ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 994

Witness

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

Identity.

Training Officer,
Irish Volunteers, 1914.

Subject.

"Peace with Ireland Council"
1920-1921.

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Nil

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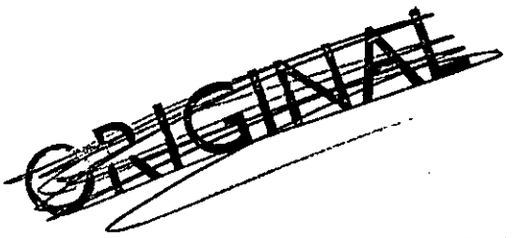

COPY

HANWELL CASTLE, BANBURY.

Tel. Wroxton St.Mary 40.

Dear Mr. Brennan,

I now enclose the MS. I promised you which describes the work of the Peace with Ireland Council 1920-1921.

Mrs. Berkeley has typed it for me, and apologises for deficiencies, as ours is an old machine.

This narrative was written in Rome in the year 1921 when I was there for a rest after the First Great War. It was due simply to a determination that the whole truth of the story should always be known.

You will see that it was not meant to be published. In it I have left facts which have no importance, simply to complete the picture. For instance, in chapter II there are small details of no interest; but they give a complete picture of a very good patriot - old Lord Monteagle.

I should like to repeat what I told you when I called on you last month, namely, that the MS is exactly as it stood when I wrote it then. The few small additions I have made are dated (1954) for clearness sake.

Finally:

I testify that the typewritten copy enclosed is a true and exact copy of my MS.

You will of course send me a formal receipt for it; and I should be glad to have from you in writing the assurance that it is confidential and would not be published without my consent.

With all good wishes from Mrs. Berkeley and myself,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) GEORGE F-H. BERKELEY.

Looking back on it now, what interests me most is what I wrote during my fortnight in Ireland. It is a description of such an extraordinary war!

It is hard to find an exact parallel: both sides spoke the same language and yet it is not a civil war. It was a war of liberation drawn out over centuries in which the weaker nation had not the slightest chance of victory. I do not know of any similar case unless it be that of the German Swiss cantons winning their freedom from Austria - and when I made my several speeches in 1921 it was from Swiss history that I took my theme - "This is the Spirit of Freedom" - and I told them the story of the Oath of Rutli.

When I called on you, you said that you would be making several copies of "My Three Months in Belfast 1914". I have only my original rough-copy. I should be very glad of two typed copies.

Would you let me know if you can do this and how much it would cost?

(Intld.) G. F-H. B.

31.vii.'54.

STATEMENT BY GEORGE F-H. BERKELEY,

Hanwell Castle, Near Banbury,
Oxfordshire, England.

My Experiences With The Peace With Ireland Movement

1920 - 1921.

FOREWORD

Hotel Bristol,

Rome.

November, 1921.

In September last, only a few weeks after the declaration of the Truce with Ireland, I was obliged, owing to Mrs. Berkeley's state of health, to give up all my political interests and wend my way to Italy. Since then I have allotted some of my time almost every day to writing out an account of my doings during the last year; that is to say during the time when I was devoting all my life to working for the Peace with Ireland Council.

For several reasons it seemed to me worth while noting down these doings:

1. Firstly because I know that their record will interest me in years to come, if those years find me still upon the earth.

2. Secondly because I believe that the period covered will be considered very important, and I had

some opportunity for seeing it from both sides and also from inside.

Living as I did at my Club, I used to hear every evening the most ultra-Conservative statements, after spending my whole day in working for the opposition. Now it seems to me very clear that these two execrated years of 1920 and 1921 will undoubtedly form a turning-point in our development. They mark the re-arising of the Irish nation. They mark the first genuine agreement between Ireland and England. And finally, let us hope, they mark the last civil war that will ever be seen in the British Isles. I say nothing of the expected new era with regard to America and the Colonies. Any record, therefore, however rough, superficial or scrappy, will probably have some slight interest for future historians. After all it represents a contemporary experience in a very interesting time.

This account unfortunately is all about myself. It could not be otherwise. I have not got the material here to write a history of the Peace with Ireland movement, but have simply jotted down my own recollections of the various things which I did or attempted to do, and find that they have fallen more or less naturally into chapters. If I had only been able to keep a diary, how much more interesting it would have been!

My principal regret is that I have not been able to give any narrative of the work of Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck who made such an excellent, enthusiastic and unselfish leader of our society: always ready to face unpopularity and quite regardless of his own career,

provided he was helping some unfortunate man or woman who was suffering: a man of over fifty with very bad health, but in spirit a knight-errant. His disinterestedness often astonished his opponents. After some of his speeches, Conservatives have said to me: "Why, he is heading straight for the wilderness!" But he never cared. On one occasion only did I ever hear him refer to the bitterness that he had aroused against himself, when he remarked to me: "People are beginning to avoid me now". What was perhaps hardest was that, according to some accounts, even his home life was rather spoilt by differences of political feeling. But about that I know nothing.

Oswald Mosley too did splendid work in the House. He is a keen and determined young man who will probably get on in politics.

Francis Acland is a man who worked very hard and unselfishly for us. I think we all liked him. There are few men cleverer than he, but I rather fear that the war has changed our political arena so greatly that it will be difficult for Acland to take the place which he deserves.

There are many others whom I should like to recall, but, having named the three whom I regarded as more or less our champions in the House of Commons, that must suffice.

CHAPTER 1.

LORD MONTEAGLE'S DOMINION HOME RULE BILL IS REFUSED BY THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

It seems to be just worth while recording the events which led up to the forming of the Peace with Ireland Council- as I had some share in the initiating and more especially in the subsequent working of that body. And although it was only a propagandist association and not a political party, yet many people have been kind enough to say that it greatly helped towards the final agreement of peace between England and Ireland. It was the production of just a few enthusiasts, but they succeeded in gathering round them some of the ablest and most disinterested men and women from every part and more especially some of those rarely-found priceless jewels of humanity, or I should rather call them those great courageous hearts who are ready to sacrifice their own interests and to face every form of unpopularity if thereby they may attempt a good and righteous work before the Lord.

During the autumn of 1919 I had at length felt myself sufficiently recovered from the weariness of the Great War (having been invalided back from Italy in 1918 and marked for permanent Home Service) to take up Irish work again. I was very anxious about the condition of Ireland. Old friends were writing to me that never in their lives, even during the land-war, had they seen matters so serious. Sinn Féin had swept the country at the 1918 elections. A Republican government had been set up which at first seemed to me a futility,

but which I very soon realised was backed by the enthusiastic support of almost the whole people. Then of course came the expected measures of repression. Sinn Féin was attacked by the British Government and hundreds of its members were imprisoned for long periods, often without trial because evidence was unobtainable. And some of them were killed. But simultaneously one read that the Police and more especially the Secret Service agents were being given short shrift by Sinn Féin. And suddenly I realised that we should very soon be face to face with civil war; and with civil war of the most ghastly description.

Nevertheless there was still time to effect a compromise. But on what lines? There seemed to be only one possibility left, namely, Dominion Home Rule. The Dominion Home Rulers were led by Sir Horace Plunkett, a man whom I trusted more than any other in Ireland. So I joined his association, the Irish Dominion League. In the spring of 1920 I was elected to its London Committee presided over by Lord Monteagle. And I was not long in discovering that there were few more genuine patriots than old Lord Monteagle.

At the same time I had other irons in the fire. I went round to see my old friend Basil Williams, in whose political acumen I had great confidence.

Basil Williams is a short stoutly-built man of about fifty-three, of such cheery bluff expression that he has often been described to me as "a little John Bull". The son of a barrister, head-boy of Marlborough College some thirty-five years ago, a first-class at Oxford (I think), he had begun life as a

Clerk in the House of Commons, and while there became one of the leading members of a young Liberal group, which included men such as George Trevelyan, Francis Acland, Erskine Childers and of several other brilliantly clever contemporaries. Personally I had first met him at the time of the South African war during which he had most creditably laid aside his intellectuality in favour of his John Bullishness; and had served and fought as a volunteer in the Honourable Artillery Company. At the end of that wearisome struggle, reverting to his natural bent, he had soon become known as one of "Cecil Rhodes' young men", and had obtained employment writing the official History of the War. An excellent start; but since then he had not gone quite so far as might have been expected. He had stood twice for Parliament in the Liberal interest, but each time unsuccessfully. His literary work however had been most successful.

He is an exceptionally good writer - as may be seen by all who care to read his Life of Chatham, or, better still, his Life of his former patron, Cecil Rhodes; and he is also - when he cares to undertake it - a clever journalist. But from my point of view in the summer of 1920 what was far more important than anything else was his political experience. He was a trained politician from his early days onwards. He "knew the ropes", and knew the type of people whom I wanted to sound. I had great confidence in him because for about a year-and-a-half before the War I had worked on a semi-official committee of his which met in one of the committee-rooms of the House of Commons in order to criticise the Asquith government's

Home Rule Bill, and make suggestions on it. Basil Williams had collected quite an interesting coterie to serve on that Committee, mostly M.Ps., or would-be M.Ps.; people such as Gooch (Editor of the Contemporary Review), Charles Roden Buxton, Hugh Law, Childers, Acland (then a Minister of the Crown), and other Liberals. Our mouth-piece in the House of Commons had been Lees-Smith, a Radical M.P. With these memories upon me I decided to go round and try to get my friend to resuscitate the old organisation, or to start something similar for present purposes.

I found Basil Williams looking fairly prosperous, as befitted one who had earned an O.B.E. during the War for his work at the War Office. At the age of over 48 he had made no attempt to go abroad.

He quite agreed as to the seriousness of the situation; and he had already thought about it. "There is nothing to be done as yet", he said, "but at any moment something may occur which would be worth our acting on and making representations to the Government. The great thing therefore is to form a Committee of the right men so as to have it there, ready to act at a moment's notice."

All through that summer I attended the periodic meetings of Basil Williams committee. It was the kind of work that he loved. In fact I have never known him without a committee. In our present case it was often composed of entirely different members on two consecutive days. He used to write to people of every possible type provided they were interested in Ireland; we had well-known journalists such as Sir Philip Gibbs

or General Maurice sitting next celebrated churchmen such as Bishop Gore, or professors such as Professor Hobhouse or Barker (of King's College); M.Ps. such as Acland or Ramsay MacDonald. Basil Williams was a fairly well-known Liberal organiser and he invited anyone with whom he was in touch. On one occasion when he told me that he had asked eighteen people, only six of them turned up, but he seemed perfectly satisfied. And this system had the advantage of keeping interest alive among a useful type of people all over London.

At the same time I was working on the London Committee of the Irish Dominion League.

I am not proposing here to write any account of the Irish Dominion League movement, because that can only be done by those who were then in Ireland. I merely speak of my experiences on the London Committee. It consisted of the following people:

Lord Monteagle (Chairman).
Lord ffrench.
Colonel Pope Hennessy, D.S.O.
Dame Una Pope Hennessy.
Lady Byles.
Mr. Frewen.
Karl Walter.
Maurice Healey.
Mr. & Mrs. Dominick Spring Rice.
Capt. Henry Harrison, O.B.E., K.C. (when in London).
G. F-H. Berkeley.
Lord Henry Cavendish Bentick (who joined

afterwards), and several others I think whose names

now escape me. Of course Sir Horace Plunkett took the chair whenever he was over in London.

When I joined the Committee it was already under weigh, considering a Dominion Home Rule Bill which our Chairman, Lord Monteagle, was to introduce in the House of Lords. And this was certainly the principal achievement of the London Committee. We were all in deadly earnest about it, because we felt, and felt most solemnly, that this was the last chance of arranging a compromise; in fact the only remaining alternative to civil war.

Our discussions were lengthy and minute. Poor old Lord Monteagle was almost worked off his feet. But at length the Bill was ready, and on (- somewhere in June 1920 I think) he introduced it in the House of Lords. I went down to hear it; this being the first occasion on which I had ever attended a debate in that august assembly. I had not bothered Lord Monteagle about obtaining admission, as I knew he had many people to look after, and I had every hope of finding some acquaintance there who would do me the favour of getting me in. As it turned out, it was Lord Ashbourne who put my name down. I remember now how he came out and talked over matters, and recited a little Gaelic proverb that he intended to quote in his speech. We had met on various occasions on Gaelic affairs, and I always admired his courage and his linguistic attainments while regretting that he made them rather ridiculous by wearing a kilt sometimes in incongruous places and by bringing in Gaelic quotations in the House of Lords. It seemed a pity that a really good man who was equally at home in about five languages and doubtless had a

working acquaintance with as many more, should get so little credit for his attainments. However he was not in a kilt that day; and he got me a place in the gallery.

Well, - our Bill was thrown out in about five hours. Personally I had not expected it to pass, but I had thought that it would at least receive an adequate discussion; and a similar opinion was expressed on the following morning in the Times. I did not sit out the whole of the five hours (being far too hungry and thirsty), but I waited until the Lord Chancellor (F.E. Smith, Carson's former galloper) had made it quite plain that the Government did not mean to listen to us. It was a profound pity. A scheme of Dominion Home Rule, offered at that moment would have been accepted by Sinn Fein. Lord Monteagle read a long statement from a leading Sinn Feiner to that effect; and a year later, when I asked Mr. Barry Egan, the Sinn Fein Lord Mayor of Cork and a leading man in the South of Ireland, he said to me: "Dominion Home Rule will probably not be accepted now; but it would have been a year ago". At all events it ought most certainly to have been discussed before instituting armed repression.

I was a good deal struck by the tone of the Upper House. It was both dignified and genuine. There was a pleasing absence of party chicanery. But, on the other hand, the speeches were of a distinctly amateurish type, even in the case of men who, like Lord Crewe, had been in politics for many years. They rather suggested to me a more grown-up version of the debates which we used to hold at the Chatham Club when I was an undergraduate at Oxford. Lord Ashbourne

brought in his Gaelic quotation, and I was rather astonished to hear him amplifying it by adding several sentences which amounted practically to an incitement to Sinn Fein not to give in. It was certainly a novelty to hear a Peer of the Realm encouraging resisters by a Gaelic address in the House of Lords. But this unusual exhortation was evidently lost on everyone else in the House except myself. After all, it was not half so remarkable an incident as that of Mr. Carlisle who shortly afterwards, taking advantage of his right as a Privy Councillor, actually entered the Chamber and solemnly warned the peers from the floor of their own House that they would never be able to suppress the liberty of Ireland. In view of subsequent events, it was indeed a dramatic incident.

From that day onwards I began to realise that our bolt was shot, and that there was very little more possible for our London Committee of the Irish Dominion League. To obtain any adequate results, one would have to look elsewhere.

CHAPTER II.

I TRY TO HELP SIR HORACE PLUNKETT.

It was not very long after the rejection of our Bill that we members of the London Committee of the I.D.L. were asked by our Chairman to write our opinions as to the best line of policy for us to pursue.

The situation in Ireland was more or less as follows: on either side there were the extremists, Sinn Fein and Orangemen. But in the centre there were a certain number of moderate men, mostly Southern Protestants, few in number but many of them influential. These Moderates might be divided roughly into three classes: the followers of Lord Midleton; the old Unionists; and ourselves (followers of Sir Horace Plunkett). Of these, we were certainly I think the most numerous.

Mr. Lloyd George had been in communication with Sir Horace, and with Captain Henry Harrison, Secretary of the I.D.L., and had promised us that, if we could raise a Centre Party of sufficiently large proportions, he would negotiate matters on our lines. So Sir Horace and Harrison were busily trying to collect followers in Ireland and to form a party which would be strong enough to initiate a deal with Lloyd George, and to stave off Civil War.

It was at that moment that Lord Monteagle invited each member of his London Committee to give his opinion on the situation.

To me personally this attempt to raise a middle party in Ireland appeared absolutely futile. I did not trust Mr. Lloyd George's promises for one instant. No Irishman really did believe in him after his performances in 1916 and the following years. And I knew that those who, like Erskine Childers, had been at the Convention were those who trusted him least of all. So I put my opinion as plainly as I could, regardless of its unpopularity. It was written in diplomatic terms, but their meaning ran more or less as follows:-

> The attempt to raise a central party seems to me absolutely doomed to failure. And even if you succeeded in raising one, it would never be strong, because it would never be united. It would represent varying degrees of opinion. Moreover, I believe that Mr. Lloyd George is merely carrying out a very ordinary business negotiation, namely, that he is using us to divide Ireland and weaken Sinn Fein. Then, once that he has set us up and reduced the power of Sinn Fein, he will be in a position to turn on us and beat our terms down to nothing.
>
> The only people with whom he can ever be brought to deal seriously are Sinn Fein, because they alone are a real power in the land, strong enough to stand up to him. Now I still believe that Dominion Home Rule or something analogous to it is the inevitable solution of the problem. But I think the only way to get it from a man like Lloyd George is by asking for something <u>more</u> that Dominion Home Rule.
>
> <u>Our true course therefore is to urge the Government to enter on direct negotiations with Sinn Fein</u>.

