a break.

One of my most interesting experiences was a visit to St. Patrick's Club for soldiers, which has been conducted by the Hon. Miss Florence Colburn, assisted by Miss Grace O'Malley, of London.

That night I arrived at General Headquarters, where I met General MacDonagh, Lieutenant Blennerhassett, and other Irishmen.

Irishmen Everywhere

From that time until I left the shores of France again I met Irishmen everywhere, and in every capacity,

not merely in the Irish regiments, but in every regiment and high up in every single branch of the Service—Irishmen from north and south and east and west. In fact, it is true to say that from the Irish Commander-in-Chief himself right down through the Army one meets Irishmen everywhere one goes.

The following day, November 18th, we left General Headquarters at 8 o'clock in the morning, under the guidance of Major Elles, and motored to visit the 1st Army. En route we passed the 59th Rifles of the Indian Army and a battalion of Indian Cavalry, splendid men, but looking somewhat chilled in the, to them, unaccustomed cold and rain. All along the route we passed miles and miles of supply and ammunition columns and battalions going to or coming from the trenches.

On arrival at the Headquarters of the 1st Army, we met General Sir Douglas Haig, the Commanding Officer, and had an opportunity of examining the extraordinary methods of the Intelligence Department of the General Staff of the 1st Army, under the control of Lieut.-Col. Charteris.

By the aid of aeroplane photography, our Army is in possession from day to day of elaborate photographs of German trenches, and I was shown the daily map which is issued on which is plainly marked every portion of the whole intricate system of German trenches, and on which is also marked the position of every German battery behind their lines.

Proceeding from thence to ——, we were received by Brigadier-General Crampton, commanding No. 1 Heavy Artillery Reserve Group. We were shown the 9·2 Naval gun, mounted on a railway truck, specially

constructed for the purpose, which can be moved up and down the line wherever the line may be made; and also a 12-inch howitzer, both enormous and forbidding-looking engines of war.

In company with General Crampton we then proceeded to ——, where we met Lieut.-General Sir Henry Rawlinson, Bart., commanding the 4th Army Corps, and Major-General Holland, commanding the 1st Division.

A Speech under Fire

Here the Munster Fusiliers were paraded and drawn up in a hollow square, and Major-General Rawlinson introduced me to the troops and asked me to address them. They had marched on to the ground playing the "Wearing of the Green" on their band of Irish war-pipes, and carrying a green Irish flag.

There was a battery of British anti-aircraft guns on my left, about forty yards away, and a battery of 75mm. French guns about forty yards on my right.

After I had spoken a few sentences, the battery on my left rang out with startling suddenness, and we then became aware that there was a hostile German Taube aeroplane right over our heads.

From that on until the end of my speech the British guns on the one side and the French guns on the other fired shrapnel shells at the Taube at regular intervals. It was a strange experience for me to have my speech punctuated, not by applause, but by the roar of guns situated only a few yards from where I was standing.

It was a marvellous exhibition of the discipline and steadiness of the men that, while this firing was taking place, not one of them even lifted his head to look in

the sky at the aeroplane, but remained absolutely passive at attention.

When I finished my speech, the men cheered lustily, and marched away playing " O'Donnell Aboo."

At the commencement of the war the men had five green flags. Now they have only one, and I promised to supply the deficiency.

We remained upon the field for some twenty minutes after, watching the battle between the guns and the Taube. Four British aircraft were sent up to aid in the attack. Shrapnel shells were bursting all round the Taube in such a way that it seemed absolutely impossible for it to escape being hit, and I am quite certain that it was hit, but not vitally: and, after wheeling over our heads more than once, as if in defiance, the Taube slowly disappeared towards the German lines.

The French 75mm. gun is certainly a beautiful weapon, if one can use such a phrase about any engine of war. It works with such ease, its construction is so simple, and it is so light and easy to move, that it is a marvel. It can, I believe, fire 20 rounds a minute. It can be used as an anti-aircraft gun, and immediately afterwards it can be used as an ordinary field gun. The British anti-aircraft gun, on the contrary, though I am sure it is a magnificent weapon, is ugly in the extreme, and cannot be used as an ordinary field gun. The French gun was painted blue, and was worked by a battery of French soldiers in their picturesque new light blue uniforms and blue steel helmets.

Subsequently, we walked to a battery of two 9·2 British naval guns, enormous monsters, which were trained on a building just behind the German lines,

about three miles distant. These guns have a range of over 10 miles.

Firing a Huge Gun

I was given the privilege of firing one of these huge guns at its object. The experience was rather a trying one, and I only hope my shot went home.

During lunch at Divisional Headquarters the band played Irish National airs, and at intervals the house was shaken by guns from a battery quite close, and a large French window in the room where we were lunching was blown in by the concussion.

We then went to visit the battlefield of Loos, which is a flat plain, the only eminences being a series of fosses, some eight in number, which really are big conical-shaped heaps of slack and cinders formed in connection with the mining operations of the district. These fosses, with the exception of Fosse 8, are all in the British possession since the battle of Loos.

We ascended one of the highest of them, a height of about 200 feet, which we reached by an underground passage through which we had almost to crawl on all fours. When we reached the top we found we had a complete view of the plain of the battlefield of Loos, with Loos itself in the distance. We saw the German lines winding along like a snake, and our lines nearer to us.

The following day, that is November 19th, making another early start and under the guidance of Major Heywood, we went to the Headquarters of the 2nd Army, where we were received by General Plummer,

the Army Commander, and where again were exhibited the war maps, aeroplane photographs, etc.

We proceeded then to the Headquarters of the 24th Division (General Capper). Here the 2nd Battalion of the Leinster Regiment, with General Jelf commanding the 73rd Infantry Brigade, were paraded to meet us.

They first gave us a display of bombing, and fired volleys of various kinds of bombs, and explained to us this mode of trench warfare. The bombs are of all shapes and sizes, some of them resembling cricket balls in appearance, some of them the shape of a hair-brush with a handle, and some of them in the nature of slings with canvas ribbons attached to them.

Address to Leinsters

After this display, I was given the privilege of addressing the Leinsters, and received from them a most enthusiastic reception. Their band of Irish war-pipes played the "Wearin' of the Green," and "Garryowen."

I had the pleasure here of meeting the two Catholic Chaplains, Father Higgins, a Sligo man, and Father Brown, a Cork man. Like all the other Chaplains whom I met at the front, they spoke in the highest praise of the extraordinary spirit of the men, their good behaviour and their devotion to their religious duties.

All the time we were in this camp shelling and big-gun firing from both the British and German lines was continuous.

We proceeded then through Armentières, which had been heavily shelled the day before, to the 25th Divisional Headquarters. Here we were met by General

Doran, an Irishman and a Wexford man, from whom we received a hearty welcome.

We proceeded then to the famous Plug Street Wood. This has been the scene of, perhaps, the heaviest fighting in the war. It is now one mass of barbed wire entanglements, and is certainly impregnable.

We walked for about a mile and a half through the three lines of defence until we arrived at the firing line, along which we walked and saw the soldiers in their huts and dugouts, and walking about in the trenchess. Most of the trenches were supplied with periscopes, and we were within about 80 yards of the firing line of the Germans, which we saw distinctly.

Although nothing which could be termed an attack was proceeding, the roar of the guns was continuous, and there was scarcely any cessation from rifle fire and from machine-gun fire of varying intensity.

While we were there a man behind us in the woods who turned out, sadly enough, to have been a Waterford man, and a constituent of mine, was struck by a stray bullet and instantly killed.

The Soldiers' Graveyard

One of the most pathetic sights in this wood was the soldiers' graveyard, which looked as if thousands of soldiers had been buried in it, each grave tastefully dressed, with a plain cross with the name of the man and the date of his death, most of them having wild flowers and bits of ribbon attached, and some of them with the poor fellow's cap hanging on the top of the cross.

We remained about an hour in the front firing trench.

* * * * *

I had the pleasure of meeting here the Catholic Chaplains, Fathers Hagerty and Cullan.

The town of Plug Street itself is in ruins, and the beautiful church utterly destroyed.

Just outside we visted the camp of the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. The men, who were paraded, were just about to start for the trenches; they had all their equipment on, and, indeed, seemed heavily laden.

Father Gill, S.J., their Chaplain, was at their head, and was going to march in for his four days in the trenches with them.

I had a warm welcome from them, and when I reminded them that their regiment was composed of men from the North of Ireland and from the South combined, they heartily cheered; and I was told that the Belfast men and the Southern and Western men in the regiment were the best of comrades and of friends.

On our way back to General Headquarters we called to see General Seely, at ——, and found him enthusiastic in praise of the Brigade of Canadian cavalry that he commands. He, as all the Commanding Officers I met, was living in a simple billet, in a small house without carpets or luxuries of any kind, and was the same cheery, gallant fellow we all knew so well.

The following day—Saturday, November 20th—we left Headquarters again at a very early hour, again under the guidance of Major Elles, in order to visit the old 87th Royal Irish Fusiliers (the Faugh-a-Ballaghs) and the Dublin Fusiliers.

On our way we passed a battalion of the French Algerian troops—most picturesque figures. They made a brave show on their beautiful Arab ponies.

Brigadier-General Hull met us here, and I was invited to address the combined battalions of the Royal Irish Fusiliers and the Dublin Fusiliers, and received from them a thoroughly hearty greeting.

After my speech, the battalions left the ground playing "O'Donnell Aboo," followed by "God Save Ireland," their cheers echoing away through the woods.

18TH ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT

From this we went on to meet the old 18th Royal Irish Regiment, the senior of all the Irish regiments. Though they had just come from the trenches they had cleaned and smartened themselves up and presented a magnificent spectacle of trained men. They gave me an enthusiastic reception.

The night before, the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French, had asked me to convey a message of congratulation to this regiment for their gallantry in the field, and to assure them how proud he was to be their Colonel. Many of the men were from Wexford, and I need not say I was glad to meet my fellow-Wexfordmen, and also many of my own constituents from Waterford.

It has been claimed for this regiment that it was the first which made "It's a long way to Tipperary" so popular with the troops. I am told this song is sung by both the Belgian and French troops, and that its strains are even heard coming from the German trenches.

Father Fitzmorris, the Chaplain, met us with his men.

While we were at lunch subsequently at Headquarters two batteries of British guns in our immediate vicinity commenced a hot fire on the German lines, so much so that the little house in which we were sitting was

shaking the whole time, the panes of glass were rattling, and the noise was so great that it was practically impossible to converse.

After lunch General Hull conducted us to what I regard as the most dangerous part of the firing line that I have visited. The day was foggy, and General Hull considered that it would be safe for us to proceed in a motor a portion of the way. He would, however, allow only one motor and a limited number of people to go.

Leaving the motor by the side of the road, we entered a long communication trench, and passed on through the supporting trenches for a couple of miles. The whole time guns were booming without cessation, and the ground on each side showed great craters which had been made by shells. When we reached the actual firing trench we were within a very short distance of the German trenches, which we saw with the utmost distinctness.

The Dublins and Ulsters

Here I met the Dublin Fusiliers and the men of a battalion of the Ulster Division (the Royal Irish Rifles) side by side in the trenches.

The next day, Sunday, November 21st, we paid a visit to the newly-formed Guards' Division, commanded by Lord Cavan.

Lord Cavan is one of the heroes of this war, and I heard everywhere I went enthusiastic praise of his qualities as a soldier and a man, and from my own observation I am certain that his men would follow him anywhere to the death.

At the Headquarters we met Lord Claud Hamilton

and the Prince of Wales. The latter seemed in first rate health and spirits. He leads exactly the same life as any other young subaltern in the army. I could not help thinking what a magnificent training it is for him. He seems perfectly happy.

The first and second battalions of the Irish Guards were paraded and inspected by us, in company with Lord Cavan. I met many men in the regiment, both amongst the officers and the rank and file, whom I knew. One a Sergeant Murphy from Enniscorthy, and another Private M'Veagh, from Co. Antrim, had just obtained the D.S.O. for gallantry at Loos.

The first battalion is commanded by Colonel M'Calmont, M.P., who was exceedingly cordial in his welcome, and the second battalion by Colonel Butler.

The men are all giants, and what struck me was the uniformity of the height of the men. It is not to be found in any other regiment which I saw.

They were all in the best of spirits, and seemed delighted by my visit.

I was told by the Catholic Chaplain that all the men had been at Communion on the Friday before.

Father Gwynn's Death

The deepest grief is felt by them all at the tragic death of their Chaplain, Father Gwynn.

Lord Cavan and the officers described him to me as a splendid fellow, who had been a tower of strength and a continual tonic to the regiment.

They deeply regret his death.

The son of Mr. Hugh Law, M.P., was one of the officers who received us.

After the parade we proceeded to some batteries of 4·5 howitzers, 18-pounders, and 9·2 howitzers, which were about to open fire upon certain houses behind the German lines, which had been suspected of harbouring enemy guns.

The officer in charge was Captain Darcy, of Galway.

As soon as we arrived the bombardment commenced, and was exceedingly exciting work. After each shot a telephone message instantly came back as to the result. The first few shots were misses, and the correction in the range was made in accordance with the telephone message. Finally, the word came—a hit. Then they knew the range to absolute accuracy, and all the guns were turned on, and in a few moments the buildings on which they were firing were completely demolished.

On Monday, November 22nd, we went to Belgium, driving along by the Belgian canals, and were deeply impressed with the spectacle of women pulling enormous canal barges twice the size of those we are accustomed to in this country. Everywhere the women were doing agricultural work in the fields. No men were to be seen at all except the troops who crowded the roads.

On reaching the Belgian frontier I had a strange experience. I had left the British Headquarters without the necessary permit to cross the Belgian lines, and we were held up by the Belgian sentries. We showed our papers, we explained we were going as guests to visit King Albert, we said we came from Sir John French. All in vain; we could not proceed. At last a Belgian officer arrived, and we suggested to him to send an armed guard with us to the Belgian Headquarters, and to this he agreed, and a soldier, with rifle and fixed

bayonet, was put next our chauffeur and thus we drove to Le Panne, where the King resides. On our arrival we found the British Minister at King Albert's Court and two Belgian aides-de-camp waiting for us, and our guard was relieved of his duty.

Ruined Villages and Towns

We passed through villages and towns lying in absolute ruins. Some of the most beautiful buildings in Europe, going back for many hundreds of years, and which were regarded as models of architecture, were riddled or completely demolished. In these towns the churches in every case suffered most. In many towns we passed through there was not a living human being, except a few Belgian guards who were living in cellars. In Pervyse, in a half-ruined two-story house in the middle of universal ruin, we found two English ladies were living. One of them is a Miss Chisholme, and they have remained there all through the war, tending the wounded and succouring the starving children of the remnant population. By the same kind of extraordinary coincidence as that whereby crucifixes and statues have escaped destruction in Belgium, so the portion of the little house which these ladies have inhabited to this time has remained untouched. It is not surprising that the Belgian people look upon them with a sort of supernatural and sacred love.

At Nieuport, the largest town in the neighbourhood, the remains of the Cathedral had been bombarded the day before we arrived, and, while we were there, an English aeroplane was passing over the town when at once it was attacked by shells from the German trenches, which

were comparatively near, and we saw fighting going on between them lasting a considerable time. In the end our aeroplane got away unscathed.

We had an unpleasant reminder of the continual danger, even on the quietest day in areas of this kind, when a bullet whizzed past us and flattened itself on a wall a few yards from where we were walking.

Absolutely Impregnable Defence

We then were driven to the front Belgian firing trench, a portion of which is an absolute impregnable defence, having in front vast sheets of water, where the country has been inundated by the inhabitants themselves and where no Army could advance against them. The warfare here consists simply of sniping and shell fire from behind. Other portions of the trench are quite near the German trenches. Continual sniping goes on and shells are always booming. The men seemed quite cheerful, and though not as comfortable looking as the English troops, still were in good heart, and quite determined, apparently, to see this matter through.

From the trenches we drove quite a short distance to the seashore, where we were received by the English Minister at the Belgian Court, General Bridges, and his staff, amongst whom we found Prince Alexander of Teck.

I had been informed before leaving the British Headquarters that King Albert had graciously expressed a desire to see me, and I therefore proceeded to his residence.

Visit to King Albert

A small, unpretending, detached seaside villa, without garden or grounds of any sort or kind, standing

literally on a sandhill, looking out to the sea, and only about thirty or forty feet from the edge of the water, is the Royal Palace—I shall never forget my visit to the King, his kindness, his courtesy, and his sympathy, and how warmly and generously he spoke of the little that Ireland had been able to do to help him. I confess that my emotions were stirred by this interview, more perhaps than ever before.

After the interview we started to pay a visit to Ypres, but were overtaken by a dense fog, and were unable, to our great regret, to get to the most shelled town in Belgium; indeed, it took us five hours crawling slowly and cautiously along the road, in and out between marching troops and transport wagons, which loomed up out of the mist constantly all round us wherever we went, to reach at last General Headquarters, late at night.

The following day, Tuesday, November 23rd, I was enabled to return to London on a troopship, carrying 1,400 men and officers coming home on leave.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS account of what Irish regiments have done in the field during the present war does not, of course, pretend to be exhaustive. Such an account could not possibly be written at the present time, and, perhaps, never will be written. The exploits of the Irish regiments in the various theatres of war have not, until recently, received any considerable recognition from the authorities. The names of the units engaged in military operations of the most brilliant kind have seldom been mentioned in dispatches. "Have you heard of the gallant deeds of the Irish regiments?" asks a recruiting poster still to be seen on the dead walls of Dublin. The answer must surely have been in the negative. Practically nobody in Ireland or in England has heard of the gallant deeds of the Irish regiments in the present war. There may be some excellent, if recondite, reason for this concealment;

but the result has been disastrous. On the one hand, the English people have been disposed to think that Ireland and Irishmen have not done their duty. On the other hand, the Irish people have not taken that vivid interest in the war and in their regiments which they would have taken had they been properly informed as to the military exploits of those regiments. And this has certainly not helped recruiting in Ireland.

Here, then, is the reason for this record of the gallant deeds of the Irish regiments in the present war, so far as the war has gone. It is a record illustrative rather than exhaustive; a page or two torn from the book of Irish valour in this greatest of all wars. Still, it may serve to draw the attention of the British people to the fact that there is such a book; that the Irish regiments in the British Army have, in the hour of fiery trial for the Empire, answered magnificently to the calls made upon their loyalty and courage. And for almost the first time in history the Irish Catholic regiments are fighting and dying for England without any shadow of bitterness in their hearts or minds.

They carry their loyalty beyond the battlefield to the prison camps of Germany, as the Germans have good cause to know. It is well that these things should be appreciated in England. It is even better that they should be appreciated in Ireland. Irish soldiers, Catholic and Protestant, have fought and died shoulder to shoulder against a common foe on the battlefields of France and Flanders and the far Peninsula of Gallipoli. Shall not their blood seal a new bond of brotherhood among Irishmen, and cry out in judgment against those who should in future seek to stir up afresh the old hatreds and old divisions that have been the curse of Ireland for centuries ?

* * * * *

One explanatory word should be added. When this book was written neither the 36th (" Ulster ") Division nor the 16th (" Irish ") Division had gone to the Front. Both these divisions are now in the field, but neither has had, as yet, the opportunity of taking part in any considerable military operations. This

is the sole reason for the absence in the following pages of any reference to these two fine divisions of the new armies.

I have to thank Mr. John Redmond for his kind permission to print the diary of his visit to the Front; and Mrs. Victor Rickard, Messrs. Cassell & Co., the New Ireland Publishing Co., Mr. H. R. Stockman, the proprietors of *The Times*, and the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, for kindly allowing me to use material in which they respectively had interests.

S. P. K.

WHAT THE IRISH REGIMENTS HAVE DONE

I.—THE EARLIER PHASES OF THE WAR

THE British Expeditionary Force began to leave England on August 9th, 1914, and its concentration in France was practically complete on August 21st. "The transport was effected," says Sir John French, "in the best order and without a check." Many observers have described for us the departure from England and the arrival in France of this famous body of British fighting men. One account tells of the march through Boulogne of a number of regiments gaily singing or whistling "Tipperary," while the inhabitants cheered, and pelted the soldiers with flowers. "Tipperary," indeed, quickly became the favourite marching song of the British troops, and in time a sort of popular International Anthem of the Allies. We are told that this Irish song has now been super-

seded by other popular airs. That may well be so. The life of a song of this kind is short; and besides, "Tipperary" has now tragic associations. It brings a lump to the throat to think of the thousands of brave men who have marched to their death singing its lilting chorus. But "Tipperary" must have had a peculiar attraction for the famous Irish regiments who formed part of the Expeditionary Force. Those regiments were as follows:

Regiment.	Brigade.	Division.
2nd Royal Munsters	1st	1st
2nd Connaught Rangers	5th	2nd
1st Irish Guards	4th	
2nd Royal Irish Regiment	8th	3rd
2nd Royal Irish Rifles	7th	
1st Royal Irish Fusiliers	10th	4th
2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers		
2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers	12th	

5th (Royal Irish) Lancers; 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards; 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons; the North Irish Horse; the South Irish Horse.

