W.S. 971

ORIGINAL



ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

# DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 971

**Witness**

George F.H. Berkeley,
Hanwell Castle,
Near Banbury,
Oxfordshire,
England.

**Identity.**

Training Officer, Irish Volunteers, 1914.

**Subject.**

The Irish political situation, 1914.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No. S.2289

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL



HANWELL CASTLE, BANBURY.
TEL. WROXTON ST. MARY 207



10 Aug. 1954

Dear Mr. Brennan

The two copies of my M.S. Three months in Belfast 1914 arrived yesterday, and I cannot tell you what a pleasure it is to see them so very finely typed as they are: I must begin by congratulating you on that score, — and whoever undertakes your work as a typist.

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In my two copies I have made the following ~~alterations~~ additions — all of them filling in gaps where I had left out something:

Page 11 - The numbers of the old Gladstonian Liberals: 267 Liberals 262.

35 Hard-bitten infatuate.

38 In line 19 - I have inserted the word "never"

48 - line 14: "other unit as a colonist"

49 line 14 - able "as" easily to five Those 15 months

Please thank the Director for his very kind message. We too hope to meet him before much time has gone by.

Yours sincerely

George F-H Berkeley

ORIGINAL



## CHAPTER I.

## THE CARSONADE.

I will now try and give a short sketch of the agitation whereby all attempts at peace or compromise between Ireland and England were rendered impossible; whereby the English Conservatives defeated the fourth great effort at settlement since the year 1886.

Personally I did not believe at first - indeed I could not believe - that they would go farther than Parliamentary opposition. Any resort to force seemed to me so extraordinarily unscrupulous. I remembered that only lately, in the years 1904 and 1905, it was Mr. Balfour and his Unionist Cabinet who had suggested self-government for Ireland under the name of Devolution (in which scheme there was no mention of partition). I remembered also the rapprochement of 1910 when the Conservatives had hoped to save the veto of the House of Lords by making concessions as regards Home Rule. Why even in the hotels in Italy - even in the far-off and beloved city of Perugia - I had been astounded at finding long columns in the Times from the well-known Conservative scribe Politicus, half shame-facedly urging these concessions:

> "Home Rule, pure and simple, may be undesirable, but call it Federation, Devolution, Self-Government, and isn't there a good deal to be said for it in that form?"

And how I wondered at the transparent hypocrisy that permeated this suave insinuation of a bargain! Yet this was

in the Times. What transpired I do not know; but nothing eventuated. And it is said that Mr. F.E. Smith, on hearing of the failure, exclaimed to a friend with unconcealed satisfaction: "Now we must beat the Protestant drum!" For many irresponsibles it was an unrivalled opportunity of gaining titles and high offices by stirring up ill-will among men and then claiming their reward.

It seemed to me impossible, therefore, that the Conservative Party should now turn on us and raise Civil War against proposals to which they had so nearly agreed in the previous year. Nevertheless I was told by responsible men that they intended to do so. In fact my own brother-in-law, Conservative M.P. for Windsor, said to me that there would be no Home Rule because some of his party were buying arms and meant to fight.

On September 23rd 1911 the campaign opened. A meeting was held at Craigavon near Belfast. Four hundred Protestant delegates assembled from all parts of Ulster, and elected a Commission of Five, whom they appointed to draw up a scheme of Provisional Government for the Province of Ulster. And Sir Edward Carson made his celebrated speech in which he said that:

> "If necessary tomorrow, Ulster would march from Belfast to Cork and take the consequences, even if not one of them ever returned."

An extraordinarily cheap boast, surely, amid a population entirely peaceful and entirely unarmed!

Before the end of the year both Mr. Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law as representing the Unionist party made speeches in support of Sir Edward.

And when I enquired of a Conservative agent who was a friend of mine, what it all meant, he replied that the Orangemen intended to arm and to hold down as much of the land as they could, round Belfast. So one began to realise that the matter was serious; but still I thought little enough of it. It was an impracticable scheme. And would have remained so, had it not been backed, presently, by the British Army and Navy. ~~This I fear rather lessened my belief in them; because I knew~~ that any Nationalist would feel that the acceptance of a title was vulgarizing his record of work. To serve Ireland has been for us all a constant call for ~~self-sacrifice, not advancement;~~ and ~~long may it remain so.~~

With the advent of the year 1912 matters began to move more rapidly. On April 11th the Home Rule Bill was introduced in the House of Commons. On the 23rd of April it was submitted to the National Convention in Dublin and unanimously accepted "as an honest and generous attempt to settle the long and disastrous quarrel between the British and Irish nations." They used the word "generous"! And what a very moderate Bill it was. How carefully it safeguarded the interests of England; how ready its promoters were to meet every imaginable demand of Ulster.

Here, then, after twenty-seven years spent in discussion, was a Bill so moderate as to be actually inacceptable to many Irish people - and both sides had their opportunity of criticising it. However, in reality very few people except M.P's even took the trouble to read its details for themselves. They preferred to listen to platform vituperation. And even the M.P's had very

little real knowledge of it. It was said in Parliament, whether truly or not I do not know, that the lesser lights used to get their speeches written by experts from outside. Mr. Bonar Law himself struck me as knowing very little about his subject at first. Many of the things which he said were just the things which Sir Edward Carson wanted to get stated, but for which he would not have cared to be responsible himself. However, Mr. Law gradually improved as time went on, and succeeded in rallying round him all the elements opposed to settlement. We soon became aware of the fact.

At Easter 1913 Lord Londonderry said that 100,000 men had joined the Ulster Volunteers, and at the great meeting at Balmoral, Mr. Bonar Law and Sir Edward Carson, after delivering their speeches, shook hands publicly as a token that they were definitely allied. On July 27, at a mass meeting at Blenheim, alliance to the death was proclaimed between the English Unionists and the Orangemen, even to the point of allied rebellion. On this occasion Sir Edward said openly:

> "We will shortly challenge the Government to interfere with us if they dare ... They may tell us if they like that that is treason."

And for his part Mr. Bonar Law made a definite statement:

> "I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster will go, which I shall not be ready to support and which will not be supported by the overwhelming majority of the British people."

Here we have the definite clinching of the agreement. And these were remarkably strong words in view of the fact that the

British electorate had decided against him in three general elections during only five years. The British people as a whole were not in his favour; but in one quarter, he undoubtedly did possess an overwhelming majority - namely, among the officers of the Army and Navy.

The whole contention of the Conservatives might be fairly well presented in one single sentence: Home Rule for Ireland was so important a measure that there ought to be a general election on that issue and that issue alone; a sort of referendum in fact.

The Liberal reply was that never possibly could you get a fair referendum on such a subject; that no grant of Imperial self-government ever yet had been referred to the people, or even sent up to the Lords. It was a measure that could so easily be misrepresented that it would never get a fair hearing. And it was undoubtedly true that even if Home Rule were subjected to a Referendum - even then the people would vote largely on different issues. Capitalists, for instance, would vote according to the interests of capital, and workers according to the interests of Labour. However, Mr. Bonar Law even went further:

> "We regard the Government as a revolutionary committee which has seized by fraud upon despotic power. In our opposition to them we shall not be guided by the consideration, we shall not be restrained by the bonds which would influence us in an ordinary political struggle. We shall use <u>any means</u> - whatever means seem to us likely to be most effective."

To use such terms as the above - in the teeth of three adverse

Elections - was manifestly a return to the 18th Century, when the House of Lords could do almost anything.

By means such as this, Sir Edward Carson undoubtedly obtained an almost complete concentration of force. But unfortunately his followers carried the process a great deal further. The horrors of the shipyards in Belfast were a loathsome underside to the boycott campaign among the richer classes. It took the form of trying to turn as many Catholics and Home Rulers as possible out of their employment in Belfast. If they went to work, they had to run the risk of being half-killed. At one time it was said that there were as many as 2,000 men out of employment in Belfast, through no fault of their own, and this process of elimination was entirely approved of by leading Orangemen. Hundreds of workmen left the city and went to Dublin. Whether the actual number, 2,000, is exaggerated I do not know, but the horrors perpetrated were not exaggerated. Catholics were beaten almost to death; some were roasted before the fires; others mutilated in different ways. There was a celebrated case of one small Catholic boy of sixteen years who was taken before the fire by Orangemen and told that if he refused to shout: "To Hell with the Pope" he would be roasted. He refused, and stood his torture till they gave it up.

Note: It may be asked: how can I be certain that these things were really true? Well, they were shown up by an Englishman, Mr. Tomlinson of the Daily News, and never disproved or seriously contradicted and when I was afterwards in Belfast I made the acquaintance of Mr. Tomlinson and many other journalists. In this connection I remember one evening, sitting around a table smoking and talking, with five or six English journalists, of whom Mr. Tomlinson was the only Liberal. Presently the others began to chaff him upon some supposed omission of his to note some small

point of interest that had occurred. He was extremely good-tempered. But at last he said: "Well, at all events you must admit that I did good work when I showed up what was going on in the shipyards about two years ago." This retort rather silenced them. "Oh, yes, excellent work" they said. "No one would deny that." These were their actual words, and I was rather struck with the gravity with which they were spoken.

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Meanwhile the campaign was going gaily forward in England. Political lunches accompanied by fiery eloquence were the order of the day. Mr. Ian Malcolm was writing a warsong for "Ulster." Lord Willoughby de Broke was raising and training men, and had given out that he declined to shake hands with anyone on the opposite side. Great ladies were using their influence with the officers of their acquaintance. Mr. F.E. Smith had been appointed Galloper to the Army of Invasion.

Indeed the year 1913 is mainly remarkable for the raising of armed resistance in England to prevent Home Rule; the capturing of the Army, and the organising of a civilian force to shoot down the unfortunate unarmed Irish peasants who were only asking to have their Parliament restored to them, and no longer to be driven, by the million, out of their own native land.

On January 16th, 1914, the Home Rule Bill passed the Commons, by a majority of 110. On the 30th it was thrown out by the Lords; majority 257. In February the Orange Assembly of Four Hundred met in Belfast and appointed the already existing Commission of Five to be the Executive of their government.

On July 5th the Home Rule Bill again passed the Commons.

On July 12th Sir Edward Carson gave a new revelation to the world:

"I tell you this, that a day never passes that I do not get - to put it at a really low average - half a dozen letters from British officers asking to be enrolled ... The Army are with us."

On July 18th he said that action on the part of the British Government in any coming campaign against him "will, I believe, smash the Army into pieces, because it will divide the Army." (Morning Post, July 19th, 1913).

~~This movement for arming England to create civil war in Ireland was progressing with extraordinary rapidity throughout~~ the year 1913. In September the Provisional Government was set up in Belfast, and the Morning Post declared "war to the knife." Mr. F.E. Smith informed us that: "We have pledges and promises from some of the greatest generals in the Army." In November, the English volunteers for Ulster were estimated at 10,000, all bent on preventing any form of self-government for Ireland. A rather absurd side of this movement was the reckless manner in which it was carried out. One Ulster rifle was accidently issued to Mr. Redmond, who, I believe, kept it in his room at the House of Commons until the war broke out. In November the Observer gave out that "every Unionist ought to prepare to leave the Territorials", and that:

"The whole Unionist influence throughout the country ought to be used to prevent recruits from joining as long as there is the slightest threat of coercing Ulster."

This was printed in November 1913, only eight months before the War.

Meanwhile arms were simply pouring into Ireland. Every Conservative, whether Orangeman or Southern Unionist took a weapon over with him for the Ulster Volunteers. On December 9th the Times said:

> "From Birmingham alone it is estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 rifles and 20,000 pistols have been sent to Ireland."

With the year 1914 I do not mean to deal at any length. I need only say that by the winter of 1913-14 many of us had perceived that we should be obliged to arm, or else our case would go by default. Hitherto the Nationalists had done little or nothing towards arming because their M.P's had determinedly set their faces against it. They had won the game on constitutional lines, and their Bill was sliding through on the crest of a Parliamentary majority. What we all feared was anything in the nature of ~~external~~ disturbance. But at length it became evident that unless there were some counterpoise to the Orange movement, no one would believe that the Southerners really wanted Home Rule and the decision would be given, as has often been the case in Ireland, to the most violent agitator. It was a commonplace on English platforms to say: "The Irish do not really want Home Rule." In fact that idea was only finally killed by the rebellion of 1916.

Finally, therefore, it was very unwillingly decided to begin drilling and arming - though at first I do not think Mr. Redmond approved of it. No sooner was it known that the

Nationalists had begun, than the Government hastily passed an Act forbidding the importing of arms into Ireland. But it no longer mattered very much what Acts they might pass. On March 20th occurred the Curragh Mutiny when it became evident that General Gough and his officers would refuse to serve against the Orangemen. Then on April 24th there came the gun-running at Larne. It was said (rightly or wrongly) that at Larne alone the Orangemen and their English leaders landed as many as 20,000 rifles and 3,500,000 rounds of ammunition. From that time out they had only one aim - to irritate the Nationalists into attacking them. It was a beautifully safe game. The Nationalists had hardly any arms at all and their drilling was actively countered by the Police. Countless people, both in Ireland and England, volunteered against them. In our own hunting County (Warwickshire) almost every man was ready to serve, and most of the women had been trained as hospital nurses; houses were taken in the neighbouring town for the wounded Orangemen. One young friend of mine informed me that every single officer in his battalion of Special Reserve had bound himself to go, and in case of his being abroad at the moment of outbreak, had been guaranteed his expenses home. The only man of my acquaintance who had sufficient moral courage to refuse was on the list of Reserve of Officers, and he told me that he could not afford to risk losing his pension.

But the problem before the Unionists in England and Ireland was to get the Nationalists to strike the first blow. The

unfortunate Irish Catholics perceived of course that the true interest of their country lay in keeping the peace. Insults were daily heaped upon them. The Belfast News Letter referred to them as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" - a statement which was very largely true. The Times informed the general public that the Nationalist Volunteers "had large stores of vitriol to throw over their enemies" and although it had sufficient self-respect to recall this issue as soon as possible, nevertheless the lie had gone forth.* But gradually one began to notice that English people - some of the Liberals even - imagined that the Home Rulers were not sufficiently in earnest to fight for their cause. Indeed Captain Craig, M.P. said openly in the House of Commons, that the Nationalists were not arming "because they haven't got the pluck."

It became evident to me, and no doubt to scores of others that we must show that we were ready if need be to give our lives, in order to maintain the system of two-party Government in England; and in Ireland to defend the Compromise.

* I have the right to record this slander because it was applied to me personally. I was first informed of it by Mr. Campbell, the Times Correspondent in Belfast, who came to me as O.C. of the Redmondite Volunteers and made a formal apology.

## CHAPTER II.

In Chapter 1 I have retained my original description of the "Carsonade" as described by my old friend George Peel (v. his handbook, The reign of Sir Edward Carson, 1914), because that is an impartial account. But lately that description has been restated and confirmed in Sir Harold Nicolson's splendid and official Life of George V; any reader who doubts my accuracy need only refer to that standard work. A propos of the Home Rule Bill of 1912 he speaks as follows:-

> "The Home Rule Bill of 1912 strikes us today as a half=hearted proposal ... ... The reserved items were so numerous and important that they virtually reduced the Irish National Parliament to the status of a glorified County Council."

Personally, I have always been a loyal man, and in Ireland that has been my family tradition for nearly three-hundred years — the tradition of Bishop Berkeley; peace and mutual help and goodwill for all those around us. But now, quite suddenly, we were all face to face with Civil War. When, on the night of April 25th, 1914 the Carsonites ran that huge cargo of arms at Larne (over 20,000 rifles and about 3,000,000 cartridges) and talked openly of marching to Dublin and Cork, then it became evident that our old life-long sacrosanct creed of law and order had now been replaced by an appeal to force; that henceforth we must always consider

the possibility of Civil War, which (we foresaw) meant the dooming of many of the beautiful Irish country houses (my old home among others); and it also became evident that if the minority in Ireland had the right to fly to arms at any given moment, then undoubtedly the majority over there would possess the same right henceforth and for ever.

I can remember it all like yesterday! We began to ask ourselves - what support could the Liberal Government rely on when the crisis arrived?

Firstly, there was, of course, the Parliamentary majority in the House of Commons consisting of three main component parties:

The Old Gladstonian Liberals, about strong

The Irish Nationalists under Redmond, about 85 strong

The newly=arising Labour Party

But, supplementary to the members in the House, there was also the group of Liberals presided over by Haldane and led by Basil Williams, consisting of 23 of the keenest and nicest among the Liberal Party, men mainly of the literary type. We used to meet about once a week in the Committee rooms of the House of Commons. It was during these discussions that I first got in touch with men such as G.P. Gooch, Charles Roden Buxton, young Frank MacDermott, and others, but I can remember them more especially because it was through them

that I first became the friend of Basil Williams and Erskine Childers. Erskine Childers name was already well-known to most people through his Riddle of the Sands, and also through The arme blanche, a work written in collaboration with Lord Roberts after the Boer War. Basil Williams, who had been Headboy at Marlborough School, had been invited to write the official History of the Boer War. The two latter were old companions, Clerks in the House of Commons, who had volunteered together and served through the Boer War and were now hard at work on jobs of the most congenial type; at first I did not at all realise what an immense advantage it was to have experience of service-in-the-field.

In the event, Basil Williams' Committee produced the best and the most serviceable book on Irish politics that I have ever seen (Home Rule Problems Ed. Basil Williams, 1911). Certainly, these were staunch men and true! But naturally that work did not in any way envisage the necessity for a resort to Armed Force. What authority could we invoke to maintain order, or, in Ireland, for defence against an Orange mob; already there had been some rioting in the town of Londonderry.