That was my opinion then (in August or September 1920) and it was the opinion on which I have continued to work ever since, until about three weeks ago from to-day, when I saw that the negotiations with Sinn Fein were actually in progress.(September 1921).

What was very plain to my mind was that the

time for finding a solution had gone by. If the Government refused even to discuss our Dominion Home Rule Bill, it was evident that they did not mean to accept suggestions. I saw that eventually the question would be settled, not by the discovery of a true solution, but by hard bargaining, on either side.

But these views of mine were very far from being popular among my associates. Shortly afterwards Sir Horace Plunkett and Harrison* succeeded in calling together the Peace Conference in Dublin, and I was invited over to attend it. But my good friend Harrison would hardly speak to me. He apparently thought I had deserted him in his task of uniting the Moderates in Ireland.

The Peace Conference in Dublin was fairly successful. There were about 600 people present, including many of some importance and standing. I admired the way in which Sir Horace Plunkett, who was

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* Captain Harrison is a man whose life has always struck me as rather remarkable. He began his career while an undergraduate at Balliol, by distinguishing himself in a landlord-and-tenant row. A tenant's house was being besieged by the Police, and Harrison, I believe, relieved it by jumping on to the roof and throwing down loaves to the people inside. He thought little enough of this episode himself, but it appeared in the papers, and on his return to Oxford the undergraduates took the horse out of his cab and drew him up in triumph to Balliol.

His name being made, he was soon afterwards elected as a Nationalist M.P. and worked under Parnell for some years; but then retired into private life.

When the Great War broke out, he joined up (either as a private or as a subaltern) in a line regiment, although about fifty years of age; was wounded and won an M.C.; was then given an administrative job and earned an O.B.E. His son was killed in the war.

With the advent of peace he became Secretary of Sir Horace Plunkett's Dominion League. He is not only an organiser, but an excellent speaker and was especially selected by Sir John Simon to accompany him to his biggest meetings all over England.

in reality the organiser of the whole conference and the provider of the funds (as he always was in these matters)[*], allowed everyone else to go before him. He spoke, but not at any great length, and was never in the Chair. I had my first view of the I.R.A. The doors of the Peace Conference were kept by some of these young volunteers, and very clean and well set-up they looked. Our first resolution, I remember, was one calling on the Government to release the Lord Mayor of Cork whose frightful tragedy had already begun.

The Peace Conference elected a Committee charged with drawing up a scheme for Lloyd George. I knew nearly every member of the Committee, but had very little faith in the possibility of their success.

Before leaving Ireland, Sir Horace Plunkett invited me down to Kilteragh in order to talk over with him my belief in urging the Government to negotiate directly with Sinn Fein; and also a plan that I was always keen about, whether it was not possible to organise a protest against the inclusion of Fermanagh and Tyrone and possibly the City of Derry among the Six Counties. Sir Horace evidently believed in his own programme of getting his Moderate party in touch with Lloyd George through the Peace Conference Committee. He said very little about it, but both he and Lady Fingall (who keeps house for him) strongly urged me not to hurry matters. "Give them time, man, give them time," were the last words of Lady Fingall.

So I decided to wait and see what scheme the

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[*] I was told that Sir Horace Plunkett was about £4,000 out of pocket over the expenses of the I.D.L. during its first year alone!

Peace Conference Committee might evolve; and to attempt nothing until Sir Horace had had his turn. It so happened that I had never met him before - though I prided myself on knowing most Irishmen on either side - and I was very much fascinated by his evident love for Ireland. His great work, for years, had been done under the stress of ill-health. His lungs were bad. In fact he took me up on to his roof and showed me the little wooden bedroom from which he obtained a wide view of his beloved country. The bedroom had one side open and was arranged to revolve, so that he could always turn its back to the wind. He thus was able to sleep in the open air. Otherwise he would not have slept at all.

I may say that during this visit I was profoundly astonished at the atmosphere prevailing in the Kildare Street Club. It was extraordinarily broadminded. Quite a number of members were avowedly in sympathy with Sinn Fein. Three or four whom I met admitted themselves to be on their side. I was especially amused at the attitude of the O'Conor Don. He is a magistrate and a D.L. of his county. But he openly avowed himself a (non-militant) Sinn Feiner, and most of his conversation was about an action which he had lately been bringing in a Sinn Fein court about his land. The line which he took showed a really fine and disinterested spirit on his part, because it meant facing social ostracism both in Ireland and in England - and he had a daughter to consider.

More astonishing still was the attitude of my old school-fellow, Hugh Pack-Beresford. He had always been an utterly irreconcileable Unionist, and had

constantly jibed at my Home Rule tendencies. Now however he professed himself practically a Sinn Feiner. I could hardly believe my ears. But of him, more anon.

CHAPTER 111.

WE ARE REFUSED A HALL.

It was only a few weeks later that we of the London I.D.L. Committee decided that, in view of the fact that the Peace Conference Committee was coming near the end of its labours, it was time for us to organise a large public meeting in London. We had already held one or two meetings, but had not as yet attempted to take a large hall.

I was deputed to engage the Central Hall at Westminster.

That day comes back to me very vividly.

I was in the lowest spirits about everything. The news from Ireland was maddening: the Lord Mayor of Cork slowly dying, and every day fresh outrages all over the country. These first outrages affected me more than those later on. Rebellion or no rebellion, I was infuriated, insulted at the idea that my country should be sacked and plundered as though it belonged to an inferior race. Supposing such deeds were done in Scotland I thought, what an outcry there would be. A police-sergeant shot in a public-house, - and in consequence the soldiers burn the whole town of Balbriggan, and bayonet two innocent people, and there are no questions asked! And

this was only one out of dozens of outrages. True, the most notorious murders, those which are now familiar to us, had not yet taken place. But already more than a hundred villages had been more or less destroyed and dozens of innocent men killed or hurt. That this should be the deliberate policy of the British government seemed inconceivable. To have punished those who fired on the soldiers I understood; but to initiate reprisals on perfectly innocent people was simply government by assassination.

How well I remember that afternoon. It was while I was going through the formalities of applying for a public hall in which to hold our meeting, that a small event occurred which started me on a fresh career of daily work for a whole year to come: one of these events which keep one to one's duty about Ireland.

I strolled down to the office of Sir Robert Perks with whom I was already slightly acquainted, - he was our neighbour in Oxfordshire, - and found him extremely civil. All was soon arranged about our hiring the Central Hall. But just as I was going to leave he said: "Well, before finally closing with you I had better just talk to Hartley the agent, as it is he in reality who settles these things". He took the telephone and spoke down it for several minutes. Then he looked up and calmly told me that I could not have the hall.

This sudden change naturally filled me with surprise, and I enquired at once as to its cause.

Without any apology he explained to me that the agents had just made a rule that their hall might not be

let to any Irish society. "If you are English Liberals, for instance, or English Conservatives" he said, "you can have the hall. But they will not let it to any society which is Irish". And in this decision he remained immovable, although I explained clearly that our leaders were men like Sir Horace Plunkett and Lord Monteagle whose loyalty (and solvency) could be in no possible doubt, and that the proposed meeting was one for the purpose of promoting peace.

At first this seemed to me merely a case of the ancient rule: "No Irish need apply". But then I suddenly realised the whole situation; namely that the Government was going to run its campaign of violence in Ireland under a veil of secrecy. It had been arranged that all news of the blackguardism going on over there should be suppressed - as is now of course a matter of common knowledge. They had already taken steps to prevent our getting the principal halls. Nothing was to be heard of what went on until the work was over. Already, indeed, Sir Hamar Greenwood had begun his campaign of suppression of evidence in Ireland, coupled with reckless denials of facts in Parliament. And practically the whole Press was in Coalition hands.

Sir Robert Perks evidently perceived a change in my expression, because he said rather anxiously:

"You could get the Kingsway Hall you know. They don't mind whom they have. They had a Bolshevist meeting there last week".

He said this in the absolute innocence of kindly

intention. To him, anything Irish and anything Bolshevist were probably not far removed from one another. When I thought of Lord Monteagle and our highly respectable committee I could have laughed aloud, - but that I was furious at the refusal. So I thanked him for his suggestion, (perhaps rather sarcastically) and then told him what I felt.

"I understand that we cannot have the hall, although we represent the Peace Conference summoned at the desire of Lloyd George. But there is one thing certain, that if people like ourselves are prevented from holding meetings, there will never be peace with Ireland".

I went out boiling with rage. When I got into the street, I said to myself: 'We may be prevented now. But I'll have a meeting here and not only here, but in every big town throughout the country and let every single person know the blackguardism that is going on in Ireland. I'll rouse the whole of England'.

It was my first personal experience of an attempt to suppress freedom of speech and I had never before realised what an extraordinarily bitter feeling it engenders. As I walked out into the street I felt profoundly lonely. For the moment it seemed as though I were one man alone going out to raise the whole of the country. But alone or not, I intended to rouse all England.

I suppose it was fortunate for me that there were others who already felt strongly on the question, or I should have found it hard to achieve any serious result. But with their help at all events we have succeeded in carrying out my programme for all it was worth. As

matters turned out, during the next nine months I was, through the Peace with Ireland Council, responsible for providing speakers on the Irish Question to nearly 200 meetings in every part of England. And of course we found various other ways of spreading our news as well. This I think was the best service that we Irish people living in England could do to the right cause, that is to say the establishing of an honourable peace between the two countries; - a small enough service at a time when so many hundreds suffered torture and so many thousands offered their lives.

CHAPTER IV.

STARTING THE MOVEMENT

My first care was to go round to the Head Quarters of the Liberal Party. I have invariably found that there is only one rule in English politics. Use the party machine: without that you will achieve nothing. This is trebly true as regards Irish questions which are never listened to over here, unless they are an item in the Party programme.

They received me very kindly and agreed to take the Central Hall for me. I intended to have it, and to have it on the night for which it had been refused to me.

My next care was to pay a visit to Mr. W.M. Crooke, the Liberal organiser of the Home Counties. A good Irishman, educated in Trinity Dublin: one who has never yet failed me when I asked for his assistance. He has eighty Liberal constituencies under his hand and eye, and is busy all day; but if one asks him to help in any Irish question, he will give you the best of his advice even if he has to sacrifice his hard-earned luncheon hour to do so.

I said to him that I wanted to run an anti-atrocities campaign all over England, just like the Bulgarian atrocities campaign of the seventies. He looked rather thoughtful.

"If Mr. Gladstone were here it could be done easily", he said.

"Well unfortunately we haven't got Mr. Gladstone here, so who is the best man to get now?" I asked.

"Simon", he said after a little thought, "if you can get him".

"Well" I said, "I believe I might be able to get him. He is a neighbour of ours and his wife is a keen Irishwoman. So at all events I might go round to him and try".

So off I went to Sir John Simon in Cadogan Gardens. I found him at home having tea. He received me most kindly. Sir John as everyone knows, is one of the best-looking men at the Bar; as well as being probably the cleverest. He is tall and well-built, clean-shaven of course, with a high forehead balanced by a strong chin. A man with a suave manner; somewhat of a Puritan type. In fact he always rather reminds me of the pictures and statues of George Washington. He is said to be earning thirty or forty thousand a year at the Bar. And one may add, he can be extremely agreeable when he likes.

On this occasion he did like. I had a most successful tea. Lady Simon was an excellent ally. She is his second wife, not long married, and he seems to be deeply attached to her. So before the end, to my great delight he said he would speak at the Central Hall, and, I gathered, probably at other meetings afterwards. "Berekely, I'm for it", he said, and Lady Simon beamed on him, and I felt profoundly grateful to them both.

I knew that with Simon as a speaker my first meeting would be a success. He was the best advocate in England. But to my great astonishment some of my I.D.L. committee were not at all pleased. "Simon, my dear fellow", said Colonel Pope Hennessy, "Simon is a past-number". And his wife, Dame Una Pope Hennessy, was even stronger on the subject than he. They insisted on my wiring to Sir Horace Plunkett before going on with the arrangements. The reply came that evening. Sir Horace entirely approved my choice. Then, however, they refused to guarantee expenses, - and I think this had probably been one of the main difficulties in their minds. However, I told them that I would pay all expenses. After that they let me run the matter as I pleased.

So away I went to Basil Williams. I meant the meeting to make a splash which would start the whole movement. I was having an extra platform built so that we could give away over a hundred platform tickets to important people apart from the body of the Hall which would hold an audience of over eleven hundred. The questions arose, which were the best named to include in our invitation list! It was here that Williams came in. He had a wide knowledge of the prominent people in Liberal circles. And in the course of the next few days he got an excellent list to add to my much smaller one. He had of course been able to keep in touch with London political life during the War; whereas for me, nearly all my landmarks were gone after six years absence.

As regards speakers he was not successful. We tried, together, nearly all the speakers whom he suggested

as suitable, but without success. During those early days it was very hard to get people to speak for us, - though later on, when our movement was in full swing, many of them were quite hurt if they were not invited. However I secured Sir Horace Plunkett; and afterwards Lord ffrench. Then Williams got Mr. G.K. Chesterton. About this time too, Erksine Childers appeared in London, and, I believe, was able to supply useful facts and figures as to various important points.

I also got in touch with the Labour Party and found them very sympathetic.

When the evening came, I was rather nervous. But the meeting was an unqualified success. The Liberal organisers, Mr. Rivers and his staff worked splendidly. The hall was packed, - there were about 1,300 people there. And Sir John swayed the whole audience. I sat there and listened to him with delight. At times it seemed as if every individual in that assemblage was afraid of moving hand or foot for fear of losing a single word. He had probably never been better. So great was his success that as we were breaking up, Colonel Pope Hennessy himself came up to me entirely unsolicited and said: "This has been a splendid meeting: and it is a <u>great</u> thing for Ireland that it has been held".

During the actual evening I kept a good deal in the background, as I was very unwilling that Mounty should by any chance hear that I was taking a prominent part in it. It was only about six weeks that Castle Mary had been burned to the ground, the old home where I had been brought up as his nephew, and I did not want him to think that I had forgotten that fact.

I shall always remember that speech, and I think it made an equal impression on others.

Sir John's methods are always forensic, - but forensic in the highest sense. With him, it is always an appeal to reason rather than to passion. The best combination imaginable for a public meeting is to get Sir John as first speaker. He convinces the audience. And then when he has left them abundantly convinced, to let some eloquent and enthusiastic orator arise and carry them off their feet. Later on I succeeded in achieving this combination for our meeting in Birmingham when I got T.P. O'Connor as seconder. I was afterwards told that those two were considered to have produced one of the greatest successes that Birmingham had seen for several years.

On this particular evening of our I.D.L. meeting at the Central Hall, Sir John mainly devoted himself to proving to the audience that the outrages in Ireland were not, as the Lloyd George Cabinet asserted, merely so many sporadic outbursts of retaliation on the part of the troops and police, but a carefully organised campaign of burning, pillage and killing deliberately planned and carried out by the Government itself. Beginning with the sack of Balbriggan and the slaughter of two of its inhabitants, he retailed instance upon instance to prove how rifles, cartridges, bombs and trains of motor lorries, in fact every implement of war had been used, - and systematically used, - during these expeditions; emphasising each significant episode until at length he would bring down on us the final crashing sentence, forcing

his conclusion home to the hilt like a giant hammer driving a wedge through the heart of a shattered log. This he did again and again; and on one occasion there was an even more effective climax of his, which I shall always remember. It was after he had piled instance on instance to prove his point until we all knew what was coming; until every single person there was waiting for the final smashing blow, and then, all at once, instead of the resounding phrases that we were expecting, he suddenly broke into a tone of the bitterest sarcasm, retailing with a kind of ferocious irony the halting and feeble replies that the Government had made in the House to the point in question.