These are, most of them, historic regiments. Their colours are covered with battle honours. Take, for example, the Royal Irish—one of the oldest of British regiments. Founded in Charles II.'s reign, it won its spurs at Namur in 1695. Does it not bear on its colours the Lion of Nassau, and the motto "*Virtutis*

Namurensis Premium" ("The reward of valour at Namur") ? And a few years later it fought right through the bloody campaign of Marlborough in Flanders. Take next the Connaughts—the pride of western Ireland. What would the history of the Peninsular War be if you took away from it the deeds of the Irish regiments—the Connaughts, the Rifles, the Irish Fusiliers, the Inniskilling Fusiliers —but, most particularly, the Connaughts ? To think of that campaign is to think of Picton storming his way about cursing his "Connaught footpads," but, nevertheless, flinging them always into the thickest of the fight. Wellesley praised the Connaughts ; but their battle honours speak for themselves. Busaco, Fuentes d'Onoro, Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vittoria : the Connaughts were in them all. So we might go through the list ; the 87th (Royal Irish) Fusiliers ("Faugh-a-Ballaghs"), who covered themselves with glory at Busaco, and on many another field ; the Inniskilling Fusiliers, who were the only Irish regiment at Waterloo, and who lost more men in that historic battle than any other battalion, though they

" never moved a step or fired a shot " ; the Royal Irish Rifles, another fine old Peninsular regiment. Nor must we forget the Dublins and the Munsters, who did so much to win the Indian Empire for England. These two regiments were in all the big fights, from Plassey to Sobraon, often with only native regiments in support. But it is impossible here to do justice to the brilliant histories of these famous Irish regiments. Only one regiment—the Irish Guards—had never before taken its place as a fighting unit in the line of battle. It was, as everybody knows, formed in 1902 by Queen Victoria as a mark of appreciation of the valour of Irish soldiers in the South African War, and this was the regiment's first campaign. But, as will presently be seen, the Irish Guards were not long in shewing that they had nothing to fear from a comparison with the other regiments in the Brigade of Guards.

On Saturday, August 22nd, the British Force was disposed on the position assigned to it, the line running from Condé on the west, through Mons, to Binche in the east. The 1st Corps held the line from Mons to

Binche; the 2nd Corps was on its left from Mons to Condé. The 5th Cavalry Brigade was at Binche. The Irish regiments were disposed as follows: In the 1st Corps, 1st Division (General Lomax), were the 2nd Munsters, forming part of General Maxse's 1st Infantry Brigade; in the 2nd Division (General Monro) were (1) the 1st Irish Guards in the 4th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier-General Scott-Kerr); and (2) the 2nd Connaught Rangers in the 5th Brigade (Brigadier-General Haking). These regiments were, therefore, on the east of Mons. In the 2nd Corps, between Mons and Condé, were the Royal Irish Rifles (7th Infantry Brigade) and the Royal Irish Regiment (8th Infantry Brigade). both in the 3rd Division under General Hubert Hamilton. (The 4th Division, in which were the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, did not reach Le Cateau until August 23rd. They first played their part in the Great Retreat on the 25th, when—a much-needed reinforcement—they took up their position at Solesme).

Such was the position on that momentous

Saturday when the British forces awaited von Kluck's attack. They did not as yet know that, further to the east, von Bulow had smashed the French line and crossed the Sambre at Charleroi. But on Sunday, when the attack developed, it was soon apparent that something was wrong. Von Kluck struck hard all along the British line, but a particularly heavy attack was made on the right of the line, from Mons to Bray. The reason for this was made clear in a telegram from General Joffre to Sir John French, received by Sir John at five o'clock on Sunday afternoon. It stated that at least three German Army Corps were moving on his front, that another corps was endeavouring to outflank him on the left, that the passage of the Sambre had been forced, and that the 5th French Army was falling back on the British right.

In short, the British Army was in a desperate position. Their right was "in the air." Their left was in danger of being enveloped by von Kluck's hordes. It was quite possible that the Germans—who outnumbered the British by four to one—would

eventually enclose them in a " ring of steel." To avoid this disaster there was only one course to be taken, and Sir John French took it : he ordered a general retirement.

But, meanwhile, fighting had been going on. The Battle of Mons started at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and it continued through the night. As we have seen, a particularly violent attack was made upon Sir Douglas Haig's 1st Corps on the right of the British line. On this ten mile line were three famous Irish regiments : the 1st Irish Guards, the 2nd Munsters, and the 2nd Connaughts. It was the Irish Guards' baptism of fire, and right nobly they stood it.

" I got my baptism of fire on Sunday night, August 23rd," writes a private in the 1st Battalion, " I will never forget that day. The fighting was awful. You would have thought the earth was going to open its mouth and swallow us. When we got to Mons we thought we were going to get tea. We got our fill, not of tea, but of shells and bullets. We acted as advance party for the Guards Brigade. I understand that we were

originally intended only to act as supports, with the Coldstreams as the advance party, but as the Irish Guards had practically no battle honours on their colours, our C.O. got the C.O. of the Coldstreams to reverse things so that we became the advance section. We were fighting on into the next morning, when we got the order to retire. . . ."

Both the Guards and the Munsters were in a particularly " hot corner." Von Kluck's guns were pounding Binche and Bray; and a part of von Bulow's Army was probably also attacking at this point. Finally, Sir Douglas Haig pushed his flank—on which were the Munsters—back behind Bray, and the 5th Cavalry Brigade evacuated Binche. This was the position on Sunday night. Early on Monday morning the 2nd Division made a demonstration as if to retake Binche, and under cover of this demonstration Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's 2nd Corps (on the left) fell back towards Frameries. The Great Retreat had begun.

But meanwhile the 2nd Corps had suffered severe losses from von Kluck's frontal attack. Von Kluck's hardest blow was struck at

Mons, close to which were the Irish Rifles and the Royal Irish Regiment. Mons was taken by the enemy, and both the Rifles and the Royal Irish were hard pressed. The Royal Irish Regiment displayed great gallantry in an extraordinarily difficult position. It was Sunday evening, and the village churches were full of worshippers, when the German artillery fire suddenly developed in intensity. A private in the Royal Irish tells of "unceasing shell fire, and the people running away from their homes." The Royal Irish were shelled out of their trenches and surrounded. For a time they were absolutely cut off from the main body of the British, but they held on desperately, together with their comrades of the Middlesex Regiment, until relieved by the Gordon Highlanders. This is how a private in the Gordons tells the story :*

"The Royal Irish Regiment had been surprised and fearfully cut up, and so, too, had the Middlesex, and it was found impossible for our B and C companies to reinforce

* Quoted from "The Times History of the War," Vol I., p. 465.

them. We (D company) were 1½ miles away and were ordered to proceed to No. 2 and relieve the Royal Irish as much as possible. We crept from our trenches and crossed to the other side of the road, where we had the benefit of a ditch and the road camber as cover. We made most excellent progress until 150 yards from No. 1. At that distance there was a small white house, flush with the road, standing in a clearance. Our young sub. was leading and safely crossed the front of the house. Immediately the Germans opened a hellish cyclone of shrapnel at the house. They could not see us, but I guess they knew the reason why troops would or might pass that house. However, we were to relieve the R.I.'s, and, astounding as it may seem, we passed that house and I was the only one to be hit. Even yet I am amazed at our luck.

" By this time dusk had set in, four villages were on fire, and the Germans had been, and were, shelling the hospitals. We managed to get into the R.I.'s trench and beat off a very faint-hearted Uhlan attack on us. About 9 p.m. came our orders to retire. What a

pitiful handful we were against that host, and yet we held the flower of the German Army at bay all day! We picked up a dead officer of ours and retreated all night. At 2 a.m. we halted, and at 4 a.m. (Monday) we started retiring again."

Here is another account of the same affair by another Gordon:

"The Royal Irish Regiment had an awful smashing, as also had the Middlesex, and our company were ordered to go along the road as reinforcements. The one and a half miles seemed a thousand. When we got to the Royal Irish Regiment's trenches the scene was terrible. They were having dinner when the Germans opened on them, and their dead and wounded were lying all around. We kept up this sort of game (fighting by day and retiring by night) until we got to Cambrai, on Tuesday night. I dare not mention that place and close my eyes. God, it was awful!"

The Royal Irish at Mons were a long, long, way from their homes in Tipperary. But they were actually fighting on soil that had been drenched in the blood of soldiers

of their famous regiment in the great campaigns of Marlborough two hundred years before. Malplaquet, Ramillies, Oudenarde: these memorable places were but a few miles from the lines where the Royal Irish first crossed bayonets with the Germans on August 23rd, 1914. It is certain that the Rifles of Antrim and Down proved their valour on this Sunday afternoon at Mons. Surely it can be said with equal truth that on the same day the Tipperary boys of the Royal Irish—in face of terrible artillery fire undreamed of by their ancestors under Marlborough—magnificently upheld the traditions of their glorious regiment!

It is not to our purpose to describe in detail the Great Retreat of the British Army from Mons to the Marne. All we have to do is to note the parts played—so far as they have been made public—here and there by the various Irish regiments in the retreating forces. Let us, first, tell briefly the heroic tale of the Munsters' last stand at Etreux. They fought magnificently at Binche in the first attack. They took part in the fighting with the 1st Corps on Monday, August 24th,

and began the retreat with them on the same afternoon. That night, at seven o'clock, the Corps reached the line Bavai-Maubeuge. On Tuesday they marched southward and westward all day, and at ten o'clock at night reached the line Landrecies-Marouilles. They were too exhausted to go further that night without a rest. But the enemy were on their heels. Late at night a German Army Corps coming through the forest suddenly flung themselves on Landrecies. This, however, was a Guards' battle: the 4th Guards Brigade held the town. Far out to the right the 1st Division—in which were the Munsters, brigaded with the Coldstreams, the Scots Guards, and the Black Watch—were heavily attacked near Marouilles. The night was dark; the men were dog-tired; the fighting was severe. Nevertheless, Sir Douglas Haig managed (with some help from the French) to pull his corps out of what Sir John French called "an exceptionally difficult position." The attack was beaten off. At dawn next day the retreat continued towards Messigny on the Oise. All day long the march of the 1st Corps continued, while the

2nd Corps were fighting the critical battle of Le Cateau. Incessant marching and fighting had rendered Sir Douglas Haig's men quite incapable of helping their comrades of the 2nd Corps; they could only march slowly southward. It was on the next morning—Tuesday—that disaster came for the Munsters. The tale is variously told, but in the main the accounts agree. The Munsters were cut off and surrounded by the Germans, and after a fight lasting for six hours, in which nine of the officers and a large proportion of the rank and file were killed, the remnant of the battalion surrendered. Let us make it clear that it was only "the remnant." The War Office posted 678 of the rank and file as "missing." Only about 300 (as we learn from the letter of a corporal in the regiment) were taken prisoners. Therefore, it would appear that about 400 were killed and wounded in the Munsters' last stand. Nine officers were killed, including the heroic Major Charrier. It is not at all clear how or why the Munsters came to be cut off from the main body of the British. But Mrs. Victor Rickard, widow of Colonel

Rickard, of the Munsters, in her beautifully written booklet, "The Story of the Munsters,"* gives the following account of the matter:

"To the meadow near the bridge where the Munsters were collected an orderly carrying a dispatch came up at about three o'clock in the afternoon. The time of the dispatch was not marked upon the message, which was to order the Munsters to retire 'at once.' The orderly who carried the message had, he said, been chased by the enemy, and after lying hidden for a time under the nearest cover, believed that it was not possible for him to bring the message through to Major Charrier. Upon this incident the tragedy of the whole day turned. Time had been lost, time too precious ever to regain: the exclusive supremacy is nearly always a question of minutes."

When morning broke the 1st Infantry Brigade had already marched away, quite ignorant of the fact that the Munsters had been left behind. The Munsters, for their

* The New Ireland Publishing Co., 6d.

part, were equally ignorant of the fact that they were isolated. They were holding the village of Chapeau Rouge, about three miles north of Etreux. This village they held with ease, then pushed south towards Etreux. They had just passed Oisy when suddenly they were astounded to receive a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from the east and south. At once it was obvious what had happened: they were cut off. The enemy had seized Etreux with a strong force of seven battalions, and the Munsters were not only cut off, but hopelessly outnumbered. Still Major Charrier never hesitated. At once he gave the order to attack the village. The men responded nobly, though they were in a veritable ring of fire and steel. One company held the Germans in the north, the direction of Oisy, while the others attacked east and south. All day long the fighting continued. Major Charrier was shot dead in the last charge against the houses of Etreux occupied by the enemy. Captain Simms, Lieutenant Chute, and Lieutenant Phayre all fell, fighting gloriously. Finally, what was left of the battalion fell back to an orchard,

which they held till their ammunition gave out. Then they surrendered.

Captain Lebœuf, of the French Army, gives the following account of the last stand of the Munsters :

" I was close to the Munster Fusiliers," he says, " when they got cut up. They had been falling back steadily when orders came that they were to hold their ground to cover the retreat of the main army. The colonel in command simply nodded his head when he got the orders, and he passed them on to the men as though he were giving orders to a waiter at a hotel. The men received the orders in the same unconcerned way, and started to make trenches for themselves. While some were digging, others were firing at the enemy. They could see the Germans closing in all round, and knew that there was no retreat. What they didn't know was that a dispatch rider with orders to continue the retreat now that the main army was safe, had been shot down. They never showed the slightest sign of worry, but kept fighting on till they had exhausted their ammunition. For a time they kept going

with the remains of the pouches of the wounded, but soon that ceased, and then the end came.

"It was a glorious end, and the Germans were forced to pay a tribute to the fine fight the men had made."

Captain Jervis of the Munsters thus describes the death of Major Charrier:

"The regiment was left behind, and for several hours fell back fighting, under the personal direction of Major Charrier, who, although well aware of the impossible nature of his task, issued his orders and made all arrangements with all the precision which made him so well known in Aldershot. Eventually the Germans worked round to the rear and cut us off completely, the key of our position being a loopholed house. The major personally led two charges in a magnificent attempt to capture this. In the first of these he was wounded, but insisted upon still retaining command and cheering us on. Shortly afterwards he was wounded again, but even this did not keep him from what he considered his duty. He heroically continued the direction of the action till after

sunset, six hours' intermittent fighting. Mr. Gower came up to make a report to him, and found him near one of our guns which had been put out of action. In reply to Mr. Gower he said: 'All right, we will line the hedge; follow me!' Still leading and setting an example to all, he was shot a third time, and mortally. He fell in the road. Yesterday we sent out a party of our men to collect and bury the dead, and they found Paul Charrier lying as he had fallen, head towards the enemy."

"We fought the whole day," says Corporal Danagher, "but were finally captured. The poor old Munsters . . . got properly cut up."

It was, in truth, as Captain Lebœuf said, "a glorious end." The tale of the 2nd Munsters' last stand on that August day at Etreux should surely not be allowed to die in Irish memories and Irish hearts.

Let us return now to Landrecies and the Irish Guards. The reader will remember that on the Tuesday night (August 25th) the 4th Guards Brigade, under Brigadier-General Scott-Kerr, had reached Landrecies. It was hoped that by their rapid march south they

had thrown off the vigour of the German pursuit. But this was not so. Hardly had the tired Guardsmen halted at the village of Landrecies when the Germans were upon them, bursting from the forests north of the village. Then followed one of the sternest fights of the retreat. It was real street fighting; street to street, house to house, alley to alley. Magnificently the Guardsmen organised themselves to beat back the German attack. A German column in the main street was held up by the fire from the houses. Suddenly the British guns spoke, and ploughed lanes of dead and dying through the German ranks. The column melted away. And this was but typical of what went on through a night of struggle. From street to street the German infantrymen poured in close formation, always to find their way blocked by British rifle and gun fire. There were hand-to-hand conflicts, too—bayonet work, such as the British Guardsman excels in. And when there was no room for bayonet work, German skulls were smashed by the butt-ends of clubbed rifles wielded by brawny British arms. "Why not smash a skull,"

says the grim Chancellor, Bismarck, in the "Man of Iron," "when if you refrain from smashing it, the brain within may survive to direct a shot to your heart?" At Landrecies the clubbed rifle drove home the German doctrine against German skulls. All this in the darkness of a dark night. But soon the flames of burning houses lit up the scene: a terrible scene of close-in fighting, British and German locked in deadly struggle, while shells from the German batteries burst all around. Landrecies was almost the first, and was certainly not the least terrible, of the street-fighting of the present war.

And in all this the 1st Battalion of Irish Guards, under Lieutenant-Colonel Morris, took a fair share with their comrades, the 2nd Grenadiers, the 2nd and 3rd Coldstreams, and the South Irish Horse. The battalion first tasted battle at Mons; Landrecies proved that the Irish Guards could fight in the streets as well as in the trenches. Indeed, "close-in" fighting appeals to the Irishman. That sort of fighting is in his blood. Like the Frenchman, he is a little impatient of lying in a trench to be "potted at"; he

loves to be "up and at 'em." Landrecies gave the Irish Guardsman his first chance with the bayonet, and he took it.

"There was terrible fighting at Landrecies," said Private Quigley, "the Coldstreams bore the brunt of that; we acted as supports. A lot of us were in our bare feet at the time the Germans attacked us. . . ."

"Fierce fighting," wrote Private Mullaney. "We were caught like rats in a trap . . . we didn't know which side to turn, as we seemed to be surrounded on all sides by Germans. I don't know how we got out of it alive. . . . We got equipped the best way we could, and set to barricading the streets outside. We pulled out carts, doors, shutters, and dug the pavements out to block the thoroughfare. We set two Maxims in position, and let the Germans come up in their masses to within twenty yards of us. Then we let them have it right and left, until they could not advance on account of the heaps of their own dead."

By midnight the Germans had had enough of British and Irish bayonets, and the fighting

ceased. The streets of Landrecies were piled with German dead.

Before we continue the retreat with the Guards, however, let us set down this characteristic story of how an Irish flag turned "defeat into decisive victory." It happened, one imagines, before the Guards reached Landrecies. The Irish Guards were hard pressed and about to retire when (the story is told by Corporal O'Meara, and right well he tells it) "suddenly into the firing line rose the stalwart figure of an Irish Guardsman flourishing the old green flag and shouting excitedly 'Erin go Bragh!' With blood coursing fast through my veins I watched with pride and admiration the marvellous effect produced by these simple words. With a mighty cheer that rent the heavens—a cheer that rose and swelled above the din of battle, the roar of artillery, those sons of Erin charged down on the advancing enemy with bayonets fixed, and every nerve tense with excitement. The enemy hesitated, staggered by such a turn of events when victory was almost within their grasp. But they were given little time for hesitation, for, to

alter slightly the lines of a well-known ballad :

> Like lions leaping at the fold
> When mad with hunger's pang,
> Right up against the German lines
> Those Irish heroes sprang.

The Germans turned and fled in all directions, completely routed and disorganised. Such is only one of many incidents which have occurred in the present campaign, but it is sufficient to show that though loving the fighting for the Empire to which he is proud to belong, the Irish soldier still cherishes his true nationality and glories in the name of Ireland."

Further to the south, in the Compiègne region, the Irish Guards did heroic things on September 1st, a week after the battle at Landrecies. First there was a fight on the edge of the woods, when German cavalry attempted to ride down the Irishmen.

" When the shock came," writes a Guardsman who saw the fight, " it seemed terrific, for the Irishmen didn't recoil in the least, but flung themselves right across the path of the German horsemen. Those far off

could hear the crack of the rifles and see the German horses impaled on the bayonets of the front rank of the Guardsmen; then the whole force of infantry and cavalry were mixed up in one confused heap, like so many pieces from a jig-saw puzzle. Shells from the British and German batteries kept dropping close to the tangled mass of fighting men, and then the German horsemen got clear, and took to flight as fast as their horses could carry them. Some had no horses, and they were bayoneted where they stood."

And this was not the only fight of the day for the Irish Guards. There was also a terrible struggle in the woods of Villers-Cotterets. The scene was very different from that of the Landrecies battle; the men fought, not on cobbled streets of a country town, but on the mossy carpet of the woods; but the character of the fighting was much the same. The Germans poured into the woods, and the British met them in a hand-to-hand struggle. Once again the brunt of the fighting fell on the 4th Guards Brigade,—the Grenadiers, Coldstreams, and Irish. Here

it was, in the Villers-Cotterets woods, that Colonel Morris, of the Irish Guards, died a soldier's death. He had proved himself an ideal leader on the long retreat from Mons. The following is a dramatic little account of Colonel Morris and his Guards at (in all probability) Villers-Cotterets :

" The Irish Guards at ——, well ! I would never have believed that discipline would have enabled one man to do what this C.O. did. Got the men up from lining one of the sides in the woods—cursed them into heaps for firing high and wasting ammunition, and then got them down to it again, and all in a thick wood where one could only see thirty to forty yards straight ; with Germans, from the sound of their firearms and bugles only 100 to 150 yards away, and an absolute hail of bullets. Gad ! It was a fine performance, and they gave the Germans hell, and then some ! "*

Another observer tells how the Guards Brigade waited in the wood for the Germans, who were double their strength, and in a

* By an officer doing cyclist duty, *The Times*, October 15th, 1914.

pitched battle with bayonets "wiped the whole crowd out—over 4,000 of them." It was, of course, a rearguard action, this fight in the woods of Villers-Cotterets, but, in its way, it was a decisive victory for the Guards. Brigadier-General Scott-Kerr was wounded; Lord Cavan afterwards took his place as Brigadier. As we have seen, Colonel Morris was killed, fighting gallantly, and Major Stepney took over the command of the Irish Guards. Later on we shall see how the regiment "made history," in Lord Cavan's words, during the bloody campaigns of the autumn. It is enough here to say that in the long retreat from Mons which ended with the stand on the Marne, the Irish Guards proved their quality again and again, and more particularly at Landrecies and in and about the woods of Villers-Cotterets.