Personally, although I lived in the country I had always belonged to the Irish Committee in London. It was composed of men and women born in Ireland and, I think, perfectly ready to offer their lives, if necessary. The presiding influence at that time was old Mrs. J.R. Green, the historian,

and the supporters of hers whom I remember best were Mr. Redmond, the Childers, Miss Mary Spring-Rice, and in those days Sir Roger Casement (whom we regarded as a pillar of legality) and Sir Alec and Lady Lawrence. As for me, seeing that I lived in North Oxfordshire, my best friend among the M.P's was naturally the Member for North Oxfordshire, Eustace Fiennes. He was a splendid type of the true English gentleman, brave and unselfish, he had been a colonist, and had taken his troop of Yeomanry to Africa. By birth a younger son of the Fiennes of Broughton Castle, the family which in 1642 had led the resistance against Charles I, at times he could become fairly scornful about the Carsonade.

However, as to Ireland, the first genuine step forward came from the ladies of the party. One day when I was up in London, lunching with the Childers, after luncheon Miss Spring Rice came in, and, of course, we talked about Ireland. Then rather suddenly Mrs. Childers said to me: "You know that we have a plan for running arms into Ireland in Miss Spring-Rice's yacht." The secret was out! At the first moment Miss Spring-Rice looked rather uncertain as to the wisdom of my being told. The original idea had been hers - but as I know now, the owner~~ship~~ of the yacht Asgard was in reality Childers. I looked at her in a sort of wondering manner, feeling that she had undertaken what could never be possible. She was of a type that one finds only too often in the Irish aristocratic families - evidently not capable

of "roughing it". Yet, so far, all her years had been devoted to the service of her country. And now, of course, I know at that moment she was living through the days which she would always feel to be the chief reward of her existence. What happiness for her! But for her to have embarked alone on this sea-trip would have been simply courting disaster. It was Mrs. Childers who made this enterprise a possibility - she, and always with her, her husband. They used to work together like one man. And what an able, thorough, practical commander he was! I think, born to have been a Naval Officer, but was a hundred times more useful for the books that he wrote.*

I spent some time talking to the Childers and Miss Spring-Rice and afterwards to our old President (Mrs. J.R. Green) but all that I could do at the moment was to promise them as "much help as I can manage". It was impossible for me to volunteer to go with them on the Asgard — I am always completely incapacitated by sea-sickness. But a few days later I said both to Childers and his wife: "I can't go with you on the yacht, but I'll go to Belfast. That is the one place where there is sure to be trouble."

On the 30th May 1914 I crossed to Dublin; took a room at the Shelbourne Hotel, and then, as soon as I had washed my hands and had tea went off to call on Colonel Maurice Moore the Officer in command of the Irish Volunteers.

*For this Committe of Basil Williams' he contributed the article on the Irish Land Question. And I always remember the comment made to me by Annan Bryce after one of the discussions: "You know Childers is far the ablest of your fellows. Where the other people end off he starts again." Annan Bryce had been

there as my guest, and ever afterwards I remembered that saying as a singularly shrewd opinion.

# CHAPTER III

Looking back on the whole scene now, forty-one years afterwards, I can recall only one man, of those whom I knew, who genuinely saw through the success of the Carsonade at the time, and was ready to act on his own initiative and get some advantage for his own side: I am thinking of the afterwards well-known Dr. Patrick McCarton. His case was certainly exceptional.

At that time, in all England, there was hardly anyone who was willing to call himself a Separatist: that would have been wrecking the Home Rule Bill in the eyes of everyone. So true was this that at that time I asked my Irish friends to give me an introduction to someone who was an avowed Separatist, so that I might have a talk with him and see whether he could not be satisfied with the existing Home Rule Bill. So, before long, that resulted in my going to call on the already well-known Dr. Patrick McCartón - a solicitor by profession.

Mr. McCartón said to me that he could not support our Bill because he was a Separatist. No arguments would move him. I remember he said to me: "I sent my car to support Carson, because his movement is a physical force movement," to which I replied: "Well, I suppose you are entitled to a share of their rifles"; but he would not admit that he had claimed any. He merely repeated: "I'm a Separatist, and I want something different from you."

That was the last contact of any sort that I had with him, until nearly seven years later, when Mr. Hugh McCartón his first cousin came to arrange the terms of the Truce with Ireland. I happened to be on the Committee of Lord Henry Bentrick's Peace with Ireland Council, and it fell to my lot to meet Hugh McCarton at the station and drive him off in a hansom to his destination. Of course I made the warmest inquiries for Doctor Patrick McCartón, and was glad to hear that he had survived those years of constant shooting on both sides. Not very long afterwards I saw in an

Irish paper that Dr. Patrick McCartan was one of the Irish representatives in New York.

Of course I personally had no adventures to retail equal to his. But those had been years of the First Great War, and I had been five and a half months in Amiens, and could claim to be just back from Vicenza where I had seen some of the Austrian bombs drop on the Asiago plateau. I had been invalided home and marked Home Service at the age of 49.

I go back to the Diary of my own doings:

On the 30th May, 1914, as already stated, I crossed to Dublin; took a room at the Shelbourne Hotel, and went off to call on Colonel Maurice Moore, the Officer in Command of the Irish Volunteers. I was very anxious to meet him, - not merely because it seemed probable that he would become my C.O., but also because he was a man about whom I had heard rather interesting descriptions. I knew that he was the son of one of the best-known Irish landlords: his father had made a name for himself among the leading sportsmen in Ireland; then, when the bad times came, had deliberately given up all his horses and his social fame, and had devoted himself entirely to helping the famine-stricken peasants around him.

This was the first occasion on which I had met our Colonel. I was glad to find myself very favourably impressed by him. Evidently he was the right man for our job. Three things struck me about him; he was a Regular soldier - ever since the days of the Ulundi campaign; a British officer (but not an Englishman from England) he was of a type which I knew among the Catholic families in Ireland, - of rather aquiline features and a military moustache now greyish; and I found at once that he was easy to talk to.

He received me most kindly, and we were soon on friendly terms. He explained to me that everything in Ireland was in a state of great uncertainty: the Nationalist political parties had coalesced in order to form the Volunteers: but there were often difficulties over the appointment of the officers. "I myself", he said half joking, "do not always feel as

if I were the most popular candidate."

This idea struck me as ludicrous for a C.B. of the Boer War, so I said to him:

"Well really Sir, after all your years of experience it would seem a rather absurd ending if you were suddenly voted out of your command by the rank-and-file." That idea seemed to amuse him.

After some further talk he saw that what I wanted now was to have a look-round before finally committing myself to anything definite: and evidently he decided to let me have it, and under genuine auspices. He suggested that I should go up to help Captain White, D.S.O., who was our C.O. in Derry; so I settled my departure for the next morning.

Next day I spent in a comfortable railway-carriage on my way to Derry, - half-sleeping and half-pondering on what I had better do. I was received at their hotel with the greatest friendliness by the Whites. Captain White, the son of General Sir George White, the defender of Ladysmith, was a man who would have been an exceptional and striking figure in any assemblage at that time. He was six foot two or more: strong: of the Orangeman type, - yellow hair and a pale skin; but having been brought up in Hampton Court, had acquired there a very attractive manner. And as I knew that he had won his D.S.O. in the field during the South African War, I felt that I had been sent to serve under a very genuine leader, - and still take pleasure in remembering that fact.

That he was attractive to men and women of many different types is hardly to be doubted, but surely that should have been an asset in his favour. There beside him in that small hotel in Derry was his wife, young and beautiful and always ready to stand by him in any adventure; she was half-Spanish, of medium height, dark and graceful; in London very much admired, and well-known in the smart set, as her sister was the wife of an officer in the Foot Guards.

I was very soon sitting beside White hard at work for our Redmondite Volunteers in the town of Londonderry; and I found that, quite apart from the town itself, he was busy organising companies in the

neighbouring villages so that they could be brought into the town in case of our being invaded from outside; within Londonderry itself the majority of the people was always Nationalist, - though only by a small margin, - but owing to the intermingling of the population it was always impossible to form any nucleus for defence; and during the recent rioting, several people had lost their lives. Of course White was very keen to visit any of the outlying villages, so this order to "show Captain Berkeley round" came rather as a godsend. When I arrived he had already planned a motor-drive through the three northern counties of Ireland.

A motor-drive through the three northern counties of Ireland in June! Who would not pay in gold for such a chance, quite apart from the political and historical interest of the situation in 1914. From village to village we went, and in each one White was welcomed with a joy that was touching. However there seems no good reason now for recalling the names of those villages; so I will merely describe the first one on the list. In it, these unfortunates, - compelled to live on about twelve shillings a week, - had been warned by their leaders to avoid any kind of physical resistance at all, - for that would wreck Home Rule. During the two years of the agitation they had submitted to any sort of insult, but now, when I saw them they had recently been told that they might arm in defence of their Home Rule cause. When I arrived there every single man was on that village green: the first thing I noticed was two old men of eighty turned out of the ranks by White because they were too old to "form fours": and that sight was more than Mrs. White could stand: she kept asking him to let them go back.

Our tour lasted four or five days, but towards the end of it there occurred for me a chance of seeing the opposite side at work; suddenly we ran into Sir Edward Carson! We were spinning along the road at about 30 miles an hour, - quite reckless in those days! - when suddenly we caught up a half-company of cyclists belonging to the Ulster Volunteers. I glanced at their rifles with some ~~interest~~ (and noticed that they had no magazines), but then we learned with great interest that this was a Guard of Honour going down to meet Sir Edward Carson at the station.

Speculation

"Do you think we had better drive on a little?" I asked White. "If you were recognised it might lead to a row." I was thinking that if stones were flying, Mrs. White might possibly be in the line of fire.

"Well" said White: "It has not yet come to the point that I cannot walk along a public road when the Ulster volunteers are there." He was a D.S.O., and he was there to defend the King's Act of Parliament. So we stopped on the bridge overlooking the railway station, and had a good view of the whole scene.

As the train steamed in, twenty of the young Ulster Volunteers were there, drawn up to receive Carson. When he stepped out on to the platform, they presented arms; after which he started to inspect them. They were nice clean-looking boys, and had learnt their drill. But, as for Carson, I had seen him before, and knew that ever since his rise to fame he had tended to assume a lofty, and in the House of Commons, a sneering expression. On this occasion he certainly combined the two. However that was what was expected of him. Outside the station the Duchess of Abercorn was waiting in a carriage to receive him. As he approached, it dawned on me that she was about to curtsey, as for a Royalty. In the end she did not actually curtsey; but the effect was just as good.

This small scene has always been the vision which remained in my mind of Carson, of the Duchess of Abercorn, and of the Ulster Volunteers. And I have often wondered whether he would have looked as insolent and she as self-satisfied, if they had known that they were only 59 days distant from the outbreak of the First World War.

CHAPTER III. IV

Only 3½ pages typed

## SIR ROGER CASEMENT.

The Whites and I had ended up our tour at Dungannon, and there we were joined by Sir Roger Casement and a young man from Belfast named Dennis McCullough who had been the principal organiser of the Irish Volunteers in that City. I was very glad to see Sir Roger as I had met him before in London at Lady (Anne) Laurence's at a moment when he was at the full flush of his fame, being perhaps the most successful Consul in the British Service, and also as the deliverer of the Putamayo natives. He struck me at once as a person of exceptionally interesting appearance - a man of about fifty, with a bronzed face, a black beard and an extraordinarily kindly smile. We soon started to talk about Ireland, and, looking back on that evening, I have often been rather amused at the line which I took - not only then but afterwards during the half a dozen conversations which I remember having with him, for as my home is in Oxfordshire I was not in the way of meeting him except at the Laurences' or occasionally at the house of Mrs. J.R. Green, the historian. Mrs Green She was the doyenne of the Irish Political Committee (I have already described that Committee at some length elsewhere), and as at her house, one or two of the friends sometimes went rather too far in their Radicalism to suit me, I decided at once that here, in Sir Roger Casement, was the type of politician that I had always hoped to find; others of course might be more extreme Nationalists than they would like to admit,

but here was a man who could not possibly be disloyal. His whole life would be a disproval of that. I said to myself:= "He has twenty years or more of sound imperial work to his credit, he has accepted a G.C.M.G. from their Government. He lives mainly on the pension provided for him by law. He, at all events must necessarily be a loyal man."

So he and I strolled through the town to buy some books together, and then went up the hill to see O'Neill's castle. He was always an interesting companion and on this occasion he took a keen pleasure in looking at the old castle. Most unfortunately I have never been able to remember what he said about it, except his telling me that the modern way of spelling O'Neill is similar or almost similar to the most ancient, and that it has escaped the usually illiterate forms of Anglicisation from which so many Irish names still suffer.

There is, however, one tiny little episode by which I take pleasure in remembering him.

When we were waiting outside the door of the meeting-house - it was locked - I saw just beside us a very small boy playing Fives against the wall with a soft ball, so by way of passing a moment or two, I began to play Fives with him. Sir Roger was immensely pleased. His whole face softened with the very kindly expression which was his chief characteristic, and he joined us, encouraging both sides in a gentle, banteringe sort of way.

Dungannon struck me as a place where, sooner or later, blood was likely to flow; an ideal place for a row. It is a small

town on the side of a steep hill containing about 3,830 inhabitants, of whom 2,120 are Catholics (according to the Census), and just then both sides were obviously very bitter. But for the moment things seemed to be fairly quiet, so we held a political meeting that evening. White spoke; McCullough spoke; and Sir Roger Casement spoke, and I did not altogether like their speeches. I was glad that I had declined the honour of addressing the assembly. The sentiments uttered were too extreme for my taste, but I accounted for those of Sir Roger as being merely due to the enthusiasm of those around him. The idea that he should be a Separatist seemed impossible. His whole life gave the lie to it.

That evening while we were all having a cheerful supper at the hotel, he invited me to go to Belfast as Organising Officer, which meant practically C.O. pro tem, of the Irish Volunteers in that town. I told him at once that I had not enough experience of soldiering for so important a post, but he answered that he was sure that I had.

"Well" I said, "I have only done about nine months soldiering in my life; the usual three months of Preliminary Drill with a Militia Battalion in 1898, and then in the year 1900 over five and a half months at Aldershot preparing myself to go to the Boer War;—and that is fourteen years ago now. Since then I have done no soldiering at all."

His face fell; but after a moment or two he said: "Well, if you will excuse my speaking quite frankly, I feel this: that even you would be better than no one at all."

I saw that evidently they could get no one to go to Belfast, and during the next few weeks that idea rather haunted me. Of course I had known that the Nationalists were extremely short of Regular Officers who were prepared to face the Social Boycott. At that moment I only knew of one, Colonel Maurice Moore, who was by birth a Catholic and an avowed Home Ruler. But as he was already C.O. of the Irish Volunteers it would be necessary for him to remain in Dublin.

I think the chief reason why my name had ever come on to the list at all was mainly because of the undoubted success of my book The Campaign of Adowa. My description of that great Italian defeat on March 1st, 1896, had been very kindly spoken of by Colonel Page Henderson at the Staff College. Thus, as far as concerned qualifications, I could claim to be a military writer; and also an Oxfordshire Magistrate who had gone over to fulfil his duty to the King during this time of difficulty.

A week later while in Dublin, I ran into Fiennes and his wife. He urged me at all costs to accept, and he added that he would come over himself to stand by me.

To summarise the whole situation during that summer, as to our chances of success:- At first there was not the very slightest chance of military success - not one in a thousand. However, from the first there did remain a certain advantage in the fact that we were undoubtedly in the right. No one could deny that we were defending the Law, the majority of the House of Commons, and eventually the position of King George V.

So during that short summer the unfortunate Belfast Catholics

End of this chapter.

For more about Casement

V. appendix II

Chapter III ends with words

"stand by me"

~~position of Prologue~~ V

"

~~Add to end of Chapter IV~~

time in Belfast.

I only saw Casement two or three times during my
what a tragedy was his life! When I heard
that he had gone over to the Germans, my first reaction
was to say - "What an awful pity! Evidently
he hadn't enough patience"

For during those early months of the War
he must have known that in almost any Offices-
-Mess some of the people were saying openly, that as
soon as the War was over "we can settle this Irish
question". In my own case I received a message from
the O.C. of the 2nd Line of Warwickshire Yeomanry (during the O.C. at the depot)
was training them "to prevent Home Rule". In fact it
at first seemed very unlikely that we should receive the Bill
in full - Probably Casement thought that he had
been tricked by Carson.

At that time I was working 12 or 14 hours a day relying on
the King's signature of the Home Rule Act, and thought that
Casement might get the same. And undoubtedly, that was
Mr Redmond's feeling - he felt that when the Irish Party - after

## CHAPTER V.

At this point in my Belfast Diary I will give a list of the dates which seem to me of greatest interest because each of them is connected with one of the Irish leaders of that day.

April 25th. The Orangemen ran their cargo of arms at Larne.

May 30th to June 6th. My visit to Colonel Maurice Moore and my drive through the Northern counties with Captain White, D.S.O., (Commanding Officer of the Irish Volunteers in Derry).

June 6th. My meeting with Sir Roger Casement, one of the founders of the Movement. He invited me to become Organising Officer of the Irish Volunteers in Belfast. I returned to England leaving his offer open. It remained open for about 10 days. I decided to accept the Belfast offer. But, as a clash seemed inevitable before long, I meant to make my position absolutely clear; any authority to use force came to me from the Parliamentary majority of the Irish people.

June 16th. So on this day I went up to the House of Commons and sent in my card to Hugh Law (M.P.) an old friend of my Oxford days. He introduced me at once to Mr. Dillon and together we called on Mr. Redmond whom I knew already. They were all three more than civil!

Thus, before starting to Belfast I had had a completely satisfactory interview with Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon, leaders of the Irish Nation, and at the same time I could claim the support - active if necessary - of my own Liberal M.P. in

Oxfordshire, Eustace Fiennes.

It was on July 7th, 1914, that I started my work as Organising Officer of the Irish (Redmondite) Volunteers in Belfast. That job came to an end with the signing by the King of the Home Rule Act (1914). I have the feeling that those last months were a crucial period for the Irish Volunteer movement although their actual fighting did not begin until 1916. I copy the following extract from my old Diary of that time:-

"Having succeeded in getting my air-rifle through the Customs, I deposited my luggage at the Shelbourne Hotel and went round to see Colonel Moore, to get my orders. An original plan of mine had been to go to the Volunteers at Achill Island - partly because a friend of mine was working there, and partly because I felt that a small command was more suited to my very slight experience of soldiering. But when I sat down to talk to Colonel Moore he said at once:

'Do you still want to go to Achill, because you could be of far more use in Belfast?'