That evening I went home with the Simons to supper. We were greatly elated. But next morning, - disappointment and surprise! Hardly a single paper reported even the fact that there had been a meeting at all. None of them had a good account of it. Yet we had notified them all. This was indeed a strange way to treat the late Home Secretary and Sir Horace Plunkett.

Nevertheless it was very largely from this assemblage that the Peace with Ireland movement arose. It brought home to a very considerable number of important people in the political world the truth as regards the Government's policy in Ireland: the possibility of a movement of protest: and the duty that lay on them in the matter. There had been some Irish meetings on the subject but this was the first large English gathering. And we had there people of the type of Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, Lord and Lady MacDonnell, Bishop Gore, Lord and

Lady Parmoor, General Gough, Lord and Lady ffrench, Miss Buckmaster and many others who afterwards became leading members of the Peace with Ireland Council.

CHAPTER V.

THE POLICY OF REPRESSION AS I SAW IT.

Colonel Pope Hennessy D.S.O. held an important post at the War Office, but this did not prevent his being an excellent Irishman, just like his father whom I had known in the old days when he lived at Rostellan and I at Castle Mary the next place to it. I remembered old Sir John the ex-Governor of Mauritius who was hated in the Army because "he had tried to put the black man over the white" and was rather a pariah among the country gentry because he alone for miles round proclaimed himself a Home Ruler. Now, I believe, many of the streets in Mauritius are called after him, and his is a name to conjure with there. And nowadays most of the Irish landlords would be glad to get the Gladstonian Home Rule which he advocated. I like his son, Colonel Pope Hennessy and can hardly imagine how he has got through this year, a Catholic Nationalist at the head of a War Office Department. I know he has had a miserable time; regarded as one who sympathised with the enemy in a particularly brutal type of war.

His wife, Dame Una Pope Hennessy earned her D.B.E. during the war. She is very pleasant and very clever, but being an Englishwoman has always seemed to me rather anxious to finish the Irish question at any price, as was perhaps natural in view of her husband's career. She was on the London Committee of the I.D.L., but I have never been able to feel that she sympathised with us au fond.

She has always struck me as more anxious to get information than to assist in our projects; and this, coupled with the fact that apparently she has many friends among the military hierarchy and is remembered to have written one or two books on secret service has caused her to be a good deal distrusted. Even one of her best friends described her as "a drawing-room conspirator".

It was from her that I first learned the military programme in the autumn of 1920. I had said to her that I intended to have meetings in every big town in England.

"But", she said, "do you realise that Sinn Féin will be broken by next Christmas!"

"I very much doubt it", I replied.

"The British Secret Service is very good you know", she said, "uncommonly good since the War". (I think she added: "It has never been so good before. It can do <u>anything</u>". But perhaps that expression came from someone else.)

"Sinn Féin will be broken by Christmas, and then it will be for the <u>moderate</u> men to rule Ireland", and she looked at me rather meaningly. "We shall see whether Arthur Griffith is man enough to call the moderate men round him to rule the country. Do you think he'll move!".

"He'll not <u>budge</u>", I said with conviction, and this answer rather closed the subject.

Her information coupled with more of the same tenor, and with the news in the papers soon made the situation fairly plain to me. It was evidently believed that Sinn

Féin was merely a murder-gang. That the Army, or more probably the Irregulars could be given a free hand and would finish off the murder-gang in another three months. How they did the work was to be their own affair. No questions would be asked. No one in Parliament was to admit that he knew what was going on. The Sinn Féin organisation was to be stamped out; and their resistance was to be crushed by reprisals. For every soldier or policeman killed, several civilians whether innocent or guilty would pay the price. No one was to be allowed to know who was responsible for any particular act of torturing or shooting. When it was over, the British public might possibly learn something about it, but, in view of the result achieved, they would not bother about the means employed. The Cabinet had actually set out to terrorize a whole white people about three and a half million in number.

The system developed by those in authority was to disarm the whole people. It was presently ordained that the possession of any fire-arm was punishable by death. Later on, a man was executed for possessing a pistol. The curfew was instituted so that everyone had to be in their homes by 10 p.m. (or sometimes even by 8 p.m.) Therefore it became impossible for them to congregate together for mutual protection or even for assistance. Crown agents in mufti went into the houses and shot men in front of their wives. Or, worse still, ordered the women into one room, and shot men in another room where on more than one occasion a husband bled to death while his wife heard him groaning on the other side of the partition.

Throughout most of Ireland inquests were suppressed so that a man could be disposed of without inquiry. On any dark night you might suddenly find yourself invaded and murdered by Government agents without a chance of defence or even of redress for your family.

How it could possibly be supposed that Arthur Griffith would crown the triumph of this system I have never been able to conceive. But possibly it was thought that he was merely a moderate, theoretical Sinn Féiner quite apart from the I.R.A. He was of course originally a pacific agitator, and had taken no part in the rising of 1916.

To me the most terrible feature of the whole thing was that at first the majority of the English people undoubtedly approved of the programme. Most of them deliberately turned a deaf ear to what was going on. They did not mean to know. If one told them the truth, they simply said that one was "condoning the Sinn Féin murders". One lady, a married woman with children said to me when I tried to convey to her the real state of affairs: "Oh the Irish are fractious". A friend of mine at my club frankly defended reprisals. He said: "If they kill some of the Irish, it will prevent the others from murdering our soldiers. It will make the people in general turn against Sinn Féin. To him I said: "My dear fellow, the Irishman is the very last man with whom you can do that. He's always ready to cut off his own nose to spite his face, and if <u>you</u> cut off his nose, you'll find he'll spite <u>your</u> face". During the last year I've had no reason to alter my opinion. Of another member

of my club, I am sorry to say a north of Ireland man, I asked whether he really believed the Irish would be subdued. "My dear Sir", he replied: "go on with reprisals and you'll get them to feed out of your hand". But this man, I may add, had spent his life in India and had a son-in-law in the R.I.C., so that his views were a good deal embittered. I had many other experiences of this kind.

The net result of my conversation with Dame Una was that I redoubled my efforts to raise meetings for Sir John Simon. At first it was very uphill work. My difficulty lay in the fact that we were ostentatiously boycotted by the whole London press almost without exception, and that I did not get much sympathy at first at Liberal Head Quarters where Sir John was apparently not very popular just then. Still I persuaded them to subscribe £10 to two of the principal meetings and added £5 myself in each case. This paid for most of the incidental expenses. We had an excellent meeting in Manchester; and presently a still better one in Birmingham where I got T.P. O'Connor as second speaker. They were kind enough to say that this Birmingham meeting "was considered the best they had had for years". Newcastle and one or two other northern towns wrote to me that they had already had Irish meetings; Liverpool was keen; but the police intervened, fearing a faction fight. Still the ball had been started. Sir John had made an immense success wherever he spoke. The Liberals were pleased. And before six months were past he had spoken at nearly all the principal towns in England.

The degree that had been reached by this policy of "turning a blind eye" simply left one gasping. There seemed to be no decency left at all; at my London club one morning I heard that a young Irish Volunteer had been condemned to death, so after my morning paper I went over to talk to a friend, a middle-aged lawyer with an important Government position in London, to try to get a reprieve. But as soon as he heard what I said, he replied with dignity: "I should be greatly obliged if you would no longer address any remarks to me at all".

That case was the case of Kevin Barry.

ADDENDUM (1954)

Kevin Barry. At the time when I tried to save his life, I did not know that he had been "tortured" (in the military sense).or I should have made that a cause of unparalleled attack on Hamar Greenwood and Lloyd George. I did not know that during this first Great War that had become a regular system for obtaining information. It was Sir John Simon who first explained it to me; he had had a war-job in Amiens, so that he was up-to-date about such matters as this. He explained it to me more or less as follows: - with his brother-in-law Manning listening and approving every word. Sir John said: "Supposing my wife were upstairs dying in pain, and supposing one of the women there knew some way of saving her but always refused to tell us, - why I should not hesitate to twist her arm or apply other pain until she told us".

Later on (1921) Desmond Fitzgerald told me that he thought more than half those arrested had been through some form of torture.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOUNDING OF THE PEACE WITH IRELAND COUNCIL.

There were several strong points in our favour, uphill though the work might appear at the start.

In the first place I was absolutely certain that I was in the right. Never in my life have I been so completely convinced of the justice, the necessity and the absolute righteousness of any work in which I have taken part. To make peace between England and Ireland; to prevent the dragooning of a whole people, - of my own people: to prevent an iniquitous party scheme which was blackening the name of England before the whole civilised world. From every point of view no duty could be plainer. If this plot for deliberately cowing a whole white people were successful, it would be tried elsewhere. It would mean reversing the only high principle for which the War had been fought, namely that Right ought to prevail over Might, especially as regards the smaller nations, and would thus be a step backwards in the history of the world. And, having lived twenty-five years in England, I believed that there were enough just men and women there to prevent the majority from persisting in this policy of secret and legalised ruffianism.

Secondly I was not a politician, and, owing to Car's health was quite impossible that I should ever enter politics. Therefore I was in a very strong position of

being able to serve other people without expecting any return. Certainly the way to make converts is to organise success as far as possible and then let someone else, - the most important man that one can find, - enjoy the credit obtained. By this means he becomes a permanent ally. But always of course one must use the party machine. Without that, one commands no votes, and consequently no influence. One becomes a mere propagandist society which usually speaks only to its own followers. I believe that our little Peace with Ireland Council achieved far more success than it was entitled to expect, mainly because of the assistance which it received (and gave to) both the Liberal and Labour party machines.

Acting on the above principle, I had endeavoured to push Basil Williams into the movement as much as possible. I had consulted him on every point; and as he was a Liberal organiser I had endeavoured to bring him into touch with Sir John Simon for his own advantage; and had even arranged that he, Williams, should speak at our meeting. All this had certainly the desired effect of making him keen to push the matter further, but also oddly enough it filled him with a competitive feeling as regards myself. He was avowedly rather nettled and a little resentful towards me because he had not received more credit for his share in our meeting, - although I had done my best to allow it to him, as he was a man with political aspirations and I was not. Consequently it was not long before I became aware that he had some scheme entirely his own, going forward. A week or two later he asked me to come to a conference he was holding in the House of Commons for the purpose of founding a

society or association to agitate for peace with Ireland. I went. And this was the first of three conferences which led eventually to the formation of the Peace with Ireland Council.

Basil Williams had succeeded in uniting the representatives, more or less important, from a large number of elements not only in the political world, but also in the religious life of London. I cannot now remember exactly which people were at this first conference, because it was followed a few days later by a second conference and then by a third. But at one or other of these three assemblages we welcomed a very fairly satisfactory assortment of people of a great many different types. The old Liberal Party was well to the fore; Lady Simon was there representing Sir John who was busy all day in court. Also Miss Margaret Buckmaster, partly on her own account, partly as representing her father Lord Buckmaster former Solicitor-General. Mr. Francis Acland M.P. lately in Asquith's government: Lady Byles, Chairman of the Women's Liberal Federation; Messrs. Ramsay MacDonald, De Lisle Burns and Wolfe, prominent Labour men; Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck M.P. and Oswald Mosley M.P., both Conservatives who had lately crossed the floor of the House and joined the Opposition. A certain number of well-known people such as Bishop Gore, Lord MacDonnell, Bernard Shaw, and, I think, Dr. Horton the leading man among the Nonconformists. And plenty of journalists such as H.W. Nevinson, J.L. Hammond, Desmond McCarthy and Robert Lynd. It is impossible to remember them all now. There were several hundreds from first to last.

But I believe that the element which had given Basil Williams the most assistance at the start was the Quaker Peace Council mainly composed of Quakers, and principally represented, as far as I know, by Lord and Lady Parmoor, her sister Miss Ellis and Mr. Pollard. The Peace Council (I think this was the right name) had been formed during the War and had endured a good deal of hatred and ridicule, being commonly known as "the Peace Cranks". But they were very much in earnest and proved themselves most genuinely unselfish. They certainly did a great deal if not most of the spade-work with regard to helping Williams to form our Peace with Ireland Council. And yet when the movement began to come to a head, they voluntarily obliterated themselves and retired from the scene in order to avoid involving the new enterprise in any of their own unpopularity. Indeed throughout all our movement nothing has struck me more forcibly than the earnestness and unselfishness of the Quakers.

Ireland was hardly represented at all. Indeed at the first two conferences I think I was the only Irishman present. Williams had rightly aimed at making it a purely English movement. It was to be an English protest against the policy of the government, and not to be confounded in any way with any kind of Irish resistance. That, I think was why Williams had rather kept aloof from me until he was actually calling his first conference. I was on the Irish Dominion League Committee, and he did not wish to be in any way confounded with them. He was right. It was far better not to be bound to Dominion Home Rule or any other formal scheme, but to gather into our fold everyone who was ready to help in stopping the

repression in Ireland. At our last conference Mr. Devlin and Mr. Bernard Shaw both spoke, but they neither of them ever became members of the Peace with Ireland Council. Nor did Mr. T.P. O'Connor.

Well, - the Conferences went off very satisfactorily. A committee was appointed to organise the new association, which soon after came into being as the Peace with Ireland Council. I was not on the committee that formed it, but as soon as our P.W.I.C. came into being, Williams invited me to serve on its committee.

I was immensely pleased at the development of the scheme and profoundly grateful to Williams. He certainly had done the work well, and, considering the disorganised conditions of the moment, had achieved wonderfully good results. No one else whom I knew could have done as much. His strong point was that he had an excellent knowledge of the political world in London. He had a very large number of names in his head and could usually label them good, bad or indifferent for any scheme that he had in hand. In fact throughout all that year that I worked in our office, it always seemed to me that no one "knew the ropes" quite so well as Basil Williams.

CHAPTER Vll.

BEGINNINGS: OUR MOVEMENT'S PROGRESS UP TO THE END OF 1920.

We took an office and started operations.

My chief regret now is that I did not keep a diary during my year of work in the office of the P.W.I.C. It would have been profoundly interesting, whereas my recollections as I can now jot them down will probably be extremely boring to everyone except myself and possibly the few who worked with me if they ever hear of them. But it was too dangerous, not for myself but for others and for the movement in general. We were in constant touch with people of every kind and description, from extreme Unionists to extreme Sinn Féiners. We lived in frequent expectation of being raided by the police. One felt that it was not fair to those who came and confided their troubles to us that any written record should exist of what they had said, even in our homes. Several times I seriously wondered whether Hanwell Castle would be raided. And there were various periods when our letters seemed to bear traces of having been opened. In fact we often asked each other whether we were really living in England where thought and speech are usually supposed to be free.

Nevertheless without a diary it is quite impossible to reproduce the human interest of our work day after day; when fresh people turned up almost every morning, - not

Sinn Féiners as a rule, but men and women who were horrified at what was taking place in Ireland; landlords, officers, Americans, English and occasionally an Irish republican, appearing one after another in our tiny office. The first case that impressed me deeply was one brought in by an ex-colonel in the British Army, who came to tell us how he had himself seen a man whom he knew well go off on a car with several policemen and nothing more had been heard of him until his murdered body was found. It was profoundly interesting to hear him going through his story, but of course I cannot now remember the details, nor what we said to him. There have been so many cases equally bad or worse! since then. But the maddening part was that we could do nothing at first to prevent these killings or help the sufferers. For one reason they usually stipulated that we should not mention their name for fear of their homes being burnt and vengeance being wreaked on their old parents in Ireland. At first I had not intended to go into the office permanently, but Basil Williams urged me to do so, - they were short of workers at the start. I refused, but said I could do so for a short time, and after being a few days there, saw that I could really be of use and so stayed on. Williams assigned me a particular branch of the work, that of providing speakers for meetings on Ireland, as he said it was the job I had already begun on my own account. And this was exactly the branch that I wanted because I was determined to see that meetings were held all over England so that everyone should have a chance of knowing the truth. So this became my staple work for the next nine months, though at the same time I undertook any other jobs for which I had time. And during those nine

months (of which only seven were actual working period as the Labour Party's campaign took over propaganda during six weeks), I sent as I have said, speakers and Propagandist literature (by the thousand) to nearly 200 meetings. The truth has been cried aloud in virtually every town in England. This result would have been quite impossible without the magnificent enthusiasm of our small band of speakers who, most of them, were ready to travel six or eight hours to address an audience of no more than perhaps 150 people. We paid their bare expenses but nothing more.