The only other Irish regiment in the 1st Army Corps—and we are still dealing with the retirement of the 1st Corps—was the Connaught Rangers. The Connaughts (2nd Battalion) were in the 5th Infantry Brigade, under General Haking. The other three regiments in the Brigade were the Worcesters,

the Oxford Light Infantry, and the Highland Light Infantry. Truly a fighting team! The Connaughts had a strenuous time from the very first.

"On getting across the Belgian border," says Corporal McGuinness, a Ranger, "on exactly where the Battle of Malplaquet was fought, we went straight into action."

The *dossier* of the Connaughts' deeds in the retreat to the Marne is, comparatively speaking, voluminous; the Rangers can write as well as fight, though, be it said, they do not brag. One dips into the *dossier* and extracts here and there a characteristic anecdote. Once, near Mons, a company of the Middlesex were digging trenches when they were set upon by a body of Germans, who rushed them with the bayonet. The Middlesex lads were only armed with entrenching tools, but they did not tamely surrender. They "went for" the Germans with their spades and picks, and some even used their fists. But entrenching tools and British fists were, alas! no match for the bayonet, and the Middlesex were getting the worst of it, when suddenly up came a number

of Connaught Rangers. Then the scene changed. With a rush the Connaughts charged the Germans, and Irish bayonets soon revenged the deaths of unarmed British soldiers. Most of the Germans were killed; the remainder were made prisoners.

But it was further south, somewhere in the valley of the Oise, that the Connaughts proved themselves worthy descendants of the men who fought at Badajoz and Busaco. The story is immortal: it should live for ever in the annals of this famous regiment. Yet, Irish-like, the men who took part in the fight thoroughly enjoyed it. One of them said it was "the best time the Connaughts had had"; another would not have missed it for "lashins of money." Here is the story. The Connaughts were being sorely pressed by the enemy, who outnumbered them by five to one. That is about the odds which best suits an Irishman. There is something tremendously sporting about five to one. But the Germans were pressing hard; they were not out for sport. It was then that the colonel of the Connaughts called upon his men, not merely to defend them-

selves, but to take the offensive; and he called upon them in words which ought to be blazoned in letters of gold, and set up in the market square of Galway:

"Rangers of Connaught, the eyes of all Ireland are on you to-day, and I know you never could disgrace the old country by allowing Germans to beat you while you have arms in your hands and hearts in your breasts. Up then, and at them; and if you don't give them the soundest thrashing they ever got, you needn't look me in the face again in this world or the next!"

Irish, wasn't it? in its appeal to pride in the "old country," and in that little touch about looking the colonel in the face "in this world or the next." The Connaughts instantly responded to the appeal. But before they charged they did what Irish regiments always do before a fight: they put up a silent prayer—"a prayer to the Mother of Our Lord to be merciful to the loved ones at home if we should fall." Then they charged with the bayonet, and routed the enemy. But many a gallant Galway man went down in that wild charge never to rise again.

To the next day belongs the story of Tim Flanagan. It is a story which should be told in the cottages of Connemara for many a year to come. Tim was in charge of a half company of the Connaughts which was temporarily cut off by the enemy. It looked as if it was a case of instant surrender to superior forces. So the German officer thought.

"Surrender!" says he, addressing Tim Flanagan.

"I beg your honour's pardon?" says Tim.

"Surrender! Pig-dog of an Irishman," says the German.

"So it's surrender you're after talkin' about?" says Tim coolly. "Sure now, it's yourself that ought to be surrendering, and if you're not off this very minute, you ill-mannered German omadhaun, it's meself will be after giving you as much cold steel as will do you between this and the kingdom of Heaven."

And with that Tim and his men laid about them with the "cold steel" until the Germans bolted, and the Connaughts got back to safety.

At Mons a company left its greatcoats in the barbed wire, and the Germans came along and put the greatcoats on; then advanced on the Irish Guards. The Guards let the Germans come to within thirty yards of them, and then opened a "terrific fusillade," when the Germans "went down like flies." The Rangers "always kept up their traditions of grit," said their Sergeant-Major Bruen. "In one engagement we killed, wounded, or captured, the whole 35th German regiment." In a week the Rangers lost 514 men and 7 officers, out of 1,100 strong. At Landrecies they were heavily engaged, and next day out of one double company of 205, only 28 answered the roll-call. So we might go on with tales of the Connaught Rangers during the retreat. But we shall hear more of this famous regiment in the course of this narrative. Always they are to be found where the battle is hottest; always they fight as their fathers fought under Picton in the Peninsula: "like demons." But if their record in this war had closed with the retreat from Mons to the Marne it would still have been a great and glorious

one. Yet it was but the prelude—now almost forgotten—to a long and splendid story of heroic deeds.

So far we have been dealing mainly with the retreat of the 1st Army Corps under Sir Douglas Haig. But the reader will remember that the 2nd Corps, under Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was also retreating, on a line parallel with that of the 1st. Their line of retreat was Bavai—Le Cateau—St. Quentin —Compiègne. The story of the retreat of the 2nd Corps is much the same as that of the 1st, except that the Battle of Le Cateau —fought by the 2nd Corps on Wednesday, August 26th—was, perhaps, a more general and a more decisive engagement than any fought by Sir Douglas Haig's men. Le Cateau was, indeed, one of the great battles of the war, if we use the term "battle" in the sense of a local engagement in which, say, 200,000 or 300,000 men take part. Von Kluck flung corps after corps against the British front, while at the same time he endeavoured to outflank our left. But in vain. By half-past three in the afternoon, Sir H. Smith-Dorrien was able to break off

the action and re-commence the retirement, though in doing so his losses were very severe.

This action was fought by the 2nd Army Corps, reinforced by the 4th Division of the 3rd Corps, which Division had fortunately detrained at Le Cateau on the same morning, and was immediately rushed out towards Solesmes to protect the flank. In the 4th Division were the following Irish regiments: the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers ("Faugh a Ballaghs"), and the 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The 3rd Division of the 2nd Army Corps already, as will be remembered, comprised the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment and the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, though these two regiments had been decimated at Mons. So that in the Battle of Le Cateau Ireland was represented by five infantry battalions. Even yet we have few details of this important engagement, or of the part played therein by Irish regiments. But we may be sure that they fought as steadily and as gallantly as did their English and Scottish comrades on that terrible day. And of the almost equally

terrible night that followed, what tales could be told! when the tired soldiers, aching in every limb, tortured by thirst, tramped steadily on through mud and darkness, longing for rest and sleep. Reading such fragmentary accounts of this march as have been published, one gets a confused picture of men, horses, guns, wagons, all crowded and jumbled together in the narrow roads, but all steadily pushing their way towards Paris. Now the harassed British soldiers would halt to beat back the enemy, and now to snatch a few hours uneasy rest. So the nights passed, and the days, until the army crossed the Marne.

Here and there in the retreat of the 2nd Corps one catches a glimpse of an Irish regiment or an Irish soldier. Take, for example, the Royal Irish Regiment. It will be remembered that the Royal Irish lost heavily just outside Mons. After leaving Mons the regiment formed part of the rearguard of the 2nd Corps. It fell to them, therefore, to fight many a desperate action in the retreat. Once Captain Cox with a few men gallantly rescued a gun after most of the gunners had

been shot down. Four times was the captain wounded, and still he held on. Finally he was killed by a shell, but not before he had saved the gun. There are, again, the thrilling experiences of a private in the Royal Irish, who went through the retreat. On one occasion his rifle was carried away, except for the part in his hand, which remained intact. On another occasion the roof of the building containing the stores at Valenciennes, blown up by the Germans, fell at his feet without injuring him, which caused him to chuckle at the thought of the Germans destroying, instead of seizing, the stores.

On the fourth day of the march he was wounded in the elbow and in the knee, while a comrade fell beside him wounded in both legs. But as the men moved on shouts were heard, and, looking round, they saw the head of their fallen comrade waved on a German bayonet. That was more than the private could stand. Though wounded, and with firing going on all round, he stopped and took aim at the German, and had the good luck to bring him down. When the wounded private reached hospital his socks had to be

cut off owing to the state of his feet, so swollen were they through the long forced marches.

Here is another story of an unknown private in the Royal Irish. It is told by a corporal in the West Yorkshire Regiment, and is, in its way, one of the most pathetic stories of individual heroism in the war.

"Early one morning," says the corporal, "we were sent ahead to a little village near Rheims. We went on through the long narrow street, and just as we were in sight of the end the figure of a man dashed out from a farm-house on the right. Immediately rifles began to crack in front, and the poor chap fell dead before he reached us. He was a private in the Royal Irish Regiment. We afterwards learned that he had been captured by German cavalry, and held a prisoner at the farm, where the Germans were in ambush for us. He tumbled to their game, and, though he knew that if he made the slightest sound they would kill him, he decided to make a dash to warn us of what was in store. We carried him into a house until the fight was over, and then we buried him next day

with military honours. His identification disc and everything else were missing, so that we could only put over his grave the Scriptural words: 'He saved others, Himself He could not save.' There wasn't a dry eye among us when we laid him to rest in that little village."

A small incident, it may be urged, to rescue from the immense unrecorded volume of just such incidents of self-sacrifice which the present war has produced. True. Yet let this incident of the unknown Irish soldier be rescued and recorded not only to the greater glory of the Irish race, but also to the encouragement of all men who have faith in humanity.

The Royal Irish Fusiliers, as we have seen, joined the 2nd Corps in time for the Battle of Le Cateau. Later on the Fusiliers had, as a unit, more than one narrow escape from being cut off by the pursuing Germans. Mr. John Foster Fraser tells the following story* of four men of the Irish Fusiliers, which, as he says, "will always stand in the first line of great deeds."

* In "Deeds that will never Die."—Cassell.

FOUR IRISH FUSILIERS

" The scene was an area which was at the mercy of the Germans, who commanded a clear open space of about 400 yards. On either side were British troops, the smaller consisting of a single battalion. It was the lives of the latter that were at stake. The difficulty presented was that of getting a dispatch sent to them with no road or way open save that narrow space that was being swept by German gunners. Bugle calls and other devices were no good. Only one method would suffice. That was a dispatch carrier. Who would volunteer? The reply was given in dramatic form the moment volunteers were asked for. Every man held up his hand, each knowing full well that the race across the plateau might end in the last step he would ever take. But as all could not go they set about it in true sportsman fashion. The men tossed for the honour in files. So they whittled the choice down until the men themselves had settled it.

" The first seized the message. He rushed out amid the rain of bullets. He cleared the first hundred yards. Then the Germans

brought him down. Next! Two men stepped forward and off they started in their race against death. One man halted to lift his previously wounded comrade, while the other raced on with the dispatch. He was shot. When the other two were afterwards dragged into the trenches they were found to be dead. But a fourth took up the race. He seemed to bear a charm against the flying bullets. He went along without injury until within a short distance of the battalion's cover, and then he, too, fell under the merciless shower of lead which the Germans poured unremittingly across the ground to be traversed.

"But the men in the trenches had seen him. A party of half a dozen sprang out to his rescue. Still the Germans kept up their incessant fire. The little band were all wounded. As for the dispatch runner, injured though he was, he crawled on and on with his message. At last he was carried into the trenches by a second succouring party, who, to save a wounded comrade, defied the German bullets.

"This glorious feat saved the entrenched

battalion. For at that moment the foe was completing a plan for surrounding them, and would have carried it out but for the splendid efforts of the Fusiliers. As it was, however, the whole battalion got safely out without loss, and lived to fight another day—as the Germans later on learned to their cost."

The Royal Irish Regiment—the Royal Irish Fusiliers—and now one story of a lad of the "Dublins." Again we lay Mr. Foster Fraser under obligation :

"He was quite a lad, and found himself alone at an outlying post with the enemy closing around from all sides. He made himself a crude breastwork from some bushes, and lay there, returning the enemy's fire until his ammunition ran out. When the silence told of the failure of cartridges, the Germans made their final rush, but they were received with defiant bayonet thrusts from the lad, who indignantly scorned their offers of quarter if he would throw down his rifle. The unequal fight was kept up for a time, and half a dozen Germans fell bayoneted before the frail breastwork ; but numbers told in the long run, and the boy was badly

wounded. Later he came under the care of the Red Cross nurses at a convent near by, where an Inniskilling Dragoon was taken to see him before he died. His last words were : 'They've done for me. There was just one too many of them ; but it was a fine shindy anyhow, and I want you to tell our boys that I didn't bring disgrace on the old regiment by surrendering so long as I could hold a bayonet or see to thrust at a German with it."

We must not forget the Inniskillings, who shared in the hardships and glories of the retreat. For the most part their deeds during that terrible week have been unrecorded, and will remain unrecorded. But here is a little picture which shows that they, too, had their share of the fighting. The scene is Cambrai, on August 26th, and it is an officer in the Inniskillings who paints the picture.

"I found him (Lieutenant Miller of the Inniskillings) lying surrounded by dead and dying Germans. He must have fought like a tiger. About ten of his own men were dead round him, and many wounded. First I tried to get a doctor for him, but couldn't.

I then returned and carried him to a farmhouse. We were under heavy shell fire all the time. When we reached the farm I went in to tell the occupants, who were still inside, that I was putting an officer down in the shelter of their wall, and they must take him in when the shell fire abated. I then got my horse and rejoined my regiment, which then was half a mile gone on its retirement. . . . It was fearfully hot, and we had been twenty-eight hours marching and fighting, and were dead beat. . . ."

* * * *

It would be invidious thus to recount the exploits of the Irish infantry in the retreat, and keep silent on the equally valiant exploits of Irish cavalry. The records of the cavalry in the retreat from Mons are, however, scanty. Perhaps one day we shall have the Homeric story in all its details. But let us just glance at the two Irish regiments of volunteer horse which took part in the retreat: the North Irish Horse and the South Irish Horse. The former was in General Allenby's Division, covering the retirement of

the 2nd Corps; the latter with Brigadier-General Sir Philip Chetwode and the 5th Cavalry Brigade, covering the retirement of the 1st Corps. The North Irish Horse took part with the 9th Lancers in their famous charge at Cambrai, on August 24th. This is the charge of which Mr. James Rhoades writes:

> Fling the fame of it far and wide!
> O Mother, arise and praise thy sons!
> Wherever an English banner floats
> Tell with pride
> Of the Lancers' ride
> Into the gaping thunder-throats
> And hell of the hidden guns!

"It was do or die that day," said Corporal Armstrong, of the North Irish Horse. "We first went straight for the guns, and captured fourteen . . . when we reached the guns we mowed down the Germans like hay, and captured every gun, but with very heavy losses."

This was not a bad beginning for a regiment of yeomanry of recent formation, and so with absolutely no previous experience of active service.

The South Irish Horse were at Landrecies, fighting with the Guards.

"We pegged down our horses," writes Corporal O'Rourke, "and had just gone out to get some rations when the alarm sounded 'Germans in town.' We all ran to our horse lines, got our rifles and defended our horses with very slight losses on our side. When we got the enemy back a bit we got saddled up in a minute, and dashed through the town after them. Thirteen got wounded. I must say that our chaps are very brave under fire."

The regiment lost 160 men at Landrecies.

* * * *

With such fragmentary glimpses of the Irish regiments in the retreat to the Marne we must be satisfied. They tell us, not all that we wish to know, but perhaps all that we need to know: they tell us that in this great test of bravery and of endurance Irish soldiers were not found wanting. There is, indeed, one supreme reason why these imperfect records of the retreat should be preserved, so far as may be, from oblivion.

The original Irish battalions which went out to Flanders with the first Expeditionary Force have since then in many cases been practically annihilated. Few, comparatively, are the survivors, except such as are to be found in German prison camps. In the later stages of the war entirely new battalions have taken their places, whose deeds in France and at the Dardanelles have almost obscured the earlier but no less heroic deeds of their predecessors. Surely it is but just that these earlier deeds should be remembered, if not by the world, at least by the Irish race at home and abroad!

The battle at the Marne must rank as one of the decisive battles of the world. It shattered for ever the German hopes of what the German strategists had called "a quick decision in the west": a decision which was to be obtained by the destruction of the French Armies in the field and by the capture of Paris. And, having shattered those hopes, it profoundly modified the history of the war in favour of the Allies. Ultimately, indeed, it may well be found that this famous battle was the starting-point of a modifica-

tion of the history of the world in favour of the aims and the ideals of the Allies as against the aims and ideals of the Central Powers. If such be the case, the Marne will rank as a battle in every way as decisive as Valmy or Waterloo.

Let it be noted that a full and accurate description of the battle has not and cannot yet be written. That is impossible until we have official accounts of the battle from the French and German General Staffs. At present we have only Sir John French's dispatches, magnificent so far as they go, but naturally only dealing with a very small portion of the vast line of battle which extended from Betz on the Ourcq in the west to Nancy in the east. We are here, however, concerned only with that very small portion, a line of about 25 miles in length, extending on the first day of the battle (September 6th) from Jouey-le-Chatel to Villeneuve-le-Comte. Where were our Irish regiments in the battle of the Marne?

It will not be forgotten that three British Army Corps took part in the battle: the first under Sir Douglas Haig, the second under Sir

H. Smith-Dorrien, and the third, which was made up of the 4th Division and the 19th Infantry Brigade, and which was placed under the command of General Pulteney. In the 1st Corps were the Irish Guards and the 2nd Connaughts; in the 2nd Corps the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, and the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment, and in the 3rd Corps was a strong Irish contingent: the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Many of these battalions had suffered severely in the retreat, but their losses had been made good. The retreat was at an end, and the Irish soldiers delighted that at last they were to have the chance of a forward thrust at the enemy.

Hot fighting occurred on September 8th. At Le Tritoire the Irish Guards and the Connaughts helped to dislodge the Germans from a strong position on the Petit Morin River. Over two hundred German dead were left on the ground.

"We had the pleasure," wrote Private O'Regan of the Connaughts, "of seeing the Germans retreat back to the Aisne. Crossing the Petit Morin River our division captured

12 of their guns and 600 prisoners. We could see a lot of their dead on the roadside."

That was on Tuesday, September 8th. But the fighting had by no means finished. Late in the evening the men of the 4th Guards Brigade, tired with fighting and marching, lay down to rest. They had thoroughly enjoyed their day: were not the Germans retreating, helter-skelter, before them? Still, they wanted rest. Camp-fires were lit, kettles were put on to boil, and the tired soldiers stretched themselves on the ground and smoked, and waited for tea. Many of them slept the sleep of exhaustion. Suddenly a terrific peal of thunder rent the sky: then flash on flash of lightning, and torrents of rain. A great thunderstorm had broken over the valley of the Marne.

But that was not all. In the middle of the storm, high above the roar of the thunder and the plash of rain came the sharp unmistakable rattle of rifle-fire. The enemy had counter-attacked.

"A double event," as Private Mullaney of the Irish Guards puts it, tersely. He is our historian of this little episode of a great battle.

For a moment or two there was confusion. Then the tired soldiers sprang to arms. The order was "fix bayonets."

"We got the order to fix bayonets and charge the guns while a great thunderstorm was raging," writes Private Mullaney. "You should have seen the Irish Guards, 3rd Coldstreamers, and 2nd Grenadiers fly down on them like an avalanche, on the Kaiser's crack regiment—the Prussian Guards. It was all over in ten minutes. They absolutely stood dumbfounded, with white faces and knees trembling. I shouldn't like to stand in front of that charge myself. Our men were drenched to the skin, but we didn't care; it only made us twice as wild. Such daredevil pluck I was glad to see.

"Back for those guns," roared an officer, "or I'll have every one of you slaughtered." The men didn't want telling twice. We proceeded to line up the prisoners and collect the spoils, which amounted to about 150 prisoners, six Maxim guns, and 38,000 rounds of ammunition.

They had snipers up in the trees to pick off our officers. That day we lost three

captains and two wounded. I had one bullet through my cap, and was picking it up when I was wounded in the leg. I got sight of my man up a tree close by. I knew it was either him or me for it, so I rolled behind some cover and took accurate aim at him. When I fired he came crashing down through the trees. I made a crutch of my rifle and got down to a schoolhouse."

Next day the 1st and 2nd Army Corps forced the passage of the Marne, and advanced some miles beyond the river. The 3rd Corps had a more difficult task. The enemy held La Ferte-sous-Jouarre in strength. It was necessary to build a platoon bridge across the river here, and our men worked at it under heavy fire. Again and again the bridge was destroyed by artillery fire, but when darkness came our engineers triumphed. The bridge was built and the 3rd Corps crossed in safety. At La Ferte the Faugh-a-Ballaghs, the Dublins, and the Inniskillings suffered severely. Private White, of the Inniskillings, who once kept goal for Belfast Distillery Football Club, was wounded in this engagement. As he lay on the ground he felt someone touch him on

the shoulder. Looking up he found Colonel Seely, sometime Secretary of State for War, bending over him, " quite regardless of the deadly fire to which the position was exposed." Colonel Seely handed White a cigarette, and assisted him back to his motor, and thence to the hospital. A trifling incident, but it helps, somehow, to bring the battlefield of the Marne a little nearer to us.