It was plain that he wanted me to go to Belfast, so I said:

'Anywhere you like, Sir'.

I admit that I was secretly rather pleased at seeing that he seemed surprised at my agreeing so easily. He asked me again several times whether I should prefer to go to Achill, but I assured him 'that I was ready to

go wherever he liked'. So that was settled."

Looking back on it now I feel that there was one diverse result of the Orangemen's breach of the peace, that now there were some of us Moderates who saw that moderation was useless and among the people whom I knew, a very good instance of that sentiment was Eustace Fiennes.

Next day I started. My orders were to go to Belfast and return after three or four days with a full report of the position there; no doubt they wanted to see what our people thought of me before finally appointing me. In the train I was awakened by the guard who had half a mind to confiscate my air-rifle, but I refused to give it up. I knew from experience with our Hanwell Miniature Rifle Club that it would be invaluable for instructional purposes. Of course I made no reference to the 21,000 rifles lately run at Larne - that would have been tactless!

On this occasion I only spent three days in Belfast - a short visit, but in that time I found myself able to collect far more than enough information for my report to Colonel Moore, for the men in authority were extremely kind and helped me in every way. As to the conditions of the Volunteers there I shall speak later; the immediate point for me to master, was the organisation and more especially the character of the people with whom I had to deal.

The first three people whom I met were Mr. D. McCullagh (whom I had already met at Dungannon), Mr. J. Burns, and Sergeant Major Cussick.

McCullough owned a shop and earned his bread by selling pianos and music. But from his 18th year he had been interested in politics, and though now only twenty-seven or twenty-eight had acquired quite an important position among the Belfast Catholics. He was the founder of the Volunteers in that town. He was nice-looking and nice-spoken - light brown hair, light brown moustache and light brown clothing; a great enthusiast for Ireland. But at first sight I saw no particular reason for the influence which undoubtedly he possessed.

By way of making a good start I asked McCullough whether there was anything of which the Volunteers stood especially in need; he at once suggested arms. This was a fortunate suggestion, because, as the gunsmiths did not yet know me by sight, I was able to procure half a dozen miniature rifles, with plenty of ammunition, and also an old Lee-Metford with 100 rounds. These I presented to the Volunteers and I think they were considered a strong proof that I was in earnest.

In this connection I had what was for me a new experience. When I had been a few minutes in that first gunsmith's shop I noticed an oldish man in a frieze coat, sitting there with his head on his hand, deeply engaged in examining some fishing flies and tackle. After making my purchases I started to go to the next smartest gunsmith in the town, but - not knowing my way - was a little slow in getting there. As I entered the second shop I was surprised to see the same grey-haired gentleman sitting there in the same attitude and similarly engaged. He must have walked there with lightening speed to

have arrived there so much before me! Undoubtedly a police agent, I think!

The position of the gunsmiths was peculiar: nominally the importation of arms was forbidden, but actually it was in full swing. In Belfast the only restriction was that Nationalists could not get them. When, a few days later I spoke again to my second gunsmith, Mr. Hunter, and asked him whether he could sell me any rifles, he said quite honestly that he was a Unionist, and that if I would pledge my word that they would be used on the Unionist side, that I could have some. This pledge I would not give, so I got none. The first-named gunsmith had no large-bore rifles for sale, but he said that he could import some miniature rifles; he told me that he could be certain of getting them through, but not quite certain as to which day they would arrive. This was the only inconvenience that his trade suffered owing to Arms Act passed by the British Parliament, and it was more than compensated for by the prices charged. Those gunsmiths must be among the "leisured classes" by now.

As a matter of history, that is how Ireland was ruled under the Act of Union (1800 - 1914). It was so effectually patrolled by the British fleet that not a single rifle was allowed into the country unless you were a Unionist. But if you could prove that you were a Unionist you might get 20,000 - if desired! I proved that while I was in Belfast.

But this instance of marvellous efficiency throughout so many years undoubtedly suffered a considerable jolt when Carson and his patrons ran such a huge consignment. This "gave away" the whole situation. And the next consignment of arms was not on the Unionist side at all. It was the coup planned by Miss Spring Rice and Mrs. Childers and carried out on the Asgard. And before I left Belfast "Joe" Devlin, M.P. had run another cargo of 250 for the benefit of the Redmondite Volunteers. And I had received information about a private machine-gun for which I certainly took no responsibility. Those 250 rifles were well and carefully guarded (every one of them numbered) with its own place in the rack, and a guard slept there at night!

It was hardly necessary to impress upon our people that they must defend them to the death - just as if they belonged to the Ulster Volunteers. That was easily arranged. But what I could not prevent happening was a secret bringing in of pistols by private individuals. In that respect all that I could do was to give out that the Irish Volunteers, who were under my command, had no connection with pistols of any sort or kind, that I thought them a danger to our Movement and would not defend anyone who got into trouble by introducing them.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE JOURNALISTS IN 1914.

"Captain Berkeley, what I want is blood - simply blood." I think my reply was: "Miss Harrison, I will not forget you."

Miss Harrison was the Lady-Correspondent of one of the leading Conservative papers, but I did not avail myself of the opening this offered, because I was there to keep the peace until the Home Rule Bill should be signed.

There were at that time staying in the hotel representatives of all the best-known London papers - men whom I afterwards got to know and whom I often think about even now; but at that time I did not know them, so that I only had quite a short contact even with Tomlinson of the Daily News (the hero who had shown up the horrors of the ship-yards two years earlier), or with H.W. Nevinson (then of the Daily Telegraph) whom I am always glad to remember - I proposed for Chairman of the Peace with Ireland Committee in 1921. Those with whom I had most talk and friendly conversation with were Mr. Campbell (already mentioned) and Edward Dunn of the Daily Mail. The Morning Post representative was then avowedly in hopes of starting people shooting each other. He was on friendly terms with Crozier (O.C. of the Orangemen's machine-guns). Behind all this was the colossal influence of Northcliffe. He had spent about a quarter of a million sterling in this district alone, after sending over some twenty motor-cycles to carry the news of victory.

One day as I was coming down the front stairs of the hotel, I was met by the Correspondent of the Daily Chronicle, a small man of nervous appearance. I did not know him but he introduced himself and gave me to understand that he had something important to communicate, and as he represented the Daily Chronicle (then Liberal) I assumed him to be a friend. He told me that on the previous evening a tall man in Ulster Volunteer uniform had come into the smoking-room and, after being very uncivil, had threatened him with personal violence; that he had only got rid of him by ringing the bell for the hotel servants.

All this seemed quite possible, and he then warned me that I myself should probably undergo a similar experience that evening, and that I had better be on my guard against a personal attack. This too seemed perfectly possible, in view of the recent riots in Derry, Dungannon and elsewhere, and of the faction fights which always take place in Belfast at times of political excitement. So I put a loaded pistol in my trouser pocket that evening when I went out. That was the first occasion in my life on which I have ever done so.

I need not have bothered: the following was the rather puerile outcome of the warning:-

When I came into the smoking-room that evening I percieved

sitting at the table with the others, a little man in Ulster Volunteer uniform. He had been in the hotel for four or five days and had already given out to the servants that "he had received his orders and that the show was going to begin at once, and he, for one, was glad of it". That evening I happened to be in conversation with Mr. Campbell, the kindly and pleasant Correspondent of the Times, but nothing daunted, the little Volunteer, after fortifying himself with whiskey and soda at the expense of his journalistic friends, came and sat down at one table and introduced himself by handing me his card on which was printed "Sir Archibald Welby." "A fine name, I think" he said with evident pride. I assented, although I did not think the name belonged to him. I put him down as looking rather like a jockey. However, his conversation soon proved him to be a fire-eater; he produced a charger of loaded rifles, ~~and~~ cartridges, out of his pouch and said:

"There; these are the cartridges. I mean to shoot every Redmondite I see." After such a brilliant opening obviously no comment was required from me!

"Surely you would not shoot at another man in the street, would you?" asked Mr. Campbell, chiming in.

"Oh yes I would" returned the Ulster Volunteer, and then holding up the charger: "These cartridges were made in Germany."

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* It was Mr. Campbell who had told me that our people had been called vitriol-throwers in an article in the Times. I understand that it is an accusation of old date in Belfast politics!

"Shame" I said

"No; I mean in Canada" he corrected, noticing his mistake. I was just reflecting that they were uncommonly like British Regulation ammunition, Mack VII, and perhaps he read my thoughts, for he started at once to create a diversion. He produced an Automatic pistol.

"Do you see that? Mind, it's loaded" he added hastily, and Mr. Campbell began to protest about playing with fire-arms.

"Nonsense" I replied pulling out the empty magazine and then working the equally empty barrel. It so happens that during my life I have shot with many different sorts of pistols (only at targets), so I examined the weapon with care, and told him how much interested I had always been in fire-arms and that I had been second in a pistol competition only three weeks before. In fact we became quite friendly over it, and he was just telling me about his service during the Boer War when one of his journalist friends, seeing, I suppose, that no "copy" would result, suddenly slipped forward and fired a blank cartridge into the floor from a very small pistol which he thought I could not see.

But I had seen it quite plainly. Not so, however, his friend "Sir Archibald" who jumped out of his seat a yard high, and lit on his feet with such an absurdly startled expression that I simply leaned back on my chair convulsed with laughter.

"Hang it" he said in a highly injured tone, "you know I've heard these things on service."

After that there was no more possibility of a "bluff". Not even when he started talking about Jujitsu!

Surely - taking the long view of the situation - it was rather sad that his friends should have let Rudyard Kipling get involved in this beneath-contempt journalistic stunt. At that moment he had just published his poem about "envy hate and greed" of the Southern Irish.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Army and the situation: COUNT GLEICHEN. and Brig. General Crozier

My day, as may be imagined, was extremely full; in fact I was pretty well overworked. In the morning I was always at the office with Burns or some other of our people, attending to all the business of four battalions - endeavouring to do for our Volunteers many of the things that are done by four Orderly Rooms and a Brigade staff, and at the same time to get out a new scheme of reorganisation: starting carpenters and other tradesmen to make the dozens of things that I required. In the afternoon I usually spent my time in a taxi-cab racing round the town to find halls or yards for either Musketry or drill; and sometimes being interviewed by people who had nothing to say, but were merely trying to get some news to retail as the latest gossip. At 7 p.m. my parades began; so after a hasty dinner I again started rushing round in a taxi from point to point, trying to see that no one, out of the several thousands who came down for instruction, should go away disappointed. Between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. I must often have driven five or six miles and attended six or eight parades in different parts of the town. At 9 p.m. I would reluctantly tear myself away from what I was at, and attend one of the Committees, and then remain up with the journalists until after mid-night - very often the most useful hour of all!

It was through one of those midnight talks that one evening I heard most circumstantially that there was an Orange plot in existence for stirring up a riot - or something equally convincing. The scheme ran as follows: They were to send a crowd of roughs from the Shankill Road into the Catholic Quarter. The roughs were to create as much disturbance as possible; break windows, shout "to Hell with the Pope" and attack passers-by, etc., until retaliation led to a riot. Then the Police were to be called in; but it was hoped that by that time the riot would have got beyond the powers of the Police and that the soldiers would have to be summoned. And finally - the culminating tableau - the Ulster Volunteers were to march in, as the last supreme hope of the cause of Law and Order!

The intention was that the U.V. should justify their claim to being necessary for the preservation of Order; and that some, at all events, of the National Volunteers - whether officially or unofficially - should be involved in the fray, and possibly in a conflict with the soldiers; and, in any case, I foresaw that by the importation of a few Union Jacks into the melee the journalists would have material for an excellent headline in every Conservative newspaper in London, such as: "Desperate riot in the Catholic Quarter of Belfast"; "Attack on the Police and Soldiers"; "The Union Jack fired on". It might be turned into a very serious cry against the passing of the Home Rule Bill.

This story came to me on excellent authority, but I rather doubted it from the first. Nevertheless, it was certainly the kind of plan that might possibly be tried, and I knew that, only a week earlier, a small body of Ulster Volunteers had marched down part of the main road in the Catholic Quarter - an unpardonable crime in Belfast; a flagrant breach of the unwritten law. So it seemed wisest to take steps to forestall this new scheme - if only to remain on the safe side. I had no desire to have a repetition of "the battle of Springfield Road", a kind of pitched battle that took place in Belfast when the Home Rule Bill of 1893 was passed; it is said to have lasted three days.

The principal aim of this plan, I knew, was to create an impression adverse to us in England, and thus to jeopardise Home Rule; so my first care was to write a complete description of the scheme beforehand, and send it to one or two of my political friends in England to enable them, if necessary, to defend us in the House of Commons. These letters, of course, went through a third party.

My next care was to place myself in touch with the soldiers. I decided, although I did not know him, to go and call on the Commandant of Belfast, namely Count Gleichen. This was a fortunate inspiration of mine!

On my arrival at the barracks I was received most civily by Count Gleichen. I put my case to him. I said that, being temporarily in charge of the National Volunteers in Belfast, I felt it my duty to be responsible for law and order in our own

Catholic quarter, and then related to him the whole story of the proposed riot, for what it was worth. He listened with a good deal of interest, and then shook his head:

"Oh no" he said, "I do not think it is true.

"You do not believe it?"

"No" he said, "the Orangemen wont do that. I know their plans".

This admission did not altogether surprise me; though it was, of course, a considerable admission. The plans of the U.V. staff were as a rule most magnificently concealed. However, I took this to be a friendly gesture on his part, and continued to pursue the purpose for which I had come to him. I told him about the Orangemen having marched through our quarter at night and pointed out that such exploits as that were regarded as invasion; that although I was bent on preserving the peace I should probably find it impossible to do so if they repeated these nocturnal marches. This led me to the desired point: I ended up by undertaking formally that in case of any difficulty he could rely on the National Volunteers to assist in keeping order.

He accepted my offer with all civility and I departed.

Thus, as long as Count Gleichen remained there, we, the National Volunteers, could make some claim to be heard. But when he departed five or six weeks later the next Governor at Belfast (as it turned out) was of a somewhat different complexion.*

*This political system must have made recruiting very difficult during the War.

However, by that time we had got our Volunteers on the true basis - that of defending the law, and for us that was not merely a figure of speech. We organised a complete system of pickets in all our streets, in case of rioting. The only serious attempt at a faction-fight occurred a few weeks later and, although the news did not reach me personally until it was over, our Organisation held good. Our local Company-Officers formed pickets of our Volunteers who very soon stopped the fighting and patrolled the streets concerned.

Consequently as ~~regards~~ for as concerned the army and Count Gleichen I could feel that the situation was satisfactory. But what I was entirely unaware of then, was the fact that in the hotel itself there was all day, working in the interest of the Orangemen, one of their most active agents, namely the afterwards well-known Crozier. He was a man who had never been in the Regular army, but had seen a good deal of irregular service in Africa and elsewhere and was soon to become known to everyone as Brig.-General Crozier-CB, CMG.-DSO simply through his career as an Orangeman. He had played a leading part in the Landing of the arms at Larne on April 25th. Of course, although he might easily have done so, he had never let me know that he was an O.W. — from my own beloved

At end of Chapter VII

School of which I have become the historian — and as he was my junior by ten years naturally I had never heard of him: However in his Impressions and Recollections he gives a resumé of his life. He tells us that he failed to get into the Army — through lack of inches he says — Owing to his never having been a Regular Soldier he had no pension to rely on for his old age: In 1898, at the age of 20, he had started life as a tea-planter in Ceylon. But a year later the Boer War which had swept him, and thousands of young men of his type had come the active service [illegible]; it lasted! When I got to know him better, he told me himself that his difficulty was that he had no provision for his old age. But that conversation acquired later on, in the year 1921 — by which time he was celebrated as the Commanding Officer of the Black-and-Tans!

(X) Undoubtedly he was a good soldier. He afterwards did good work as a Colonel in the Ulster Division: but he had quarrelled with his Employer (the British Government and had published a book of Memoirs "a Brass-hat in No Man's Land", which was little else than an attempt at Black-mail. He had served in West Africa and in other places where blackmail was by no means impossible

(X) Short, thick-set, fairly-hard-bitten; accustomed to deal with natives.

His description of Belfast at that moment runs as follows (p. 149) –

"It can be imagined that all the time that we were at Craigavon Ulster was like a powder magazine laid bare to the chance flicker of a naked lamp. Feeling was running high – any chance public house brawl between Catholics and Orangemen was liable to blow the whole structure of society sky high. On one of these occasions one of my men absented himself and was found drunk as soldiers will be often found, in a very ~~dangerous~~ undesirable and ~~dangerous~~ desirable quarter, in U.V.F. uniform. After consulting Captain Craig relative to the matter, I hastened down to the city Cafe at night and removed the culprit to safety. Next morning he was dismissed, I had only one hold over the men – dismissal. As there was always a good deal of drink flying about, I used to turn a man out for the first offence of this nature, by calling round at his home and removing his uniform. I was helped very considerably by the women on these occasions. Drink being the curse of many of their homes, they welcomed the drastic measure I was forced to take to render my command sober, which sometimes had a beneficial effect on their own homes, as many a man tried to sober up in order to get back to me. The wives and children used to ridicule the dismissed men most unmercifully, shouting after them in the streets such comments as; "Did the wee marn (Ulster for "man") tear the Greeks off ye."

CHAPTER ~~X.~~ VIII

Our training for the rifles and their landing at Howth.

As the days went on I began to feel rather anxious. I had been there some weeks and time was getting extremely short. The Home Rule Bill might be signed at any moment and then the Orangemen would certainly take action of some sort. I did not doubt that some of them were keen enough to get to work, but whether keen or not, they would be absolutely compelled to do so after all their speeches and gun-running, and their two Covenants, unless they were willing to appear absurd in the eyes of the whole world. Besides which their Conservative subscribers in England would naturally expect some return for their money.