At first it seemd almost futile to try to convince the dull, leaden mass of public opinion. Our second meeting I remember was broken up by organised ex-service men (to my great grief) who said we were attacking the army. This was the prevalent idea; that Sinn Féin was merely a small gang of extremist murderers who had made an unprovoked attack on the Army. It was necessary to put the other side of the question before the people. The newspapers were practically closed to us. So I asked Robert Lynd the well-known writer to prepare a leaflet entitled Who began it? and after a fortnight he produced an excellent one which travelled far and wide by the thousand. It was taken up by the Labour Party and there must have been about six hundred thousand copies circulated from first to last. I myself in great haste wrote a small * pamphlet giving the history of the Irish Question

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* This pamphlet shows various verbal slips owing to the great hurry in which it was produced, - mainly between a Saturday and Monday, - in order to be in time for a series of meetings for which Hammond's pamphlet was late. He took some time over his, "A tragedy of errors", but when it did appear later on, it was excellent.

since 1914, and to my great delight, though necessarily somewhat lengthy, it proved successful. About six to seven thousand copies were disposed of sooner or later which I think was above the total reached by any other pamphlet or leaflet except Lynd's. The pamphlets of course (such as mine) were more expensive and could not be distributed in the same wholesale manner as the leaflets of which we often gave away fifty or a hundred gratis to put in the seats at a meeting. And at this time I remember there appeared a Sinn Féin map of Ireland covered with about 200 red dots each representing a town or village sacked or damaged by troops or police, and giving names and dates. This struck me as an excellent method of making people realise the blackguardism of the Government's policy. Having verified the dates, I persuaded the Liberal Party Headquarters to reprint it on terms of my paying half the expense. Their printers refused to carry out the order on the grounds that "it would be hampering the Government", but another firm was found to do the work and soon afterwards we had a copy on the walls of every Liberal Club in England. This small feat seems to have given quite a "jolt" to the Government. Our map was attacked in Parliament, once by the Prime Minister and on another day by Hamar Greenwood in terms of fury, on the grounds that it amounted to publishing the propaganda of the enemy. Yet it was merely a list of places and a chart! I think the Liberals were a little alarmed at this onslaught, but our result had already been obtained. This was the only occasion on which I ever published anything produced by Sinn Féin, because ours was in reality an English movement and we meant it to remain so. The map, however, was a mere

summary of facts and dates which had already appeared in the Irish newspapers. The original Sinn Féin version was afterwards disseminated in a slightly different form in France, but I do not know who was responsible for that move.

One small event of this early period I shall always remember because it filled one's heart with encouragement. I went out one evening to the Kingsway Hall to a meeting on Ireland under the auspices of the Women's International League. It was excellently done. The speakers were good, and they had magic-lantern slides representing the sacked town of Balbriggan and other scenes of the sort which brought the true conditions home to the audience. At the end they made a collection. There were about 600 people present, but they seemed far from being rich. Nevertheless to my great surprise they subscribed no less than £67 to the campaign. Of course many of them were Irish! But for all that, here I thought, is hope and sympathy: and I may add that the Women's International League certainly deserved it. They had sent a deputation of their members over to Ireland to study conditions on the spot, and these ladies had afterwards issued a report in which they spoke out boldly and published the facts in plain English for everyone to see. The gist of their verdict was expressed in the first two paragraphs of the final summary:

> "(1) Ireland at the General Election 1918 by constitutional election chose her own government. A majority of over 70% was cast for Sinn Féin, and by the overwhelming consent of the people, the Irish Parliament (Dáil Éireann) meeting in Ireland, rules over the Irish people.

(ii) As a necessary consequence, the British Government attempting to rule against the will of 70% of the people, can do so only by force complicated by fraud. Spies and informers are an essential part of the government where the mass of the people are hostile. There is no co-operation between governors and governed and the army of occupation (whether military proper or armed police) is demoralised by perpetual and agonising fear, and the constant use of debasing methods of espionage and lawless intimidation and revenge".

I do not know what political creed these ladies professed. I believe that some of them were considered to hold extreme views. But as regards Ireland, at all events! I know that they were the first body of English people who had the courage to put their names to the truth.

Another event of the same sort but far more important was the Labour Party Commission to Ireland; the same Commission which afterwards issued such a detailed and instructive report on the Government's policy of killing and burning. I knew its secretary and also its military member General Thompson, and was able to provide introductions for them all to various friends of mine. Moreover I took Harrison round to their office, and he gave them an excellent list of people to consult, far longer than mine. Later on, when their report appeared, it was bitterly decried and derided as being merely a party move. Even Punch, which under Owen Seaman's guidance has become militantly anti-Irish, had a cartoon directed against it. But now at this present day, a year later, I will challenge anyone to read that report and say that it was not an honest and courageous attempt to make the truth known. At that time no one would believe, - absurd as it may seem now, no one would actually believe that the British Government was

responsible for the policy of repression in Ireland. But the Labour Commission summed up the truth as follows:

> "Murder in cold blood, the callous and brutal treatment of innocent children, incendiarism and theft are crimes and offences against the moral law even when they are committed under the auspices of the British Empire and in the name of law and order. Sir Hamar Greenwood has applied the term "murder-gang" to the "gunmen" of Ireland. The epithet can be applied to those individuals who, in the pay of the British Government kill people in cold blood. The Chief Secretary has identified himself with a policy which is a disgrace to the British people and which we believe to be unparalleled in this country".

Plain speaking! But unfortunately it occurred in a party report and consequently was little read by outsiders. Still it came as a revelation, I think, to a good many Labourites and Liberals, and as a confirmation of their suspicions to many more. But as regards the majority of the English people, our difficulty was that they did not want to know the truth, - even the bulk of the Church of England at first, - and continued to ignore the matter until it grew into a world scandal and became a danger to the Empire.

During this early period the events are rather scrappy. We had an excellent Secretary, Mr. De Lisle Burns, but a very bad, tiny office, and as yet it had been impossible to get matters quite smooth. Nevertheless we seemed to be making progress. The fact was that our start had not been quite as successful as we had hoped. We had not been joined by quite so many important people as might have been expected. But now they were <u>gradually</u> coming in.

The two most important events of De Lisle Burns' secretaryship were the first visit of our delegates to

Ireland, and secondly our Albert Hall meeting.

As regards the delegation, it was rather a fiasco. We invited all the prominent people whom we knew, but none of them would accept. They were all unwilling to incur the odium. At length, however, we found two stalwarts who were not afraid of unpopularity. The first of these was Lady Sykes, widow of Sir Mark Sykes whose early death had been so greatly deplored. He had been a really promising politician, one who was respected by all parties. Very rich, a Conservative and a sportsman who had travelled all over the world: but at the same time a Catholic and a man with broadminded views on Ireland, and, I believe, on other subjects as well.

His widow undertook to fill his place, and to do the work which he doubtless would have done. I well remember her first appearance one evening in our tiny office. She was tall, well-built good-looking woman in black, with a great deal of hair through which there ran a copper tinge; quick-tempered I daresay, because her eye flashed rather brightly now and then; noticeably well-dressed, - in fact she seemed to brighten up our dingy little room. She was daughter of Sir John Gorst and a convert to Catholicism. I afterwards heard that her mother had been Irish. But whether this was so or not, she was evidently ready to work in the interests of peace; and appeared capable. She gave me the impression of knowing whom to approach in both religions and on both sides of the water. And this was afterwards proved to be the case.

Our second delegate was Sir Henry Lawson, a

Lieutenant-General who had only lately retired from the Army. He was still an uncommonly good-looking man in spite of forty years service in every known quarter of the world. As a lieutenant he had taken part in the dash across the desert to relieve General Gordon; and now lately, at the age of about sixty, he had commanded the British communications in Italy during the Great War. I suppose there is hardly another man alive who has taken part in both these campaigns. He was married to an Englishwoman, - Lord Radnor's daughter, - but he himself was the son of an Irish judge and had never entirely lost touch with Ireland. He was a man to whom one felt greatly drawn at the very first glance, owing to his charm both of face and manner. And now, looking back over the past year, it seems to me that I have been working with no one whom I liked as well as Sir Henry Lawson, except perhaps Bishop Gore.

He and Lady Sykes ought in reality to have formed part of a Commission. But we could not get any other people for certain, (Sir Frederick Pollock had given us a rather qualified acceptance) so it was decided to ask both Lady Sykes and Sir Henry Lawson to go over to Ireland as representing our council individually and to report to us on the state of affairs there. They were not to work in conjunction with each other.

I have always thought that these two representatives of ours did more to further our work than perhaps any other of those outside Parliament. Lady Sykes was able to obtain invaluable information and to spread it among influential people who wanted to know the truth. And Sir Henry Lawson wrote three excellent reports, two of

which were printed by our Council, and one which I got done by the Liberals. Coming from a soldier with his splendid record of service they naturally carried weight. And, as hardly a single newspaper would publish anything we sent them, it was only by means such as the above-named that we could hope to undermine Hamar Greenwood's dead-wall of denials and lies. The cynicism of Greenwood's lying during this period was absolutely beyond belief. He denied practically anything of which he could prevent the proof either by force or by fraud.

Our last important event before the end of the year was the Albert Hall meeting. I had never supposed that we were strong enough as yet to fill the Albert Hall, but everyone else seemed to think it possible, and we decided to hire that huge place and invite the best speakers available. We were fortunate in being able to get the help of Mr. Rivers of the London Liberal Federation to organise it for us, and he is probably the best political organiser in England. It was anxious work; but our speakers were well-known and their names drew large numbers to hear them. We had about 8,000 people there, - I spent half-an-hour counting them. There were a few seats vacant, but that is inevitable at the Albert hall where it is a condition of hiring that where a ticket-holder fails to turn up, no one else can take his place. And it was a favourable audience, with the exception of about fifteen or perhaps twenty interrupters, who I strongly suspect, had been sent there by the Government.

Our speakers were the following; and their names rather show that our Council was well-regarded by all parties in the Opposition:

> Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck (in the Chair)
> Mr. Asquith (representing the Liberal Party)
> Lord Buckmaster " " " "
> The Bishop of Peterborough (representing the Church)
> Dr. Horton, representing the Nonconformists
> Miss Margaret Bondfield representing the Labour Party and the women
> Sir Thomas Grattan Esmonde representing Ireland.

And Sir Horace Plunkett also spoke.

Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck is not a great speaker, but on this occasion he did well and made an excellent chairman and figure-head with his good-looking cheery face. Mr. Asquith who spoke second, seemed to me to have aged. He was slow, and for him not very successful. This was partly due to his being the mark against which the interrupters had evidently decided to concentrate. They did their best to spoil his speech and were successful, but only for a short time. Of the others, I thought Dr. Horton spoke well. His reference to the policy of reprisals seemed to me powerfully expressed. The following is an extract from it:

> "A government may punish but must not imitate crime. Directly it yields to the temptation of retaliating, because to do justice is too hard, it brings disaster on itself, and on the country, unless the country hastens to repudiate the government.
>
> By such treasons against their subjects, empires destroy <u>themselves</u>. The true strength of Empires and rulers lies not in the physical force at their disposal, but in the trust of all that they are inflexibly open, truthful and legal. So soon as a government departs from that standard, it ceases to be anything more than the <u>gang in possession</u>, and its days are over".

Dr. Horton certainly spoke well. But Miss Margaret Bondfield was by far the most successful of our team.

Throughout every sentence of her speech she carried the whole audience with her. There is undoubtedly something magnetic about her, - I think it is perhaps frankness combined with enthusiasm which goes to the heart of the listeners. Of course her appeal comes home most powerfully of all to those of her own party, but it moves others as well. I have known a strong Conservative who hated her political creed and yet admitted that he would rather listen to her than to almost anyone else.

Sir Horace Plunkett had not been on our original list of speakers, but at the end he was called on for a speech. I greatly feared for the result as he is far from eloquent. But he did better than I had ever heard him before. And it was clearly brought home to me that he is one of those speakers who do best without previous preparation. He is over-conscientious; he dreads omitting anything. Give him time to prepare and he will drag in every minor detail for miles round. But get him suddenly on to his feet, and he will deliver you, with quite sufficient fluency, a flow of commonsense whose manifest earnestness and patriotism more than atone for any lack of art in delivery. I have heard him talk down a telephone about twice as well as he usually talks on a platform. At the Albert Hall he got an excellent reception.

Next day one hastened to look at the papers. Result - similar to that after my Central Hall meeting. Our great gathering was scarcely mentioned at all. One or two Conservative papers gave half a column to it,

but they reported, not the speeches but the interruptions. I then understood why the interruptions had been so systematic.

So much for government by coalition! Never let us have a coalition again. It means that almost every newspaper is defending the government. One can never hear the other side. Of the morning papers, the Daily News and the Manchester Guardian were our only stalwarts. The Times and Daily Mail would not even publish letters for us, although their views often coincided with ours.

CHAPTER V111.

GREATLY INCREASED ENTHUSIASM IN THE SPRING OF 1921.

On the 1st January 1921 Miss Edith Stopford became our secretary. De Lisle Burns had done very well during his two and a half months of office, but he cost us £500 a year; and he was now offered an important post at the Headquarters of the Labour Party. Miss Stopford is Irish by birth, though English by education. A Courtown Stopford one of the old Cromwellian stock, settled nearly three centuries in Ireland, and, when Nationalist, more bitterly and determinedly Nationalist than any other. Having had some previous experience as secretary of a suffragist association, being a niece of Mrs. J.R. Green and first cousin by marriage of Sir John Simon (through his first wife, a Miss Venables), Miss Stopford was singularly well fitted to carry on our work. A republican (for Ireland), of excellent shrewdness, and genuine enthusiasm.

Her arrival rather signalised the gradual change that was coming over the personnel of the office. It was automatically passing into the hands of Irish people, simply because they were more ready to do the work and more devoted to it than the English members. The movement remained English, but the actual daily drudgery was done by Miss Stopford, Mr. B.C. Waller, Miss Margaret Lawrence, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Stephen Spring Rice and myself, all Irish. Miss Stopford, for instance, could not afford to work for nothing, but she was willing to do so for less than half the salary that De Lisle Burns had received, thereby saving us about £280 a year. Similarly the others

were ready to do clerk's work for nothing or, if this were impossible, for low salaries. As will be seen by their names, they were all members of well-known families of the Irish gentry. ✱

As I am recording our work during this period, I shall just give a short description of the office routine. It will interest me in years to come, even if no one else ever reads it!

To describe Miss Stopford's work would be impossible, it was so varied and universal. As secretary she had to overlook everything that everyone else did; and, as in the case of all secretaries, her day consisted in a series of interruptions. Whenever she sat down to write a letter, some visitor came in to pour out his griefs to her for perhaps an hour or more. Sometimes a telegram arrived from Ireland; and these were often very painful. Telegrams asking us to intervene to save the life of some unfortunate man who had been sentenced to be hung for a crime which, we were assured, he had never committed. And it was often impossible not to believe that he was innocent. I have seen Miss Stopford in tears over cases of this sort. I firmly believe that many of those executed were not guilty. It was this cursed system of trying to terrorise a whole people by means of reprisals, of substituting vengeance for justice, which demoralised the whole mentality of those engaged in it. I could quite understand that the officers and men who went in danger of their lives should show no mercy for any man whom they really believed guilty of attacking them, but it soon

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✱ There was one English girl with us, Miss Seward daughter of a Cambridge professor. She did excellent work.

became apparent that they cared nothing about the individual as long as they got a life for a life. I say nothing of the more celebrated cases such as those of Mr. Quinn, of Father Mangan and young Crowley, of Clune, Mr. Lysaght's secretary and the two men with him, of the Croke Park victims, of the Drumcondra murders, of Father Griffin, of the Mayors of Cork and of Limerick, - of others of their calibre. These of course are well-known. But there were innumerable less-known cases that came to our ears and left us convinced that time and again another innocent man had suffered or was to suffer, and that we could do nothing to save him. We could raise protests of course, and we did raise protests. Lord Henry Bentinck and many of our other friends were continually writing to the Prime Minister: but without result. Sir Hamar Greenwood denied everything in the House. And, more maddening still, no one was responsible. The system was carefully arranged so that it should be impossible to bring home responsibility to anyone. The Cabinet washed their hands of the situation. In Dublin the official concerned always denied his liability. Meanwhile the English papers except the Daily News and the Manchester Guardian, combined to preserve secrecy. And, as everyone knows, when Mr. Hugh Martin of the Daily News published some accounts of the true state of affairs, his life was openly threatened by the Black and Tans.