The history of the four days, September 6th to 10th—is, so far as the British Army is concerned, the history of a great drive back of von Kluck's Army from the Marne to the Aisne, " with a loss of thousands of prisoners, many guns, and enormous masses of transport."

By the evening of the 10th, the battle of the Marne was over. The enemy were on the line Soissons-Rheims, just south of the River Aisne. On the 13th began the battle of the Aisne.

* * * *

" On that morning I ordered the British Forces to advance and make good the Aisne." So writes Sir John French in his famous dispatch of October 1st, 1914. " That

morning" was the morning of September 13th, 1914. It is a date to be remembered, for it saw the beginning of the battle which never finished: the battle of the Aisne. Twelve months have passed since the battle began, and it is still (November 1915) raging, but only as a small section of a battle-line 300 miles long.

Yet in a sense the battle of the Aisne did finish, for in less than three weeks the Aisne was "made good" by the British Forces. Thereafter the battle of the Aisne became a battle of the trenches, and the British Forces were moved north to more stirring fields of action.

The Aisne was a soldier's battle—a ding-dong fight where position after position was won by the courage, the tenacity, the stubborn will-to-victory of the British Tommy.

Here and there in the dust and din of battle we catch sight, as it were for a moment, of an Irish soldier or an Irish regiment, and always—as one likes to think—"where the fighting is hottest," as an Irish Tommy—or should it be Paddy?—expressed it, writing from the battlefield.

We see, for example, a half battalion of the Connaught Rangers—war-worn veterans now —smashing 4,000 Germans who tried to cross the river and take the Irish in the rear. " Down to the river bank they came," says an observer, " fighting for all they were worth. The Irishmen were entrenched, and shouted across the river such greetings as ' Hullo, old tin hat ! When are you coming over ? ' and as soon as the Irishmen caught sight of the great boots of the Germans, Hibernian humour was irrepressible. The Rangers shouted: ' We see you ; it's no good hiding there. We can see your ears sticking out ! ' Then the Rangers settled down to enjoy themselves, but a little later some more German infantry which had crossed the river at another point, attempted to outflank them. It was terribly hard work, but the way the Irish stuck it would have taken your breath away."

In different vein was the experience of the Rangers at Soupier on Monday, September 14th. The position on that day was as follows: the Connaughts were, it will be remembered, in the 5th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Division. On Sunday morning,

September 13th, the 5th Brigade had crossed the Aisne under shell fire by creeping in single file along the broken girder of a bridge that had not been completely submerged. This was the only brigade of the division to cross that day: the remainder bivouacked on the southern bank of the river. Next day was a strenuous one for the 2nd Division, indeed, for the whole of the 1st Army Corps.

"The action of the 1st Corps on this day," says Sir John French, "under the direction and command of Sir Douglas Haig, was of so skilful, bold, and decisive a character that he gained positions which alone have enabled me to maintain my position for more than three weeks of very severe fighting on the north bank of the river."

For the Connaughts the fighting began at 9 a.m. They had started to advance early in the morning, and without waiting for breakfast. At 9.0 they halted at a farm-house and began to make tea. Then suddenly came word that the Germans were immediately in front of them. The Rangers turned out instantly, baulked of breakfast, and cursing

the Germans with exceeding fluency. There was no time to dig trenches. Into the mangel-fields round the farm-house the Rangers poured, lining ditches and taking any cover that offered. The battle opened with a hail of lead from the attacking Germans, but the Rangers never blenched. Hour after hour the rifle-fire continued, but still the Rangers held the mangel-fields. Then the Germans attempted to rush the position. On they came with their hoarse shouts of "*Vorwärts, Vorwärts!*" "They came on like a great mob," one of the Rangers said. But each time the Connaught boys drove them back. "*It is great sport,*" said the Ranger, "*to see them run back again when we start to shake them up. They don't seem to have any sore feet. They run back like hares or else they chuck in. . . .*" In time, however, the German numbers told—they were nine to one against the Irishmen. The Rangers were forced back, and would have been completely beaten, but in the nick of time up came the Guards Brigade. Then the tide turned. As the evening closed in darkness the Guards and the Rangers charged, broke up the German ranks,

and took 260 prisoners. Thus ended the battle of the Mangel-fields.

On this day the Connaught Rangers suffered heavily, and mostly from rifle-fire. Only 270 answered the roll-call at night. Among the officers who fell was Major Sarsfield, bearer of an historic Irish name, no whit inferior in courage to him who fought at Aughrim and the Boyne.

All day long, on that eventful Monday, the Inniskillings were under heavy shell fire. The historian mentions this only to record the fact that on that evening Michael Dunne, of Mullingar, remarked to a comrade, amid the noise and ruin of bursting shells, that that was the day of Mullingar Autumn race meeting, "*and I suppose,*" says Michael, "*we won't hear what won at Newmarket?*" Let this little picture stand without comment: this little human picture of the two Irish lads in the fire-swept trench on the Aisne, thinking of Mullingar Races, and wondering "what won at Newmarket."

The Royal Irish Rifles covered themselves with glory on the Aisne. They were with the 3rd Division under General Hubert Hamilton.

On September 14th the Division had reached the plateau of Aigy when it was driven back by a powerful counter-attack, supported by heavy artillery. It fell back in good order, however, and entrenched itself a mile north of the Valley Bridge. Next day it advanced again, and secured all the ground it had previously lost. Throughout the whole battle of the Aisne the Division, in Sir John French's words, " formed a most powerful and effective bridge-head."

Once during these days of stress thirty Irish Riflemen suddenly issued from their trenches, and with the utmost coolness and daring, attacked the German lines with the bayonet. They were led by Captain Colehurst, who fell wounded by a piece of shrapnel when within 25 yards of the enemy's position. But the gallant thirty swept on and actually cleared the German trench, though the spike-helmeted Germans were ten times their number. And once during the battle of the Aisne the Germans made a terrific onslaught at two o'clock in the morning on the trenches occupied by the Royal Irish Rifles. " Two o'clock in the morning " courage is, as we know, the

rarest kind of courage. But the Irish Rifles proved that they had it in abundance. The Germans crept up in the darkness, holding their fire, until they were less than fifty yards from the Irish trenches. But they had been discovered, though they knew it not Suddenly the rifles of the Irishmen rang out in a perfect hurricane of fire. The attacking Germans wavered, as well they might ; nevertheless a party of them still came on and tried to clear the Irishmen from the trenches. They failed. The Irishmen with their bayonets " swept them away ' as Sergeant Busby said, " before they had time to wink." Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien acknowledged the gallantry of the Irish Rifles as follows in an Order of the day :

" During an attack by the enemy on the 7th Infantry Brigade last night the enemy came to close quarters with the Royal Irish Rifles, who repulsed them with great gallantry with the bayonet. The Commander wishes to compliment the regiment on this splendid feat, and directs that all battalions shall be informed of the circumstances, and of his high appreciation of the gallantry displayed."

Thus the Royal Irish Rifles, the lads of Antrim and Down, proved that they were worthy comrades in arms of the famous regiments of the South whose deeds have been related above.

* * * *

It is worthy of record that at the battle of the Aisne another famous Irish regiment, the Leinsters, faced the enemy for the first time. They came into line on September 16th with the 6th Division. The Leinsters did not, however, acquire any special prominence at the Aisne, though once or twice they suffered severely with their comrades of the Rifle Brigade. But later on in the campaign they more than proved their mettle. As the "Royal Canadian Regiment," the old 100th Foot, first recruited in Canada, they have a special bond with the Dominion; and it was only fitting that, at the end of 1914, two Canadian battalions should have been affiliated to them—the 10th Royal Toronto Grenadiers and the 110th Winnipeg Grenadiers.

II.—CERTAIN EPISODES IN THE WEST

To write an adequate and connected history of the part played by Irish regiments in twelve months' warfare on the Western front would, in itself, require a volume of no small size, even if it were possible to write such a history at the present time. But in fact it is not possible. The official accounts of the operations during this period give us almost no information as to the various units engaged, and such private accounts as are at our disposal are necessarily fragmentary and confused. It may be that at some future date when the final official records of the war are available it will be possible to do something like justice to the Irish regiments engaged in this colossal struggle. But one doubts it. How can you describe adequately the part played by any regimental unit in battles where, to use Sir John French's words, " units become inextricably mixed " in

the course of the struggle? And further: when the men who could tell the world exactly what happened, do not survive? The full story of Irish valour, as of English valour, in these battles of the West, will therefore, in all probability, never be told, and all we can do here and now is to pick out incidents illustrative of the valour of Irish regiments in the long drawn out struggle on the Western front.

The Storming of Le Pilly by the Royal Irish Regiment

The storming of Le Pilly by the 2nd Royal Irish is but an episode in the grim battles of Ypres—Armentières so vividly described by Sir John French in his dispatch of November 20th, 1914.

For six days the 2nd Army Corps had been slowly pushing the Germans back north of La Bassée. Pivoting on Givenchy, the Corps had swung round through a ten-mile arc until the left flank rested on Herlies. Slowly it had pushed the Germans back through a maze of villages, factories, workshops, pit-heads; all admirable cover, of which the enemy took full advantage. Also, the land

was as flat as a table, and effective artillery positions were rare. On October 14th, General Hubert Hamilton, of the 3rd Dvision and the Royal Irish Rifles, was killed by a shell. On October 17th the Corps reached its furthest line of advance—the line Herlies—Givenchy. It had come up against a solid German defence, and could get no further.

But active fighting did not cease. The enemy counter-attacked in great force. On October 19th they held the little village of Le Pilly, some distance in advance of our lines.

Le Pilly was situated on the top of a hill, of no great eminence, it is true, but noticeable in this country of dead flatness. It was thus a strong position for defence. Nevertheless, it was considered essential that it should be taken, and the Royal Irish Regiment was ordered to take it.

On the evening of the 19th, therefore, the Royal Irish, under Major Daniell, advanced on Le Pilly. They dashed forward until they reached the slopes below the village. There they were met by a storm of bullets and shrapnel. They wavered, but neither broke nor fled. "Now then, Royal Irish!" came

the word from Major Daniell. Gallantly they pressed forward, though men were falling fast. They reached the crest of the hill. The village was before them ; they dashed into it through the rain of bullets.

" When we saw them emerge at the crest of the hill and dash into the village," writes a gunner of the R.F.A., " we sent up a cheer and a round of ammunition to encourage them."

The Royal Irish had taken the village ; it was now their task to hold it. Hastily they threw up barricades and loopholed the walls of the houses. Then they waited for the counter-attack which they knew must come.

It came before midnight. Down in the main British lines, our men could hear the rapid crack-crack of rifles and the spitting of machine guns. The Germans were attacking Le Pilly in force. Could the Royal Irish hold it ?

They might have done so if their flanks had remained covered. But before the fury of the German attack one part of our line crumpled up, and one flank of the Royal Irish was thereby uncovered. The Germans

attacked on that flank and in front. They did more. Slowly but surely they crept round the village. Presently the village was surrounded, and the Royal Irish completely cut off from the main body of the British forces.

But the fighting did not cease. All night long the Irishmen held the village against the furious attacks of the Germans. And again and again during the night attempts were made from the British lines to relieve them. These attempts did not succeed. The British troops were battle-weary and the Germans were strong. But still the Irish fought on. They fought until their ammunition gave out, and only a handful of men remained unsurrounded.

"They were cut off," says Sir John French's dispatch, "and surrounded"—not, be it noted, "surrendered"—"suffering heavy losses." Did the remnant of the Royal Irish at Le Pilly surrender? Apparently they did. Surrounded by overwhelming enemy forces—cut off from all possible help—they ceased fighting, when to prolong it would have meant useless slaughter. This is

what happened according to the most authoritative evidence on the point.

But it is curious that the gunner quoted above states that a few men of the Royal Irish cut their way out from Le Pilly, and got back in safety to the British lines. When dawn broke they staggered into the British camp "more dead than alive" says the gunner. "We gave them a rousing cheer, as we had given them up for lost."

We should like to believe that the men whom the gunner saw staggering back to the British lines were the remnant of the Royal Irish. It would have been a glorious finish to a glorious deed.

But whether the storming of Le Pilly ended in one way or the other, it was not the least of the many gallant deeds that now stand to the credit of the Royal Irish Regiment.

The Irish Guards at Ypres

The Irish Guards have done magnificent things in the world-war. Ireland knows little of these things, and England less, and this ignorance is no doubt deplorable. But perhaps it has its value. A halo of mystery has

thereby been shed over the deeds of the Irish Guards in France and in Flanders. Their heroic bravery and contempt of death has already acquired the impetus and spiritual force of a legend. But the legend of the Irish Guards rests on a solid basis of fact. Behind the mystery and romance there is actual heroism—actual sacrifice. When the Irish artist paints a picture of the Irish Guards kneeling to pray on the field of battle, he is painting a picture of what actually happened. When the English journalist describes the rush of the Irish Guards across a field swept by the devastating fire of machine guns, he is describing an incident that actually happened. There is nothing unsubstantial about the doings of this now famous regiment. Take for illustration: the story of their stand in the first battle of Ypres.

To make that story at all intelligible, one must disentangle it from the greater and more involved story of the first battle of Ypres, which lasted from about October 16th till November 11th, 1914.

The Irish Guards, it will be remembered, formed part of the 4th Guards Brigade com-

manded, first, by Brigadier-General Scott-Kerr, and subsequently by Lord Cavan. The 4th Brigade were in Sir Charles Monro's 2nd Division of the 1st Army Corps, commanded by Sir Douglas Haig. The 1st Corps moved north from the Aisne, finished its By the 21st it was in position in the famous detrainment at St. Omer on October 19th. "Ypres salient" between Bixschoote and Zonnebeke.

An airman taking a bird's-eye view of the British lines in the "Ypres salient" on this date, would have seen lying below him the following forces, and somewhat in the following order: the 1st Division from Bixschoote to Langemarck; on their right, the 2nd Division from Langemarck to Zonnebeke; then Byng's Cavalry Division; then Sir Henry Rawlinson's 7th Division; then General Allenby's Cavalry Corps, extending to Messines.

South of the salient came the 3rd Army Corps under Sir W. P. Pulteney, whose lines extended to Armentières. Then came a French Cavalry Corps, and then the 2nd Corps under Sir H. Smith-Dorrien.

The story of the first battle of Ypres, or as Sir John French calls it, " the battle of Ypres-Armentières," is the story of many fierce and prolonged German attacks upon the whole length of the British lines extending from Bixschoote in the north to Bethune in the south ; but for the moment we are concerned only with the attacks upon the salient of Ypres, properly so called, and in particular with the part played in the British defensive within the salient by the Irish Guards in the 2nd Division.

From October 21st to October 29th the 2nd Division was posted on the line Langemarck-Zonnebekke—that is to say, on the northern curve of the salient ; on their right was the 7th Division, at the point or head of the salient.

During these eight days the Germans kept hammering away all along the line of the 1st Corps. The 7th Division was most particularly and heavily engaged every day and almost every hour, and the men were exhausted with the strain of constant fighting.

On October 27th therefore, Sir Douglas

Haig, in accordance with Sir John French's order, redistributed the line of the 1st Corps. The 2nd Division was placed at the front of the salient, Zonnebeke to Reytel village; on their right was the 1st Division, Reytel to Gheluvelt; then the 7th Division, Gheluvelt to Zandvoorde.

But the redistribution of the line brought no relief to the harassed British forces. The battle, in fact, waxed fiercer than ever. The three most critical days were October 30th, October 31st and November 1st.

On the 30th a terrific attack was made on the extreme right of our line, held by General Julian Byng's Cavalry. The line had to fall back for a mile to Klein Zillebeke. This involved the right of the 7th Division, and that much-tried Division had also to fall back. The Germans gained the Zandvoorde Ridge, and Sir Douglas Haig described the position as "serious." And with reason. The four-mile line between Gheluvelt and the Canal at Klein Zillebeke was cracking ominously. If the Germans succeeded in breaking it, nothing could save Ypres, and nothing could save the 1st Army Corps.

"Hold the line at all costs" was Sir Douglas Haig's order.

To help in holding it Lord Cavan's Brigade was brought over from the 2nd Division, and placed in the line to the right of the 7th Division. And with Lord Cavan's Brigade came the Irish Guards.

For twelve days they had been fighting in the Ypres salient, but they were still as full of cheerfulness and courage as on the day they turned out of the train at St. Omer and marched to Ypres. And that is saying a good deal, because we know that on the day they reached the town of Ypres, the Irish Guards piled their arms in the streets and proceeded to cheer up the inhabitants. They danced with the girls to the music of melodeons and mouth organs, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The fighting came later. It came most fiercely in those hastily constructed trenches that ran from the village of Gheluvelt to the corner of the Ypres canal, the line which was to be held "at all costs."

For three days and nights the Irish Guards were in the thick of the fight. On October 31st, the 7th Division at Gheluvelt were

driven back by a hurricane of artillery fire. Between the 7th and General Maissy's 9th French Corps was Lord Cavan's 4th Guards' Brigade. Cavan's Brigade did not give way. All day long the men clung to their trenches : Grenadiers, Coldstreams, and Irish, they held doggedly on. Sir John French regarded between 2 and 3 o'clock of this day as the most critical time in the whole of the battle of Ypres. The 1st Division had been forced back from Gheluvelt ; the 7th Division had likewise been bent back to Klein Zillebeke. It was just touch and go whether the British line should hold or break disastrously. Two things saved it. One was the taking of the village of Gheluvelt at the point of the bayonet by the Worcesters. The other was the grim " holding on " of Cavan's Brigade and the 2nd Brigade. They held on till night brought some rest to the battle-worn soldiers.

But for Cavan's Brigade, Sunday, November 1st, was a still worse experience—" that disastrous day," as Lord Cavan calls it. The whole of the British front was shelled. Some of the trenches of the Irish Guards were

blown in, and many of the men killed, wounded, and buried. And still the Guards held their ground. Near them a regiment gave way temporarily, and left the Irishmen "in the air"; but the gallant fellows fought on in the midst of that dreadful carnage and confusion. With trenches pulverised by artillery fire and choked with dead and dying, the Guards flinched not. When the Germans came on with the bayonet, the Irishmen stood up, and again and again flung them savagely back. Nothing could shift the Irish Guards from their trenches on that bloody Sunday.

It was on this day that Lord John Hamilton fell. The Germans had swept up to the Irish trenches. On they came, a great surging wave of grey, that dashed and broke against the solid rock of the Irish defence. For a few wild moments Irish and Germans were mixed in a deadly hand-to-hand struggle. Then once more the Germans that survived fled back to the shelter of their trenches. But out in the fire zone lay Lord John Hamilton, wounded and helpless. They called for volunteers to bring him in. There was no lack of volunteers. Corporal

Delaney and three privates were chosen, and at once started on their dangerous journey. In a few moments they had reached Lord John, and were about to bring him in, when a shrapnel shell burst close to the party, and all were killed save Delaney, who was badly wounded. A day or two afterwards Lord John Hamilton was buried on the field of battle.

That was but one tragic incident of a tragic day. All day long the fighting went on, with varying fortune. At nightfall the inevitable happened. Under cover of darkness the Germans once more rushed the broken trenches, and this time the Irishmen gave way and retired. But not for long. In the hours of darkness they swore that at dawn they would drive the Huns back again or die in the attempt. Many of their officers were killed and wounded, but Captain Orr-Ewing and Captain Trefusis pulled the battalion together. As dawn broke, the Irishmen rushed the position with the bayonet, and once more, and for the last time in this attack, drove the Germans back to their lines.

No wonder that Lord Cavan, writing to Colonel Proby after the battle of Ypres had definitely finished, said: "I want you to convey to every man in the battalion (1st Battalion Irish Guards) that I consider that the safety of the right flank of the British position depended entirely on their staunchness on that disastrous day, November 1st. Those of them that are left have made history, and I can never thank them enough for the way in which they recovered themselves, and showed the enemy that Irish Guards must be reckoned with, however hard hit."

The Irish Guards had another fierce attack to sustain on the following Friday, November 6th, when the French on their right gave way, and once more they were left in an advanced position. It was during this attack that Colonel Wilson, of the Royal Horse Guards, and Major Hugh Dawnay, of the 2nd Life Guards, were killed. Their battalions were advancing under the command of General Kavanagh to fill the gaps made by the break-away of the French. Meanwhile, Cavan's Brigade held on, and ultimately

Kavanagh was able to bring his men up into line beside them.

And all this fierce and bloody fighting is summed up, so far as the Irish Guards are concerned, in three lines of Lord Cavan's report of the battle:

"On October 31st, November 1st, and November 6th, the Irish Guards lost 16 officers and 597 other ranks in disputing 200 yards of ground with superior enemy forces."