My difficulty was that our people had no rifles for their own defence, and that many of them did not know how to use a rifle; in fact as yet they had no striking power; even if arms were supplied to them a good many people would be handling them for the first time. I had great hopes of the rifles arriving, but did not see how I could train a sufficient number of recruits in time to receive them. Time was what I prayed for — if only a few weeks; every week was invaluable.

Therefore I turned my whole attention to Musketry. In this I did not receive unequivocal support, even from my own officers, because among the senior battalion-commanders were some who had been N.C.O's of the old school of pre-Boer War days, when pipe-clay and parade were paramount and firing was done by volleys. In this branch we had everything to create, and I had an immense

amount of detail to do myself. However, in England I had for years been training a rifle-club to shoot Germans, so I was happy enough at the work.

I began by making a miniature rifle-range against the back of a fives-court in our athletic ground, but found that I could only get four firing points there. Then I wasted an immense amount of valuable time in searching for halls in which to set up indoor ranges. The first difficulty that I encountered struck me as absurd - in one of the halls which was lit by gas-jets, the atmosphere was so thick from escaped gas that the smell almost knocked me down. However, the caretaker assured me that there were so many holes in the roof that it would not be dangerous! Apparently he was right. After some further efforts I finally arranged for borrowing three halls; In the first one I had about eight firing-points; in the second about ten, and in the third four. So with all possible dispatch I gave the order for tripods to be made; after which we succeeded in buying some more rifles and air-rifles and started to train as many instructors as possible. Then I began to put the companies through instruction in the firing positions, and in the use of the rifle. Having no sub-target machine, we used the air-rifles. In the first and third halls the men spent about ten evenings being taught and practised with the air-rifle, and then in hall No.2 they spent another ten evenings with the miniature rifle. It was a very short period of preparation, but I could not give them more. Each Company overlapped the preceding one; there were always two companies being instructed at the same time; one on preliminary work, the other firing with miniature rifles.

My original scheme was that each man should fire 90 rounds (with miniature rifle or air-rifle) before passing out, but I doubt whether many of them ever had time to fire more than half that number. Still one hoped that even 50 rounds would be enough to prepare them for learning our large bore rifles - when (and if) they ever arrived.

In addition to these three halls we succeeded afterwards in getting one or two others, and we did some firing on the out-of-door miniature range. Most of the afternoons I spent in a motor, scouring the country in search for a site for the open range, and finally I hit upon one that would have done up to 300 yards and possibly a little farther, but the owner was afraid to let us have it!

At first the shooting was bad; but it improved rapidly and I found the air-rifles an excellent institution. As we had no real rifles, there was no promiscuous snapping. The recruit was instructed until he had mastered the standing and prone positions, but he was not allowed to press the trigger more than two or three times without the rifles being loaded; the moment he knew the prone position he was put to fire at a decimal target. The result was that I had better trigger-pressing than I have ever seen since then among beginners. The recruits were accustomed from the very first never to press the trigger without the rifle's going off, and their seeing where the shot had struck, so they very soon realised that bad pressure meant a bad score; and, as their points were always totalled up for them, there was a good deal of keenness to do well. Unfortunately, the miniature

rifle shooting was not so successful. My difficulty was the ammunition; one of my Officers offered to get some for me (he being in that line of business) but the consignment turned out to be bad. However, I did my best to rectify matters by buying more.

It was at the beginning of this period that an event occurred that gave a great stimulus to my Musketry and in fact to the Volunteers in general. I mean the landing of arms at Howth. I well remember how the news of that landing reached me. It was the evening on which we were to hold a public meeting of all our supporters in order to raise funds for the Volunteers. I had been preparing my speech and came down at about 7 p.m. for dinner. In the doorway of the hotel were several journalists, and I was just exchanging a few words with them when the representative of the Daily Chronicle came running in with an evening paper in his hand, saying in his usual rather melodramatic way: "It has begun; the troops have fired on the people; it has begun." Knowing that he was always rather given to heroics, I remained somewhat sceptical until I had actually seen the news. But it seemed to be true enough. The telegrams said that arms had been landed at Howth, that the troops had fired on the people landing them, and that some people had been killed. I forget the exact number of deaths reported, but I remember that the first two telegrams were a good deal exaggerated. The journalists of course were delighted; but to me it came as rather a shock. In the first place it seemed evident that our arms had been seized during their landing; that a fight had ensued, and that some of my friends, at all events, had been killed; and it might

of course mean civil strife all over Ireland. It was a very sad evening for me. When I went to the meeting all the other speakers were in great excitement, but I asked them to let me forego my speech. Violent death at that time was an unfamiliar spectre. We looked upon it in an absolutely and entirely different light from that in which we regard it now, since the German War has dulled our sense of the value of life. I was wondering most of that evening whether I had done right in subscribing money to the enterprise. Moreover I was wondering, should the conflagration become general, what in the world I was to do. Here we were, several thousands strong of course, but as yet only very slightly trained, and hardly able to raise a single rifle between us; no bayonets and no ammunition. We had no possible chance of success. In case of emergency it seemed useless even ordering the men to fall-in, seeing that I had no arms to give them. To resist would be waste of time and waste of life; yet I knew that for the sake of honour we should have to make some sort of defence if occasion arose.

While the speeches were in progress I racked my brains to try to provide for every possible outcome of the event. Then I was called upon to speak. So I spoke as shortly, and as sanely as I could. I told them that if occasion arose for our three battalions to fight, they would most certainly not hang back; but that they would be acting as military units, and that there must be no unauthorized movements; that it was our duty to view the new incident calmly, and turn it to the account of our cause as we should any other incident that occurred. Considering the electric condition of the atmosphere, my rather uninspiring

remarks were very kindly received.

Next morning the papers were more cheering; and, oddly enough in Belfast the Orangemen, so far as I could gather, seemed to have taken rather a sympathetic view of the landing. One or two of my people who worked on the Island told me that when they arrived there, they were well received by their Orange work-mates who merely grinned and said: "Ye're more in earnest than we thought ye were". The Ulster Volunteers certainly had no cause for complaint, because on the very day on which people were bayoneted for landing rifles near Dublin, the Orangemen in Belfast were marching down the street, fully armed, in broad daylight, without the slightest let or hindrance — which fact was made plain in the Daily Mail, with a view presumably to stirring up anger in Ireland against the British Government.

And now, as the days wore on, I began to receive news of the little white yacht that was steered by the lady. I was so much excited during the first two days, wondering whether my friends would escape, that Mr. Campbell actually enquired whether there were some romance in the matter, and whether the lady was my affianced bride. He even offered to pay for a signaller's lamp for the Volunteers, if I would tell him the whole story, and I remember that I wondered vaguely what people would say if it were revealed that and it struck me as ludicrous that the Tories should offer to Lord Northcliffe had bought buy signallers' lamps for the National Volunteers! However After the third day I felt that we could safely assume that "the little white yacht" had got safely away.

At our Volunteer Headquarters they were keenly interested to hear that the arms had been run by friends of mine; and that

we could expect at least a portion of the rifles shortly, and perhaps have a chance of making some attempt at defence: and although inwardly I felt that a weak defence was worse than none, I also knew that until we had some arms on parade we should always be regarded as a negligible quantity. Above all, I felt it would be a proud day for the Volunteers when our battalions marched through the streets with rifles over their shoulders, and bayonets by their side; the movement would then have some definite weight in the scale.

"And where is the little boat gone now?" one of our people asked me.

"Oh," I said, "the little yacht has slipped away across the waves, and they'll never see her again."

I suppose the news spread of my entirely vicarious success, for I sprang into immense popularity. On the following Saturday evening when I rode at the head of my battalions, on my noble black steed after our drill, the main street of the Catholic quarter was absolutely crammed with people who had come to see us. Not only were the pavements packed with people, so close that they could not pass each other, but the crowd bulged right out into the roadway, so that there was barely room for our men, marching in fours, to get through; and the windows were full of enthusiastic waving handkerchiefs. For a mile we passed through these thousands who were cheering us deliriously; there certainly must have been thirty or forty thousand people there. I have never seen such enthusiasm. At one point a woman rushed forward and presented me with a bunch of flowers. It seemed profoundly pathetic to see the joy of these poor folk at thinking

they were to receive arms. It made me feel how deeply they had felt the shame of being separated from the rest of their native land, without even striking a blow.

These were "the hewers of wood and drawers of water"; and they had seen a mpmentary gleam of hope.

From that day out, matters began to move faster. So many recruits came in that it was nearly impossible to keep pace with them: the parade ground and the drill halls would hardly hold them. For about a week we could scarcely cope with the movement, and were obliged to enlarge our organisation.

Personally I felt that the Howth incident, if it had any influence at all, would certainly tend to accelerate matters. The other side would feel that we were making up lee-way, and might decide to act at an earlier date. This was not a pleasing reflection; we still had no arms or ammunition; we still had no funds sufficient to meet an emergency; were still out-numbered, as I then believed, by about five to one. Nevertheless, we should obviously be expected to do something; and - which troubled me most - a single false move might lead to complications all over Ireland that would jeopardise the great Act which was to restore a Parliament to our country after so many generations of toil; the Act which would also enable Ireland to take her place willingly, and therefore without loss of honour, in the circle of self-governing States which form the British Empire.

Other people felt much as I did: in fact things were rather tense in Belfast just then, as the following tiny incident will show: One day I was standing for a moment at a corner where

we passed three or four particularly solid houses, looking down a large street that led up to that point from the Protestant Shankhill Road, and trying to estimate the distance - "Three-hundred and fifty yards" said a voice at my elbow. It was one of our supporters who had guessed my thoughts.

In the midst of my mental difficulties, I unexpectedly received news that Colonel Moore was coming up to Belfast on a tour of inspection with Colonel Cotter. Three or four days later they arrived, and as they stepped out on to the platform most of my anxieties seemed to roll away from me. The weight of immediate responsibility was gone. For the next two days at all events, if action were necessary, the decision would lie with Colonel Moore.

## CHAPTER IX.

## PEACE AND WAR.

In this year 1914 the July 12th annual celebrations of "the Boyne" were undoubtedly a good deal eclipsed by the news which reached us on August 4th that war had been declared against Germany. For me that meant peace. In fact it let me out of the most awkward dilemna of any that I can remember.

Colonel Maurice Moore and Colonel Cotter were up in Belfast on a visit to me, so we evolved a complete plan of action in case of any attack by the U.V. However, none eventuated, and I had great hopes that, in view of the present-day war and others to follow, the Boyne celebrations might be discontinued once and for all. And they were in fact discontinued during the war, but as soon as the war was over they were renewed with all their customary glories at Scarva and elsewhere.

During that week I had some very nice friends from London staying with me to see our men parade - Sir Alexandra and Lady Lawrence, strong Liberals - but very soon I was compelled to realise that the War had virtually crippled our Redmondite Volunteers in Belfast. As far as I could reckon we had lost at least 700 men, either as Reservists or through enlistment, during the first ten days - there may have been more. But what really crippled our movement was the fact that so many of our best men were called away had to go- from every part of the forces. Burns and Cusick went - neither of whom could satisfactorily be replaced, and good men went from every part of the force.

The first soldier killed of all those whom I remember during that war was one of our Company-Commanders, a man named Quinn.

"This show is blanketed now - don't you think?" asked my friend Edward Dunn of the Daily Mail.

I was sorry to part with the journalists. I think that almost all of them were seeing the situation much more from my point of view than at first. In fact, as matters turned out, with several of them I was able to renew friendly relations later on. How well I remember that last evening which I spent with them. We were sitting up late and smoking hard, and were wondering all the time whether we should hear news coming through which might alter the fate of Europe. Each fresh arrival from the office was greeted with a shout "Any new telegrams?". We had cause for excitement for an apparently genuine message had come through telling us that the British fleet had met the German fleet somewhere between the Channel Islands and the North Sea, and that 35 of the German ships were hors-de-combat, 19 of them sunk. We were in a hilarious condition, though as the Holy Writ says, not with wine. But unfortunately the tidings were too good to be true. We waited up until half-past one o'clock that evening, and then I went round, half-asleep, with Mr. Dunn of the Daily Mail office where we were told that "they knew all about the story and the exact place where it had been invented." This was the last occasion on which I ever had any converse with Mr. Campbell of the Times, thick-set, gentle and friendly, and now of course keenly alive to the situation.

"Have you heard that the Ulster Volunteers have refused to join up? They say, 'What have we to do with the wars of England". That was true. They refused en masse at first. It was hardly surprising. Originally they had become Ulster Volunteers in order to fight against any sort of self-government for Ireland; now they were being appealed to every day to enlist against the Germans - and at the same time the Home Rule Bill was actually slipping through Parliament and almost entirely ready for signature by the King.

A few evenings later the young Officer in command of the Orange machine-guns came into the lounge, furious.

"I've done with the Ulster Volunteers, because they won't volunteer. I'm going abroad, because I want to serve the Empire." That was Crozier.

About half-way through the war I happened to come in contact with the well-known Colonel Laverton. Laverton was a British Colonel who had come over to be C.O. of a U.V. battalion, and he made no bones about the situation. When he called on his men to volunteer for the War, "out of a thousand men on parade, only six stepped forward". But here in this small Memoirs I have made no attempt to describe the situation as regards either the Ulster Division or the two Redmondite Divisions, because I have no first-hand knowledge of them. To me they are simply: from the North one Ulster Division which served in France, and from the rest of Ireland two Divisions and the tragedy of Gallipoli.

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It seems to me that as we have reached the climax of the story - that is to say the moment when King George V signed the Home Rule Act (Sept. 1st, 1914), I cannot do better than close this narrative with a small extract from my diary of the last few days there:-

"As time went on, it gradually became realised that there was a political truce, and although we continued to work at high pressure, nevertheless I found that I tended to become more and more a Police Officer. The probability of an organised attack by the Orangemen was now very slight, but there still remained the danger of sporadic rows, which even at the eleventh hour might conceivably be a danger to our Bill."

In that connection the following small incident rather illustrates what I mean:

While I was at dinner I suddenly received an urgent message from the Police asking me to drive at once to a certain point in my district. I shouted for a taxi, and on the way succeeded in learning the facts of the case. It appeared that it concerned one of our Company-Commanders, a man named O'Neill. O'Neill was a Reservist who had been an N.C.O. in the British Army. On the formation of the Volunteers he had joined them - in fact I rather think that under the inspiration of his historic name he had been able to raise a Company - but at all events, being both efficient and popular he had soon been appointed a Company-Commander (in those days normally of 100 men). Then the War came upon us, and he was called up as a Reservist to

go to the Front.

The difficulty that faced me, as I drove up in my taxi, was the following. He was just going off that evening to rejoin his regiment for foreign service, and his Company of National Volunteers wanted to give him a send-off. They had decided to march under his orders up to the barrack gate and give him a cheer as he went in. I was immensely pleased at this entirely spontaneous display of good feeling both towards O'Neill and towards the Army.

But the Police were considerably alarmed. They told me that it was certain to lead to a disturbance, because some of the streets between our headquarters and the barracks were strongholds of Orangemen, and if our Company passed along them it would certainly be attacked. They asked me to send out an order that the march should not take place. And they drove me off to catch O'Neill.

I was bitterly ashamed of sending out such an order, and I do not think that in the end I did so. By that time O'Neill had received word from the Police, so instead of marching his men to the barrack-gate, he marched them twice round the square, after which they gave him three cheers and he went off alone. I was in time to shake hands with him before he left - and to wish him God-speed. It is very sad to think that in all probability he never returned.

Perhaps the most tangible remnant of my life during those last days was the moment when a young Redmondite M.P. arrived suddenly to inform me that agreement had been reached with the Carsonites, but, he added, with evident hesitation, "on the basis of dividing Ireland." He looked at me expectantly, evidently thinking that the news of Partition would infuriate me. But I said to him at once: "That is the best news that I have heard for weeks - I thought I should have had people shooting each other all round me."

The following is the entry in my Diary:

"I was receiving constant letters recalling me to my home. My wife knew that the Home Rule Bill was just about to become law, so my task was done. But only when I had proved absolutely for certain that Home Rule would become law - and not until then - did I dream of leaving the Volunteers.

With great regret I said good-bye to the friends who had so loyally supported me, and helped me through that difficult time. They showed the greatest kindness up to the very last; invited me to a farewell dinner, and presented me with an excellent pair of field-glasses as a remembrance. I shall never forget their kindness.

Two days later - before I left Ireland - Home Rule became law. My mission was now over, for Home Rule was on the Statute Book. I felt then that any man born in Ireland

was free to join the British Army or perhaps a Canadian or any other unit Colonist. I felt that the great work was done - the work of allowing Ireland to enter on honourable terms to its place within the Empire. Self-Government for Ireland had been signed by the King and sealed with the Great Seal of England.

Relying on the honour of England I have worked since then - and thousands of Irish Nationalists have died - to seal the pact and fulfil their duty to the Empire.

After leaving Belfast I was not called upon (perhaps fortunately) to express any opinion about Ireland for nearly four years to come. During that period I had been working ten or twelve hours a day as Bisley Musketry Officer to eight or nine different Brigades, and was now spending the last 13 months of the War in France and Italy. But in the Spring of 1918 I was rather surprised to receive a visit from a cousin of mine whom I believed to be in hospital. He had begun the War as Captain Dillon (Oxfordshires) and was now Colonel Dillon, D.S.O, had been in the retreat from Mons; afterwards wounded and promoted, and was in fact getting rather near the end of his tether - as good a little Officer as you could find at any Public School.*

He had come to tell me that Lloyd George was about to introduce Conscription for Ireland and ~~he~~ was anxious to get opinions as to how the Irish would take it. Harry's own opinion was "if they're put into a good regiment they'll forget all that rot about Home Rule."

Looking back on the scene now forty years afterwards I am profoundly thankful that I gave him the answer that I did. I said:- "If Lloyd George tries to bring in Conscription there will be thousands of men all over Ireland who would rather die on their doorsteps than go."