One or two instances will illustrate what I mean. In Dublin during those early days a man named Lynch was murdered in his bed by the police; no trial of course; no inquest as far as I remember. Inquests were forbidden throughout most of Ireland during most of this period,

so as to prevent the truth being discovered. But we were informed that this man Lynch was not the man whom the police were looking for, but his cousin; and moreover that the man whom they were in reality tracking was entirely innocent of the crime in question. It had been committed by a third man named Lynch. I do not know whether this story was true or not. I suppose it will be sifted some day.

Another story which I heard a little later on was that of an Irish prisoner (his name was given me, but I have now forgotten it), for whom a rescue was arranged. It was entirely successful. His friends succeeded in reaching his cell, but he refused to escape. He pointed out to them that he was entirely innocent and that he had such excellent proofs of his innocence that he could not possibly be condemned; so that he could only injure his own case by any attempt at evasion. They actually opened the door; but he refused to pass through it. This man was afterwards found guilty and executed. This story I believe to be true.

I think that in years to come no one will believe, as indeed now many English people can hardly believe, the extraordinary cynicism of these times. One instance that brought it home to me as much as any other was a case that I heard retailed at a tennis party at Bitham Hall, Warwickshire, the home of Miss Perry. After our game we were all sitting round a table having tea, when an officer present began to talk to the lady next him about the case of a Sinn Féiner who, according to the papers, had been rescued by a party of friends masquerading as British soldiers. This officer seemed immensely amused.

He said: "Oh, the papers did not know everything. This man was taken out of prison all right, but not by Sinn Féiners. He was one of those whom the Black and Tans wanted to get. They knew he was guilty but they could not prove it. So they broke into his prison and took him out and killed him". The lady to whom he spoke went off into fits of laughter. But this instructive little anecdote gave me a good idea of the sort of tone that prevailed at the Courts-martial.

Yet there is no one who has always had more admiration for the Army than I have. It so happens that I have not a single male relative who is not in the Army. All our family go into it. My father was in it, my three uncles were in it, and all my cousins. It was the dream of my youth to be a British officer. And, having been brought up at Wellington College, a military school, nearly all my oldest friends are soldiers. I meet them continually and talk with them. I meet them serving in Ireland sometimes. They are good fellows; it is this cursed policy of the Tory extremists that sets them to do this work of terrorism, and makes it a point of honour with them not to fail in achieving it.

All this dissertation has rather takem me away from my description of the office routine. But the above gives an idea of the sort of atmosphere in which we lived; especially Miss Stopford, who besides an immense amount of routine, had to do most of the interviewing.

Next I come to my own department, the meetings, which I need not recapitulate except to remember with gratitude the principal friends who helped me. My job

was an independent one from the rest of the office. I was in reality a sub-committee of the Council, charged with attending to meetings; my original collaborator Pringle (a Liberal M.P.) had been too busy at the House of Commons to help me. And I soon ceased calling on him, because the police put such delays in the way of anyone calling at the House. They were afraid of bomb-throwing.

Of the speakers in our cause Sir John Simon was undoubtedly the best. But after the first he became rather too busily engaged at Liberal and other meetings on the Irish Question to speak very often for our Council. I imagined also that he was perhaps a little nettled at not having been invited to speak at the Albert Hall, - but I may wrong him. It was not my fault that he was omitted. But he went round England addressing large and successful assemblages, and we gave him as his second speaker Harrison of the I.D.L. already mentioned. Harrison, with his splendid war-record, his Irish experience and his natural eloquence made an excellent supplement to Sir John. The two achieved great successes at many of the most important centres in England.

After Harrison, I think I should name Grey as having done more spade-work in the speaking line than anyone else. Mr. R.C. Grey was a retired civil servant of over twenty years service, formerly British Resident at one of the Malay States. Though married and well past the military age in 1914, he had gone out to Serbia working on the Serbian Relief Fund and had been taken prisoner by the Austrians in Belgrade. At the end of the War he settled down in Ireland, being half-Irish and anxious to end his

days there. But when the Black and Tans reached his district, it very soon came between him and his rest. Several police-murders and outrages took place in his neighbourhood. Roused by these, he set out once again and came across to England to make known the true state of affairs far and wide. He began by writing an excellent leaflet describing his experiences, and we distributed and sold it by the thousand. At the same time he came out as a speaker, and made quite a mark at our meetings. Very soon the news of his work reached Ireland. His name was posted at the police-stations. He was officially "on the run" in his native land. But we got some of our friends to interest themselves in him over here. Lord MacDonnell took up his case and spoke to Mr. Short (I think) about him. So he was able to continue his work. But Mrs. Grey led a life of great anxiety and strain in Ireland, often wondering whether the police would burn her house over her head.

As regards the other speakers, I give a list of those on whom I chiefly relied. Their unselfishness was wonderful, especially perhaps Mrs. Crawford, Francis Acland, Miss Buckmaster and Hammond.

Press-cuttings etc. This was Waller's department. Mr. Bolton Waller was well-known on account of his work on the League of Nations question. We had from the first tried hard to get articles into the newspapers, both London and provincial. With this purpose in view, Waller had been engaged and placed in charge of the press-cuttings books which were kept in the outer office by the ladies who volunteered to work for us. They spent hours each day cutting out everything of importance in the Times,

the Irish Independent, the Freeman's Journal, the Daily News and several other papers. Our press-cuttings books were excellent.

But Waller was never able to make a success of the press work. The London press were nearly all hostile and the local papers very little interested. I had from the start been able to get some articles written for the Liberal local press and some promises from the Labourites, and do not think that Waller ever achieved much more. But he developed another line which became very important and I consider very successful; namely that of providing matter of all sorts to speakers, both on the platform and in the House of Commons. He soon perfected an excellent system of questions which he supplied daily to a small but energetic group of M.Ps. who regularly shelled the Government with them whenever there occurred a possible occasion. Not only our own M.Ps.namely, Lord Henry, Francis Acland and Oswald Mosley, but various other stalwarts such as commander Kenworthy (afterwards on our Committee), Captain Wedgwood Benn and others. I cannot help thinking that the gradual change that occurred in the House of Commons was largely due to this constant hammering by Waller.

It was our experience of this department of Waller's which converted me once and for all from any belief in government by coalition. Never again let us have a coalition. Even party-government is better. Under a coalition you get all the newspapers of one way of thinking, all supporting everything that the Government does, all chorusing the same lies. And the House is just as bad. The great majority of members simply

record their votes. They have put so many of their convictions in their pockets when joining the Coalition that they may as well let the rest go as well. Old members told me that there had never before been such a calm lack of principle in the Commons. There was simply a large dull majority, many of its members new men, registering their votes in favour of the Government regardless of right or conscience.

It was not only at meetings and with his pen that Grey did good work. He went about England raising branches of our Council. For a long time he was the only person who attempted this work, as we were all tied to the office. Finally just before the end, we had some paid organisers to continue this line, but this sort of branch work is far better done by a person of position, and one who like Grey can go unpaid. Before the truce we had no less than thirty branches of our Society dotted here and there all over Great Britain, very largely due to the efforts of Grey.

Literature. As regards our Literature there is in reality a great deal to say, because it was probably our strongest point. We included among our members quite a large number of well-known writers. Our difficulty was which to reject of the pamphlets, leaflets and reports that were written for us. Before the end of the campaign we must have had nearly thirty, almost every one of which was signed by a well-known man such as Hammond, AE (George Russell), G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Robert Lynd, Clutton Brock, Mrs. J.R. Green, Basil Williams, H.W. Nevinson and others; also valuable reports by Sir Henry Lawson, Mrs. F.D. Acland, Judge Bodkin, the Women's

International League and the Labour Party's Report. And! to complete the list, several excellent letters or speeches, the best of which were from Sir John Simon and Cardinal Logue. I have never heard of any propagandist society whose list of writers included so many well-known names.

But undoubtedly the best of the pamphlets were those by Hammond. His two brochures, A tragedy of Errors and The Terror in Action formed an overwhelming indictment of the Government. He had been over to Ireland and knew exactly what he wanted to say to the English people. The following paragraph for instance has always seemed to me a magnificent specimen of the true spirit of Liberalism:

> "Revolution is a more terrible weapon in the hands of a government than in the hands of a people. Lenin has shown that in Russia. Mr. Lloyd George has shown it in Ireland. This policy (reprisals) produced the inevitable answer. The I.R.A. grew in strength, guerrilla warfare increased, the men who regarded themselves as defending their country against this oppression became more daring and more ruthless.
>
> The Government replied in December by introducing Martial Law and setting up a code of punishment to which no parallel can be found since the days of Judge Jeffreys. It was made a crime punishable with death to shelter a rebel, so that father or mother could be hung for giving bread and water to a fugitive son. Within two months men and boys were being shot in batches for possessing revolvers or taking part in ambushes. Collective punishment, so fiercely condemned by Englishmen when adopted in other countries was adopted as an official practice. And this last effort of force was followed, like every other, by a terrible increase in crime and disorder. For two years Ministers have pursued a policy, step by step, of which this at least cannot be disputed, that if it is a wise policy, then Prussia was wiser than England, Turkey was wiser than Prussia and the Englishmen who died in Flanders or the East died, like Cavaliers, for a mistaken sentiment".

Or again the last paragraph of his pamphlet which to me stands out as a splendid instance of broadmindedness,

coming as it does from an Englishman.

"The writer asked an Irish bishop, well-known for the moderation of his views, whether the spirit of Ireland was breaking under this fierce grasp. The bishop replied: 'The other day a chaplain went to a prisoner to tell him that his brother had been put to death that morning. How did he die? He died bravely for Ireland. Then I am happy. 'That' said the bishop, 'is the spirit of the women whom I have to comfort, women whose sons are fugitives or prisoners or dead. We are proud to give them for Ireland!' Men and women, living in poverty, their lives bounded by the narrow horizons of daily work and daily want speak with a light on their faces of this sacrifice. "Let us all perish that the Ireland of our children may be free'. The mother of a boy who was shot as a rebel declared last week: 'I am proud to have reared him; prouder still that he died for Ireland'. By these words she was tempting punishment, for men are expiating such language to-day in Irish prisons. Nobody can move about in Ireland without becoming conscious of this spirit. It is to be seen amid all the strain and sorrow of their wearing life, in the eyes of the people, in the way they walk, in their whole bearing and temper. They have learnt if no one else has learnt what Seneca meant: <u>Non quid sed quemadmodum feras, interest</u>. 'It is not what you have to bear but how you bear it that matters'. "This is a tragedy" said an Irishman to the writer, 'but it is your tragedy, not ours'. He spoke the truth. Over our injustice brood the lengthening shadows of despair: over Ireland's misery there steals the distant dawn".

CHAPTER IX.

DIARY OF TEN DAYS SPENT IN IRELAND. EARLY SPRING 1921.

One day Basil Williams said to me: "Will you go up to Edinburgh and help them found a Branch there?".

I answered: "That would probably keep me away for a fortnight or more. Owing to my wife being an invalid I never go so far away from home unless I go to Ireland". So Grey went to Edinburgh and helped them to found the Branch there. But soon afterwards I received an invitation to a congress organised in Dublin by the Irish Dominion League. And I felt that if the office could spare me for Edinburgh it could equally well spare me for Dublin. So I accepted. As a matter of fact Miss Stopford wrote to me at the end of six days asking me to come back, so I only remained away for ten. But the conditions during this ten day visit to my native land struck me as being so extraordinary that I decided to keep a diary and risk my papers being examined. It was kept in Italian so that the servants, at all events, should not understand it, and most of the proper names were omitted.

The enclosed is a translation of the original with a few additions at points where I had left gaps for future insertions of matter which seemed safer retained in my memory than committed to paper.

Ten days in Ireland at the time of the I.D.L. Conference

Tuesday. I arrived at the Kildare Street Club after a good crossing. Tired, but feeling well, and no trace of

seasickness.

Wednesday. I went to the I.D.L. Conference. There were fifty of us there or perhaps sixty. We were all agreed, except two or three, namely Stephen Gwynn and a Dr. Crofton who wanted us to accept the new Home Rule Act.

Crofton related to us how he had been (together with Colonel O'Gowan) an intermediary between the Government and Arthur Griffith. He said that the Government had offered Dominion Home Rule, and that this had been accepted by Griffith at first, but afterwards refused. I enquired whether it had been a written and signed offer, and he said not. Indeed I now hear that Sinn Féin took it for a ballon d'essai, which seems very probable. And this small episode brings it home to me the impossibility of negotiating except through authorised delegates on either side.

It is said that these people Messrs. Gwynn and Crofton, Sir William Hutcheson Poe, Shanks and Lord Decies are to stand as candidates for the Southern Parliament. But whether they will be elected is quite another and a much more doubtful matter.

During our interval, Mr. Anderson of Department fame invited me to lunch with him. Several old friends and acquaintances were there, including Father McCotter whom I had met in Belfast in 1914.

Thursday. I went off with Sir Henry Lawson (our Lieutenant General) to be introduced to AE. (George Russell). He is a real Bohemian; but a man of genius. I have never heard a man talk better. He is certainly

one of the most interesting Irishmen alive. After a long conversation two conclusions stand out in my mind. Firstly, that it is impossible to arrive at any solution except by means of free negotiation; negotiation, that is, in which the Government does not claim the right of naming those Sinn Féiners whom it refuses to meet. And secondly, that there must be no demand for a surrender of arms. AE. told us that it would be impossible even for the leaders of the revolution to obtain a surrender of arms; the men would refuse to give them up. The ultimate result of the negotiation I gathered, would probably be some form of Dominion Home Rule.

At the Club I was much amused at the rabid politicians who surrounded our General; mostly Conservatives. Especially a man named Guiness who is a leader of the old Unionist Association. Now at last I understand what they are hoping for. Even now, after all that is gone, they are hoping to save the Union! They think the Belfast Government will not last long, and that the Southern Parliament will never see the light of day. So the Union will be left intact in all its glory.

Another politician, but one of the opposite camp, was Sir Henry Grattan Bellew. He is a finely-built, good-looking man and full of enthusiasm. He told me many very interesting things. For instance, he says the old R.I.C. cannot bear the Black and Tans. In the barracks near Mount Bellew they sit down to dinner at opposite sides of the room. But it is said that now, owing to resignations, there are not many left of the old R.I.C.

Sir Henry Grattan Bellew also told me various stories about the recruiting of the Ulster Volunteers

during the War. He said that a good many of them were recruited with the connivance of the doctors while still under age or physically unfit. On these grounds, therefore, it was very easy to get them demobilised soon afterwards. So out of the Army they went, back to their homes, and shortly afterwards enlisted again and went through the same performance once more. All this of course was merely a device to increase the number of Protestant recruits, - on paper, - for political purposes, compared with the Catholics.

A third friend was Harry Fowler ✱ . He also talked politics. He told us that "without reprisals he could not live in Ireland": that "The real remedy was to shoot five Sinn Féiners for every soldier shot, and to burn a village for every house burnt by the rebels".

✱ Harry Fowler is a very old cricketing friend of mine, though a rabid Unionist. He had been employed in the recruiting office during the war, and hastened to inform me that "Ulster had sent more recruits than the rest of Ireland put together". This remark rather tended to make me trust what Bellew had told me about the recruiting methods, because it is absolutely misleading. I knew through figures supplied from the Chief Secretary's office, that there had been 47,000 Protestant recruits, and 81,000 Catholic recruits in all Ireland. So it is just conceivably possible that if one included all the Ulster Catholic Nationalists as "Ulstermen" one might just make an Ulster majority over the remaining Catholics. But Harry Fowler's implication of course was that more Orangemen had joined up than all the Catholics put together. I said to him: "You must be counting Ulster Catholics as well as Orangemen", and he answered "Oh, I make no difference between Catholic and Protestant". But he had of course implied what I state. And these unfortunate Belfast Catholics had been urged to join up so that they might be spared partition!

It is a profound pity that so nice a man should be so bitterly hostile to the people among whom he lives.

I asked him if he could stand seeing all the villages of his native county burnt. He made no reply. But soon afterwards he answered that "one must govern". I am bound to say that I cannot see any necessity for governing if the whole people is wiped out. Fowler said that the war in Ireland would be over by the end of the summer. x

Harry Fowler was on the track of our General. He invited him to stay with him from Saturday to Monday (I was glad to know that Sir Henry was already engaged). But he was also out to prevent other people from being on his track. When Grattan Bellew was talking to us, Harry Fowler came over and very gravely warned him that he was in danger, - presumably from Government agents. I suppose this was intended to frighten him. But Bellew took very little stock of it. And matters have come to a curious pass when a man cannot talk privately to a friend at his Club.