So this true and thrilling story of Irish heroism is just a story of . . . two hundred yards of ground.

And let us not forget the Brigadier himself, an Irishman also, who has added lustre to the name of Cavan, and won in this war undying fame.

"On many occasions Brigadier-General the Earl of Cavan, commanding the 4th Guards Brigade, was conspicuous for the skill, coolness, and courage with which he led his troops, and for the successful manner in which he dealt with many critical situations."

* * * *

"When they fix bayonets and sing 'God Save Ireland' there is always blood on the skyline."

So it has been said of the Irish Guards in the titanic struggle on the Western front. And the Guards have proved it over and over again.

The Munsters at Festubert

We have seen how the Munsters were cut off and surrounded at Etreux in the early weeks of the war, and how, after fighting all day, the remnant surrendered to the Germans, and were made prisoners of war.

For a time, therefore, the 2nd Battalion was wiped out as a fighting unit. But soon drafts came out from Ireland, and the battalion was fully re-established early in the winter of 1914.

One would like, if space permitted, to sketch a few of the officers who filled the places of those who had died at Etreux, or had been made prisoners. There was Lieut.-Colonel Bent, who had seen service in South Africa and India; Major Ryan, with a long record of service in South Africa and Egypt

(he was to be caught by a sniper before the year 1915 was many days old); Major Thompson and Major Day, both killed at Festubert. And in any portrait gallery of the officers of the Munsters, space would certainly be found for a sketch of Father Gleeson, the chaplain. There have been many heroic Irish priests and ministers of religion attached to the Irish regiments in the Great War. These men have gone bravely forth with the troops, scorning hardship and danger and death, that they might minister to the soldiers in their hours of need. And always with the smile and the cheery word so characteristic of the Irish padre. But no Irish chaplain has deserved better of his regiment than Father Gleeson of the Munsters. He loved his "boys," as he called them. And his boys returned his love. One of them spoke of him as follows:

"The hottest place in the firing line was where he was to be found, and only that he is doing God's greatest work he would never be spared. Whether bullets are showering round, or shrapnel falling like rain, as long as a Munster exposed himself to these perils,

Father Gleeson was at his side praying, animating him with courage; and when the soldier fell the last voice he heard was that of Father Gleeson invoking the mercy and love of the Saviour. . . . He is not one of the best, he is the very best."

And now hear Father Gleeson on his regiment. In a letter published in *Our Boys*, he writes:

"The Munster boys are a credit to us all. The French people love them intensely. We carry our green flags in every company of the battalion, the golden harp in the centre and the word 'Munster' underneath. It looks so historic and so beautiful to see the Munsters' beautiful green flags being blessed by the chaplain, amidst every rite and ceremony of Holy Church, and placed in the sanctuary of the French village church. There hang the Munster flags; just as the 'Wild Geese' hung their flags in Ypres after Fontenoy, so do the Munsters hang their beloved green after their present battles. It is history repeating itself to the very detail. I drew the men's attention to it, and quoted Davis's lines for them:

"The flag we conquered in that fray
Looks lone in Ypres choir, they say."

Always before the Munsters went into action Father Gleeson gave them a general absolution. Here is the picture drawn for us by Mrs. Rickard in her booklet on the Munsters, from which quotation has already been made. It refers to an evening in May, 1915, before the action of the Rue de Bois :

" At the entrance to the Rue du Bois there stands a broken shrine, and within the shrine is a crucifix. When the Munsters came up the road, Colonel Rickard halted the battalion. The men were ranged on three sides of a square, their green flags, embroidered with the harp and the word 'Munster,' a gift from Lady Gordon, placed before each company. Father Gleeson mounted, Colonel Rickard and Captain Filgate, the adjutant, on their chargers, were in the centre, and in that wonderful twilight Father Gleeson gave a General Absolution. To some present, very certainly the '*vitam æternam*' was intensely and beautifully manifest, the day-spring of Eternity very near. '*Misereatur vestri*

Omnipotens Deus et dimissis peccatis vestris, perducat vos ad vitam æternam.' The whole regiment with their heads bared sang the '*Te Deum,*' the great thanksgiving, the '*Sursum Corda*' of all the earth. . . ."

But to speak of the action of the Rue du Bois is to anticipate. Let us get back now to a certain day in December, 1914, when the Munsters met with their second great trial of endurance. It happened at or about Festubert, but the action may well be called the " Battle of the Bog," for it was fought in a land of bog and liquid mud ; in the darkness, too, of a black and bitter winter's night.

" Disaster again," Major Ryan called it. " Eight of our best officers killed while gallantly leading their men."

Yes, but disaster lit up with heroism as fine as the world has ever seen.

Here is the story in brief. A portion of the Indian Division had been driven out of certain trenches near Festubert. It was necessary to re-take those trenches. The 1st Division was ordered for this duty, and late at night on December 20th, they marched out of billets for the firing line.

At dawn, after a short rest, they moved on again, the morning being bitterly cold and wet. By 2 o'clock the 3rd Brigade, consisting of the Welsh Regiment, the Gloucesters, the Munsters, and the South Wales Borderers were in action. All that afternoon the Brigade fought to re-take the trenches lost by the Indians.

Darkness brought no respite. The Munsters had dug themselves in a thousand yards out in the direction of the lost trenches. But the order was "Advance!" And in the ever driving sleet and the blackness of night, the ground as soft as a sponge, the gallant Munsters pressed on until they reached the German trenches.

"How well I remember that night," said a member of the London Scottish to the writer. "We were lying out in the darkness, and had lost touch with the forces on our right; we didn't know where we were or where anybody was. Presently, out of the darkness stumbled an officer of the Munsters. 'Where the h—l are you?' he asked. 'I've been looking for you everywhere. We've lost touch with our left.' 'What's up?' we asked

him. 'The Munsters are going to attack,' he answered. Sure enough, as soon as dawn came, we saw the Munsters leap out of their trenches and rush across to the German trenches. They were met by a fearful rifle fire, and were shot down like rabbits. But they never stopped till they got in among the enemy. It was a terrible sight; but, God! it was magnificent."

It was 7 a.m., and still dark, when the Munsters got home with the bayonet. The rain and snow were falling thickly, the men were tired and almost starving, but there was no grumbling, no faltering.

Across the first German trench Major Thompson fell wounded severely, but he refused to be moved. All day long he lay there giving orders, until a second German bullet ended his sufferings for ever.

Colonel Bent had already fallen, desperately wounded; Major Day was killed. So was Captain O'Brien, as he shouted: "Get a bit of your own back, boys!" So was Captain Durand. But the Munsters held on. They cleared the Germans out of the lost Indian trenches, and themselves occupied them. All

day long they lay there, while the Germans counter-attacked fiercely. But the Munsters gave not a single inch of ground, nor was a single unwounded prisoner of war taken by the enemy.

That day, Tuesday, December 27th, was a dreadful day for the Munsters. All day long the fighting went on. All day the wounded and dying lay out in the snow. It was impossible to bring them help; the Germans were raking the whole area with a deadly fire.

Night fell again. The Munsters were in a perilous position—out in the bogs and the blackness, with the Germans thundering at their trenches with overwhelming forces. Not a man could be spared for their support. Could the Munsters be saved?

That was the question Major Ryan asked himself when darkness fell on Tuesday night. The Major had been left at Brigade Headquarters to organise ammunition and transport. His beloved regiment had disappeared into the night. No reports were coming in, nothing was heard but the persistent thunder of guns. To all intents and purposes the

Munsters were lost in the blackness of the night and the dreadful confusion of war. Could they be saved?

Major Ryan set himself to save them. He asked for help at headquarters. The answer he got was: "Not a man can be spared." Then he found six of his own men, and sent them out by twos in the dark. "Find the regiment if you can." In a few hours they came back, these brave six—with grave news. "The colonel is wounded, many officers are dead; orders, please!" Once more the major went to headquarters. At 10 p.m. he got the Brigadier's order: "The Munsters are to retire." And again the heroic six went out. The weather was worse than ever. Through darkness and driving rain, up to their knees in mud and slime, the six staggered on, feeling their way to where the Munsters held the line. The order to retire was given, and guided by the six, the remnant of the battalion found their way back to billets by midnight.

But the wounded, including Colonel Bent, were still lying out in the bitter cold of the night. Major Ryan called for volunteers with

stretchers, and at once got them. Two journeys these volunteers made into the darkness. On the second they found Colonel Bent, still living. They brought the colonel in at four in the morning, together with other wounded. They brought in, too, the dead body of Major Thompson.

In this way was the remnant of the Munsters saved. To one man above all others was the credit due for this fine achievement: Major Julian Ryan. Honour to this brave man, who now sleeps in a lonely grave in Flanders. He had but a month to live after he saved the Munsters on that black and bitter night at Festubert, but it was a month "crowded" with glorious life. Then came the sudden end to it all. He had been on a visit to the trenches, and was on his way back, a journey he had often taken before. A sudden incautious movement, and a sniper's bullet got him. Thus died a very gallant Irishman.

The Dublins at St. Julien

The Second Battle of Ypres fought in April-May, 1915, was in every way as epic

as the first, fought in the previous October-November. And in one sense it was more dramatic and terrible than any of the earlier fighting, by reason of the fact that it was on this occasion that the Germans first used their horrible " poison-gas."

It was on April 23rd that the French troops on the left of our Canadian Division saw the yellow poison-cloud slowly drifting towards them on the east wind. Presently it spread over their trenches, and in a few moments hundreds of French soldiers were gasping their lives out in the deadly fumes.

The poison-gas had broken the French line. Soon the Canadians were involved, and the world knows the gallant struggle the brave Colonials put up on that fatal evening, when in two hours Princess Patricia's regiment alone lost 800 men—mostly poisoned by gas.

The line was broken, and the gap had somehow to be filled up. Reinforcements were hurried from the south. Units were picked up anyhow and anywhere, and rushed into the ragged battle-line of Ypres.

One of these units was a Brigade from the 3rd Army Corps, which was holding the line

further south. The Brigade consisted of the 1st Yorkshire and Lancaster Regiments, the 3rd Middlesex, the 2nd East Surrey, and the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

It was on Saturday, April 24th, that the Dublins got the word to move. They were at Bailleul. From Bailleul to Ypres is ten miles as the crow flies—between two and three hours' march. The Dublins started after dark and reached Ypres at close on midnight. At Ypres they halted, while their officers explained to them the work which was to be done. Two miles out from Ypres was the village of St. Julien. Here the British lines had broken badly under poison-gas attacks, and the village was in the hands of the Germans. Under cover of darkness the Dublins were to get as near the Germans as possible, and at dawn were to rush the position with the bayonet.

From midnight to 5 a.m. the Dublins had a long and trying wait. The rain fell in torrents. Above the splash of the rain and the howling of the wind, could be heard at intervals the boom of the guns and the sharp crack, crack of the rifles. And in the dark-

ness Germans and French and British were still at death-grips in the trenches.

At five came the welcome order to advance, and the Dublins moved quickly out from Ypres. Hardly had they left the shelter of the last group of houses when suddenly from front and left flank came a raking hell of fire. But the Dublins did not quail. Steadily and without confusion they advanced in short rushes, taking advantage of any cover which the ground offered. It was not much. The land was flat and woodless, the heavy rain had made it a swamp. But the Dublins struggled on, at times up to their waists in water. Men were falling everywhere, yet the highest spirits prevailed in the ranks. We have read of the gallant Scottish regiments closing with the enemy while the men encouraged each other with football cries. "On the ball, lads!" "Mark your men!" At St. Julien the Dublins tossed cigarettes to each other and shouted "Good old Dublins!" "Now then Dublins," while one humorist yelled in a rich Dublin accent "Hurrah for Jim Larkin," which sent a roar of laughter along the line. Nor were the officers less

light-hearted than the men. The Colonel walked about with a pipe in his mouth, and a walking stick in his hand, shouting out now and then to his "Good old Dublins" to "stick it" at all costs.

So our Irish regiments always have gone and always will go into action, with laughter in their eyes and jests on their lips, though deep down in their Irish hearts the love of God and of Ireland burns like a bright flame.

At 150 yards from the German trenches the order is given to fix bayonets. Two officers—Captain Le Mesurier and a lieutenant, rush up in advance to cut the barbed wires. They are killed on the spot. Others take their places, and man after man is shot down in an endeavour to clear away the hellish obstacle. In vain. There has been no proper artillery preparation for the attack, and to charge the trenches with the wires still standing would mean annihilation for the regiment. And in these terrible moments of waiting the men are lying out in the open, 150 yards from the Germans, who rake them with rifle fire, with machine-gun fire, with shrapnel. . . .

To attempt an advance is hopeless, and the

order is given to retire. And somehow or other the order is carried out. Across that awful shell-swept space the Dublins slowly fall back, until they reach a point where they are able to dig trenches and obtain some shelter from the German fire. There they lie all day, until night enables them to improve their position so as to make the line tenable against whatever German attacks might come.

You are to picture the Dublins holding this line for eight days without giving an inch. By day and by night they are attacked by the enemy. They suffer from cold, from wet, from want of sleep. But they hold the line.

Then comes a quiet Sunday afternoon when the Germans cease from shelling, and there is a great calm. Some of the men are deceived by this calm. They think the worst is over, and they rejoice accordingly. But the officers knew better ; it is the calm before the storm. Suddenly over the trenches bursts a succession of shells, not shrapnel—shells that the Dublins have never seen before. From the shells there spreads a cloud of a sickly green colour. It sinks slowly and

settles on the trenches. The shells are gas-shells, and the cloud is poison-gas.

"Wet your handkerchiefs," shout the officers. "For God's sake, men, wet your handkerchiefs, and clap them to your mouths!"

Quick as lightning, the men uncork their water-bottles, pour water on their handkerchiefs, and apply the damp cloths to their mouths and noses. It is a homely remedy, but it serves. In a few minutes the gas has gone and the men can breathe again. They wait quietly for the Germans, who themselves must wait till the poison-gas has passed. When the Germans come on, thinking to find the trenches full of dead and dying men, they are met by a hail of machine-gun fire, and by the concentrated rifle-fire of the Dublins. Gloriously steady are the Dublins, despite the hellish poison-gas. The Germans reel under their fire; reel and break, and scuttle back to their trenches. By midnight the attack is over and another poison-gas attack has failed.

Next day the Dublins were relieved and sent back to reserve after nine days' hard fighting.

The record of the Dublins for that nine days is a record of apparent failure, apparent disaster. Eight or nine officers were killed and 400 of the rank and file killed or wounded, and St. Julien was not taken. But there was no real failure or real disaster. The Dublins, like all other famous British regiments in those days of stress, had played their part in the successful defence of the Ypres salient.

> "And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
> For the fulness of the days?"

The Allied line, bent and cracked as it was, was never broken. Ypres still defied the Germans, and the channel ports were safe.

The London Irish at Loos

Of the many Territorial regiments that, willingly accepting the "Imperial service obligation," have gone abroad and fought gloriously in the present war, there is none which has more reason to be proud of its record than the "London Irish"; the 18th Battalion County of London Regiment.

The London Irish Rifles is not a regiment

of to-day or of yesterday. It has over half a century of history behind it. "Form, form, riflemen, form!" sang Mr. Alfred Tennyson (as he then was) in 1859; and the London Irish were among the riflemen who "formed" in that year. Our present great and gallant ally, France, was then the Power to be feared, and Britons were adjured to forget their domestic concerns and arm themselves for the defence of England.

> "Better a rotten borough or so,
> Than a rotten fleet, and a city in flames."

Thus was born the Volunteer movement, and the Irishmen in London were among the first to form a Volunteer Corps. They captured two distinguished recruits almost at once—Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, and the (alas!) now almost forgotten author of "Handy Andy"—Mr. Samuel Lover. And in those early days there was no more enthusiastic or more efficient Volunteer regiment in London than the London Irish Rifles.

They were not, however, called upon to fight the French, or any other nation. The regiment lived through that rather pathetic

period when Mr. Punch's "Brook Green Volunteer" symbolised the amused contempt with which the British public regarded the gallant fellows (grandfathers now) who shouldered their rifles in response to the appeals of Mr. Tennyson and others. It had no experience in that period more exciting than a review in Hyde Park or a sham fight on Wimbledon Common. The history of the London Irish, as of other volunteer corps, is for nearly forty years a peaceful one.

Then came the South African War, when the London Irish had its first taste of active service. It furnished "the second largest contingent of any volunteer unit for the C.I.V., a service company for the Royal Irish Rifles, and men for the Middlesex Yeomanry." The members of the London Irish who went to South Africa saw plenty of hard fighting, and one of them won the V.C.

But it was, of course, the Great War which gave the London Irish its real chance. A few days after the declaration of war the 1st Battalion reached its full strength. Within four days a second battalion was recruited. And practically every man volun-

teered for service abroad. In the beginning of March, 1915, the 1st Battalion arrived in France, thoroughly trained, and eager to get to the firing line.

Let us pause here and emphasize the fact that the London Irish is, as its name implies, not only a London but also an Irish regiment. It belongs to Ireland and the Irish as well as to the metropolis. Indeed, Irish people the world over have an interest in the regiment, and are proud of it as a fighting unit of Irish soldiers. Nothing, for example, has been more remarkable than the rush of recruits since the war began to the London Irish from all parts of the world. From all corners of the Empire they came, from the United States, from the Far East: Irishmen who heard the "call of the Irish"—who felt that when bugles were blowing and drums beating to the colours it was impossible for men with Irish blood in their veins to remain quiescent in the occupations of civil life. The London Irish is characteristically and essentially Irish, and its deeds on the battlefield are to be set to the credit of Irish soldiers.

Shortly after its arrival in France, the battalion was inspected by Sir John French, who praised its bearing and appearance. The praises of the British Commander-in-Chief were soon justified by the event. The London Irish very quickly were in the thick of the fighting. They were in the engagement at St. Eloi, after Neuve Chapelle. They fought a hard action at Richebourg St. Avast on May 9th, and a still harder one on May 29th at Festubert. Here they lost fifty or sixty men and several officers. After Festubert things settled down to a comparatively uneventful three months' hard trench-work in the lines of the First Army. "Comparatively uneventful"—for there was always fighting to be done. Here is a characteristic anecdote of the battalion, which had, by the way, taken their pipers to the front with them.

"On one occasion the London Irish were ordered to hold on in an exceptionally difficult place at La Bassée. Beside them were the Irish Guards and the King's Royal Rifle Corps. The London Irishmen were tired, having been long in action, but they settled grimly to

their task. Suddenly there rose up from the trenches the familiar strains of 'St. Patrick's Day,' given with vigour by the pipers. A new spirit entered into the men, and a roar of cheers went down the line. Presently the 'Minstrel Boy' was played, and the rifle fire redoubled. The German trenches were only seventy yards away, and the Germans could hear the music and the cheers."*

Then came the last fateful days of September, and the "big push" at Loos. It has been well said that the name of Loos will be "a word of proud memory" in the records of the London Irish. For the regiment was in the thick of the battle. It captured the position assigned to it; it helped to capture German guns; and always during those days and nights of desperate fighting, the London Irishmen fought with the dash and the reckless bravery characteristic of Irish regiments. The following account of the part played by the London Irish in the capture of Loos is based upon an account supplied to the writer

* Quoted from the official "Brief History" of the Regiment.

by a member of the regiment who went through the fight.

On the evening of September 24th the London Irish were at the village of Maroc, nearly opposite Loos. For some nights before this they had been engaged in digging advance trenches in front of our first line. Difficult work this, and dangerous, too; the regiment lost many men in carrying it out. Nor was trench-digging the only task assigned to the Irishmen. It appears that they were by way of being gas-experts (there is an opportunity here for humorists), and they were required to fix 600 gas-cylinders in position in preparation for the coming attack. For, as everybody knows, we used asphyxiating gas at Loos, and smoke also: the Germans were not having it all their own way in this connection. But just here it may be remarked that the experiment was not entirely successful. At the time of the attack a drizzling rain was falling; there was little or no wind; and in the damp, heavy atmosphere the gas and smoke hung about and bothered our own men much more than it bothered the Germans. The Irishmen were

glad when the fumes cleared away, and "proper soldiering" began.

One further point. The bombing platoon of the London Irish appears to have been particularly proficient. Their "bombers" were not surpassed, if, indeed, they were equalled, by any in the division: and the division was the famous 47th, entirely composed of London Territorials. The bombing platoon is a very important factor in the attack under modern war conditions. The platoon is split into sections, and each man in the section carries 10 bombs, as well as a reserve stock of 20 bombs in a sack—an extra weight of 40 lbs. The work is, therefore, exceptionally arduous. It is also, perhaps, exceptionally dangerous. The London Irish bombing platoon went into action at Loos, 46 strong. It came out with 17 unwounded men, and there were 14 dead.

On the night of September 24th, then, the London Irish marched out of billets and took up their allotted positions in the advanced lines. The attack was timed for an hour named "zero" in orders; "zero" was, in fact, 5.50 a.m. The regiment had arrived in

position about midnight, so that there was a long and dreary wait through the night, while the British guns thundered overhead. And what a night! The rain poured in torrents; but, in spite of the discomfort, the Irishmen remained cheerful. Towards morning the weather moderated somewhat, though a drizzling rain still fell. At 5.50, just as it was growing light, the bombardment increased —and the gas was turned on. As we have seen, the gas was not particularly effective, although it had been turned on, according to orders, for 38 minutes, two minutes' start being allowed for the infantry, who attacked at 6.30 a.m.