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* I had four first cousins at the beginning of the War - all in the Army. By the end of the War three of them were dead and one of them a cripple for life. This Harry Dillon was a true Dillon - one who traced back for five or six generations to the Dillons who fought at Fontenoy. But his branch of the family were completely Anglicised.

Footnote to Chapter IX

The rifles carried by the Childers and Miss Spring Rice (with my assistance) were as modern as those of the Ulster Volunteers but they were not magazine-rifles; and, of course, for street-fighting a far better weapon was the pistol. The British soldiers, armed with their Lee-Enfield, and by that time trained by people like myself to get off 15 rounds rapid in a minute ("the mad minute") were able easily to fire those 15 rounds in that minute, as an Irish volunteer could fire one or perhaps two rounds out of his 1874 weapon. Yet it is a solemn fact that the present day freedom of Ireland was won with the weapons that I have named. It is an extraordinary story!

I must add that two years later — in 1916 — when that struggle began and I heard that at first the I.R.A. were actually holding their own, I said to myself: They must have begun that engagement by raiding the other side for arms. Nothing else is possible!"

George F-H Berkeley

(George F.H. Berkeley)

18th July - 1954



witness. D. J. Brennan
Secretary of the Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE CARSONADE.

I will now try and give a short sketch of the agitation whereby all attempts at peace or compromise between Ireland and England were rendered impossible; whereby the English Conservatives defeated the fourth great effort at settlement since the year 1886.

Personally I did not believe at first - indeed I could not believe - that they would go farther than Parliamentary opposition. Any resort to force seemed to me so extraordinarily unscrupulous. I remembered that only lately, in the years 1904 and 1905, it was Mr. Balfour and his Unionist Cabinet who had suggested self-government for Ireland under the name of Devolution (in which scheme there was no mention of partition). I remembered also the rapprochement of 1910 when the Conservatives had hoped to save the veto of the House of Lords by making concessions as regards Home Rule. Why even in the hotels in Italy - even in the far-off and beloved city of Perugia - I had been astounded at finding long columns in the Times from the well-known Conservative scribe Politicus, half shame-facedly urging these concessions:

> "Home Rule, pure and simple, may be undesirable, but call it Federation, Devolution, Self-Government, and isn't there a good deal to be said for it in that form?"

And how I wondered at the transparent hypocrisy that permeated this suave insinuation of a bargain! Yet this was in the Times. What transpired I do not know; but nothing eventuated. And it is said that Mr. F.E. Smith, on hearing of the failure, exclaimed to a friend with unconcealed satisfaction "Now we must beat the Protestant drum!" For many irresponsibles it was an unrivalled opportunity of gaining titles and high offices by stirring up ill-will among men and then claiming their reward.

It seemed to me impossible, therefore, that the Conservative Party should now turn on us and raise Civil War against proposals to which they had so nearly agreed in the previous year. Nevertheless I was told by responsible men that they intended to do so. In fact my own brother-in-law, Conservative M.P. for Windsor, said to me that there would be no Home Rule because some of his party were buying arms and meant to fight.

On September 23rd 1911 the campaign opened. A meeting was held at Craigavon near Belfast. Four hundred Protestant delegates assembled from all parts of Ulster, and elected a Commission of Five, whom they appointed to draw up a scheme of Provisional Government for the Province of Ulster. And Sir Edward Carson made his celebrated speech in which he said that:

> "If necessary tomorrow, Ulster would march from Belfast to Cork and take the consequences, even if not one of them ever returned".

An extraordinarily cheap boast, surely, amid a population entirely peaceful and entirely unarmed!

Before the end of the year both Mr. Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law as representing the Unionist party made speeches in support of Sir Edward.

And when I enquired of a Conservative agent who was a friend of mine, what it all meant, he replied that the Orangemen intended to arm and to hold down as much of the land as they could, round Belfast. So one began to realise that the matter was serious; but still I thought little enough of it It was an impracticable scheme. And would have remained so, had it not been backed, presently, by the British Army and Navy.

With the advent of the year 1912 matters began to move more rapidly. On April 11th the Home Rule Bill was introduced

in the House of Commons. On the 23rd of April it was submitted to the National Convention in Dublin and unanimously accepted "as an honest and generous attempt to settle the long and disastrous quarrel between the British and Irish nations". They used the word "generous". And what a very moderate Bill it was. How carefully it safeguarded the interests of England; how ready its promoters were to meet every imaginable demand of Ulster.

Here, then, after twenty-seven years spent in discussion, was a Bill so moderate as to be actually inacceptable to many Irish people - and both sides had their opportunity of criticising it. However, in reality very few people except M.Ps. even took the trouble to read its details for themselves. They preferred to listen to platform vituperation. And even the M.Ps. had very little real knowledge of it. It was said in Parliament, whether truly or not I do not know, that the lesser lights used to get their speeches written by experts from outside. Mr. Bonar Law himself struck me as knowing very little about his subject at first. Many of the things which he said were just the things which Sir Edward Carson wanted to get stated, but for which he would not have cared to be responsible himself. However, Mr. Law gradually improved as time went on, and succeeded in rallying round him all the elements opposed to settlement. We soon became aware of the fact.

At Easter 1913 Lord Londonderry said that 100,000 men had joined the Ulster Volunteers, and at the great meeting at Balmoral, Mr. Bonar Law and Sir Edward Carson, after delivering their speeches, shook hands publicly as a token that they were definitely allied. On July 27, at a mass meeting at Blenheim, alliance to the death was proclaimed between the English Unionists and the Orangemen, even to the point of allied rebellion. On this occasion Sir Edward said openly:

> "We will shortly challenge the Government to interfere with us if they dare ... They may tell us if they like that this is treason".

And for his part Mr. Bonar Law made a definite statement:

> "I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster will go, which I shall not be ready to support and which will not be supported by the overwhelming majority of the British people".

Here we have the definite clinching of the agreement. And these were remarkably strong words in view of the fact that the British electorate had decided against him in three general elections during only five years. The British people as a whole were not in his favour; but in one quarter, he undoubtedly did possess an overwhelming majority - namely, among the officers of the Army and Navy.

The whole contention of the Conservatives might be fairly well presented in one single sentence: Home Rule for Ireland was so important a measure that there ought to be a general election on that issue and that issue alone; a sort of referendum, in fact.

The Liberal reply was that never possibly could you get a fair referendum on such a subject; that no grant of Imperial self-government ever yet had been referred to the people, or even sent up to the Lords. It was a measure that could so easily be misrepresented that it would never get a fair hearing. And it was undoubtedly true that even if Home Rule were subjected to a Referendum - even then the people would vote largely on different issues. Capitalists, for instance, would vote according to the interests of capital, and workers according to the interests of Labour. However, Mr. Bonar Law even went further:

> "We regard the Government as a revolutionary committee which has seized by fraud upon despotic

power. In our opposition to them we shall not be guided by the consideration, we shall not be restrained by the bonds which would influence us in an ordinary political struggle. We shall use <u>any means</u> - whatever means seem to us likely to be most effective".

To use such terms as the above - in the teeth of three adverse elections - was manifestly a return to the 18th Century, when the House of Lords could do almost anything.

By means such as this, Sir Edward Carson undoubtedly obtained an almost complete concentration of force. But unfortunately his followers carried the process a great deal further. The horrors of the shipyards in Belfast were a loathsome underside to the boycott campaign among the richer classes. It took the form of trying to turn as many Catholics and Home Rulers as possible out of their employment in Belfast. If they went to work, they had to run the risk of being half-killed. At one time it was said that there were as many as 2,000 men out of employment in Belfast, through no fault of their own, and this process of elimination was entirely approved of by leading Orangemen. Hundreds of workmen left the city and went to Dublin. Whether the actual number, 2,000, is exaggerated I do not know, but the horrors perpetrated were not exaggerated. Catholics were beaten almost to death; some were roasted before the fires; others mutilated in different ways. There was a celebrated case of one small Catholic boy of sixteen years who was taken before the fire by Orangemen and told that if he refused to shout: "To hell with the Pope" he would be roasted. He refused, and stood his torture till they gave it up.

<u>NOTE</u>: It may be asked: How can I be certain that these things were really true? Well, they were shown up by an Englishman, Mr. Tomlinson of the Daily News, and never disproved or seriously contradicted and when I was afterwards in Belfast I made the acquaintance of Mr. Tomlinson and many other

journalists. In this connection I remember one evening, sitting around a table smoking and talking, with five or six English journalists, of whom Mr. Tomlinson was the only Liberal. Presently the others began to chaff him upon some supposed omission of his to note some small point of interest that had occurred. He was extremely good-tempered. But at last he said: "Well, at all events you must admit that I did good work when I showed up what was going on in the shipyards about two years ago". This retort rather silenced them. "Oh, yes, excellent work" they said. "No one would deny that". These were their actual words, and I was rather struck with the gravity with which they were spoken.

Meanwhile the campaign was going gaily forward in England. Political lunches accompanied by fiery eloquence were the order of the day. Mr. Ian Malcolm was writing a war-song for "Ulster". Lord Willoughby de Broke was raising and training men, and had given out that he declined to shake hands with anyone on the opposite side. Great ladies were using their influence with the officers of their acquaintance. Mr. F.E. Smith had been appointed Galloper to the Army of Invasion.

Indeed the year 1913 is mainly remarkable for the raising of armed resistance in England to prevent Home Rule; the capturing of the Army, and the organising of a civilian force to shoot down the unfortunate unarmed Irish peasants who were only asking to have their Parliament restored to them, and no longer to be driven, by the million, out of their own native land.

On January 16th, 1914, the Home Rule Bill passed the Commons, by a majority of 110. On the 30th it was thrown out by the Lords; majority 257; In February the Orange Assembly of Four Hundred met in Belfast and appointed the already existing Commission of Five to be the Executive of their government.

On July 5th the Home Rule Bill again passed the Commons.

On July 12th Sir Edward Carson gave a new revelation to the world:

> "I tell you this, that a day never passes that I do not get - to put it at a really low average - half a dozen letters from British officers asking to be enrolled ... The Army are with us".

On July 18th he said that action on the part of the British Government in any coming campaign against him "will, I believe, smash the Army into pieces, because it will divide the Army". (Morning Post, July 19th, 1913).

The year 1913, in September the Provisional Government was set up in Belfast, and the Morning Post declared "war to the knife". Mr. F.E. Smith informed us that: "We have pledges and promises from some of the greatest generals in the Army". In November, the English Volunteers for Ulster were estimated at 10,000, all bent on preventing any form of self-government for Ireland. A rather absurd side of this movement was the reckless manner in which it was carried out. One Ulster rifle was accidentally issued to Mr. Redmond, who, I believe, kept it in his room at the House of Commons until the war broke out. In November the Observer gave out that "every Unionist ought to prepare to leave the Territorials" and that:

> "The whole Unionist influence throughout the country ought to be used to prevent recruits from joining as long as there is the slightest threat of coercing Ulster".

This was printed in November 1913, only eight months before the war.

Meanwhile, arms were simply pouring into Ireland. Every Conservative, whether Orangeman or Southern Unionist took a weapon over with him for the Ulster Volunteers. On December 9th the Times said:

"From Birmingham alone it is estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 rifles and 20,000 pistols have been sent to Ireland".

With the year 1914 I do not mean to deal at any length. I need only say that by the winter of 1913-14 many of us had perceived that we should be obliged to arm, or else our case would go by default. Hitherto the Nationalists had done little or nothing towards arming because their M.Ps. had determinedly set their faces against it. They had won the game on constitutional lines, and their Bill was sliding through on the crest of a Parliamentary majority. What we all feared was anything in the nature of disturbance. But at length it became evident that unless there were some counterpoise to the Orange movement, no one would believe that the Southerners really wanted Home Rule and the decision would be given, as has often been the case in Ireland, to the most violent agitator. It was a commonplace on English platforms to say: "The Irish do not really want Home Rule". In fact, that idea was only finally killed by the rebellion of 1916.

Finally, therefore, it was very unwillingly decided to begin drilling and arming - though at first I do not think Mr. Redmond approved of it. No sooner was it known that the Nationalists had begun, than the Government hastily passed an Act forbidding the importing of arms into Ireland. But it no longer mattered very much what Acts they might pass. On March 20th occurred the Curragh Mutiny when it became evident that General Gough and his officers would refuse to serve against the Orangemen. Then on April 24th there came the gun-running at Larne. It was said (rightly or wrongly) that at Larne along the Orangemen and their English leaders landed as many as 20,000 rifles and 3,500,000 rounds of ammunition. From that time out they had only one aim - to irritate the Nationalists into attacking them. It was

a beautifully safe game. The Nationalists had hardly any arms at all and their drilling was actively countered by the police. Countless people, both in Ireland and England, volunteered against them. In our own hunting county (Warwickshire) almost every man was ready to serve, and most of the women had been trained as hospital nurses; houses were taken in the neighbouring town for the wounded Orangemen. One young friend of mine informed me that every single officer in his battalion of Special Reserve had bound himself to go, and in case of his being abroad at the moment of outbreak, had been guaranteed his expenses home. The only man of my acquaintance who had sufficient moral courage to refuse was on the list of Reserve of Officers, and he told me that he could not afford to risk losing his pension.

But the problem before the Unionists in England and Ireland was to get the Nationalists to strike the first blow. The unfortunate Irish Catholics perceived of course that the true interest of their country lay in keeping the peace. Insults were daily heaped on them. The Belfast News Letter referred to them as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" - a statement which was very largely true. The Times informed the general public that the Nationalist Volunteers "had large stores of vitriol to throw over their enemies" and although it had sufficient self-respect to recall this issue as soon as possible nevertheless the lie had gone forth.* But gradually one began to notice that English people - some of the Liberals even - imagined that the Home Rulers were not sufficiently in earnest to fight for their cause. Indeed Captain Craig, M.P. said openly in the House of Commons, that the Nationalists were not arming "because they haven't got the pluck".

It became evident to me, and no doubt to scores of others

* I have the right to record this slander because it was applied to me personally. I was first informed of it by Mr. Campbell, the Times Correspondent in Belfast, who came to me as O.C. of the Redmondite Volunteers and made a formal apology.

that we must show that we were ready if need be to give our lives, in order to maintain the system of two-party Government in England; and in Ireland to defend the Compromise.

## CHAPTER II.

In Chapter 1, I have retained my original description of the "Carsonade" as described by my old friend George Peel (v. his handbook, The reign of Sir Edward Carson, 1914), because that is an impartial account. But lately that description has been restated and confirmed in Sir Harold Nicolson's splendid and official Life of George V; any reader who doubts my accuracy need only refer to that standard work. A propos of the Home Rule Bill of 1912 he speaks as follows:-

> "The Home Rule Bill of 1912 strikes us today as a half-hearted proposal ... ... The reserved items were so numerous and important that they virtually reduced the Irish National Parliament to the status of a glorified County Council."

Personally, I have always been a loyal man, and in Ireland that has been my family tradition for nearly three-hundred years - the tradition of Bishop Berkeley; peace and mutual help and goodwill for all those around us. But now, quite suddenly, we were all face to face with Civil War. When, on the night of April 25th 1914, the Carsonites ran that huge cargo of arms at Larne (over 20,000 rifles and about 3,000,000 cartridges) and talked openly of marching to Dublin and Cork, then it became evident that our old life-long sacrosanct creed of law and order had now been replaced by an appeal to force; that henceforth we must always consider the possibility of Civil War, which (we foresaw) meant the dooming of many of the beautiful Irish country houses (my old home among others); and it also became evident that if the minority in Ireland had the right to fly to arms at any given moment, then undoubtedly

the majority over there would possess the same right henceforth and for ever.

I can remember it all like yesterday: We began to ask ourselves - what support could the Liberal Government rely on when the crisis arrived?

Firstly, there was, of course, the Parliamentary majority in the House of Commons consisting of three main component parties:

The Old Gladstonian Liberals, about 267 strong,
The Irish Nationalists under Redmond, about 85 strong.
The newly-arising Labour Party, 42

But, supplementary to the members in the House, there were also the group of Liberals presided over by Haldane and led by Basil Williams, consisting of 23 of the keenest and nicest among the Liberal Party, men mainly of the literary type. We used to meet about once a week in the Committee rooms of the House of Commons. It was during these discussions that I first got in touch with men such as G.P. Gooch, Charles Roden Buxton, young Frank McDermott, and others, but I can remember them more especially because it was through them that I first became the friend of Basil Williams and Erskine Childers. Erskine Childers name was already well-known to most people through his Riddle of the Sands, and also through The Arme Blanche, a work written in collaboration with Lord Roberts after the Boer War. Basil Williams, who had been Headboy at Marlborough School, had been invited to write the official History of the Boer War. The two latter were old companions, Clerks in the House of Commons, who had volunteered together and served through the Boer War and were now hard at work on jobs of the most congenial type; at first I did not at all realise what an immense advantage it was to have experience of service-in-the-field.

In the event, Basil Williams' Committee produced the best and the most serviceable book on Irish politics that I have ever seen (Home Rule Problems Ed. Basil Williams, 1911). Certainly, these were staunch men and true! But naturally that work did not in any way envisage the necessity for a resort to Armed Force. What authority could we invoke to maintain order, or, in Ireland, for defence against an Orange mob; already there had been some rioting in the town of Londonderry.

Personally, although I lived in the country I had always belonged to the Irish Committee in London. It was composed of men and women born in Ireland, and, I think, perfectly ready to offer their lives, if necessary. The presiding influence at that time was old Mrs. J.R. Green, the historian, and the supporters of hers whom I remember best were Mr. Redmond, the Childers, Miss Mary Spring-Rice, and in those days Sir Roger Casement (whom we regarded as a pillar of legality) and Sir Alec and Lady Lawrence. As for me, seeing that I lived in North Oxfordshire, my best friend among the M.Ps. was naturally the Member for North Oxfordshire, Eustace Fiennes. He was a splendid type of the true English gentleman, brave and unselfish, he had been a colonist, and had taken his troop of Yeomanry to Africa. By birth a younger son of the Fiennes of Broughton Castle, the family which in 1642 had led the resistance against Charles I, at times he could become fairly scornful about the Carsonade.