After returning from our visit to AE., Sir Henry Lawson and I went off to the Shelbourne to see Lady Sykes. She struck me as being nervous. I did not then know that she was on the point of starting to see Arthur Griffith in prison.

I found Colonel Moore there, and Captain McManus. They were coming to lunch with me. And we had a most interesting time. Colonel Moore had been arrested a fortnight before, because they had found a copy of the Bulletin among his letters. He had been placed on a lorry as a hostage and driven through the town like a malefactor; a noble recompense for having offered his

x This was the third date that I had heard fixed. In October I had been assured that Sinn Féin would be wiped out by Christmas. After Christmas I had heard that it would be over by Easter.

life a thousand times in the wars of the Empire. ✱

After lunch, they (Colonel Moore and McManus) took me to visit Gwynn. He told us that the night before the police had almost taken Desmond Fitzgerald (who had been "on the run" for about a year), but he had got away. It was, they said, a raid to kill not to capture. (They knew this from the fact that the raiders were in mufti). And my friend McManus had only just missed being in the house. He had gone home early. To be killed in this way would have been a sad end for a man who had lost half a foot in Gallipoli.

They told me that Desmond Fitzgerald would like to see me, so I promised to be on the look-out for a note from him on the following day. (I may add here that I never received any note from him. He had arranged to see me on the following afternoon, but was captured during the morning. Having been "on the run" for so long, he had become rash, and had gone home to his flat to see his wife and get shaved. Unfortunately for him, there were two detectives watching the door of the house so he was taken, and never wrote his note to me, - perhaps fortunately from my point of view! I have since met Desmond Fitzgerald and he has told me that he believed he owed his life probably to the fact that the officer on duty, the notorious Hardy, the torturer was drunk that night!)

✱ Colonel Moore of course had nearly thirty years service in the Army had had earned a C.B. for his work during the Boer War, while he was in command of an Irish battalion. During that time he accomplished the difficult task to turning his infantrymen into a complete battalion of Mounted Infantry.

Friday. I went with the General to visit Erskine Childers. He looks worn out. His face is like a skeleton and very pale. His wife is not well; she is on the sofa; but the strain has told far more on him than on her.

We were there for an hour-and-a-half, - Mrs. Childers exercising her most alluring persuasions on the General. He of course was charming as usual. And out of all this conversation with them, two main points remain graven on my mind, - almost the same two which I gathered from AE. (1) We must persuade them to initiate negotiations without any preliminary conditions on either side; no exclusion of any of the Irish leaders, and no demand for laying down arms. (2) It will be better not to hold another Irish election under the present appalling conditions.

As regards Erskine Childers therefore, our decisions have not changed. Three months ago he and I came to exactly the same conclusions.

After luncheon I went to see Sir John O'Connell. He has done splendid work during this period of suffering. He is on the Committee of the Peace Conference (Sir Horace Plunkett's Peace Conference). It was he who entertained and supported the Archbishop of Perth during his attempt at negotiating with Lloyd George, and he has now undertaken to bring to light the truth about the Drumcondra murders. He gave me to-day the sworn deposition of Joseph Murphy, brother of one of the murdered men: it is a record of unimaginable cold-blooded blackguardism. And one realises what a profoundly moving scene it must have been when this boy came and

poured forth his story in the solicitor's office, in order to get justice for the assassination of his only brother.

It seems that they lived together in the same lodgings, both being at work in business houses in Dublin. A few evenings ago James Murphy (the murdered man) went out with a friend named Kennedy to spend a few hours at the pictures or at a game of billiards. Joseph saw no more of them that evening. But at about 3.30 a.m. that night, he was awakened by the flashing of an electric torch in his face. It was the police who had come to tell him that his brother had been found badly wounded, and was now in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital. The police searched his room, but discovered nothing. Neither of these boys were in the I.R.A. nor took any part in politics. *

Joseph dressed himself quickly and they took him off in a lorry to the Mater Hospital. There he found his brother in bed, desperately wounded, and heard his story. It appeared that after leaving the cinema at about 9.30 p.m. the brother had been included in a "hold-up" by the armed forces of the Crown in Talbot Street, and searched, and then put on to a military lorry and taken to Dublin Castle where he was examined. Nothing compromising was found on him and he answered all questions satisfactorily, so he was released and told to go home. But as it was by now after 10 p.m. the hour when the curfew began, and it would therefore have been unsafe for him to walk through the streets, the officer in charge told some

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* I have since heard that they were in the I.R.A. but had taken no active part in politics. Whether this is true I do not know.

soldiers to take both him and Kennedy to their homes in a motor lorry.

They started, expecting to be taken home. But instead of this they were taken about three miles away by Drumcondra to Clonturk Park. There they were turned out and taken into a field. Some old tin cans were put over their heads, and some shots were fired at them. Kennedy was killed at once. But Murphy fell to the ground wounded, and was left to die. He had received four bullets; one through the tin can into his mouth; one on the left cheek; one on the right cheek; and one through the breast.

An hour or two afterwards two of the Dublin Metropolitan Police heard his moans while they were on their beat. They picked him up and took him to the Mater Hospital.

Sir John O'Connell told me this story and gave me a copy of the affidavit. It has every appearance of being true. Mrs. Childers had spoken about it, and advised me to go and see the boy. She said: "Until you have actually spoken with one of these people yourself, you will never realise what it is like".

Saturday. Our General (Sir Henry Lawson) left Dublin to spend Saturday to Monday with Sir Thomas Esmond, the ex-Nationalist M.P.

I went off to see Murphy in his cheap lodgings in Killarney Street.

I found him in his clean little sitting-room, just going to have his dinner. At the first moment he

looked alarmed at my arrival, but I told him immediately that I came from Sir John O'Connell and that I was an Irishman. I also mentioned the Peace with Ireland Council of which he seemed to have heard, as too the name of Lord Henry Bentinck. One or two of our meetings have been reported in the Irish press.

He is a clean, respectable boy employed as an underling in a firm of wine merchants (I went to their house and they seemed to be people of good class). He does not strike me as looking clever; has dark blue Irish eyes and black curling hair which with his round cheeks give him a faintly negroid expression, though his skin is very white and he has manifestly no tinge of dark blood. He had received orders to go up to the Castle about an hour later to give evidence. It must be a trying ordeal for him to go into that nest of assassins and know that henceforth he will be a marked man; the man who gives evidence.

He told me the whole story, just as it appeared in the affidavit, only what a profound difference it makes to hear the man tell it himself! Mrs. Childers was right. It is when you <u>talk</u> to one of them yourself that you <u>realise</u>. One seems to feel the blood thudding in one's head with rage.

One point he said he had forgotten when swearing his affidavit: namely that his brother had been tortured while he was being interrogated. I asked him how he had been tortured.

"By being thumped and hit in the face" he said, "with their fists".

"Well" I said, "I should not use the word 'tortured' as that is a very strong word. I should tell them that he was hit".

He agreed. * And then it was time for him to go. So I gave him my best encouragement. He seemed wonderfully calm. I think that he certainly felt safer for the fact that we were watching his case. I promised to call on him again next day.

Back to the Kildare Street Club. After luncheon I had a long talk with two young officers, one of them on General Macready's staff. He looked very pale and drawn from the strain. Seemed to be a nice boy; had been married for about a year or two; his wife and child were in England. Both officers were exceedingly bitter against the Irish; told me that the Army was sure to win but not very soon; that there were 8,000 Irish in arms and that it was only a question of gradually hunting them down; that they had already taken about 2,000. And the Staff Officer added that if they did not succeed in finishing them off "he should never care for anything again". What an appalling crime it is to set good men killing each other!

Curious: they both believe in the "murder-gang" theory and in the ubiquity of Michael Collins. They say he goes about protected by a gang of dead shots. Apropos of dead shots, I passed one or two blackguardly-looking ruffians in mufti, - manifestly not Irish - and I

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* Since then I have rather regretted this advice, because afterwards I heard through the Head of the Mater Hospital that all over James Murphy's body there had been marks of ill-treatment. "He was in such a terrible state all over", my informant told me.

noted that when one went by, there was generally another in sight, about fifty yards off.

Sunday. I went down to pay another visit to young Murphy, as I had promised him. He seemed to be fairly satisfied with his visit to the Castle. He went there on a military car with two officers. He was then taken into a room where five officers were sitting round a table. They asked him to give his story, so he repeated it again. They only asked a very few questions.

He told me also that the police officer who had wakened him at 3.30 a.m. on Thursday week, had evidently thought that he (Murphy) would try sooner or later to make his escape through fear, and had told his lodging-house keeper that, if he departed, she was to report the fact at once to the police-station. So on the Friday, Murphy went round himself to the police-station and asked the D.M.P. for police protection in case of his lodgings being invaded at night by Black and Tans. The D.M.P. he felt were at all events Irish. They promised him that two policemen would patrol outside his door during the night. So here we actually have a perfectly innocent man protected by the local police against the danger of being murdered by Government agents. ✱

For luncheon I went out to Killiney, to Sir John O'Connell's house. A party of six people (excluding myself) all interesting and apparently all interested. Sir John and Lady O'Connell, a cousin O'Connell who is a priest, R.A. Anderson of the Department, Lennox Robinson

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✱ Sir John O'Connell afterwards told me that he understood that this protection had actually been given. He seemed to have doubted its possibility at first.

the playwright, fresh from his success in London with "The white-headed Boy" and Miss Birch. The conversation varied to an extraordinary degree between the opposite poles of bitterness and gaiety. Anderson told us the now well-known story of the Orangewoman who used to frighten her children away from a dangerous quarry by telling them that "it was full of wee Popes". At another moment the young priest was telling us of the extraordinary state of apathy that existed in several districts, where the people actually allowed the Black and Tans to commit murder, and made no complaint for fear of the whole village being burnt and more people killed in vengeance. I knew how true were these cases, because even in England we had sometimes found it hard to get signed evidence for fear of reprisals on the home or on the old parents.

After luncheon we went out to see the ruins of an ancient church which stands just above Sir John's garden. It is said to be of the tenth century; extremely interesting. And Sir John pointed out another similar ruin on the Island of Howth. There must have been hundreds of these small stone churches in Ireland in those early days. I should say that architecture was far further developed there than in England before the Norman Conquest.

Monday. Sir Henry Lawson turned up again after spending an interesting week-end with Sir Thomas Esmond. In the afternoon I arranged a meeting between him and Colonel Moore. This had been my aim for several days, as I thought it would be a pleasure to Moore, especially in his present circumstances; and knew that Lawson would

be interested to hear his views. Apparently it was a great success.

That evening Sir Henry returned to England.

During the afternoon I managed to get in half an hour with Sir John O'Connell. He had been up to the Castle to see about Joseph Murphy's case, and had returned very much satisfied with his visit. General Macready had said that he knew that such murders had taken place all over Ireland and that it was necessary to make an example; in fact he had already had two policemen (Auxiliaries), arrested in Dublin, and one over in England for trying to terrorise the witnesses. O'Connell was extremely pleased. He fancies that General Macready has no great love for Tudor and his Black and Tans. This is a brave action on the part of O'Connell. At the very least he runs the risk of having his office raided and his business as a solicitor seriously injured. But he says that he doesn't care if they kill him.

Tuesday. In the morning I went to pay another visit to Erskine Childers but without adding much to my previous information. In the evening after dinner I went off with old Lord Monteagle to pay some interesting calls. I had told him how much distressed I felt at what was going on, and how extraordinarily helpless one seemed to be. Before the War how easy it would have been to put a stop to the whole thing! I had known plenty of people who were influential enough to have moved half England in a case of this kind. But now the whole balance of power was altered. The Liberals had nearly all turned into Coalitionists. Lloyd George the champion of freedom for the people was now the promoter of a secret campaign

of repression and outrage. My own personal friends were scattered. Even Eustace Fiennes whom I had so often helped, who had been Winston Churchill's private secretary, even he, my own member was now thousands of miles away, Governor of the Seychelles Islands, somewhere on the far side of the Indian Ocean. Both parties were united for the purpose of repression, and, worst of all, they had secured nearly every single one of the great papers, not only in London, but in the provinces, in one vast conspiracy of secrecy.

When I told this to Lord Monteagle he was very sympathetic, and took me round to see certain acquaintances of his. We went to the house of Mrs. McBride, formerly better known under her maiden name of Maud Gonne. I was greatly struck by her appearance. She must have been a very good-looking woman, and one of considerable charm: tall, graceful, feminine, wonderfully young-looking even now, although she has a grown-up son. They spend their time between France and Ireland (I believe she is half-French). At her house there was quite a large party; poor old Mrs. Green whom I already knew; Darrell Figgis whom I had met when I was in Belfast in 1914, just a few days after he had helped to run the arms from Howth on the occasion of the Bachelor's Walk episode. He was greatly improved in appearance and manner; far more quiet and modest. And there were seven or eight others, hardly one of whom had not lately been in danger of his life. But for the presence of my companion I doubt my having been admitted at the door.

As it was, of course, we were received in a most friendly fashion. Mrs. McBride pressed me to sign a

petition to Lord French for the reprieve of a boy who had been condemned to death. They all said he was innocent, - Heaven alone knows, - because one realises how far people can be carried away by their passions in revolutionary times. But I believe that he was innocent. It was very unpleasant refusing but at the time I said that I could not sign the petition or get Lord Henry Bentinck to sign without further evidence. But next day, after fresh enquiries, both I and Lord Monteagle signed the petition and telegraphed to Lord Henry. (This boy was executed in spite of our protest which certainly reached Lloyd George).

It is terribly hard to refuse to help in saving the life of a man whom one believes to be innocent on the assurance of people whom one knows to be truthful. But it was a duty to make every enquiry first. Already our credit is nearly used up. Yet cases of this kind are continually being sent to us. It is inevitable under the system of reprisals, by which any man whether innocent or guilty may have to die whenever a soldier or policeman is shot.

Wednesday. I started off with Lord Monteagle to make enquiries at Limerick and to spend the night with him at Mount Trenchard. It was a long train journey, at first rather cold. However Monteagle gave me a spare rug and then went off into a smoking carriage to have a smoke. It was not until half through the day that I discovered that he had given me the only rug he possessed, and had been covering his old knees with a mackintosh! If I had even suspected it I would rather have died than accepted it.

At Limerick he introduced me to Father Hackett who was going to take us out that afternoon to cross-question a boy who had been tortured by the local police officer in order to obtain evidence. This police-officer, Williamson was a well-known figure in county society. I believe that Monteagle constantly met him and all his friends. And it is a good instance of the blackguardism of the times, that even a man like Monteagle knew that

he could not show up this iniquity without doing more harm than good and endangering the life of the boy. For me the matter was simpler. I could take steps in London.

As a matter of fact I did not see the boy that day. Just as I was starting for the drive to his house, Father Hackett came in to say that (it being market-day I think) some girls had arrived who could give me evidence of another outrage, and that I had better put off the case of the boy Graham until the following day. So I decided to see the girls instead, and spent nearly an hour and a half listening to them and asking them questions.

It was one of the most curious interviews in my life. I sat at a table with Father Hackett beside me, and took down everything they said. They were three farm girls and a young boy. It was the story of a police attack on them when they had been enjoying themselves at a dance at . They told me how their elder brother had been in the I.R.A. and had had a rifle. He was in constant danger, being known to the police, in fact being "on the run", and the strain of course was considerable. So when Christmas came round, they decided to give a dance "to cheer all the boys up and give them a good time". The question was, where could they give it? The place must be secret. At that point their difficulties began. The eldest girl was principal spokeswoman, and I give the following as representing more or less accurately what she said: but nothing can ever reproduce the constant play of her features, or the varying intonations of her voice.

She spoke very rapidly, as though afraid of omitting any point within the given time, and her whole manner often changed in one single whirling sentence, from half-impatient explanation to me to affection and reverence for the priest, and then back to the general flow of bitter resentment for the wrongs done them and for the death of her brother. Her words were more or less as follows:

"The dance was given by my brother Martin. He was on the run, so we didn't ask the people to any address, but posted guides at Holy Cross and the boys there showed them the way.