"Irish—up and over!"

Up and out of the trenches and over they went, attacking by platoons—three platoons at a time. The men wore their smoke helmets, and carried picks and shovels as well as rifles. It is said that they began the attack by dribbling a football towards the German trenches; but though a football was probably part of the equipment of one of the Irish lads, what lawyers call the "weight of evidence" is against the dribbling. But

the football spirit was there, nevertheless. Five hundred yards away was the first line of German trenches. As soon as the Irishmen leapt from the cover of their own trenches a terrible fire was opened upon them, but they did not waver. Forming up in four lines they sprinted across the fire-swept zone, and soon reached the first line of enemy trenches. It was full of Germans who, to their credit be it said, neither ran away nor surrendered. They fought to the death. Then followed a few minutes of bloody hand-to-hand fighting before the trench was captured. Here the Irishmen suffered most of their casualties. The first trench taken, there was another sprint of 1,000 yards to the second trench, which was the real objective of the London Irish. This trench was poorly defended, and was taken almost without loss. A good deal has been heard of the wonderful system of German entrenchments; but, in fact, the second line held by the Germans at this point, just outside the village of Loos, was a mere scratch in the surface of the soil, being not more than two feet deep. And the first duty of the Irishmen who had taken it

was to " dig themselves in " ; to excavate a proper trench, seven feet deep, against the inevitable counter-attack. This they at once proceeded to do.

Let us leave them for a moment " digging themselves in," and make one or two comments. So far, this attack at Loos seems quite simple : a rush to the first trench ; the attack upon and capture of that trench ; then another rush, and the capture of another trench. But, of course, it was a much more complicated affair than that. The man who takes part in the capture of a trench cannot describe the whole operation of a combined attack : he can only describe what he saw. Only the spectator behind the firing line—say, the Staff Officer—can give us something like a complete picture of the attack. For example, three German guns were captured somewhere about the village of Loos by certain London Territorials. Who were those Territorials ? Were they London Irish ? As to that we can only say that, while the position occupied by those guns was not part of the objective of the London Irish, it seems certain that members of the regiment did

assist the 19th and 20th Battalions of the London Regiment (T.F.) to capture the guns. The units became mixed in the attack, and the guns were taken by men of the three battalions. Again, we cannot discover whether the London Irish suffered in the street-fighting at Loos: apparently not. But that there was desperate street-fighting is certain, for the Royal Irish Rifles, fighting on the right of the London Irish, suffered severely in Loos village.

"Street-fighting?" said a wounded corporal of the R.I.R. to the writer. "Yes; lots of it. The houses were packed with Germans. Our artillery cleared them out mostly, but we attacked with the bayonet too. I saw three officers of our battalion killed before my eyes. I was orderly to one of them. He was killed by rifle fire from the houses. Then a shell burst near me, and I knew no more. . . ."

To come back to the Irish in the second line of German trenches. While engaged in their hard entrenching work they saw Highlanders streaming back through the lines. These were the remnant of the gallant 15th

Division, which had penetrated far beyond the second German lines, right into the suburbs of Lens. They held on to the position as long as possible ; but in time the Germans massed their reserves, and drove them back. The sight of the returning Highlanders depressed the Irish ranks for a time, but their officers reassured them. Loos was taken, and Loos would be held. And it was. Soon the new lines of the London Irish—the left flank extending to the cemetery outside the village —were in a condition to withstand the German counter-attack, which was not long delayed. For three nights and four days the London Irish were shelled persistently, but they did not budge. On the night of the 28th they were relieved by the 142nd Infantry Brigade, and marched back to billets.

The London Irish went into action at Loos 600 strong ; they came out 300 strong. Three hundred of the rank and file and 12 officers were killed and wounded. These figures need no comment.

" You have performed one of the finest actions of the war," was the message of authority to the regiment after the battle.

The London Irish would be the last regiment to minimise the valour of other Territorial regiments on the great day of Loos. But those of us who are Irish will remember with peculiar pride the valour displayed and the glory achieved on that day by the London Irish Rifles.

III.—THE DARDANELLES

(1) The Landing at V Beach

From Flanders to Gallipoli is a far cry; but on the peninsula of Gallipoli, by the narrow waters of the Dardanelles, the bravery of Irish regiments was to be even more severely tried, and even more triumphantly vindicated, than on the "gory fields" of France and Belgium.

Remember what the problem at Gallipoli was. The German-led Turkish troops were deeply entrenched on the rugged hill country of the peninsula. From the top of Achi Baba —700 feet high—down the precipitous slopes to the sea, all the natural defences of rock and shrub and deep-cut gully were improved and strengthened by every art and artifice of German science. The slopes bristled with guns—heavy guns, light guns, machine guns; thousands of troops, armed with modern rifles, covered the hillsides; and zigzagging

everywhere ran the most fiendish barbed wire entanglements. The whole area was a redoubt of enormous strength. The problem was to land troops on the open beaches under these murderous cliffs and to establish a firm holding on the peninsula.

And this impossible thing was done. It was done by troops which must surely be accounted the finest in the world ; the picked troops of Great Britain and Ireland, of Australia and New Zealand, and of France.

Two historic Irish regiments were chosen to take part in the landing. They were the 1st Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the 1st Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers. We have already written something of the valour of the 2nd Dublins and 2nd Munsters in France and Belgium. And now the first battalions were to prove their valour in even more terrible conditions than those which obtained with their brothers in the West.

The troops were to be landed on five beaches —S, V, W, X, and Y. Of these V, W, and X were to be the main landings ; the landing at S and Y were chiefly made to protect the flanks of the other landing parties. The

southern half of the peninsula of Gallipoli is, as Sir Ian Hamilton said, "shaped like a badly-worn boot." V, W, and X beaches were grouped round the toe of the boot, and V beach almost precisely at the toe. The landing at V beach was assigned to the Dublins and the Munsters, with a half battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, the West Riding Field Company and other details.

We pause to observe that V beach was, with the possible exception of W beach, the most difficult of all the landings. All men and women of the Irish race must be proud to think that it was the Dublins and the Munsters—the gallant lads of Dublin and the South of Ireland—who were chosen by Sir Ian Hamilton for this desperate enterprise. Shall we be wrong in thinking that they were so chosen because it has been proved over and over again that the Irish soldier, with his high courage and contempt for danger, his dash and initiative, is peculiarly fitted for work of this kind ?

Just before dawn on Sunday, April 25th, the transports containing the Dublins and Munsters arrived at the final rendezvous,

about three miles from V beach. At this spot three companies of the Dublins were transferred to small boats in which they were to be towed ashore.

Picture the scene : a calm, still morning of early spring ; the sea as smooth as glass ; over everything the silence and beauty of the dawn. Round the pinnaces and the small boats lie the warships—great grey shapes in the mist.

Suddenly the silence is broken by the thunder of the guns, the echoes rolling and reverberating far over the sea and along the face of the cliffs. Again and again the guns sound, flinging death and destruction on the distant Turkish trenches. But they provoke no answering thunders from the shore. There everything is quiet—ominously quiet.

Meanwhile the boats with the three companies of the Dublins on board, towed by the pinnaces, skim over the calm water to their landing-places. Behind them came the steamer *River Clyde*—the now famous " horse of Troy "—with the rest of the Dublins, the Munsters, and other troops. The *Clyde* was to be run ashore ; lighters which

she towed were to be placed in position between ship and shore so as to form a gangway ; and along this gangway 2,000 men were to be thrown ashore with the utmost rapidity. That was the programme. But it went sadly wrong.

The *Clyde* and the small boats touched ground at the beach almost simultaneously. Until that moment not a sign came from the enemy. But on the instant the first boat was beached hell broke loose.

" A tornado of fire," says Sir Ian Hamilton, " swept the incoming boats, and the collier. The Dublin Fusiliers and the naval boats crews suffered exceedingly heavy losses while still in the boats. Those who succeeded in landing and in crossing the strip of sand managed to gain some cover when they reached the low escarpment on the further side. None of the boats, however, were able to get off again, and they and their crews were destroyed upon the beach."

This is a scene upon which the less one dwells the better. The Dublins were to all intents and purposes unarmed men. They could not fire in reply. There was nothing to

aim at. They could not take cover. They could only sit in the boats and die. Occasionally one or two staggered ashore through a hail of bullets and found cover a few yards up on the sandy beach. But this was the exception. It may be said that practically the whole of the three companies of the Dublins which attempted the landing perished.

Here is the experience of an officer who took part in the landing :

" About a mile and a half from the shore the enemy's shells started to burst around our boats, doing a lot of damage. As we got closer bullets started to whiz round us, killing several men in our boats. The ships' shells were simply ripping up the ground, and with my field glasses I could see many of the Turks running for their lives. I thought then that we would have no difficulty in landing.

" Then machine guns galore were played on us from a trench unseen at the bottom of the cliff, not ten yards from us. A shrapnel burst above our heads at the same time and before I knew where I was I was covered with dead men. Not knowing they were dead, I was

roaring at them to help me up, for I was drowning. The guns still played on us till we got back to a mine-sweeper. I was simply saturated all over with blood, and I could feel the hot blood all over me all the way across. When they pulled these poor fellows off me they were all dead, and the poor fellow under me was dead. The boat was awful to look at, full of blood and water.

" We got the dead and wounded off on to the mine-sweeper, and gathered another three boatloads of men to take ashore and face the same thing again. Going across this time I was looking through my glasses until we got fairly close to shore, when I felt a terrible knock on my haversack, which I had strapped on top of my pack, with two days' rations in it.

" I then saw the poor fellow next to me with the top of his head taken off by the same piece of shrapnel. It decorated fellows with bully beef from my rations. I then thought it time to put away my glasses, which I left hanging in front of me, and turned my pack towards the enemy to stop bullets coming towards my head, and bent low. We could do nothing but sit there and

wait. Then our boats struck shore, and we were again showered by machine guns. The four men in the fore part of our boat got off but were shot down at once.

" The fire ceased for a while, for I suppose they thought we were all finished with. Then a steam pinnace came and took us away, and the fire followed us again for some time. We eventually arrived at the battleship *Albion*, which was still hard at it pouring shells into land. They took us on there and attended to us in turn. All day long the bombardment lasted, and on Monday morning it started again, although several ships kept it up all through the night."

Meanwhile, what of the steamship *River Clyde* and her freight of 2,000 men—mostly Dublins and Munsters? She was beached according to expectation; but nothing else prospered. The current was strong, and the lighters that were to form a gangway to the shore swung hither and thither in the swirling water. The naval working party were called upon to put them in position, and gallantly responded. But the lighters were raked by machine guns, and man after man dropped

in the withering fire, many wounded men drowning in the sight of hundreds powerless to rescue them. The water between the steamer and the shore was red with blood, but still the gallant naval men worked on. At length the gangway was fixed. But then came the most terrible moment of a terrible day.

The disembarkation began. It was a company of the gallant Munsters that led the way. In single file they rushed along the gangway and made for the shore. A hail of lead tore through them, but they faltered not. Many fell wounded into the water and were pulled down and drowned by the weight of their equipment. Only a few reached the sandy beach, and of these few only one or two struggled to safety under the low escarpment thirty yards up the beach.

So much for the 1st Company. The 2nd Company of the Munsters was called on. It meant death to nearly every man in that company; but not a man of that heroic band of Munster boys flinched. They flung themselves upon the gangway in the midst of a terrible fire. The lighters quivered and broke away from the shore, leaving the men utterly

at the mercy of the Turkish guns. And again the gallant naval men came to the rescue and secured the gangway once more. But the 2nd Company of Munsters had been wiped out.

The 3rd Company was called on. One would have thought that hardly any body of soldiers in the world would have faced the terrible ordeal before these men. But it is to the eternal glory of Irish soldiers that the Munster Fusiliers willingly and gladly answered the call. They rushed across the gangway of death ; they reached the corpse-strewn shore. Under a murderous hail of shrapnel, raked by rifles, pom-poms and machine guns, the survivors of this company of heroes staggered across the beach to the comparative safety of the escarpment.

An Irish member of the Naval service who was present on the *River Clyde* gives the following account of his experiences :

" Amidst the terrible deafening roar, they got the signal to go right in, and with full steam ahead the vessel made for the shore. We little expected what we were in for, as opinion was divided, some saying it was certain death, others saying not a shot would

be fired, as nothing could live in the terrible fire of the Navy.

" Anyway, when about forty yards from the shore they opened on us, and such a din of pom-poms and bullets I never want to be in again. The Commander went right on and beached us beautifully high and dry. By this time the guns were playing on the Turks, but could not get the sharpshooters.

" What followed was a terrible sight. Our men were simply butchered, and the water was red with blood and the air boiling with bullets. I was far too excited to have any fear, but I made up my mind that my hour had come. I next learned that a large shell had gone right through our after hold without exploding, but it killed several.

" All this time our fellows were dropping on their way to the beach, about two in every three. While arranging about a volunteer to assist me in rescuing a poor fellow shot in very narrow water, someone shouted : ' Take cover, you fool.' Almost simultaneously a bullet hit my cap, and one went either side of my head, shaving my ears. As I dropped flat one clipped me on the right shin and

another entered my right foot, but came out again.

" All that night I carried on as best I could. At six in the evening there was a lull in the firing, and though we had no food that day we decided to abandon the ship, all the wounded to go back to the ships, and everyone else for the shore.

" The sights on the beach were ghastly, and the day had been a bad one for us. To get the wounded away was impossible, but we decided to take as many as possible back to the ships against our better selves. We did so, and I shall never forget it as long as I live."

Let us pause to say this one thing : should it ever happen that the detractors of the Irish soldiers of the Empire — whether those detractors be themselves nominally Irishmen or not—should it ever happen that such persons speak slightingly of the services Irish soldiers have rendered to the Empire in this great crisis of her fate, let the sacrifice of the Dublins and the Munsters on V Beach on this spring morning of 1915 be their answer, and shame them for ever into silence.

The landing from the *River Clyde* was suspended. Five hundred men—wounded and unwounded—lay crouching under the low sandy bank on V beach. For twenty-four hours they lay there, "a day and night of ceaseless imminent peril." They were exhausted by the strain of the fight, by hunger and thirst. But they did not lose their courage, or their will to win.

Next day two Staff officers—Lieut.-Colonel Doughty-Wyllie and Lieut.-Colonel Williams—arranged an attack on the hill above. Between the sandy beach, where the men crouched, and the hill were three entanglements of barbed wire—"made of heavier metal and of longer barbs than I have seen elsewhere" notes Sir Ian Hamilton. Beyond the barbed wire, on the rising ground, were the deep-cut trenches of the enemy. Pom-poms and machine guns, carefully hidden, raked the whole width of the shore. Such was the position against which Colonel Doughty-Wyllie led his handful of brave men on the morning of Monday, April 28th.

A few lines in the official report tell the tale: how the guns of the fleet bombarded the

shore and the hill; how the men advanced slowly but surely across the beach, and up the hill and into the ruined village of Sedd-ul-Bahr which was on the hill; how Colonel Wyllie fell, leading the last assault; and how the men pushed on without wavering, and finally captured the position.

It is a thrilling story, and Sir Ian Hamilton tells it well. But there are several incidents not mentioned in his dispatch. One is the death of the heroic Father Finn, the chaplain of the Dublins. He insisted upon coming ashore with his men. There were those who urged him to stay behind in safety, but he would not listen. "No," he said, "the place of an Irish priest is in the firing line, by the side of his boys, helping the wounded and ministering to the dying." Father Finn went ashore. And all through that Sunday night of "ceaseless imminent peril" he remained with his men, helping and comforting them, giving those marked for death the consolations of religion, and the last services of a priest. Next morning, while still engaged in this work of mercy, he fell a victim to a Turkish bullet. Thus died a true Christian

soldier and hero. Father Finn was the first Irish chaplain to fall in the war.

Another incident worthy to be chronicled is the deed by which Corporal Cosgrove won the V.C. We have seen that barbed wire entanglements of peculiar malignity zigzagged across and up and down the beach. The guns of the Fleet had played upon the entanglements for hours, and had partially destroyed them. When our soldiers left the shelter of the sandy bank and advanced towards the hill, they found that the wire still blocked the way. At once men advanced upon it with wire-cutters and endeavoured to cut a way through. But the wire was desperately thick, and the Turkish fire heavy. The poor fellows who were cutting the wires were shot down on all sides. More and more men flung themselves upon the wire. They tore their hands in vain attempts to tear it down. And still the Turkish bullets spread death along the line.

It was then that Corporal Cosgrove had an inspiration. He noticed that the posts supporting the barbed wire were fixed loosely in the sandy soil.

"Pull them up!" he shouted. "Don't wait to cut the wires. Pull up the posts!"

And he set the example himself. Rushing to the posts, he pulled them up one by one, while the bullets whistled round him. Others followed his example, and soon sufficient way had been cleared for the troops to advance.

That night the hill and the village above V beach were firmly held. The heroic remnant of the Dublins and the Munsters had "made good."

After fifteen days' hard and constant fighting with the "immortal 29th Division," the Dublins were relieved and sent to billets, and General Hunter-Weston addressed them as follows:

"Well done, Blue Caps! I now take the first opportunity of thanking you for the good work you have done. You have achieved the impossible. You have done a thing which will live in history. When I first visited this place with other people of importance, we all thought a landing would never be made, but you did it, and therefore the impossibilities were overcome, and it was done by men of real and true British fighting blood.

" You captured the fort and village on the right that simply swarmed with Turks with machine guns ; also the hill on the left where the pom-poms were ; also the amphitheatre in front, which was dug line for line with trenches, and from which there came terrific rifle and machine-gun fire.

" You are indeed deserving of the highest praise. I am proud to be in command of such a distinguished regiment, and I only hope, when you return to the firing line after this rest (which you have well earned), that you will make even a greater name for yourselves. Well done, the Dubs ! Your deeds will live in history for time immortal. Farewell ! "

But men's memories are short, and there is much to be remembered in these stirring times. Perhaps that is why Admiral de Robeck omitted to mention the Dublins and the Munsters in his dispatch on the naval operations at Gallipoli. Wherefore, the deeds of the Dublins and the Munsters at V beach in Gallipoli are set down here, lest we in our short day forget. But, in truth, these deeds are secure for other days than ours—for " time immortal."

II.—THE LANDING AT SUVLA BAY

THE landing of British troops at Suvla Bay in August, and the intense fighting which followed that landing, has for us who are Irish a peculiar significance. It was on this occasion that an Irish Division of the New Armies—"Kitchener's Army"—came into action for the first time. During twelve months of sustained and heavy warfare, in Flanders, in France, and in the southern end of the Gallipoli Peninsula, the grand old Irish regiments of the line had, as we have seen, proved their valour and their fighting capacity times without number. They had shown clearly that the Irish professional soldier—the man who had added lustre to British arms in a thousand bloody battle-fields of the past—was to-day as good a soldier as he had ever been, and better. But now the time had come when the New Army was to be tested in the furnace of the battle-field. Would it answer the test as the Regular Army had answered it? Would the undergraduates, the clerks, the schoolmasters, the barristers, the merchants, and the many

thousand of gallant Irish lads from other ranks of Irish life emerge from the dreadful ordeal of courage which a modern battlefield imposes with as much success and honour as their comrades of the old professional battalions ? That was the question which trembled on the lips of Irishmen and Irishwomen when they heard that the 10th Division had been ordered to the Dardanelles.

The 10th Division was the first distinctively Irish Division of the New Armies to take the field. At the time when it left England the other two Irish Divisions—the 16th (" The Irish Brigade ") and the 36th (the " Ulster ") were still in training camps. It has been suggested by certain critics—and, sad to say, by critics who are themselves Irish—that the 10th was not an Irish Division : that it contained a large admixture of English and Scottish soldiers. This was not the case. The fact was, that the 10th was formed at the beginning of the war, before the idea either of an Irish Brigade or of an Ulster Division had taken definite shape. The recruits that flocked to the colours in Ireland at the outbreak of the war were

drafted into this new division. It was before the " spurt " in Irish recruiting ; before the war had really caught the imagination of the Irish people, and before either the Irish or the Ulster Volunteers had made up their minds as to what part they would collectively play in the matter of recruiting. Consequently a certain number of English and Scottish recruits were, no doubt, at first drafted into Ireland, bringing the 10th Division up to establishment numbers. But the overwhelming majority of the division were Irishmen. And if we are casting up a debtor and creditor account of Irish recruiting, we must not forget to enter on the credit side of Ireland's account the vast number of Irish recruits—estimated by competent observers at 150,000—who have joined English and Scottish regiments, and particularly the Highland, the Lancashire, and the Northumberland regiments.