However, as to Ireland, the first genuine step forward came from the ladies of the party. One day when I was up in London, lunching with the Childers, after luncheon Miss Spring-Rice came in, and, of course, we talked about Ireland. Then rather suddenly Mrs. Childers said to me: "You know that we have a plan for running arms into Ireland in Miss Spring-Rice's yacht". The secret was out! At the first

moment Miss Spring-Rice looked rather uncertain as to the wisdom of my being told. The original idea had been hers - but as I know now, the owner of the yacht Asgard was in reality Childers. I looked at her in a sort of wondering manner, feeling that she had undertaken what could never be possible. She was of a type that one finds only too often in the Irish aristocratic families - evidently not capable of "roughing it". Yet, so far, all her years had been devoted to the service of her country. And now, of course, I know at that moment she was living through the days which she would always feel to be the chief reward of her existence. What happiness for her! But for her to have embarked alone on this sea-trip would have been simply courting disaster. It was Mrs. Childers who made this enterprise a possibility - she, and always with her, her husband. They used to work together like one man. And what an able, thorough, practical commander he was! I think, born to have been a Naval Officer, but was a hundred times more useful for the books that he wrote.*

I spent some time talking to the Childers and Miss Spring-Rice and afterwards to our old President (Mrs. J.R. Green) but all that I could do at the moment was to promise them as "much help as I can manage". It was impossible for me to volunteer to go with them on the Asgard - I am always completely incapacitated by sea-sickness. But a few days later I said both to Childers and his wife: "I can't go with you on the yacht, but I'll go to Belfast. That is the place where there is sure to be trouble".

* For this Committee of Basil Williams' he contributed the article on the Irish Land Question. And I always remember the comment made to me by Annan Bryce after one of the discussions: "You know Childers is far the ablest of your fellows. Where the other people end off he starts again". Annan Bryce had been there as my guest and ever afterwards I remembered that saying as a singularly shrewd opinion.

## CHAPTER III.

Looking back on the whole scene now, forty-one years afterwards, I can recall only one man, of those whom I knew, who genuinely saw through the success of the Carsonade at the time, and was ready to act on his own initiative and get some advantage for his own side; I am thinking of the afterwards well-known Dr. Patrick McCartan. His case was certainly exceptional.

At that time, in all England, there was hardly anyone who was willing to call himself a Separatist; that would have been wrecking the Home Rule Bill in the eyes of everyone. So true was this that at that time I asked my Irish friends to give me an introduction to someone who was an avowed Separatist, so that I might have a talk with him and see whether he could not be satisfied with the existing Home Rule Bill. So, before long, that resulted in my going to call on the already well-known Dr. Patrick McCartan, a solicitor by profession.

Mr. McCartan said to me that he could not support our Bill because he was a Separatist. No arguments would move him. I remember he said to me: "I sent my car to support Carson, because his movement is a physical force movement", to which I replied: "Well, I suppose you are entitled to a share of their rifles"; but he would not admit that he had claimed any. He merely repeated: "I'm a Separatist, and I want something different from you".

That was the last contact of any sort that I had with him, until nearly seven years later, when Mr. Hugh McCartan, his first cousin, came to arrange the terms of the Truce with Ireland. I happened to be on the Committee of Lord Henry Bentinck's Peace with Ireland Council, and it fell to my lot to meet Hugh McCartan at the station and drive him off in a hansom to his destination. Of course I made the warmest inquiries for Doctor Patrick McCartan, and was glad to hear that

he had survived those years of constant shooting on both sides. Not very long afterwards I saw in an Irish paper that Dr. Patrick McCartan was one of the Irish representatives in New York.

Of course I personally had no adventures to retail equal to his. But those had been years of the First Great War, and I had been five and a half months in Amiens, and could claim to be just back from Vincenza where I had seen some of the Austrian bombs drop on the Asiago plateau. I had been invalided home and marked Home Service at the age of 49.

I go back to the Diary of my own doings:

On the 30th May 1914, as already stated, I crossed to Dublin; took a room at the Shelbourne Hotel, and went off to call on Colonel Maurice Moore, the Officer in Command of the Irish Volunteers. I was very anxious to meet him - not merely because it seemed probable that he would become my C.O., but also because he was a man about whom I had heard rather interesting descriptions. I knew that he was the son of one of the best-known Irish landlords; his father had made a name for himself among the leading sportsmen in Ireland; then, when the bad times came, had deliberately given up all his horses and his social fame, and had devoted himself entirely to helping the famine-stricken peasants around him.

This was the first occasion on which I had met our Colonel. I was glad to find myself very favourably impressed by him. Evidently he was the right man for our job. Three things struck me about him; he was a Regular soldier - ever since the days of the Ulundi campaign; a British officer (but not an Englishman from England) he was of a type which I knew among the Catholic families in Ireland, of rather aquiline features and a military moustache now greyish; and I found at once that he was easy to talk to.

He received me most kindly, and we were soon on friendly terms. He explained to me that everything in Ireland was in a state of great uncertainty; the Nationalist political parties had coalesced in order to form the Volunteers; but there were often difficulties over the appointment of the officers. "I myself", he said, half joking, "do not always feel as if I were the most popular candidate". This idea struck me as ludicrous for a C.B. of the Boer War, so I said to him:

"Well, really, Sir, after all your years of experience it would seem a rather absurd ending if you were suddenly voted out of your command by the rank-and-file". That idea seemed to amuse him.

After some further talk he saw that what I wanted now was to have a look-round before finally committing myself to anything definite: and evidently he decided to let me have it, and under genuine auspices. He suggested that I should go up to Captain White, D.S.O., who was our C.O. in Derry; so I settled my departure for the next morning.

Next day I spent in a comfortable railway-carriage on my way to Derry - half-sleeping and half-pondering on what I had better do. I was received at their hotel with the greatest friendliness by the Whites. Captain White, the son of General Sir George White, the defender of Ladysmith, was a man who would have been an exceptional and striking figure in any assemblage at that time. He was fix foot two or more; strong; of the Orangeman type - yellow hair and a pale skin; but having been brought up in Hampton Court, had acquired there a very attractive manner. And as I knew that he had won his D.S.O. in the field during the South African War, I felt that I had been sent to serve under a very genuine leader - and still take pleasure in remembering that fact.

That he was attractive to men and women of many different types is hardly to be doubted, but surely that should have been an asset in his favour. There beside him in that small Hotel

in Derry was his wife, young and beautiful and always ready to stand by him in any adventure; she was half-Spanish, of medium height, dark and graceful; in London very much admired, and well-known in the smart set, as her sister was the wife of an officer in the Foot Guards.

I was very soon sitting beside White hard at work for our Redmondite Volunteers in the town of Londonderry; and I found that, quite apart from the town itself, he was busy organising companies in the neighbouring villages so that they could be brought into the town in case of our being invaded from outside; within Londonderry itself the majority of the people was always Nationalist, - though only by a small margin - but owing to the intermingling of the population it was always impossible to form any nucleus for defence; and during the recent rioting, several people had lost their lives. Of course White was very keen to visit any of the outlying villages, so this order to "show Captain Berkeley round" came rather as a godsend. When I arrived he had already planned a motor drive through the three northern counties of Ireland.

A motor drive through the three northern counties of Ireland in June ! Who would not pay in gold for such a chance, quite apart from the political and historical interest of the situation in 1914. From village to village we went, and in each one White was welcomed with a joy that was touching. However, there seems no good reason now for recalling the names of those villages; so I will merely describe the first one on the list. In it, these unfortunates - compelled to live on about twelve shillings a week - had been warned by their leaders to avoid any kind of physical resistance at all, for that would wreck Home Rule. During the two years of the agitation they had submitted to any sort of insult, but now, when I saw them they had recently been told that they might arm in defence of their Home Rule cause. When I arrived there every single man

was on that village green; the first thing I noticed was two old men of eighty turned out of the ranks by White because they were too old to "form fours", and that sight was more than Mrs. White could stand; she kept asking him to let them go back.

Our tour lasted four or five days, but towards the end of it there occurred for me a chance of seeing the opposite side at work; suddenly we ran into Sir Edward Carson! We were spinning along the road at about 30 miles an hour - quite reckless in those days - when suddenly we caught up a half-company of cyclists belonging to the Ulster Volunteers. I glanced at their rifles with some speculation (and noticed that they had no magazines) but then we learned with great interest that this was a Guard of Honour going down to meet Sir Edward Carson at the station.

"Do you think we had better drive on a little?" I asked White. "If you were recognised it might lead to a row". I was thinking that if stones were flying, Mrs. White might possibly be in the line of fire.

"Well", said White, "it has not yet come to the point that I cannot walk along a public road when the Ulster Volunteers are there". He was a D.S.O. and he was there to defend the King's Act of Parliament. So we stopped on the bridge overlooking the railway station, and had a good view of the whole scene.

As the train steamed in, twenty of the young Ulster Volunteers were there, drawn up to receive Carson. When he stepped out on to the platform, they presented arms, after which he started to inspect them. They were nice-cleaning-looking boys, and had learnt their drill. But, as for Carson, I had seen him before, and knew that ever since his rise to fame he had tended to assume a lofty and, in the House of Commons, a sneering expression. On this occasion he certainly combined the two. However, that was what was expected of him. Outside the station the Duchess of Abercorn was waiting in a

carriage to receive him. As he approached, it dawned on me that she was about to curtsey, as for a Royalty. In the end she did not actually curtsey; but the effect was just as good.

This small scene has always been the vision which remained in my mind of Carson, of the Duchess of Abercorn, and of the Ulster Volunteers. And I have often wondered whether he would have looked as insolent and she as self-satisfied, if they had known that they were only 59 days distant from the outbreak of the First World War.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Whites and I had ended up our tour at Dungannon, and there were joined by Sir Roger Casement and a young man from Belfast named Denis McCullough, who had been the principal organiser of the Irish Volunteers in that city. I was very glad to see Sir Roger as I had met him before in London at Lady (Anne) Lawrence's at a moment when he was at the full flush of his fame, as being perhaps the most successful Consul in the British Service, and also as the deliverer of the Putamayo natives. He struck me at once as a person of exceptionally interesting appearance - a man of about fifty, with a bronzed face, a black beard and an extraordinarily kindly smile. We soon started to talk about Ireland, and, looking back on that evening, I have often been rather amused at the line which I took - not only then but afterwards during the half a dozen conversations which I remember having with him, for as my home is in Oxfordshire I was not in the way of meeting him except at the Lawrence's, or occasionally at the house of Mrs. J.R. Green, the historian. Mrs. Green was the doyenne of the Irish Political Committee (I have already described that Committee at some length elsewhere) and as, at her house, one or two of the friends sometimes went rather

too far in their Radicalism to suit me, I decided at once that here, in Sir Roger Casement, was the type of politician that I had always hoped to find; others of course might be more extreme Nationalists than they would like to admit, but here was a man who could not possibly be disloyal. His whole life would be a disproval of that. I said to myself: "He has twenty years or more of sound imperial work to his credit, he has accepted a G.C.M.G. from their Government. He lives mainly on the pension provided for him by law. He, at all events, must necessarily be a loyal man".

So he and I strolled through the town to buy some books together, and then went up the hill to see O'Neill's Castle. He was always an interesting companion and on this occasion he took a keen pleasure in looking at the old castle. Most unfortunately, I have never been able to remember what he said about it, except his telling me that the modern way of spelling O'Neill is similar or almost similar to the most ancient, and that it has escaped the usually illiterate forms of Anglicisation from which so many Irish names still suffer.

There is, however, one tiny little episode by which I take pleasure in remembering him.

When we were waiting outside the door of the meeting-house it was locked - I saw just beside us a very small boy playing Fives against the wall with a soft ball, so by way of passing a moment or two, I began to play Fives with him. Sir Roger was immensely pleased. His whole face softened with the very kindly expression which was his chief characteristic, and he joined us, encouraging both sides in a gentle, gantering sort of way.

Dungannon struck me as a place where, sooner or later, blood was likely to flow; an ideal place for a row. It is a small town on the side of a steep hill containing about 3,830 inhabitants, of whom 2,120 are Catholics (according to the Census) and just then both sides were obviously very bitter. But for the moment things seemed to be fairly quiet, so we

held a political meeting that evening. White spoke; McCullough spoke; and Sir Roger Casement spoke, and I did not altogether like their speeches. I was glad that I had declined the honour of addressing the assembly. The sentiments uttered were too extreme for my taste, but I accounted for those of Sir Roger as being merely due to the enthusiasm of those around him. The idea that he should be a Separatist seemed impossible. His whole life gave the lie to it.

That evening while we were all having a cheerful supper at the hotel, he invited me to go to Belfast as Organising Officer, which meant practically C.O. pro tem. of the Irish Volunteers in that town. I told him at once that I had not enough experience of soldiering for so important a post, but he answered that he was sure that I had.

"Well", I said, "I have only done about nine months soldiering in my life; the usual three months of Preliminary Drill with a Militia Battalion in 1898, and then in the year 1900 over five and a half months at Aldershot preparing myself to go to the Boer War - and that is fourteen years ago now. Since then I have done no soldiering at all".

His face fell, but after a moment or two he said: "Well, if you will excuse my speaking quite frankly, I feel this: that even you would be better than no one at all".

I saw that evidently they could get no one to go to Belfast, and during the next few weeks that idea rather haunted me. Of course I had known that the Nationalists were extremely short of Regular officers who were prepared to face the Social Boycott. At that moment I knew only of one, Colonel Maurice Moore, who was by birth a Catholic and an avowed Home Ruler. But as he was already C.O. of the Irish Volunteers it would be necessary for him to remain in Dublin.

I think the chief reason why my name had ever come onto the list at all was mainly because of the undoubted success of

my book The Campaign of Adowa. My description of that great Italian defeat on March 1st, 1896, had been very kindly spoken of by Colonel Page Henderson at the Staff College. Thus, as far as concerned qualifications, I could claim to be a military writer, and also an Oxfordshire Magistrate who had gone over to fulfil his duty to the King during this time of difficulty.

A week later while in Dublin, I ran into Fiennes and his wife. He urged me at all costs to accept, and he added that he would come over himself to stand by me.

To summarise the whole situation during that summer as to our chances of success: At first there was not the very slightest chance of military success - not one in a thousand. However, from the first there did remain a certain advantage in the fact that we were undoubtedly in the right. No one could deny that we were defending the Law, the majority of the House of Commons, and eventually the position of King George V.

I only saw Casement two or three times during my time in Belfast. What a tragedy was his life! When I heard that he had gone over to the Germans, my first reaction was to say: "What an awful pity! Evidently he hadn't enough patience.

For during those early months of the War he must have known that in almost any Officers Mess some of the people were saying openly that as soon as the War was over "We can settle this Irish question". In my own case I received a message from the O/C. of the 2nd Line of Warwickshire Yeomanry (delivered by the O/C. at the Depot) that he was training them "to prevent Home Rule". In fact, it at first seemed very unlikely that we should receive the Bill in full. Probably Casement thought that he had been tricked by Carson.

At that time I was working 12 or 14 hours a day relying on the King's signature of the Home Rule Act and thought that Casement might very well do the same.

## CHAPTER V.

At this point in my Belfast Diary I will give a list of the dates which seem to me of greatest interest, because each of them is connected with one of the Irish leaders of that day.
April 25th. The Orangemen ran their cargo of arms at Larne.
May 30th to June 6th. My visit to Colonel Maurice Moore and my drive through the Northern counties with Captain White, D.S.O., (Commanding Officer of the Irish Volunteers in Derry).
June 6th. My meeting with Sir Roger Casement, one of the founders of the movement. He invited me to become Organising Officer of the Irish Volunteers in Belfast. I returned to England leaving his offer open. It remained open for about 10 days. I decided to accept the Belfast offer. But, as a clash seemed inevitable before long, I meant to make my position absolutely clear; any authority to use force came to me from the Parliamentary majority of the Irish people.
June 16th. So on this day I went up to the House of Commons and sent in my card to Hugh Law (M.P.) an old friend of my Oxford days. He introduced me at once to Mr. Dillon and together we called on Mr. Redmond whom I knew already. They were all three more than civil!

Thus, before starting to Belfast I had had a completely satisfactory interview with Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon, leaders of the Irish Nation, and at the same time I could claim the support - active if necessary - of my own Liberal M.P. in Oxfordshire, Eustace Fiennes.

It was on July 7th, 1914, that I started my work as Organising Officer of the Irish (Redmondite) Volunteers in Belfast. That job came to an end with the signing by the King of the Home Rule Act (1914). I have the feeling that those last months were a crucial period for the Irish Volunteer movement although their actual fighting did not begin until 1916. I copy the following extract from my old Diary of that time:

"Having succeeded in getting my air-rifle through the customs, I deposited my luggage at the Shelbourne Hotel and I went round to see Colonel Moore, to get my orders. An original plan of mine had been to go to the Volunteers at Achill Island - partly because a friend of mine was working there, and partly because I felt that a small command was more suited to my very slight experience of soldiering. But when I sat down to talk to Colonel Moore he said at once:

'Do you still want to go to Achill, because you could be of more use in Belfast?'"

It was plain that he wanted me to go to Belfast, so I said: "Anywhere you like, Sir".

I admit that I was secretly rather pleased at seeing that he seemed surprised at my agreeing so easily. He asked me again several times whether I should prefer to go to Achill, but I assured him 'that I was ready to go wherever he liked'. So that was settled".

Looking back on it now I feel that there was one diverse result of the Orangemen's breach of the peace, that now there were some of us Moderates who saw that moderation was useless and among the people whom I knew, a very good instance of that sentiment was Eustace Fiennes.