It was an empty house belonging to Lady Fermoy. We took a room (this with a slightly twinkling eye). The caretaker said that he was forced to give it up to us; and his daughters were at the dance. So he gave it up at six o'clock and we lit fires and put kettles to boil. At about eight o'clock the dance began. It was not a political dance. About 200 people came and only about five were on the run. And there were no arms there, except three rifles and two revolvers. The men on the run had arms".

For greater security they had posted signallers outside, and for the first four or five hours the dance apparently proved a great success.

"At about half-past one that night a signal was given. And at that moment a rocket went off and suddenly the police opened fire. We ran up into the room above, but bullets came through the windows, for the police and soldiers had the house surrounded with a cordon. They said that they were fired on; at all events after they rushed into the room one of them was shot in the head and killed, though I am never certain that it wasn't one of their own bullets that killed him. You should look at the mark on the wall, Sir, to see if it didn't come from behind.

No resistance was made. But they hit the men and girls with the butts of their rifles; and they searched the house and beat most of the people present, including the women. The girls were not arrested, but they were assaulted, beaten and kicked. One policeman, Sergeant Hartigan, said that the dance was got up to get money to shoot the police.

> All the girls were herded into one room, some of them clinging on to one another in twos and threes with fright. And the policemen kept hitting the boys in the next room for about an hour, and we could hear it all going on. Then they set up a board of four officers and the County Inspector, and brought all the boys before them in batches of six at a time to have their names and addresses taken; and then passed them out another door. And they made them run the gauntlet, hitting them with broken banisters.
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> But from the beginning, Martin and the men who was on the run had started out to make a rush and break out through the cordon. And poor Martin got through, but he was shot down and got up and ran on again, but he was shot again and killed. And John Quinlan was killed and Maloney, and two others mortally wounded - Harry Wade and Danny Sheehy - and they were carried away on an open lorry".

The above is a very brief version of the story that I was told by this girl and her two sisters. As a study of human nature, it was extraordinarily interesting. At one moment her naive ideas would make one smile; at another one might feel inclined to weep. I very nearly laughed aloud when she told us how she had taken Lady Fermoy's house, (poor prim little Lady Fermoy who used to be such a friend of my dear old Aunt Narcissa), and, having got over the difficulty of the caretaker, had then found that there was another even worse;; namely that the house was haunted by the ghost of some long-forgotten General. And so these girls, practical as ever, brought a bottle of Holy Water and laid the General in much the same matter-of-fact spirit that they would have brought a tin of insecticide to lay the moths.

On the other hand it really did bring tears to my eyes when this unfortunate girl told me about the great enthusiasm of her brother Martin Conway. When the order came out to hand in all fire-arms, he had said that he never would surrender his rifle, because "it was

only a slave who dare not have arms". I knew something of these young idealists. And the girl was secretly very proud, though determined to show no emotion, of his last dash for life, and how he had got through the cordon before he was shot down, and even then got up and went on again.

Of course with regard to this case one feels that one has not heard the other side. One does not know what proofs the police and soldiers may have had against Martin Conway and his friends. One remembers that a policeman was killed; and one remembers too that they go constantly in fear of their lives. The case has been tried, and I must have missed seeing the evidence, if indeed it was ever published at any length. But unfortunately the sort of trials that have taken place in Ireland all through this year inspire very little confidence in the mind of anybody, and were destined to do so less and less as the months went on. From the day that the soldiers deliberately shot an absolutely innocent young peasant woman, Mrs. Quinn of Gort, and were then solemnly acquitted on the grounds that it was merely a precautionary shot, no one has believed that a military trial was worth anything; and so many other similar instances have occurred, that one sees plainly how impossible would be the system of reprisals if anyone were ever punished for them. It is primarily the system which is wrong, or rather, iniquitous and insane.

As soon as it was finished I went on to Mount Trenchard with Monteagle and spent a very pleasant evening. His dauther Miss Spring Rice and his niece Miss Knox were exceedingly kind. They are both ardent patriots.

In fact Miss Knox had that day bicycled about 5 miles to a Gaelic League meeting, although the Gaelic League was proclaimed and was obliged to hold its meetings at a different place every time. Yet I do not suppose she went with any political intent. We talked about Ireland of course, and about revolution in general. Charlotte Corday and Felice Orsini were mentioned, and I think it was in everyone's mind that there might quite possibly arise an Orsini or a Corday for Greenwood or Lloyd George. I believe that this has been very seriously feared in England. At one period I heard from a man who had sought an interview with the Prime Minister that "he had never been in such an atmosphere of fear in his life". This may have been an exaggeration. At all events let us thank Heaven that we have so far been spared that!

Mount Trenchard lies in a pretty stretch of Irish country, between trees and hills and inlets from the sea. It was there that Miss Spring Rice learnt her yachting, - which later enabled her to go with the Childers when they ran the arms at Howth. Her father told me that she had been a patriot from the time when she was quite a little girl of six or seven, and had started on her own account to learn Irish from the gardener. Very much my own start: only mine was with the coachman.

I went to bed early, as I had to be up early to catch the seven o'clock train back to Limerick, to make my enquiries with Father Hackett into the Graham case and several others.

Thursday. I got down early to breakfast and started off. It was a two mile drive to the station with a little trap and pony, on a nice road along the sea-coast. A lovely

morning. Breathing that beautiful sea air one felt fresh and well. In the small station of Foynes there was a squad of eight policemen, all armed of course with rifles and bayonets.

It was a very small train. In fact it consisted of only two carriages. I sat down in the only first class compartment, and saw the police tramp into the compartment immediately in front of mine, and some of them I think went into the next one in front of that. There were a few passengers dotted here and there.

Presently we started. I do not remember how far we had gone, but I was just beginning to feel particularly imaginative and peaceful when suddenly the train began to slow down and finally came to a stop. At the same moment I heard a shot and a sharp thwack. That, I thought, is a bullet hitting wood. Nothing else makes quite the same sound. So I glanced out, and saw that we had been halted between the banks of a cutting; they seemed like a pair of blinkers on either side of us. Then there came several other shots and a regular fusillade broke out all round us. I realised that I was in an ambush. "Here", I thought, "in my trench-coat they'll mistake me for the officer in charge". So I took it off and leant back as far as I could, wishing that my nose were not quite so long in case of passing bullets.

The ambushers were evidently well-informed, because they concentrated almost entirely on the police compartment, that is to say on the compartment immediately in front of mine. I could hear the whole affair going on just the other side of my cushioned partition; firstly the thwack of bullets striking our two stationary carriages, and then

the crashing noise of the police firing through both windows, blindly and in such hurried explosions as almost to resemble successive volleys; each of which was followed by the shivering of glass into atoms, - and usually accompanied by loud profanity. Oddly enough no bullet came through my compartment although the carriage was riddled. Presently after four or five minutes of this banging all round and pleasing expectancy on my part, there occurred the only noteworthy act in the episode. The old Irish sergeant in charge jumped out on to the least exposed side and ran boldly along the line, - a really plucky action, although the firing had by then slackened on that side of the train. I heard him jump on to the engine, shouting furiously: "Push off that train, or I'll blow your brains out". Then we began to move. The shots continued, but looking out of the window I could not detect the firers. We emerged from the cutting into a grass field with rock strata sticking up out of the ground here and there all over it. From behind one of these slanting rocks about 40 yards distant there came a puff of smoke. And that was the only time that I actually saw anything of the ambushers. Then we soon left it all behind. But the police continued to fire for a little while afterwards, at anything they thought suspicious. They fired two shots at a farmer who was looking at a bullock, but only startled them a little. From first to last the whole episode must have taken rather over ten minutes. But we were not halted in the cutting for more than about five by my watch.

When we reached the next station, everyone turned out on to the platform and we found that by some absolute

miracle none of the police had actually been hit, although one or two were bleeding slightly in the face from broken glass; and one peasant girl was crying from a hit in the leg, about six inches above the kneecap, and (how typically Irish!) she was too modest to examine the place and see whether it was serious until the stationmaster said to her: "Ah, go into the waiting-room and ye'll be by yerself!" She told me afterwards that it was nothing serious. She thought a piece of wood or glass must have hit her.

The police compartment was riddled. It was thoroughly splintered on the inside, and in the windows there was hardly even a shred of glass left, except here and there a tiny fragment sticking out from the frame. I fancy that small compartment must have had at least fifteen bullets through it from outside. And one point rather amused me. The ambushers, it was said, were out to kill an informer who was going up to Limerick to give evidence that day. Apparently they knew their man. Because on the side of the carriage there were six bullet holes in a close group, evidently the work of a steady shot you could have covered them with your hat, - every one of which would have killed anyone who had taken refuge under the seat! Only it happened that he did not get under the seat that day, so he survived. However they wrecked the railway carriage. It had to be taken off the train at Limerick.

On this occasion the police claimed in the papers to have hit eight Sinn Féiners. But I do not believe that they knew how many they hit. ✱

✱ As a matter of fact Dermot Coffey has since told me that he saw one Sinn Féiner who had been seriously hit in this fight, and that there were others wounded as well.

I am glad now to have been in an ambush because it enables one to realise better how the troops feel. Even from this comparatively small test, in which none of them were seriously hurt, one saw that the men emerged on to the platform temporarily rather shaken and certainly resentful. Had any of them been killed they would have been infinitely more so. And those who have been through an ambush would be nervous if they suspected that another were coming. This might account partly for the constant torturing of people to get information out of them beforehand. But I do not think it could account for more than a few cases. The torture was part of the system for terrorising the people.

At Limerick I was met by Father Hackett full of keenness. So I told him I would start in about an hour. The fact was that having breakfasted hastily at 6.30, I was famished by 9.30. Also I wanted to write to Lord Monteagle to tell him I was alright, and to ask him not to make any reference to an ambush if he addressed a letter to me at Hanwell, as I did not mean Car to hear of it until after peace was made. I might be wanting to come to Ireland again, and she would be nervous.

At about 10.30 (I think) Father Hackett turned up again and I went off to see the boy Graham and enquire into his case. He was "a big lump of a boy" as they say in Ireland, the son of a well-to-do-farmer, fair-haired and well educated, eighteen years old, had just left school and was destined to be a surgeon. I include his story at some length elsewhere. Here it is only necessary to say that the Auxiliaries had arrived at his father's farm-house at 11 a.m. one morning and searched it

for a gun. Finding none, they then put the boy up against the wall and threatened to shoot him. They then searched the house and commandeered a catapult and a gun-case, also a gold watch. After which they forced him to come away with them to the barracks. In the guardroom he was searched, and they got round him and began beating him with their fists in the face and body. "I was bleeding from the teeth and nose; and my face all swelled out". A sergeant was present. This I suppose was to wring a confession from him. But he was only a schoolboy home for the holidays and could not tell them anything.

"They left me in a cell". I was bleeding. It went on bleeding so I lay down with my head back and it left off bleeding after about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. ..... The rest of the afternoon was quite quiet except that they kept looking at us through the peep-hole and calling us names. I know no reason at all for their being so angry with us. There had not been a shot fired within ten miles radius".

There were eleven men in the cell with him, two of whom were brothers named Hynes. The elder Hynes aged twenty-nine, was chairman of the Rural District Council and the younger one, twenty-five years old, lived in the house with him and their father. So,

> "Next morning at about five o'clock the younger brother was taken out with me first. We were put up against the door and threatened to be shot. A man came along with a rifle. Then we were taken along to a room and told to strip off all our clothes. I was put on the table first to be flogged. There were two men flogging me, one on each side of me. They used canes first, and when the canes broke, ashplants. Colonel Williamson, the R.M. was there. He encouraged them. He even took a couple of strokes himself 'for luck' as he said. I do not know how many strokes I had because I was dazed. I had had a couple of strokes with an ashplant on the back of the head.
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> When they had finished they gave me a final bash on the head, and told me to lie down while they flogged Hynes".

Half an hour afterwards he was interrogated by Colonel Williamson as to where certain neighbours of his slept at night, but could give no information because he knew nothing.

> "When I had no information to give to Colonel Williamson the policeman present knocked me down and jumped on me, and kicked me twice in the stomach. I had no information to give so I was put back in the cell".

I will not enter any more here, as I have given the report in full elsewhere. I need only say that this unfortunate boy was left in the crowded cell for another four days before he received any medical attention. They then dressed his head, but not his other wounds, although the skin had broken under the flogging. Three days later, owing to his constant fainting he was sent to hospital where he remained for a fortnight with septic poisoning of the head.

During his time in hospital Lady Sykes saw him in the course of her visit to Ireland as representative of our Peace with Ireland Council. She believed him, as I believe him.

These extracts give only a very faint idea of what this boy Graham actually told me. I was listening to him and interrogating him for over an hour. And it is when you talk face to face with a man who has been through this suffering, that you realise what it means, - not before. You do not begin to realise it before.

When he was gone, Father Hackett took me for a walk through the streets to visit a woman whose son had been killed. On the way he told me of various cases, and especially one, a horrible case at Lahinch where, he said,

the Government people had set fire to a house and threatened to shoot anyone who came out. He said he had seen the body of a man who had been burnt to death inside; the arms and legs had been burnt off. I wish this case could be gone into fully.

It was a very painful scene at the house of the widow. She told me that her son had been in the I.R.A. and admitted that he had taken part in some attack. Nevertheless he was apparently a very respectable lad, in regular work. She said that he had been warned that the Government agents meant to get him, but continued to go to his work. One evening he did not turn up, and was found dead in the street on his way home.

So many people had attended his funeral that it was regarded as a political demonstration and they were set upon by the police.

I did not take this case down at any length, because I felt that as the boy had taken part in an attack, he could only expect retaliation, - however genuinely patriotic his motives might have been. Also because I could stand no more of it for the time being. It was after two o'clock and I was played out from listening to horrors.

After luncheon I went with Father Hackett to be introduced to the Mayor of Limerick. This was a very interesting interview. His name was Mr. Clancy. (My recollection of him is that he was a man of medium height, nicely dressed, who struck me as being well-informed on most matters. I sized him up as being a man in some line of business). At first Father Hackett did the

talking. Mr. Clancy seemed to be very quiet. At the time I did not realise the meaning of his quietness of manner. It was very stupid of me not to realise it. I had seen it often enough during the War, when people said a man was feeling the strain, which in reality means feeling the profound sadness of knowing that he may soon have to leave all he cares for in the world.

Presently he became involved in the argument. I was not now asking for evidence of outrages, but wanted to discuss the political question au fond. He was very interesting. But I found him a stiff Sinn Féiner. He seemed to have less give-and-take than most of those with whom I had spoken. For instance, he was evidently an unshakeable republican. I remember saying to him that the demand for a republic made it very hard for Englishmen to agree, because it not only implied separation, but also that their own monarchical form of government was wrong. I asked him whether the word 'commonwealth' would not suit as well as 'republic'. He agreed for the moment, and we proceeded to discuss other points, but at the end of our interview he smiled and said: 'Well you know I prefer the word republic all the same'.

After leaving him, we went and interviewed a business man Mr. Morley by name. He was a compromiser and took a very intelligent view of the situation. He said to me: "What is wanted is some man who can play the same part in this struggle as Shawe Taylor played in the Land War;; and he added that he believed that he could get appointed to represent de Valera if I could get Lloyd George to receive him. I sympathised with him, but was obliged to tell him that there was very little

prospect of such an arrangement. Scores of men were anxious to play the part that poor Shawe Taylor had played, but the circumstances were different. Where Sir Horace Plunkett, where the Archbishop of Perth, where AE had failed, it was most unlikely that anyone else would succeed. Indeed AE had been taken in by Lloyd George. Having left the Prime Minister with an agreement apparently arranged, he had been arrested on his way home and the whole negotiation had been nullified. It was said that no sooner had he got outside the door than Lloyd George had been attacked by the Conservative members of his Cabinet, Bonar Law and his following, and had given in to them.

At tea-time, Father Hackett had another very interesting person for me to meet, a monk, a Franciscan as far as I remember, named Father Philip. Unfortunately I cannot recollect all that he told me. His information was of a general character, so that I did not take it all down. But I remember his describing how his brother, though not a Sinn Féiner, had been attacked in the streets of Cork by a patrol and left unconscious, and had spent a week in hospital. This case of Father Philip's brother was the only one brought to me that day from outside Limerick.