But we must emphasise the fact that the 10th was an Irish Division, and the first Irish Division of the New Armies to take the field. It was commanded by a gallant Irish officer, Sir Bryan Mahon, the famous Galway cavalry

officer, whose flying column relieved Mafeking in the South African War. Sir Bryan has now received promotion, and commands the British forces, including the 10th Division, now operating in the Balkans. The 10th consisted of battalions of most of the famous Irish regiments of the line, the Dublins, Munsters, Inniskillings, Connaughts, Royal Irish, and Royal Irish Rifles. There was also a battalion of the South Irish Horse, Field Artillery, Garrison Artillery, Engineers, and the usual details. On May 25th, the division was inspected by His Majesty the King at Basingstoke. Every battalion on the field had its Irish pipers, and as the men marched back to camp the band played that once forbidden tune, "A Nation Once Again." For it seems we have at last awakened to the very ancient truth that the recognition of the principle of nationality is a source of strength, and not of weakness, to an Empire, and the further truth that national music is, of all martial music, the most inspiriting.

Eleven weeks after the review at Basingstoke, transports containing the 10th Division —less one brigade, the 29th—steamed through

the Ægean, and in the darkness of a night in August slipped into Suvla Bay. To be precise, on Friday night, August 6th, the transports arrived at Suvla, and early in the morning of Saturday, the 7th, the troops prepared to land. In the light of Sir Ian Hamilton's dispatch it is possible to indicate the aim of this landing at Suvla, and to summarise generally the subsequent military operations. Undoubtedly the aim of the landing was to seize the heights to the north of the main Turkish positions on the peninsula, and to link up the front of the Australians and New Zealanders at Gaba Tepe with the new front so established. This would have threatened, if not entirely cut, the communications of the main Turkish forces. In Sir Ian Hamilton's words, it would have "smashed the mainspring of the Turkish opposition to Anzacs." For the purposes of this operation a large force, consisting of the 11th and 10th Divisions, was flung ashore very quickly on August 6th and 7th. Later on, the 53rd and 54th Divisions (T.F.) were also landed; and at the same time the 13th Division was landed at Anzac. These operations, as the

world now knows, were only partially successful. They have, indeed, taken their place in contemporary history as "the Suvla Bay failure." They ought, in fact, to have been entirely successful. The Turks were, to a certain extent, taken by surprise; the landings were accomplished without a hitch; and the men were splendid. But all these advantages were thrown away by mistakes in command. This much we may say, because it has been said by Sir Ian Hamilton himself. "Driving power was required, and even a certain ruthlessness, to brush aside pleas for a respite for tired troops. The one fatal error was inertia. And inertia prevailed." "Golden opportunities" were missed, and never returned. It was thus that disaster came to the well-planned expedition of Suvla Bay.

It is not, however, our business to dwell upon this aspect of the matter. It is enough for us to say that the failure was not a failure of the Irish Division. On the contrary, that Division, as will presently be seen, had done magnificent things. It had captured heights like the famous Chocolate Hill. It had

fought desperate battles, and suffered bloody and terrible losses. It had triumphantly established the *moral* and the fighting capacity of the first Irish Division of the New Armies. The lads of the 10th—the clerks of Dublin and Belfast, the Trinity and Q.C.B. boys, the young barristers and schoolmasters—had won immortal glory for the New Army of Ireland. With a grand courage they had marched to death through infinite horrors—glad to die for a great cause. As one reads the broken records of the glorious achievements of the 10th Division in those terrible days, one feels the poignant tragedy of it all; but one is proud to be of the race which produces such heroes.

Let us piece together the story as best we may. On the night of Friday, August 6th, the transports containing the 10th Division anchored in Suvla Bay. The 11th Division had already landed. The Turks were on the alert, and the transports of the 10th as they slipped into the bay were heavily shelled. At two o'clock in the morning, in that half-light which comes before the dawn, the men of the 10th, crowding the decks of the trans-

ports, could see the flashes of the Turkish guns far back on the heights of Anafarta, and could hear the rattle of musketry as the men of the 11th pushed their way upwards and onward. Everywhere shells were bursting and rockets blazing. It was the first sight of war to most of the lads of the 10th Division. But they were not to be spectators for long. Presently shells began to drop unpleasantly close. The decks were cleared, and the landing-lighters came alongside. The men tumbled in, and were rowed ashore, while the shrapnel burst around them. As the various regiments landed, they were shelled persistently. Under heavy artillery fire they advanced along the beach, taking such cover as the dips in the sand afforded.

The country over which the advance of the 10th was made was the worst possible for an attacking force. It was a plain, flat and sandy, with little cover of any description. Part of it was the bed of the Salt Lake, now evaporated. The only cover obtainable was in those places, here and there, where a low bank of sand or a dry shallow ditch gave a momentary and inadequate

shelter to the much-tried soldiers. Between two and three miles from the beach lay the Anafarta range of hills, upon which the enemy were entrenched, and from which their artillery shelled our troops. Some of these hills were as high as 900 feet. The task of our men was, therefore, of extreme difficulty. It was to advance under heavy artillery fire for a distance of three miles over exposed country, and then to seize the hills beyond. This would have been a task to the utmost of the powers of war-worn and seasoned veterans. It was, in fact, assigned to, and performed by, troops who had no previous experience of war, whose training had been of the shortest, who, a few months before, had been pursuing the ordinary avocations of civil life. That it was performed, up to a point, with substantial success, is the highest tribute that can be paid to the men of the New Armies.

Let us follow the fortunes of two Irish battalions on that eventful day, Saturday, August 7th. The battalions are the 7th Dublin Fusiliers—the " Pals " battalion, and the 6th Inniskillings. Dublin was proud of

its " Pals "—the boys from counter and office and college who rushed to join the old " Dubs " when the call came for more men. And the " Pals " fought gloriously at Suvla under a hail of shrapnel. They got away from the beach in support of the 6th Inniskillings, advancing in good order. They were as steady under fire, these boys from Dublin, as if they had been on parade at Phœnix Park. At one point they had to change direction on a small neck of sand, the range of which the enemy had gauged to a nicety. A veritable hell of high-explosive shells swept the place, but the " Pals " did not falter. They would wait until a burst had passed, and then rush across the narrow neck of sand to the slight shelter on the other side. Then it was a steady grind across a sandy sweep until the base of the hills was reached. The heat was intense ; and the men were weighted down by heavy equipment. They reached the foot of the hill about three o'clock in the afternoon, and found the Turks well entrenched on the hillside, quantities of furze and scrub affording excellent cover. The " Pals " fixed bayonets. A and C Companies, with Major

Harrison in command, were in the first line. On their right were the 6th Inniskillings. Together the "Pals" and the Inniskillings dashed for the hill with fixed bayonets. But the Turks did not wait for the cold steel of the Irish troops. They broke and fled in the wildest confusion, and at dusk the hill was ours.

Thus was captured one of the Chocolate Hills; a feat of arms which won the highest praises from the general officer commanding the Division.

On the Chocolate Hills that night the Dublins and Inniskillings dug themselves in and took such rest as they could obtain in the hastily constructed trenches, with the enemy snipers active. There was, it appears, shocking mismanagement in the commissariat. The men were weak and hungry, and parched with thirst. Biscuits and bully beef were plentiful but water was terribly scarce. The nearest source of supply was a well several miles back, and it was hours before any water could be obtained from this source. But nobody grumbled. Despite wounds, fatigue, hunger and thirst, the "Pals" and the

Inniskillings kept up their good spirits. They had done a big thing and were proud of it.

For a week these two battalions lay along the hills, counter-attacked by day and night, suffering continual bombardment from shrapnel and high-explosive shells, and the irritating and unceasing attention of the Turkish sniper. On the Monday the 6th Battalion of the Dublins came up from reserve alongside them. In doing so, they too had to capture a hill from the Turks. One of the 6th, who took part in the fight, writes as follows :

" We were engaging in a proper soldiers' battle—no trenches at all, but just a case of who could blow the other first to the land of sweety mice. Suppose Cave Hill* to be the hill—it is about the same height—and imagine that at the back of the Cave Hill is a sheer wall of rock—twice as high again—extending all along the back. About 3.45 a.m. we came into action, about, say, Whitewell. Day is breaking. Ah, God, what a day ! We moved along the Antrim road round towards old

* A hill near Belfast, Co. Antrim, 1,200 ft. high.

Cavehill road. The Turks seem to know exactly where we are. Now, if I could describe vividly all the sights I saw and what happened on that awful Monday, I would not. And the memory of that awful day is locked up in my head for ever. From, say, Cavehill road we were ordered to take the hill. We went up through the bushes and gorse in an atmosphere of bursting shells, smoke, screams, curses, dying moans, and the crack of rifles.

"Half-way up the hill we came into rifle fire. The bullets were dropping like hail. You could hear and feel them whizzing past you. Officers and men were falling like skittles. The Turks then caught us between two cross fires, and some one gave the order to retire. At one time a portion of the hill on our left caught fire. We then moved round to the right—we have to leave our wounded there. Shortly after that, something told me that a sniper was trying to pick me. That something proved right, for I got hit on the outside of the big toe of the left foot."*

On the Friday, August 13th, the Dublins and Inniskillings were relieved by part of

* *The Belfast Evening Telegraph.*

an English Territorial Division, and marched back to rest at a camp seven miles away. But not for long. After a few hours' sleep the men were awakened and ordered again to go up to the firing line. Weary, but with indomitable pluck, they started out again for the hills. This time they found that they were to be on the extreme left of the line—Kiretch Tepe Sirt—instead of where they had been—near the extreme right. And the reason for this was as follows: our first attacks had captured the chain of hills that ran parallel with the coast from Suvla Bay almost to Gaba Tepe. Contact had not yet been established with the Australian and New Zealand troops at Gaba Tepe; nevertheless the positions on the right, which had been captured by the Irish Division, were firmly held. It was otherwise with the positions on the left. There the Turks were able to keep the attacking force at bay, and the Irish were ordered to make the positions good.

Accordingly the 6th and 7th Dublins, the 5th Inniskillings, the 6th Royal Munsters, and the 5th Royal Irish Fusiliers advanced on the hills.

The best description of the fight is given by Reuter's correspondent :*

" On the 15th inst. I witnessed a stirring bayonet attack, carried out by troops on the left of the Suvla position. Our troops were already in possession of nearly the whole of the high ridge running inland parallel to the shore, and the objective of the attack was the last crest of the ridge, beyond which it dips and swings round southwards. The attacking troops were a division which was almost wholly Irish, and which had already the capture of Chocolate Hill to its credit. The operation was timed to commence at one o'clock in the afternoon. The assaulting battalions advanced along the seaward side of the ridge, keeping under cover of the crest until they reached the crest immediately before the one to be attacked.

" Here they spread out in skirmishing lines down the side of the ridge, almost to the sea. On August 15th these troops commenced an enveloping movement around the base of the Turkish hill, under a heavy fire from the crest.

---

* *Daily Telegraph*, August 23rd, 1915.

Reserves were massed on the nearer crest of the ridge, and as the afternoon wore on a battalion of Irish was sent up to occupy a smaller spur on the right of the main ridge. It was late in the afternoon before the assault was launched. About four o'clock our firing-line on the seaward side of the ridge began to advance determinedly. We had a mountain battery on the nearer crest, with which we shelled the Turkish hill, thereby drawing a heavy fire from the Turkish guns on our guns. A destroyer from the gulf shelled the Turkish coast.

" At six o'clock our men on the crest nearest to the Turkish hill charged with the bayonet. The Turks came out to meet them, and a most exciting bayonet fight followed on the saddle between the two crests. Our fellows could be heard cheering as they went forward, and the bayonets were flashing and stabbing for several minutes before the Turks began to give way. Then I had the closest view I have yet enjoyed of the Turks in any number running before our men.

" They leapt up from the crest and ran down over the ridge, our men standing up and firing

down on them from the captured crest, while at intervals our machine guns on the hill behind drowned the sound of the rifle fire, whenever the gunners were able to catch a clear view of the fleeing Turks. It was a most successful afternoon's work, and one which has given the troops renewed confidence in their ability to beat the Turks, good fighters as they are."

Of this fight Sir Ian Hamilton says :

" After several hours of indecisive artillery and musketry fighting, the 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers charged forward with loud cheers, and captured the whole ridge, together with eighteen prisoners. The vigorous support rendered by the naval guns was a feature of this operation. Unfortunately, the point of the ridge was hard to hold, and means for maintaining the forward trenches had not been well thought out. Casualties became very heavy, the 5th Royal Irish Fusiliers having only one officer left, and the 5th Inniskilling Fusiliers also losing heavily in officers. Reinforcements were promised, but before they could arrive the officer left in command decided to evacuate the front

trenches. The strength of the Turks opposed to us was steadily rising, and had now reached 20,000."

A lieutenant of the "Pals" writes of the same fight:

"All that night our fellows dug, fighting against dawn. At last dawn did come—so did the Turks. But dawn came slowly, and the Turks came d—— quick. Our men got quickly to their places, and the fight commenced. I can't give you a description of the fierceness of their attack in a letter. They seemed to come up from all the bushes, rocks, etc., around. Their bullets were fairly screaming over us.

"They advanced up to us, at least three to one, under excellent cover. Then they started to hurl their bombs on to us, and our casualties were getting pretty bad. Our men held on to their ground like heroes, and never gave an inch. Many of their ill-timed bombs were hurled back to their origin, greatly to the Turks' dismay and cost.

"We determined to charge them and endeavoured to push them back a bit. Poole Hickman led the first line, and raced onwards

the Turkish trench. None came back. Major Harrison headed the second charge, but they were in great force, and we had to retire to the ridge again.

" I got a beautiful toss backwards from an explosion of a hand bomb right among the second lot, and a jolly lucky toss for me. Many of our fellows were badly damaged now, but, despite this, wounded and otherwise, held on.

" They were determined to take the ridge, and we were determined to hold it. Our left got it pretty badly for a time, and Captain Fitzgibbon and others got knocked out. Tobin soon got killed, and fell down at my feet. At last reinforcements arrived, and we were ordered to retire and lie down. Reluctantly they gave up their places to the new and fresh arrivals.

" General Sir Bryan Mahon sent a message to the Division, and said that Ireland should be proud to own such soldiers as the 10th Division, and so they should."

The " Pals " lost heavily in this fight of the 15th and 16th of August. Tried and trusted officers, like Major Harrison and Captain

Poole Hickman were killed, and the ranks were sadly thinned. Nevertheless the remnant of the heroic battalion again went into heavy action on the 21st, when an attempt was made to storm Hill 100 on the Dardanelles side of Chocolate Hill. The action on the 21st represented a final attempt to seize the positions which, if occupied, would cut the main Turkish communications. For the purpose of this attack the 29th Division—the " Old Guard " from the southern end of the peninsula—was brought up in the dead of night and launched against the Turks on the hills. A portion of the 10th Division helped to extend the line southward toward Anzac, together with New Zealanders, the 4th South Wales Borderers, and an Indian Brigade, all under the command of General Cox.

This action was only partially successful ; the " great deed was too great." But, once more the heroism displayed was magnificent. " Advancing through hell " an officer of the " Pals " called it. The Inniskillings, with the Border Regiment, drove their way right to the top of Hill 70, and actually held the

crest, but in the end were driven back by concentrated shrapnel and machine-gun fire. An officer of the 5th Connaught Rangers, who also took part in the action of August 21st, writes :

" General Godley addressed us before the fight, saying that he knew if any regiment could take it it would be an Irish one, and that two other regiments had previously failed.

" At 3.30 on the 21st August, after a heavy bombardment, the infantry were ordered to advance, and in less time than twenty-five seconds our lads were in the first line of Turkish trenches, and then the bayonets got to work. In ten minutes the Turks took to their heels, and the nicest hunt you ever saw took place.

" We had taken the first line and two wells, and reformed up in front of the second line in an old sunken roadway.

" At the dressing station, which was right in the midst of the firing line, with shrapnel shells and high explosives bursting all round, my wound was dressed by Dr. O'Sullivan (J.I.). He and Father O'Connor, our chaplain, with coats off and shirt sleeves rolled

up, were attending to the wounded, and where necessary Father O'Connor administering the last rites of the Church. It was splendid to see the two typical Irish gentlemen doing their duty without thought for themselves. To give you an idea of the volume of fire only two of Dr. O'Sullivan's stretcher-bearers were left after two hours' fighting."

And here is another glimpse of the same action, this time from the pen of a N.C.O. of the Connaughts :

"We got into extended order on the double, and each man in a very short space of time picked out his objective. Two minutes afterwards the air was filled with the moans of the wounded, but amidst the din of battle you could hear our lads shouting 'A Nation Once Again,' 'God Save Ireland,' etc.

"The fever of fight was upon us, and nothing could resist the dash of the Connaughts. On we sped, never moving from the straight line, only picking out the Turk that blocked the way, leaving the rest to our second and third lines that followed

closely until at last our objective—a well at the bottom of the incline—was gained.

"For a moment we halted, and then a young blood-spattered officer shouted 'On,' and again away over the plain. A burst of fire from the Turkish machine guns thins our lines, but before they can do much damage we are on top of their trenches.

"The fight for the first line did not last long. We were into their second line almost as soon as the Turks, and, my God, what slaughter there was there. They simply fled before us, and our machine guns mowed them down."

Another attempt to take the crest of Hill 60 was made on the 27th August. Sir Ian Hamilton calls it "a brilliant affair." General Cox again commanded, and his force consisted of Australians and New Zealanders, with the 5th Connaught Rangers. Of the work of the Rangers on this day Sir Ian writes:

"On the left the 250 men of the 5th Connaught Rangers excited the admiration of all beholders by the swiftness and cohesion of their charge. In five minutes they had carried their objective, the northern Turkish

communications, when they at once set to and began a lively bomb-fight along the trenches against strong parties which came hurrying up from the enemy supports and afterwards from their reserves. At midnight fresh troops were to have strengthened our grip upon the hill, but before that hour the Irishmen had been out-bombed, and the 9th Australian Light Horse, who had made a most plucky attempt to recapture the lost communication, trench had been repulsed."

In the end, however, this attack was successful, and "four hundred acres," as Sir Ian Hamilton notes, "were added to the territories of Anzac."

* * * *

There let us leave the operations at Suvla Bay—with a sight of the Connaughts dashing into action, singing the songs of Ireland. Though those operations were, from the military point of view, unsuccessful, it is enough for us to say and to know that the 10th Division was not found wanting in the day of fiery trial. Battalions like the Dublin "Pals," almost swept out of existence, tell

their own heroic tale. Whatever the result on the whole, at least the Irish soldiers had helped to take and to hold the furthest forward positions on the right and left of the line.

" I am proud to be Irish," writes an officer of the 10th. " Ireland may mourn, but the Irish may hold up their heads and be proud of their losses."

IV.—THE BALKANS

THE "Disaster of Suvla Bay," as it has been called by many critics, ended for the moment any hope there may have been of driving the Turks from the Peninsula of Gallipoli. While the pundits were discussing who was to blame, and what was to be done next, the remnant of the heroic 10th (Irish) Division "sat tight" in their trenches and calmly awaited developments.

Developments were not long in arriving. While pundits discussed the position in all the capitals of Europe; while *démarches* of prodigious prolixity were being "presented" at Sofia, at Athens, at goodness knows where; while diplomats were wrangling, and General Staffs were cudgelling their brains for a strategical policy, and journalists were shouting unwanted and entirely preposterous advice at the tops of their voices; while, in short, the Allied Nations were temporarily in a state

of intellectual chaos . . . the fiat had already gone forth. Serbia was to be destroyed. The Austro-German guns were already roaring on the Danube. The Bulgars were preparing to deal the little Serbian nation an assassin's blow in the back. Mackensen had been "detached" from the Eastern Front (having himself been unable to "detach" the Russians), and was marching towards the Serbian frontier. *Delenda est Serbia.*

Meanwhile, the 10th Division sat tight in the trenches of Gallipoli, grimly holding on, with their grand comrades of the "immortal 29th," of the English Territorial Division, of the heroic "Anzacs."

Presently, confusion ceased. The Allies struck in the Balkans. The blow was delivered too late. It was, in fact, ineffective; but it was an honourable blow, struck to help a small country about to be crushed by overwhelming enemy forces (the Central Empires take no risks when they set out to murder a small nation); a blow such as Prussia has never struck since first that robber State began. And it was the hardest

blow that the Allies could deliver at the moment.

The French had landed at Salonika. That was the news that flashed round the globe one morning in early October. General Sarrail was in command: Sarrail, the hero of the Argonne, the man who beat the Imperial Crown Prince at the Battle of the Marne. In a few days, as it seemed, he was already pushing his gallant troops up towards Serbia—stretching out hands of help—vainly, perhaps, but magnificently—towards the little Serbian Army in its death agonies in the mountains. A sublime gesture, whatever the German General Staff might think of its tactical or strategic value.

"Bravo, France!" That was the thought of every Briton as he read of the quixotic dash of the French towards Serbia. And immediately the other thought followed: "But what is England doing? Has she left France in the lurch?"

It was an impossible and an intolerable thought, and in fact it was not justified. England had not for one moment failed her ally. The decision to send troops to the

Balkans was a decision taken in common by England and France. As soon as it was made, British troops were moved, as French troops were moved, to Salonika. The French got there first. Why? For one reason only: *because the British Government chivalrously placed at the disposal of the French troops the transports which were assembled to move the British.* So another slander, industriously circulated in England and France by persons who ought to have known better, dies a natural death.

The first British troops to reach Salonika were the 10th Division—a reinforced and refitted 10th Division—from Gallipoli. Thus the Irish Division were first in the field in the Allied campaign in the Balkans.