Next day I started. My orders were to go to Belfast and return after three or four days with a full report of the position there; no doubt they wanted to see what our people thought of me before finally appointing me. In the train I was awakened by the guard who had half a mind to confiscate my air-rifle, but I refused to give it up. I knew from experience with our Hanwell Miniature Rifle Club that it would be invaluable for instructional purposes. Of course I made no reference to the 21,000 rifles lately run at Larne - that would have been tactless!

On this occasion I only spent three days in Belfast - a short visit, but in that time I found myself able to collect far more than enough information for my report to Colonel Moore, for the men in authority were extremely kind and helped me in every way. As to the conditions of the Volunteers there I shall speak later; the immediate point for me to master was the organisation and more especially the character of the people with whom I had to deal.

The first three people whom I met were Mr. D. McCullough (whom I had already met at Dungannon), Mr. J. Burns and Sergeant Major Cussick.

McCullough owned a shop and earned his bread by selling pianos and music. But from his 18th year he had been interested in politics, and though now only twenty-seven or twenty-eight had acquired quite an important position among the Belfast Catholics. He was founder of the Volunteers in that town. He was nice-looking and nice-spoken, light brown hair, light brown moustache and light brown clothing; a great enthusiast for Ireland. But at first sight I saw no particular reason for the influence which undoubtedly he possessed.

By way of making a good start I asked McCullough whether there was anything of which the Volunteers stood specially in need; he at once suggested arms. This was a fortunate suggestion, because, as the gunsmiths did not yet know me by sight, I was able to procure half a dozen miniature rifles, with plenty of ammunition, and also an old Lee-Metford with 100 rounds. These I presented to the Volunteers and I think they were considered a strong proof that I was in earnest.

In this connection I had what was for me a new experience. When I had been a few minutes in that first gunsmith's shop I noticed an oldish man in a frieze coat, sitting there with his head on his hand, deeply engaged in examining some fishing flies and tackle. After making my purchases I started to go

to the next smartest gunsmith in the town, but - not knowing my way - was a little slow in getting there. As I entered the second shop I was surprised to see the same gray-haired gentlemen sitting there in the same attitude and similarly engaged. He must have walked there with lightning speed to have arrived there so much before me! Undoubtedly a police agent, I think.

The position of the gunsmiths was peculiar; nominally the importation of arms was forbidden, but actually it was in full swing. In Belfast the only restriction was that Nationalists could not get them. When, a few days later I spoke again to my second gunsmith, Mr. Hunter, and asked him whether he could sell me any rifles, he said quite honestly that he was a Unionist, and that if I would pledge my word that they would be used on the Unionist side, that I could have some. This pledge I would not give, so I got none. The first-named gunsmith had no large-bore rifles for sale, but he said that he could import some miniature rifles; he told me that he could be certain of getting them through, but not quite certain as to which day they would arrive. This was the only inconvenience that his trade suffered owing to Arms Act passed by the British Parliament, and it was more than compensated for by the prices charged. Those gunsmiths must be among the "leisured classes" by now.

As a matter of history, that is how Ireland was ruled under the Act of Union (1800-1914). It was so effectually patrolled by the British fleet that not a single rifle was allowed into the country unless you were a Unionist. But if you could prove that you were a Unionist you might get 20,000 - if desired! I proved that while I was in Belfast.

But this instance of marvellous efficiency throughout so many years undoubtedly suffered a considerable jolt when Carson and his patrons ran such a huge consignment. This "gave away" the whole situation. And the next consignment of arms was not on the Unionist side at all. It was the coup planned by Miss Spring-Rice and Mrs. Childers and carried out on the Asgard.

And before I left Belfast "Joe" Devlin, M.P. had run another cargo of 250 for the benefit of the Redmondite Volunteers. And I had received information about a private machine-gun for which I certainly took no responsibility. Those 250 rifles were well and carefully guarded (every one of them numbered) with its own place in the rack, and a guard slept there at night.

It was hardly necessary to impress upon our people that they must defend them to the death - just as if they belonged to the Ulster Volunteers. That was easily arranged. But what I could not prevent happening was a secret bringing in of pistols by private individuals. In that respect all that I could do was to give out that the Irish Volunteers, who were under my command, had no connection with pistols of any sort or kind, that I thought them a danger to our Movement and would not defend anyone who got into trouble by introducing them.

## CHAPTER VI.

"Captain Berkeley, what I want is <u>blood</u> - simply <u>blood</u>". I think my reply was: "Miss Harrison, I will not forget you".

Miss Harrison was the Lady-Correspondent of one of the leading Conservative papers, but I did not avail myself of the opening this offered, because I was there to keep the peace until the Home Rule Bill should be signed.

There were at that time staying in the hotel representatives of all the best-known London papers - men whom I afterwards got to know and whom I often think about even now; but at that time I did not know them, so that I only had quite a short contact even with Tomlinson of the Daily News (the hero who had shown up the horrors of the shipyards two years earlier), or with H.W. Nevinson (then of the Daily Telegraph) whom I am always glad to remember - I proposed for Chairman of the Peace with Ireland Committee in 1921. Those with whom I had most talk

and friendly conversation were Mr. Campbell (already mentioned) and Edward Dunn of the Daily Mail. The Morning Post representative was then avowedly in hopes of starting people shooting each other. He was on friendly terms with Crozier (O.C. of the Orangemen's machine-guns). Behind all this was the colossal influence of Northcliffe. He had spent about a quarter of a million sterling in this district alone, after sending over some twenty motor cycles to carry the news of victory.

One day as I was coming down the front stairs of the hotel I was met by the Correspondent of the Daily Chronicle, a small man of nervous appearance. I did not know him but he introduced himself and gave me to understand that he had something important to communicate, and as he represented the Daily Chronicle (then Liberal) I assumed him to be a friend. He told me that on the previous evening a tall man in Ulster Volunteer uniform had come into the smoking-room and, after being very uncivil, had threatened him with personal violence; that he had only got rid of him by ringing the bell for the hotel servants.

All this seemed quite possible, and he then warned me that I myself should probably undergo a similar experience that evening, and that I had better be on my guard against a personal attack. This, too, seemed perfectly possible, in view of the recent riots in Derry, Dungannon and elsewhere, and of the faction fights which always take place in Belfast at times of political excitement. So I put a loaded pistol in my trouser pocket that evening when I went out. That was the first occasion in my life on which I have ever done so.

I need not have bothered: the following was the rather puerile outcome of the warning:-

When I came into the smoking-room that evening I perceived sitting at the table with the others, a little man in Ulster Volunteer uniform. He had been in the hotel for four or five

days and had already given out to the servants that "he had received his orders and that the show was going to begin at once, and he, for one, was glad of it". That evening I happened to be in conversation with Mr. Campbell,* the kindly and pleasant Correspondent of The Times, but nothing daunted, the little Volunteer, after fortifying himself with whiskey and soda at the expense of his journalistic friends, came and sat down at our table and introduced himself by handing me his card on which was printed "Sir Archibald Welby". "A fine name" I think," he said, with evident pride. I assented, although I did not think the name belonged to him. I put him down as looking rather like a jockey. However, his conversation soon proved him to be a fire-eater; he produced a charger of loaded rifle-cartridges out of his pouch and said: "There, these are the cartridges. I mean to shoot every Redmondite I see". After such a brilliant opening, obviously no comment was required from me! "Surely you would not shoot at another man in the street, would you?" asked Mr. Campbell, chiming in. "Oh, yes, I would" returned the Ulster Volunteer, and then holding up the charger: "These cartridges were made in Germany". "Shame", I said. "No; I mean in Canada", he corrected, noticing his mistake. I was just reflecting that they were uncommonly like British Regulation ammunition, Mark VII, and perhaps he read my thoughts, for he started at once to create a diversion. He produced an automatic pistol. "Do you see that? Mind, it's loaded" he added hastily, and Mr. Campbell began to protest about playing with firearms. "Nonsense", I replied, pulling out the empty magazine and then working the equally empty barrel. It so happens that during my life I have

* It was Mr. Campbell who had told me that our people had been called vitriol-throwers in an article in the Times. I understand that it is an accusation of old date in Belfast politics'.

shot with many different sorts of pistols (only at targets) so I examined the weapon with care, and told him how much interested I had always been in fire-arms and that I had been second in a pistol competition only three weeks before. In fact, we became quite friendly over it, and he was just telling me about his service during the Boer War when one of his journalist friends, seeing, I suppose, that no "copy" would result, suddenly slipped forward and fired a blank cartridge into the floor from a very small pistol which he thought I could not see.

But I had seen it quite plainly. Not so, however, his friend "Sir Archibald" who jumped out of his seat a yard high, and lit on his feet with such an absurdly startled expression that I simply leaned back on my chair convulsed with laughter.

"Hang it" he said in a highly injured tone, "you know I've heard these things on service". After that there was no more possibility of a "bluff", not even when he started talking about Ju Jitsu.

Surely, taking the long view of the situation, it was rather sad that hie friends should have let Rudyard Kipling get involved in this beneath-contempt journalistic stunt. At that moment he had just published his poem about "envy hate and greed" of the Southern Irish.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Army and the situation: COUNT GLEICHEN AND BRIGADIER GENERAL CROZIER.

My day, as may be imagined, was extremely full; in fact I was pretty well overworked. In the morning I was always at the office with Burns or some other of our people, attending to all the business of four battalions - endeavouring to do for our Volunteers many of the things that are done by four Orderly Rooms and a Brigade staff, and at the same time to

get out a new scheme of reorganisation: starting carpenters and other tradesmen to make the dozens of things that I required. In the afternoon I usually spent my time in a taxi-cab racing round the town to find halls or yards for either musketry or drill; and sometimes being interviewed by people who had nothing to say, but were merely trying to get some news to retail as the latest gossip. At 7 p.m. my parades began; so after a hasty dinner I again started rushing round in a taxi from point to point, trying to see that no one, out of the several thousands who came down for instruction, should go away disappointed. Between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. I must often have driven five or six miles and attended six or eight parades in different parts of the town. At 9 p.m. I would reluctantly tear myself away from what I was at, and attend one of the committees, and then remain up with the journalists until after midnight - very often the most useful hour of all!

It was through one of those midnight talks that one evening I heard most circumstantially that there was an Orange plot in existence for stirring up a riot - or something equally convincing. The scheme ran as follows: They were to send a crowd of roughs from the Shankill Road into the Catholic quarter. The roughs were to create as much disturbance as possible; break windows, shout "To hell with the Pope" and attack passers-by, etc. until retaliation led to a riot. Then the police were to be called in; but it was hoped that by that time the riot would have got beyond the powers of the police and that the soldiers would have to be summoned. And finally - the culminating tableau - the Ulster Volunteers were to march in, as the last supreme hope of the cause of Law and Order!

The intentions was that the U.V. should justify their claim to being necessary for the preservation of Order; and

that some, at all events, of the National Volunteers - whether officially or unofficially - should be involved in the fray. and possibly in a conflict with the soldiers; and, in any case, I foresaw that by the importation of a few Union Jacks into the melee the journalists would have material for an excellent headline in every Conservative newspaper in London, such as: "Desperate riot in the Catholic Quarter of Belfast", "Attack on the Police and Soldiers"; "The Union Jack fired on". It might be turned into a very serious cry against the passing of the Home Rule Bill.

This story came to me on excellent authority, but I rather doubted it from the first. Nevertheless, it was certainly the kind of plan that might possibly be tried, and I knew that, only a week earlier, a small body of Ulster Volunteers had marched down part of the main road in the Catholic quarter - an unpardonable crime in Belfast; a flagrant breach of the unwritten law. So it seemed wisest to take steps to forestall this new scheme - if only to remain on the safe side. I had no desire to have a repetition of "the battle of Springfield Road", a kind of pitched battle that took place in Belfast when the Home Rule Bill of 1893 was passed; it is said to have lasted three days.

The principal aim of this plan, I knew, was to create an impression adverse to us in England, and thus to jeopardise Home Rule; so my first care was to write a complete description of the scheme beforehand and send it to one or two of my political friends in England to enable them, if necessary, to defend us in the House of Commons. These letters, of course, went through a third party.

My next care was to place myself in touch with the soldiers. I decided, although I did not know him, to go and call on the Commandant of Belfast, namely Count Gleichen. This was a fortunate inspiration of mine!

On my arrival at the barracks I was received most civilly by Count Gleichen. I put my case to him. I said that, being temporarily in charge of the National Volunteers in Belfast, I felt it my duty to be responsible for law and order in our own Catholic quarter, and then related to him the whole story of the proposed riot for what it was worth. He listened with a good deal of interest, and then shook his head: "Oh no" he said, "I do not think it is true". "You do not believe it?" "No" he said, "the Orangemen wont do that. I know their plans".

This admission did not altogether surprise me; though it was, of course, a considerable admission. The plans of the U.V. staff were as a rule most magnificently concealed. However, I took this to be a friendly gesture on his part, and continued to pursue the purpose for which I had come to him. I told him about the Orangemen having marched through our quarter at night and pointed out that such exploits as that were regarded as invasion; that although I was bent on preserving the peace I should probably find it impossible to do so if they repeated these nocturnal marches. This led me to the desired point: I ended up by undertaking formally that in case of any difficulty he could rely on the National Volunteers to assist in keeping order.

He accepted my offer with all civility and I departed.

Thus, as long as Count Gleichen remained there, we, the National Volunteers, could make some claim to be heard. But when he departed five or six weeks later the next Governor at Belfast (as it turned out) was of a somewhat different complexion. *

However, by that time we had got our Volunteers on the true basis - that of defending the law, and for us that was not merely a figure of speech. We organised a complete

* This political system must have made recruiting very difficult during the War.

system of pickets in all our streets, in case of rioting. The only serious attempt at a faction-fight occurred a few weeks later and, although the news did not reach me personally until it was over, our Organisation held good. Our local Company-Officers formed pickets of our Volunteers who very soon stopped the fighting and patrolled the streets concerned.

Consequently as far as concerned the army and Count Gleichen I could feel that the situation was satisfactory. But what I was entirely unaware of then was the fact that in the hotel itself there was all day, working in the interest of the Orangemen, one of their most active agents, namely the afterwards wellknown Crozier. He was a man who had never been in the Regular Army, but had seen a good deal of irregular service in Africa and elsewhere and was soon to become known to everyone as Brigadier General Crozier, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. simply through his career as an Orangeman. He had played a leading part in the landing of the arms at Larne on April 25th Of course, although he might easily have done so, he had never let me know that he was an O.W. from my own beloved school of which I have become the historian - and as he was my junior by ten years, naturally I had never heard of him. However, in his Impressions and Recollections he gives a resumé of his life. He tells us that he failed to get into the army - through lack of inches he says - Owing to his never having been a regular soldier he had no pension to rely on for his old age. In 1898, at the age of 18, he had started life as a tea-planter in Ceylon. But a year later there had come the Boer War which had swept him and several thousands of young men of his type into active service for as long as it lasted! When I got to know him better he told me himself that his chief difficulty was that he had no provision for his old age. But that conversation occurred later on, in the year 1921, by which time he was celebrated as the Commanding Officer of the Black and Tans.

Undoubtedly he was a good soldier.* He afterwards did good work as a Colonel in the Ulster Division; but he had quarrelled with his employer (the British Government) and had published a book of memoirs "A Brass Hat in No Man's Land" which was little else than an attempt at blackmail. He had served in West Africa and in other places where blackmail was by no means impossible.

His description of Belfast at that moment runs as follows (p.149) :-

> "It can be imagined that all the time we were at Craigavon Ulster was like a powder magazine laid bare to the chance flicker of a naked lamp. Feeling was running high - any chance publichouse brawl between Catholics and Orangemen was liable to blow the whole structure of society sky high. On one of these occasions one of my men absented himself and was found drunk, as soldiers will often be found, in a very undesirable and dangerous quarter, in U.V.F. uniform. After consulting Captain Craig relative to the matter, I hastened down to the city late at night and removed the culprit to safety. Next morning he was dismissed. I had only one hold over the men - dismissal. As there was always a good deal of drink flying about, I used to turn a man out for the first offence of this nature, by calling round at his home and removing his uniform. I was helped very considerably by the women on these occasions. Drink being the curse of many of their homes, they welcomed the drastic measure I was forced to take to render my command sober, which sometimes had a very beneficial effect on their own homes, as many

* Short, thick-set, fairly hard bitten; accustomed to deal with natives.

a man tried to sober up in order to get back to me. The wives and children used to ridicule the dismissed men most unmercifully, shouting after them in the streets such comments as: "Did the wee marn (Ulster for "man") tear the breeks off ye?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Our training for the rifles and their landing at Howth.

As the days went on I began to feel rather anxious. I had been there some weeks and time was getting extremely short. The Home Rule Bill might be signed at any moment and then the Orangemen would certainly take action of some sort. I did not doubt that some of them were keen enough to get to work, but whether keen or not, they would be absolutely compelled to do so after all their speeches and gun-running, and their two Covenants, unless they were willing to appear absurd in the eyes of the world. Besides which their Conservative subscribers in England would naturally expect some return for their money.

My difficulty was that our people had no rifles for their own defence, and that many of them did not know how to use a rifle; in fact as yet they had no striking power; even if arms were supplied to them a good many people would be handling them for the first time. I had great hopes of the rifles arriving, but did not see how I could train a sufficient number of recruits in time to receive them. Time was what I prayed for - if only a few weeks; every week was invaluable.

Therefore I turned my whole attention to musketry. In this I did not receive unequivocal support, even from my own officers, because among the senior battalion commanders were some who had been N.C.Os. of the old school of pre-Boer War days, when pipe-clay and parade were paramount and firing was

done by volleys. In this branch we had everything to create, an I had an immense amount of detail to do myself. However, in England I had for years been training a rifle-club to shoot Germans, so I was happy enough at the work.