The news leaked out in England gradually, as such news does. One afternoon in October Mr. Tennant announced in the House of Commons, as it were casually, that Sir Bryan Mahon was in command of the British Forces in the Balkans. Ireland, at least, knew what that meant. If the gallant commander of the 10th Division was in command in the Balkans, it was safe to assume that the

10th was with him. And so in fact it was.

Great was the joy of the 10th Division when the word went round early in October that they were to be moved to Salonika. They had been looking forward to a winter in the trenches in Gallipoli: a dash into the Balkans was much more attractive, at least in anticipation. For in this case the old adage did not apply. The devil they did not know was considered a great improvement on the devil they knew.

By the end of October the 10th had reached Salonika, and was pushing up in support of General Sarrail's right flank towards Lake Doiran.

We pause for a moment to consider the nature of the task set the Allied commanders in the Balkans, and to sketch the operations which began with Sarrail's dash to Krivolak, and which have ended, temporarily, with the creation of the great *tête-de-pont* of Salonika.

General Sarrail's task was, from a military standpoint, hopeless from the first, and, of course, he knew it: that is to say, assuming

that his task was to prevent the Serbian Army from being annihilated. It was not in any way possible to relieve the Serbians with the forces at his command. But, at least, something was possible. It was possible to strike rapidly up towards Veles and Uskub, and thus to call off a certain substantial number of the Bulgar forces which were seeking to encircle the Serbians from the south. And this was the course taken by Sarrail. He knew that, in all probability, he could not reach Uskub. He knew that he must eventually beat a retreat back towards Salonika. He knew also that he might lose heavily in the operation; there was even a risk of disaster. But it was a risk worth taking, and he took it. The result proved that Sarrail was right. The Serbians were, it is true, driven back to the mountains of Albania; the French lost a couple of thousand men; but, on the whole, the limited operation undertaken by Sarrail was a triumphant success. The Serbians escaped the clutches of the Bulgars; the Bulgars themselves lost heavily; and a large Bulgar army was kept in Southern Macedonia. Best of all, the

bold throw forward of the French towards Serbia enabled the Allies to plant a firm foot in Salonika, in which place they mean to remain.

Sarrail's difficulties of advance were enormous. One single line of railway connected Salonika with Nish, and was the sole means by which the French Commander-in-Chief could move his troops, guns, munitions, and supplies. There was a deficiency in rolling-stock, and the Greek authorities were not over-helpful. But by far the worst feature of the situation was the nature of the country through which the Nish-Salonika line ran. From the military point of view it was dangerous to a degree. The line ran through the valley of the Vardar, a mountain stream that rises in the hills of Albania, flows east as far as Uskub, and then, turning south, dashes and foams its way through the mountain gorges till it reaches the sea in the Gulf of Salonika. On the right bank of the Vardar —towards Bulgaria—the country is again mountainous, hills rising here and there to a height of 2,000 to 8,000 feet. Narrow defiles lead from the Vardar through the hills to-

wards Bulgarian territory. Even the layman can see the terrible dangers incurred by the French, and later, by the British forces, in this advance. At any point the Bulgars might break through to the railway, and cut off the retreat of the Allies.

But what Sarrail does not know about strategy is hardly worth knowing. He handled his little force magnificently. What he did was, roughly, as follows : As he pushed his advanced troops up the line of the Vardar towards Veles, he flung out on his right light forces *en échelon* to protect the strategical points on his flank. Thus at every point where the Bulgars advanced from the east on the Allied flank they found themselves confronted by the deadly fire of the French "75's" and, later, of the British field guns, and also by rifle and machine-gun fire of well-posted troops. The allied flank was, in fact, held in sufficient force, as the event proved, to enable the French to withdraw from their advanced positions, and retire towards Salonika with comparatively small losses.

The furthest reach of Sarrail's "spear-

head" was Veles, though for a time the French seemed to threaten Uskub. But the occupation of Veles was a matter of days only. The Bulgars, massing at Ishtip, were too strong. The French quickly withdrew to the line Krivolak–Strumnitza, which they occupied about the last week in October.

At this point, enter the British troops. They came up gradually and occupied the gap on the right rear of the French, between Strumnitza and Lake Doiran. Between 10,000 and 20,000 Irishmen held this gap, their right resting on Lake Doiran. East and south of Lake Doiran was Greek territory, which the Bulgars dare not enter. A rough sketch will, perhaps, make the position plain :

The country between Strumnitza and Lake Doiran occupied by the British troops was mountainous and difficult. Most of the positions were on the Belashitza hills, and the work of entrenching, and of placing the guns in position, was difficult in the extreme. Nevertheless, the Irish Division held on tenaciously to these positions for over a month. While the French were sustaining violent attacks on the Krivolak and Strumnitza points, strong forces of Bulgars were also attacking the British. Quite early in November we hear of the Connaught Rangers crossing bayonets with the Bulgars on the mountains, and in fact repeated bayonet attacks were made on the Irishmen during November by the Bulgarians (who, by the way, are skilful and daring fighters). These attacks were all repulsed. For by now the 10th Division were seasoned troops: Suvla had taught them much. The Bulgars found that the Irish would not budge until Sarrail and Mahon gave them the word.

Meanwhile, the French were slowly falling back from Krivolak. Nothing was to be gained by holding the Krivolak-Strumnitza

line, now that the Serbian army had got away, and General Sarrail withdrew his troops steadily, and in accordance with plans thought out carefully long before. Pausing at the pass of Demir Kapu, where the railway runs through a tunnel in the rock 100 feet long, he blew up the railway and completely blocked the tunnel. He also destroyed the bridge over the Vardar. The Bulgars were checked, but only for the moment. They came on again in overwhelming numbers against the French rearguards. At Gradetz, if we are to believe the official Bulgarian report, there was terrible street fighting, and the French lost heavily. But nowhere was the French retreat seriously hampered. The two divisions commanded respectively by Baillard and Leblois fell back in perfect order, the British on the right conforming to the movement.

On December 11th came the great Bulgar attack on the 10th Division. By this date they had abandoned their original positions on the Belashitza range, and had fallen back westwards towards the Vardar, keeping in touch with the French on their left. Let us

give the War Office account of the battle verbatim. It is an historic document, for it is the first official *communiqué* to mention by name Irish regiments which had distinguished themselves in the field :

FIGHTING NORTH OF SALONIKA

" After sustaining violent attacks delivered by the enemy in overwhelming numbers, the 10th Division succeeded, with the help of reinforcements, in retiring to a strong position from Lake Doiran westwards towards the valley of the Vardar in conjunction with our Allies.

" The Division is reported to have fought well against very heavy odds, and it was largely due to the gallantry of the troops, and especially of the Munster Fusiliers, the Dublin Fusiliers, and the Connaught Rangers, that the withdrawal was successfully accomplished.

" Owing to the mountainous nature of the country it was necessary to place eight field guns for purposes of defence in a position from which it was impossible to withdraw them when the retirement took place.

"Our casualties amounted to some 1,500 men."

A few details may be added to the bald official account of the battle. The Bulgars attacked early on the Saturday morning, battering our first-line trenches with high-explosive shells for hours. The infantry attacked in the German style, in close formation, and they suffered heavily from the concentrated gun, machine-gun, and rifle fire of the Irish. But numbers prevailed, and our troops retired, first to the second line of trenches, and then to the third line, where they took up a strong position from which the Bulgars could not dislodge them.

One incident of the battle will be immortal. It is the story of the sacrifice of two companies of the Inniskillings—the heroes of Chocolate Hill. These men were posted on a ridge known as Kevis Crest. For a whole morning they kept the Bulgars at bay with their rifle fire, while the main body of the Irish was falling back on the third line. The Bulgars came on furiously and in overwhelming numbers; but the Inniskillings emptied their magazines again and again until

their ammunition was exhausted. Hardly a man of these two heroic companies escaped. But they did not die in vain. The stand of the Inniskillings gave our men time to prepare the third line of trenches against which the Bulgar attack broke as a wave breaks on the solid rock.

" Greater love hath no man. . . ." It has been said a thousand times in the Great War. Let us say it once again as we think of the brave lads of the Inniskillings who died willingly to save their comrades on the shores of Lake Doiran.

* * * *

Eight thousand Bulgars, 1,500 British, and an unspecified number of French, killed and wounded. Such is the tale of death and suffering at Lake Doiran. But the Allied forces were saved, and the Bulgars were flung back. Quietly the Allies evacuated Ghevgeli and Doiran, and retired across the Greek frontier towards Salonika.

* * *

There, behind the fortifications thrown up

by the Allies, let us bid farewell to the 10th Division with their gallant British and French comrades, waiting for the days when they can once more take the offensive and assist to drive the Germans back from the East.

And, as we suspend for the moment this story of Irish valour on the battlefields of the East and of the West, can we not draw a moral for ourselves and for all who are Irish? Let us state it in the words of an anonymous writer in an Irish newspaper,* for better words can hardly be used:

"Is the spectacle of Irish Unionists and Nationalists fighting side by side in Flanders and Gallipoli—true comrades and brothers—less wonderful and inspiring? A little more than a year ago they were preparing to kill one another. To-day many of them have died for one another. When this war is ended we shall resume our political controversies in a new Ireland. The Unionists and Nationalists who fought at Ypres and stormed the hill at Suvla have sealed a new bond of patriotism. The spirits of our dead

* *The Irish Times.*

Irish soldiers will cry trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of internecine strife in Ireland. Shall we dare to think that the Irish soldier who has died for the liberties of the world, and for the future progress and happiness of Ireland has died in vain? Our memories of that storied peninsula where so much Irish blood has been shed will be proud as well as sad. Our sons and brothers there have made a new chapter in Irish history. Of those who will never come home we can truly say, as the Spartans said of their dead at Thermopylæ, that their tombs are altars, their lot glorious and beautiful."

APPENDIX

A LIST OF IRISH V.C.'s

DURING the present war (to December, 1915) the Victoria Cross has been awarded to Irishmen in the following instances:

LIEUTENANT MAURICE JAMES DEASE,
4th Batt. Royal Fusiliers.

> During the action at Nimy, north of Mons, on August 23rd, 1914, the machine guns were protecting the crossing over a canal bridge, and Lieutenant Dease was several times severely wounded, but refused to leave the guns. He remained at his post until all the men of his detachment were either killed or wounded, and the guns put out of action by the enemy's fire.

Lieutenant Dease was the first officer to gain the Victoria Cross in the war. He was the only son of Mr. Edmund F. Dease, Culmullen, Drumree, Co. Meath. He was killed in the action at Nimy.

SERGEANT (NOW SECOND-LIEUTENANT) DAVID NELSON,
L Battery, Royal Horse Artillery.

For helping to bring the guns into action under heavy fire at Nery on September 1st, and, while severely wounded, remaining with them until all ammunition was exhausted, although he had been ordered to retire to cover.

Second-Lieutenant Nelson was one of the heroes of the famous stand of L Battery, R.H.A., at Nery, in the retreat from Mons. Lieutenant Nelson's own description of the incident is as follows: "My battery suffered heavy loss on Tuesday morning (September 1st), but I escaped with two wounds—one slight on the thigh, and the other severe on the right side. We were watering our horses when a German battery of eight guns came up within 700 yards of us, and practically mowed us down in dozens. I got my gun into action, and after heavy fighting we silenced the eight German guns. We were taken prisoners by the Germans on Wednesday night. However, I escaped on Saturday, and found my way to the French troops."

Lieutenant Nelson is a native of County Monaghan.

DRUMMER WILLIAM KENNY,
2nd Batt. the Gordon Highlanders.

For conspicuous bravery on October 23rd, near Ypres, in rescuing wounded men on five occasions under very heavy fire in the most fearless manner, and for twice previously saving machine guns by carrying them out of action. On numerous occasions Drummer Kenny conveyed urgent messages under very dangerous circumstances over fire-swept ground.

Drum-Major Kenny, V.C., though a member of a Scottish regiment, is a native of Drogheda, Co. Louth, where his parents still reside. The freedom of the borough was conferred upon him on March 19th, 1914. Other freemen of Drogheda have included the Duke of Ormond (1704), Henry Grattan, Sir Arthur Wellesley, and Sir Garnet Wolseley.

LIEUTENANT J. A. O. BROOKE,
2nd Batt. Gordon Highlanders.

Lieutenant James Anson Otho Brooke, 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders, was awarded the V.C.:

For conspicuous bravery and great ability near Gheluvelt on October 29th, 1914, in lead-

ing two attacks on the German trenches under heavy rifle fire and machine-gun fire, regaining a lost trench at a very critical moment. He was killed on that day. By his marked coolness and promptitude on this occasion, Lieutenant Brooke prevented the enemy from breaking through our line at a time when a general counter-attack could not have been organised.

Lieutenant Brooke was a grandson of the late Sir Arthur Brinsley Brooke, of Colebroke, Co. Fermanagh.

LANCE-CORPORAL (NOW SECOND-LIEUTENANT) MICHAEL O' LEARY,
1st Batt. Irish Guards.

For conspicuous bravery at Cuinchy on February 1st, 1915. When forming one of the storming party which advanced against the enemy's barricades he rushed to the front, and himself killed five Germans who were holding the first barricade, after which he attacked the second barricade, about sixty yards further on, which he captured, after killing three of the enemy, and making prisoners of two more. Lance-Corporal O'Leary thus practically cap-

tured the enemy's position by himself, and prevented the rest of the attacking party from being fired upon.

Second-Lieutenant O'Leary is, perhaps, the most famous of the Irish V.C.'s of the war. At all events, his great exploit at Cuinchy, and his rollicking Irish name seemed to catch the public imagination, and "Mike O'Leary" became a popular national hero. Second-Lieutenant O'Leary was born near Macroom, Co. Cork. He was the first Irish Guardsman to win the V.C.

PRIVATE ROBERT MORROW,
1st Batt. Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusiliers).

For most conspicuous bravery near Messines on April 12th, 1915, when he rescued and carried successively to places of comparative safety several men who had been buried in the *débris* of trenches wrecked by shell fire. Private Morrow carried out this gallant work on his own initiative, and under very heavy fire from the enemy.

Private Morrow was killed at St. Julien a fortnight later, while again rescuing wounded under

fire. He was a native of Newmills, Co. Tyrone. In addition to the V.C., Private Morrow received from the Tsar of Russia the medal of St. George (Third Class) for "gallantry and distinguished service in the field."

PRIVATE EDWARD DWYER,
1st Batt. the East Surrey Regiment.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at "Hill 60" on April 20th, 1915. When his trench was heavily attacked by German grenade-throwers, he climbed on to the parapet, and, although subjected to a hail of bombs at close quarters, succeeded in dispersing the enemy by the effective use of his hand grenades. Private Dwyer displayed great gallantry earlier on this day in leaving his trench, under heavy shell fire, to bandage his wounded comrades.

Private (now Corporal) Dwyer was born at Fulham, of Irish parents.

PRIVATE WILLIAM KENEALEY,
1st Batt. the Lancashire Fusiliers.

On April 25th, 1915, three companies and

the headquarters of the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, in effecting a landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula, to the west of Cape Helles, were met by a very deadly fire from hidden machine guns, which caused a great number of casualties. The survivors, however, rushed up to and cut the wire entanglements, notwithstanding the terrific fire from the enemy, and after overcoming supreme difficulties the cliffs were gained, and the position maintained. Amongst the many very gallant officers and men engaged in this most hazardous undertaking, Captain Willis, Sergeant Richards, and Private Kenealey have been selected by their comrades as having performed the most signal acts of bravery and devotion to duty.

Private Kenealey was born in the city of Wexford in 1886. His parents removed to Wigan in 1890. His father, Colour-Sergeant John S. Kenealey, served in the Royal Irish Regiment for twenty-four years. Private Kenealey died of his wounds at the base hospital at Malta.

CORPORAL (NOW SERGEANT) WM. COSGROVE,
1st Batt. the Royal Munster Fusiliers.

For most conspicuous bravery in the leading

of his section with great dash during our attack from the beach to the east of Cape Helles on the Turkish positions on April 26th, 1915. Corporal Cosgrove on this occasion pulled down the posts of the enemy's high wire entanglements single-handed, notwithstanding a terrific fire from both front and flanks, thereby greatly contributing to the successful clearing of the height.

Sergeant Cosgrove, V.C., was born at Upper Agharn, near Queenstown, Co. Cork. His own account of his feat (also referred to at p. 147 supra), is as follows: "I believe there was wild cheering when they saw what I was at, but I only heard the screech of bullets and saw dust rising all round from where they hit. I could not tell you how many posts I pulled up, and the boys that were left with me were everything as good as myself, and I do wish that they all got some recognition. We met a brave, honourable foe in the Turks, and I am sorry that such decent fighting men were brought into the row by such dirty tricksters as the Germans. They gave us great resistance, but we got to their trenches and won about 200 yards length by 20 yards deep, and 700 yards from the shore. When I got to the spot I did my own part,

and later collapsed. One of the bullets struck me at the side, and passed clean through me. I was removed to Malta Hospital, where there were two operations performed."

SERGEANT JAMES SOMERS,
1st Batt. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

For most conspicuous bravery. On the night of July 1st–2nd, 1915, in the southern zone of the Gallipoli Peninsula, where, owing to hostile bombing some of our troops had retired from a sap, Sergeant Somers remained alone on the spot until a party brought up bombs. He then climbed over into the Turkish trench, and bombed the Turks with great effect. Later he advanced into the open, under heavy fire, and held back the enemy by throwing bombs into their flank until a barricade had been established. During this period he frequently ran to and from our trenches to obtain fresh supplies of bombs. By his gallantry and coolness, Sergeant Somers was solely instrumental in effecting the recapture of portion of our trench which had been lost.

Sergeant Somers, V.C., resides at Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary.

CAPTAIN GERALD ROBERT O'SULLIVAN,

1st Batt. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

For most conspicuous bravery during operations south-west of Krithia, on the Gallipoli Peninsula. On the night of July 1st–2nd, 1915, when it was essential that a portion of a trench which had been lost should be regained, Captain O'Sullivan, although not belonging to the troops at this point, volunteered to lead a party of bomb-throwers to effect the recapture. He advanced in the open under a very heavy fire, and, in order to throw his bombs with greater effect, got up on the parapet, where he was completely exposed to the fire of the enemy occupying the trench. He was finally wounded, but not before his inspiring example had led on his party to make further efforts, which resulted in the recapture of the trench. On the night of June 18th–19th, 1915, Captain O'Sullivan saved a critical situation in the same locality by his great personal gallantry and good leading.

Captain O'Sullivan was killed at Suvla Bay on August 21st. He was a native of Co. Cork.

SECOND-LIEUTENANT GEORGE ARTHUR BOYD ROCHFORT,

Special Reserve, 1st Batt. Scots Guards.

For most conspicuous bravery in the trenches, between Cambrin and La Bassée. On August 3rd, 1915, at 2 a.m., a German trench mortar bomb landed on the side of the parapet of the communication trench, in which he stood close to a small working party of his battalion. He might easily have stepped back a few yards round the corner into perfect safety, but shouting to his men to look out he rushed at the bomb, seized it, and hurled it over the parapet, where it at once exploded. There is no doubt that this splendid combination of presence of mind and courage saved the lives of many of the working party.

Second-Lieutenant Boyd Rochfort resides at Midleton Park, Castletown, Westmeath, and is a well-known Irish polo player.

CAPTAIN ANKETELL MOUTRAY-READ,

1st Batt. the Northamptonshire Regiment.

For most conspicuous bravery during the first attack near Hulluch on the morning of September 25th, 1915. Although partially

gassed, Captain Read went out several times in order to rally parties of different units which were disorganised and retiring. He led them back into the firing line, and, utterly regardless of danger, moved freely about encouraging them under a withering fire. He was mortally wounded while carrying out this gallant work. Captain Read had previously shown conspicuous bravery during digging operations on August 29th, 30th, and 31st, 1915, and on the night of July 29th–30th he carried out of action an officer, who was mortally wounded, under a hot fire from rifles and grenades.

Captain Moutray-Read was a native of Wicklow, and was a well-known Army athlete.

MAJOR GEORGE G. WHEELER,
Late 7th Hariana Lancers, Indian Army.

For most conspicuous bravery at Shaiba, Mesopotamia, on April 12th and 13th, 1915, when he rode straight for the enemy's standards, and was killed.

Major Wheeler was a member of a well-known Dublin family.

Printed in Great Britain by Wyman & Sons Ltd., London and Reading

IN A FRENCH HOSPITAL

NOTES OF A NURSE

By M. EYDOUX-DÉMIANS. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d. net

This book gives in an astonishingly graphic and unforced style a variety of thumbnail sketches and vignettes of wounded and nurses in a French Hospital at the beginning of the war. The work is perfectly natural and simple: it does not pile on horrors, nor does it sentimentalise unduly. But it certainly gives one some indelible impressions of courage, devotion, suffering, and patriotism. As the translator says: "The merit of these notes is their profound sincerity. They give only impressions of courage and devotion that exist to-day in a French provincial Hospital."

T. FISHER UNWIN Ltd. LONDON

Kerr, S. Parnell
What the Irish regiments have done