I began by making a miniature rifle-range against the back of a fives-court in our athletic ground, but found that I could only get four firing points there. Then I wasted an immense amount of valuable time in searching for halls in which to set up indoor ranges. The first difficulty that I encountere struck me as absurd - in one of the halls which was lit by gas jets, the atmosphere was so thick from escaped gas that the smell almost knocked me down. However, the caretaker assured me that there were so many holes in the roof that it would not be dangerous! Apparently he was right. After some further efforts I finally arranged for borrowing three halls; in the first one I had about eight firing-points; in the second about ten, and in the third four. So with all possible dispatch I gave the order for tripods to be made; after which we succeeded in buying some more rifles and air-rifles and started to train as many instructors as possible. Then I began to put the companies through instruction in the firing positions, and in the use of the rifle. Having no sub-target machine, we used the air-rifles. In the first and third halls the men spent about ten evenings being taught and practised with the air-rifle and then in hall No. 2 they spent another ten evenings with the miniature rifle. It was a very short period of preparation, but I could not give them more. Each company overlapped the preceding one; there were always two companies being instructed at the same time; one on preliminary work, the other firing with miniature rifles. My original scheme was that each man should fire 90 rounds (with miniature rifle or air-rifle) before passing out, but I doubt whether many of them ever had time to fire more than half that number. Still one hoped that even 50

rounds would be enough to prepare them for learning our large bore rifles - when (and if) they ever arrived.

In addition to these three halls we succeeded afterwards in getting one or two others, and we did some firing on the out-of-door miniature range. Most of the afternoons I spent in a motor car, scouring the country in search for a site for t the open range, and finally I hit upon one that would have done up to 300 yards and possibly a little farther, but the owner was afraid to let us have it!

At first the shooting was bad, but it improved rapidly and I found the air-rifles an excellent institution. As we had no real rifles, there was no promiscuous snapping. The recruit was instructed until he had mastered the standing and prone positions, but he was not allowed to press the trigger more than two or three times without the rifles being loaded; the moment he knew the prone position he was put to fire at a decimal target. The result was that I had better trigger-pressing than I have ever seen since then among beginners. The recruits were accustomed from the very first to press the trigger without the rifle's going off, and their seeing where the shot had struck, so they very soon realised that bad pressure meant a bad score; and, as their points were always totalled up for them, there was a good deal of keenness to do well. Unfortunately, the miniature rifle shooting was not so successful. My difficulty was the ammunition; one of my officers offered to get some for me (he being in that line of business) but the consignment turned out to be bad. However, I did my best to rectify matters by buying more.

It was at the beginning of this period that an event occurred that gave a great stimulus to my musketry and in fact to the Volunteers in general. I mean the landing of the arms at Howth. I well remember how the news of that landing reached me. It was the evening on which we were to hold a public

meeting of all our supporters in order to raise funds for the Volunteers. I had been preparing my speech and came down at about 7 p.m. for dinner. In the doorway of the hotel were several journalists and I was just exchanging a few words with them when the representative of the Daily Chronicle came running in with an evening paper in his hand, saying in his usual rather melodramatic way: "It has begun; the troops have fired on the people; it has begun". Knowing that he was always rather given to heroics, I remained somewhat sceptical until I had actually seen the news. But it seemed to be true enough. The telegrams said that arms had been landed at Howth, that the troops had fired on the people landing them, and that some people had been killed. I forget the exact number of deaths reported, but I remember that the first two telegrams were a good deal exaggerated. The journalists of course were delighted; but to me it came as rather a shock. In the first place it seemed evident that our arms had been seized during their landing; that a fight had ensued, and that some of my friends, at all events, had been killed; and it might of course mean civil strife all over Ireland. It was a very sad evening for me. When I went to the meeting all the other speakers were in great excitement, but I asked them to let me forego my speech. Violent death at that time was an unfamiliar spectre. We looked upon it in an absolutely and entirely different light from that in which we regard it now, since the German War has dulled our sense of the value of life. I was wondering most of that evening whether I had done right in subscribing money to the enterprise. Moreover I was wondering, should the conflagration become general, what in the world I was to do. Here we were, several thousands strong of course, but as yet only very slightly trained, and hardly able to raise a single rifle between us; no bayonets and no ammunition. We had no possible chance of success. In case of emergency it seemed useless even ordering

the men to fall-in, seeing that I had no arms to give them. To resist would be waste of time and waste of life; yet I knew that for the sake of honour we should have to make some sort of defence if occasion arose.

While the speeches were in progress I racked my brains to try to provide for every possible outcome of the event. Then I was called upon to speak. So I spoke as shortly and as sanely as I could. I told them that if occasion arose for the three battalions to fight, they would most certainly not hang back; but that they would be acting as military units, and that there must be no unauthorised movements; that it was our duty to view the new incident calmly and turn it to the account of our cause as we should any other incident that occurred. Considering the electric condition of the atmosphere, my rather uninspiring remarks were very kindly received.

Next morning the papers were more cheering; and, oddly enough, in Belfast the Orangemen, so far as I could gather, seemed to have taken rather a sympathetic view of the landing. One or two of my people who worked on the Island told me that when they arrived there, they were well received by their Orange workmates who merely grinned and said: Ye're more in earnest than we thought ye were". The Ulster Volunteers certainly had no cause for complaint, because on the very day on which people were bayoneted for landing rifles near Dublin, the Orangemen in Belfast were marching down the street, fully armed, in broad daylight, without the slightest let or hindrance - which fact was made plain in the Daily Mail, with a view ~~to~~ presumably to stirring up anger in Ireland against the British Government.

And now, as the days wore on, I began to receive news of the little white yacht that was steered by the lady. I was so much excited during the first two days, wondering whether my friends would escape, that Mr. Campbell actually enquired

whether there were some romance in the matter, and whether the lady was my affianced bride. He even offered to pay for a signaller's lamp for the Volunteers, if I would tell him the whole story and I remember that I wondered vaguely what people would say if it were ever revealed that Lord Northcliffe had bought signallers' lamps for the National Volunteers! However, after the third day I felt that we could safely assume that "the little white yacht" had got safely away.

At our Volunteer headquarters they were keenly interested to hear that the arms had been run by friends of mine, and that we could expect at least a portion of the rifles shortly, and perhaps have a chance of making some attempt at defence; and although inwardly I felt that a weak defence was worse than none I knew also that until we had some arms on parade we should always be regarded as a negligible quantity. Above all, I felt it would be a proud day for the Volunteer when our battalions marched through the streets with rifles over their shoulders, and bayonets by their side; the movement would then have some definite weight in the scale.

"And where is the little boat gone now?" one of our people asked me. "Oh", I said, "the little yacht has slipped away across the waves, and they'll never see her again".

I suppose the news spread of my entirely vicarious success, for I sprang into immense popularity. On the following Saturday evening when I rode at the head of my battalions, on my noble black steed after our drill, the main street of the Catholic quarter was absolutely crammed with people who had come to see us. Not only were the pavements packed with people, so close that they could not pass each other, but the crowd bulged right out into the roadway, so that there was barely room for our men, marching in fours, to get through; and the windows were full of enthusiastic waving handkerchiefs. For a mile we passed through

these thousands who were cheering us deliriously; there certainly must have been thirty or forty thousand people there. I have never seen such enthusiasm. At one point a woman rushed forward and presented me with a bunch of flowers. It seemed profoundly pathetic to see the joy of these poor folk at thinking they were to receive arms. It made me feel how deeply they had felt the shame of being separated from the rest of their native land, without even striking a blow.

These were the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" and they had seen a momentary gleam of hope.

From that day out, matters began to move faster. So many recruits came in that it was nearly impossible to keep pace with them; the parade ground and the drill halls would hardly hold them. For about a week we could scarcely cope with the movement, and were obliged to enlarge our organisation.

Personally I felt that the Howth incident, if it had any influence at all, would certainly tend to accelerate matters. The other side would feel that we were making up lee-way, and might decide to act at an earlier date. This was not a pleasing reflection; we still had no arms or ammunition; we still had no funds sufficient to meet an emergency, were still outnumbered, as I then believed, by about five to one. Nevertheless, we should obviously be expected to do something, and - which troubled me most - a single false move might lead to complications all over Ireland that would jeopardise the great Act which was to restore a Parliament to our country after so many generations of toil; the Act which would also enable Ireland to take her place willingly, and therefore without loss of honour, in the circle of self-governing States which form the British Empire.

Other people felt much as I did; in fact, things were rather tense in Belfast just then, as the following tiny incident will show: One day I was standing for a moment at a

corner where we passed three or four particularly solid houses, looking down a large street that led up to that point from the Protestant Shankill Road, and trying to estimate the distance - "Three hundred and fifty yards" said a voice at my elbow. It was one of our supporters who had guessed my thoughts.

In the midst of my mental difficulties, I unexpectedly received news that Colonel Moore was coming up to Belfast on a tour of inspection with Colonel Cotter. Three or four days later they arrived, and as they stepped out on to the platform most of my anxieties seemed to roll away from me. The weight of immediate responsibility was gone. For the next two days, at all events, if action were necessary, the decision would lie with Colonel Moore.

## CHAPTER IX.

## Peace and War.

In this year 1914 the July 12th annual celebrations of "the Boyne" were undoubtedly a good deal eclipsed by the news which reached us on August 4th that war had been declared against Germany. For me that meant peace. In fact, it let me out of the most awkward dilemma of any that I can remember.

Colonel Maurice Moore and Colonel Cotter were up in Belfast on a visit to me, so we evolved a complete plan of action in case of any attack by the U.V. However, none eventuated, and I had great hopes that, in view of the present-day war and others to follow, the Boyne celebrations might be discontinued once and for all. And they were in fact discontinued during the war, but as soon as the war was over they were renewed with all their customary glories at Scarva and elsewhere.

During that week I had some very nice friends from London staying with me to see our men parade - Sir Alexandra and Lady

Lawrence, strong Liberals - but very soon I was compelled to realise that the War had virtually crippled our Redmondite Volunteers in Belfast. As far as I could reckon we had lost at least 700 men, either as Reservists or through enlistment, during the first ten days - there may have been more. But what really cripplied our movement was the fact that so many of our best men had to go away from every part of the forces. Burns and Cusick went - neither of whom could satisfactorily be replaced, and good men went from every part of the force. The first soldier killed of all those whom I remember during that war was one of our Company-Commanders, a man named Quinn.

"This show is blanketed now - don't you think?" asked my friend, Edward Dunn, of the Daily Mail.

I was sorry to part with the journalists. I think that almost all of them were seeing the situation much more from my point of view than at first. In fact, as matters turned out, with several of them I was able to renew friendly relations later on. How well I remember that last evening which I spent with them! We were sitting up late and smoking hard, and were wondering all the time whether we should hear news coming through which might alter the fate of Europe. Each fresh arrival from the office was greeted with a shout: "Any news telegrams?". We had cause for excitement, for an apparently genuine message had come through telling us that the British fleet had met the German fleet somewhere between the Channel Islands and the North Sea, and that 35 of the German ships were hors-de-combat, 19 of them sunk. We were in a hilarious condition, though as the Holy Writ says, not with wine. But unfortunately the tidings were too good to be true. We waited up until half-past one o'clock tha evening and then I went round, half-asleep, with Mr. Dunn of the Daily Mail office where we were told that "they knew all about the story and the exact place where it had been invented". This was the last occasion on which I ever had any converse with Mr.

Campbell of The Times - as always, thick-set, gentle and friendly and now of course keenly alive to the situation.

"Have you heard that the Ulster Volunteers have refused to join up? They say: 'What have we to do with the wars of England?" That was true. They refused en masse at first. It was hardly surprising. Originally they had become Ulster Volunteers in order to fight against any sort of self-government for Ireland; now they were being appealed to every day to enlist against the Germans - and at the same time the Home Rule Bill was actually slipping through Parliament and almost entirely ready for signature by the King.

A few evenings later the young officer in command of the Orange machine-guns came into the lounge, furious.

"I've done with the Ulster Volunteers, because they won't volunteer. I'm going abroad, because I want to serve the Empire". That was Crozier.

About half-way through the war I happened to come in contact with the well-known Colonel Laverton. Laverton was a British colonel who had come over to be C.O. of a U.V. battalion, and he made no bones about the situation. When he called on his men to volunteer for the war, "out of a thousand men on parade, only six stepped forward". But here in this small Memoirs I have made no attempt to describe the situation as regards either the Ulster Division or the two Redmondite Divisions, because I have no first-hand knowledge of them. To me they are simply: from the north one Ulster Division which served in France, and from the rest of Ireland two Divisions and the tragedy of Gallipoli.

It seems to be that as we have reached the climax of the story - that is to say, the moment when King George V signed the Home Rule Act (Sept. 1st, 1914), I cannot do better than close this narrative with a small extract from my diary of the

last few days there:-

"As time went on, it gradually became realised that there was a political truce, and although we continued to work at high pressure, nevertheless I found that I tended to become more and more a Police Officer. The probability of an organised attack by the Orangemen was now very slight, but ther still remained the danger of sporadic rows, which even at the eleventh hour might conceivably be a danger to our Bill".

In that connection the following small incident rather illustrates what I mean:

While I was at dinner I suddenly received an urgent message from the police asking me to drive at once to a certain point in my district. I shouted for a taxi, and on the way succeeded in learning the facts of the case. It appeared that it concerned one of our Company-Commanders, a man named O'Neill. O'Neill was a Reservist who had been an N.C.O. in the British Army. On the formation of the Volunteers he had joined them - in fact, I rather think that under the inspiration of his historic name he had been able to raise a company - but at all events, being both efficient and popular he had soon been appointed a Company-Commander (in those days normally of 100 men). Then the War came upon us and he was called up as a Reservist to go to the Front.

The difficulty that faced me, as I drove up in my taxi, was the following: He was just going off that evening to rejoin his regiment for foreign service, and his Company of National Volunteers wanted to give him a send-off. They had decided to march under his orders up to the barrack gate and give him a cheer as he went in. I was immensely pleased at this entirely spontaneous display of good feeling both towards O'Neill and towards the army.

But the Police were considerably alarmed. They told me that it was certain to lead to a disturbance, because some of the streets between our headquarters and the barracks were

strongholds of Orangemen, and if our Company passed along them it would certainly be attacked. They asked me to send out an order that the march should not take place. And they drove me off to catch O'Neill.

I was bitterly ashamed of s ending out such an order, and I do not think that in the end I did so. By that time O'Neill had received word from the Police, so, instead of marching his men to the barrack-gate, he marched them twice round the square, after which they gave him three cheers and he w ent off alone. I was in time to shake hands with him before he left - and to wish him God-speed. It is very sad to think that in all probability he never returned.

Perhaps the most tangible remnant of my life during those last days was the moment when a young Redmondite M.P. arrived suddenly to inform me that agreement had been reached with the Carsonites, but, he added with evident hesitation: "on the basis of dividing Ireland". He looked at me expectantly, evidently thinking that the news of Partition would infuriate me. But I said to him at once: "That is the best news that I have heard for weeks - I thought I should have had people shooting each other all round me".

The following is the entry in my diary:

"I was receiving constant letters recalling me to my home. My wife knew that the Home Rule Bill was just about to become law, so my task was done. But only when I had proved absolutely for certain that Home Rule would become law - and not until then - did I dream of leaving the Volunteers.

With great regret I said goodbye to the friends who had so loyally supported me, and helped me through that difficult time. They showed the greatest kindness up to the very last; invited me to a farewell dinner, and presented me with an excellent pair of field-glasses as a remembrance. I shall never forget their kindness.

Two days later - before I left Ireland - Home Rule became law. My mission was now over, for Home Rule was on the Statute Book. I felt then that any man born in Ireland was free to join the British army or perhaps a Canadian or any other unit as a Colonist. I felt that the great work was done - the work of allowing Ireland to enter on honourable terms to its place within the Empire. Self-Government for Ireland had been signed by the King and sealed with the Great Seal of England.

Relying on the honour of England I have worked since then - and thousands of Irish Nationalists have died - to seal the pact and fulfil their duty to the Empire.

After leaving Belfast I was not called upon (perhaps fortunately) to express any opinion about Ireland for nearly four years to come. During that period I had been working ten or twelve hours a day as Bisley Musketry Officer to eight or nine different brigades, and was now spending the last 13 months of the war in France and Italy. But in the Spring of 1918 I was rather surprised to receive a visit from a cousin of mine whom I believed to be in hospital. He had begun the war as Captain Dillon (Oxfordshires) and was now Colonel Dillon, D.S.O., had been in the retreat from Mons; afterwards wounded and promoted, and was in fact getting rather near the end of his tether - as good a little officer as you could find at any Public School.*

He had come to tell me that Lloyd George was about to introduce conscription for Ireland and was anxious to get opinions as to how the Irish would take it. Harry's own

* I had four first cousins at the beginning of the war - all in the army. By the end of the war three of them were dead and one of them a cripple for life. This Harry Dillon was a true Dillon - one who traced back for five or six generations to the Dillons who fought at Fontenoy. But his branch of the family were completely Anglicised.

opinion was "if they're put into a good regiment they'll forget all that rot about Home Rule".

Looking back on the scene now forty years afterwards I am profoundly thankful that I gave him the answer that I did. I said: "If Lloyd George tries to bring in Conscription there will be thousands of men all over Ireland who would rather die on their doorsteps than go."

The rifles landed by the Childers and Miss Spring-Rice (with my assistance) were as modern as those of the Ulster Volunteers, but they were not magazine rifles, and, of course, for street fighting a far better weapon was the pistol. The British soldiers, armed with their Lee-Enfields, and by that time trained by people like myself to get off 15 rounds rapid in a minute ("the mad minute") were able as easily to fire those 15 rounds in that minute, as an Irish Volunteer could fire one or perhaps two rounds out of his 1874 weapon. Yet it is a solemn fact that the present day freedom of Ireland was won with the weapons that I have named - It is an extraordinary story!

I must add that two years later - in 1916 - when that struggle began and I heard that at first the I.R.A. were actually holding their own, I said to myself: "They must have begun that engagement by raiding the other side for arms. Nothing else is possible".

(Signed) George F.H. Berkeley.

1st July 1954.

WITNESS: P.J. Brennan

Secretary of the Bureau of Military History, 1913-21.