After dinner Father Hackett took me to visit the Daly family. This family was well-known in town for its Sinn Féin sympathies. It consisted of a mother and three daughters, well-to-do shopkeepers. The father, a former Fenian, was dead, and the brothers and brother-in law had been shot during the rebellion of 1916. They were frankly rebels, and had their brother's photograph

displayed on the table in his Volunteer uniform. It seemed useless taking down all the story of what these girls had suffered, as I knew that they could get no redress owing to their own record of rebellion. So I have rather forgotten the details; one has heard such countless stories of ill-treatment that their details become intermingled. But I remember that they had been raided five times in one week, besides many other visits, nearly always at night, during which various things were stolen from them. They said that on one or two occasions some of the men were undoubtedly drunk. The worst thing that was done to them was when a girl made some resistance, - she was in a dressing-gown with her two pigtails down her back, - and an Auxiliary had dragged her out of the front door by the hair and had cut off one of the pigtails. When she put up her hand to try and save it, he had deliberately cut downwards with some sharp instrument and severed a vein between her fingers. She said that she might have bled to death but for her sister's knowledge of First Aid.

I was greatly struck by these girls' extraordinary courage and defiant spirit. So far from being cowed, they were infuriated. They were good-looking. And I came to the conclusion that the Auxiliaries, when they had nothing better to do of an evening, took advantage of their defenceless condition and their open rebellion to come round and amuse themselves by humiliating them and tyrannising over them.

It was 11.30 at night when I reached the hotel. I thought I had fairly earned my rest, but the spirit moved me to go into the smoking-room and try to classify my impressions of the day over a cigar. It was fortunate

that I did so.

Sitting round the fire I found three young men, evidently officers or ex-officers. One was Irish, - I put him down as being a young squireen; another English in accent and appearance; the third doubtful.

Presently I got into conversation with them, and the talk naturally turned on politics. I began by upholding that Lloyd George ought to meet the Sinn Féiners in conference without excluding any of their leaders. After some argument they branched off on to more general lines, and in a very short time I found that I had learnt a good deal. They talked openly about the interrogation under torture which was going on all over Ireland. One story I remembered of a Sinn Féiner who had taken refuge as a lunatic in an asylum. He was identified by an informer, but the Police were not certain. So they tortured him on chance. It took over an hour of torture to make him confess; and he is almost the only case I know of a man's giving in. He gave himself up; but I do not think he gave any other information. And I have often wondered how the officer in charge would have felt if the man had turned out to be only a harmless lunatic after all.

Incidentally I heard a possible explanation of Colonel Williamson's treatment of Graham and the Hynes. Two or three months ago (last November or December) there had been an attempt to shoot a man named Titchmarsh, and, as there was no possible reason for attacking him, it was thought that the person aimed at was in reality Colonel Williamson. I gathered that Titchmarsh had driven off in his car from Colonel Williamson's house; but nothing could be deduced for certain, because there had been one or two other people calling there in their cars at the same time.

They related various other cases, one in Cork, where as far as I remember, the ordeal lasted two hours, but without result. They spoke of torture as being quite part of the recognised system; and this was the first occasion on which I had heard it openly admitted as such; though now of course everyone knows all about it. They told a story of a senior officer who had said that in Ireland there were hundreds of splendid fellows who were ready to stand all that you could give them, without revealing one shred of information.

Most of my facts came from the English boy.

Of the three, the Irish one seemed to me the most bitter against Sinn Féin. But a small incident at the end of the evening gave me the idea that he perhaps had rather talked for the purpose of drawing out his companions for my benefit. He was speaking of the killing of policemen, and he said: "What I think is so unfair is that the Sinn Féiners say that they always hold a trial before shooting a man, but of course he is not able to be there to defend himself".

"Outrageous", I said vehemently, being anxious to encourage him.

But his face fell. He was evidently not too well-pleased with my energetic agreement. I think he had been trying to insinuate to me that Sinn Féin never killed a man without trial.

For one moment I wondered whether these three or any one of them, had been sent up for the purpose of talking to me; but the idea was obviously absurd. It was only by a thousand-to-one chance that I had seen them at all.

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I should have hurried away straight to bed, without going near the smoking-room; and next morning they had started off to their work before I came down.

At about a quarter to one, I turned in. It had been one of the longest days of my life. I had been on the go for nearly nineteen hours; and, once in bed, I slept like a dead man.

Friday. Up rather late and went off to have a last talk with Father Hacket then back to Dublin by train. Met Monteagle at the train; he had come up to see that I was all right. Nothing could have been kinder than his enquiries. He had heard at about midday that my train had been ambushed and it was he who now told me that the aim had been to prevent a policeman from giving evidence at the trial now going on in Limerick.

Half-way up to Dublin three Sergeant-Majors got in, travelling across to England for their leave. One of them spoke rather openly of the work they were doing in Ireland, and rather apologetically. He evidently did not like it. They were greatly interested in hearing that I had been in the Foynes to Limerick ambush which had appeared in all the papers, and suggested that if I had rolled up the cushion and put it against the side of the carriage, that would have stopped a bullet. I do not feel certain about that, but it would be worth trying.

In the evening I arrived back at the Kildare Street Club.

Saturday. I spent a good portion of the day ruminating over the things which I had seen and heard. It was

evident to me that the town of Limerick was little better than a hell upon earth, and that Cork City was probably in even worse condition. But I had been told that the worst deeds of all were done in the out-of-the-way country villages, where concealment was far more easy. I was quite determined that the truth should be known in England. What seemed to infuriate me most was the idea that these things could be done with impunity because they were done in Ireland. Supposing, I thought, supposing that Scotland claimed self-government would she be partitioned? Or if she were in rebellion, would they dare to suppress it in this way?

I went to see Sir John O'Connell. I found him very much less satisfied from when I had left him about the case of Murphy and Kennedy; the case of the Drumcondra murders. He had received no further communication from General Macready who at first had professed himself so strongly determined to make an example of the murderers. O'Connell thinks (so runs my note) that for them it is simply a question of hushing up the whole matter. We shall see about that!

(As a matter of fact the case <u>was</u> afterwards hushed up. A trial took place in which the officer accused was acquitted. His name is King and everyone in Ireland believes him to have been guilty. We received later on some curious information as regards that trial.

But owing to O'Connell's efforts and our own, the facts of the case became very widely known in England).

During the afternoon I called on Mrs. McBride and also on Mrs. J.R. Green. *

It was on this evening, I think, if not it was on the evening before, that I had a long talk with a rabid Unionist and finally put the question to him: "Are people being tortured in your district, in the same way as they are all over Ireland?". His reply was: "No, not in my district. It depends rather on the commanding-officer." I was astounded at this admission, because it was part of the Unionist creed to deny everything, and I had fully expected him to do so.

He had told me of a case of a woman being outraged by an Auxiliary who had held a pistol to her head; (this also astounded me, coming from an embittered Unionist). But it was a case that could hardly be proved. For one thing the woman was waiting to see (so he said) whether anything resulted. If not, she meant to keep silence. One had to be very careful as to what cases one took up. As regards women, I had been told that it would be very difficult to prove anything. Firstly because the Irishwoman would rather die than appear in court. Secondly because, although assaults on women undoubtedly existed, they were few in number.

Sunday. I decided to return to England. I could of course have gone all over Ireland collecting evidence, but I wanted the enquiry to be conducted by a trained lawyer and done systematically. I knew that every case that became public meant endangering the lives and

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* At the age of 75 Mrs. Green had been raided again and again by Crown forces: five times in one week alone. My first visit to her was after one of these raids and she looked rather pulled down. But now, only a few days later she seemed quite normal again. A wonderful old lady!

relatives and homes of the people who gave their names. It was necessary that there should be no mistakes and that those who conducted the enquiry should be people of such importance that they could protect the sufferers. I had learnt enough now to direct anyone who would take up the matter. And I intended to find people whose word could neither be doubted nor ignored.

Moreover Miss Stopford had written over to me from the office saying that I was wanted back there to continue my work of sending speakers out to the meetings all over England.

It was a fine day and I got across very successfully.

On the other side I travelled up with Sir A. Chance the well-known doctor who is head of the Mater Misericordiae hospital. I had a long talk with him about the Drumcondra murders case, and he told me that when poor young Murphy was brought in he was in a dreadful state all over his body from torturing during his interrogation. He promised me that the doctor in charge should be allowed to give evidence.

I began to understand that a tortured man is not likely to live long, lest he should show his wounds. There was no other possible reason for killing these two boys.

I think it was Sir A. Chance (I have heard it more than once) who first told me the story of the respective grandfathers of the two murdered boys, Kennedy and Murphy. One of these old men had served for many years in the Army, the other in the Royal Navy. But at the funeral service

of their murdered grandsons they grasped each others' hands and solemnly cursed the day when they had taken service under the King.

After spending ten days in my native land, it was in a mood somewhat similar to theirs that I returned to England. I seemed to have learnt a good deal about the real methods used in Empire-building.

I had taken notes of most of what I had heard and seen, although this was rather risky. I had written them in Italian so that the ordinary servant or customs officer might not be able to understand them, and would probably suppose that I was studying the language.

(The notes of this expedition seem rather crowded. But it must be remembered that they represent ten days of strenuous work and enquiry. Also that I had been able to arrange for almost every moment to be occupied.

Hanwell Castle. January 15th 1954).

CHAPTER X.

AFTER MY RETURN FROM IRELAND. THE LIBERAL HOME COUNTIES CONFERENCE.

At our first Committee after my return, Lady Sykes made a more or less formal report on what she had discovered during her time in Ireland. After giving us her description, she ended up by saying: "Almost every type of torture that was known in the Middle Ages seems to have been revived, even to the fact that men were made to hold very hot eggs between their bare arm and their side". I said at once: "Except the story of the hot eggs, I can confirm every thing that Lady Sykes has told us". It was fortunate that I was able to do so, or her stories might have been doubted. And I think she was rather relieved at hearing my confirmation.

It was true. There are many things that I had heard but had not noted in my Diary, partly because they were too dangerous, partly because I had confined the diary to events which I myself had seen, or else had been told about by the people to whom they had actually happened. I had for instance heard the story of the man who had had his nails torn out by the roots. This I had not noted because the man in question (like many of those tortured) was being kept in prison, and I could not interview him. But this story was afterwards confirmed to me on good authority.

Strange. The instance which seemed to impress people most strongly in England was that of a doctor who

possessed a fine collection of old Irish glass. Because his wife was a Sinn Féiner, the Auxiliaries called on him one evening, took the whole collection out into the yard and deliberately smashed every piece of it. It was valued, some said at seven hundred, and others at a thousand pounds. This instance I first heard quoted by Mrs. Crawford in a speech, and it created a good deal of sensation. Oddly enough it always made an impression, I suppose because it was an act of such blatantly barbarian stupidity.

The result of this meeting was that the committee allowed me to proceed with the scheme that I had been urging for weeks and weeks; namely to return to our original plan of appointing a commission of prominent people to go over to Ireland with a lawyer and enquire systematically into what was going on and collect genuine legal evidence that would stand cross-examination. I knew that if we could issue a report of these cases of torture and murder, a report signed by four or five people whose names would be an absolute guarantee of good faith, that it would be enough to shake the government to its foundations. And that seemed to me the only possible way of stopping atrocities. To try and form a Commission which should resemble as closely as possible Lord Bryce's Commission on German atrocities in Belgium, and produce a similar book of horrors.

Meanwhile I was straining every nerve to stir up opposition by other means.

In the years before the War I had done a certain amount of political speaking, but do not count myself a speaker. So I usually confine my efforts to supplying

information and audiences to those who are more eloquent than myself. After my return from Ireland, of course I told various suitable people what I had seen and heard, and I spent an evening with Sir John Simon retailing all that I could remember. Lord Robert Cecil and Oswald Mosley also received a full report from me of the Graham case, which was a good one because it was confirmed by Lady Sykes. Our only difficulty lay in the fact that the two Hynes were in prison for three months. And their evidence was necessary to support Graham's story. Of course Lord Henry and all our committee heard everything that I could tell them.

As regards Lord Robert Cecil rather a curious thing happened. It was only a fortnight after my return, when I was going to interview his private secretary about this very matter of Graham, that I saw in the street a large poster belonging to some afternoon paper, headed: "Murder of the Mayor of Limerick". I bought a copy of the paper at once. I was horrified. For there I saw that Mr. Clancy with whom I had spent such an interesting hour only a fortnight before, discussing the Irish problem, had actually been murdered. And, knowing his views as I did, and the respect in which he was held by his own party, it was impossible for me to doubt for one moment that he had been murdered by Government agents, as indeed was practically admitted by the paper. Any other supposition was absurd. Some attempts were afterwards made to pretend that the Sinn Féiners had killed him, but I always knew that this was as ridiculous as to say, if Lord French were shot, that he had been killed by his own officers.

I read the account and began to have a very strong feeling that he must have been disposed of because he gave interviews to people like myself. There seemed no other reason for killing him. And I knew that Lady Sykes had also been to see him a week or two before me.

This idea infuriated me to such a degree that I hardly knew what I proposed to do. But, as I was on my way to the League of Nations Office, I determined at all costs to see Lord Robert Cecil himself as well as his private secretary. I had never met him in my life, but I determined to do so now.

The private secretary was extremely kind and soon arranged for me to see Lord Robert. When I went in to his room, he was probably rather astonished at my arrival, as no interview had been arranged for me. I do not know what I said: I was so angry that I probably spoke more or less at random. I wanted to tell him what I thought of the British Government and of every politician in England. Only two phrases have remained in my mind. One was in the middle of the interview when he asked rather impatiently: "Has the Mayor of Limerick really been murdered?" And I said, "Yes", and thrust the paper into his hand. The other is that at the close of the conversation, having expressed myself more freely than I ever have before to an entire stranger, I went out saying: "All I can say is that when I go back to visit my native country I do not propose to be a walking death-trap".

He was very nice about the whole matter, and still more so when I met him again later on. Perhaps my

abrupt arrival and plain speaking brought the situation home to him more vividly than an ordinary conversation.

As a matter of fact I was not very far wrong in my surmise. Some weeks afterwards Miss Ellis, sister of Lady Parmoor brought me a very kind message from Mrs. Clancy, widow of the Mayor of Limerick. She had heard that I was greatly troubled at the idea that I was partly the cause of her husband's death, and she sent to say that she hoped I should not distress myself about it. That certainly it was on account of his propaganda that he had been murdered, but that the actual reason was because he had given an interview to two American journalists a week or two before he spoke with me. This had signalled him out for reprisal.

From this information I rather gathered that there was a list of some sort kept by the Authorities, and whenever a British officer was killed by Sinn Féin, they retaliated by killing one of the leading Sinn Féiners. Seeing that the Sinn Féiners were simply fighting to preserve their national entity and the free institutions for which they paid taxes, the whole scheme struck me as very little better than a system of dominating a small nation by murdering its leading inhabitants. Future generations will probably cry out that such an idea would be an insult to every Englishman. But that is not the case. There are men who seriously defend such a course. For instance people like my friend at the Club who advocated reprisals on innocent people in order to terrorise the others, are very little removed from this doctrine. And only three weeks ago, when I was discussing the troubles in India, a British Colonel

present, a particularly nice person, said quite seriously that he could easily settle the Indian question if he were given a free hand. He would quietly dispose of the leaders. "They would simply disappear, probably about five thousand of them". I am bound to say that another officer there disagreed with him. But the Colonel had spent many years in India, and, I suppose, domination can become a mania. I may add that he was a man who had often offered his own life in the Service.

In addition to the methods named, I decided that I must try and speak myself at one or two meetings, and try to tell people what I felt about things, although I had not addressed an audience since my Musketry lectures during the War. I began with a small meeting of about forty working men; found myself very amateurish and out of practice, attempting too much and rather prone to drone on without making my points with sufficient snap or emphasis. Soon afterwards however I was invited to speak at quite an important meeting. It was the Annual Conference of the Liberal Home Counties Federation. ✱ It was not a large audience, being only 200 in number. But every man there was a delegate from one of the eighty constituencies which form the Home Counties. Here I was more successful. One lady delegate afterwards came and asked me to help her to get

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✱ In this speech I let myself go (half unintentionally). I found that I had told them what I thought about the Empire and about Religion and "loyalty" in England.

"How can one be loyal to the head of a murder-gang?" These remarks happened to synchronise with a speech of the O'Conor Don at Sir Horace Plunkett's meeting in Dublin. "If this goes on any more, we shall all be damned republicans".

Of course we both knew that King George V was in no way to blame. He had stood by his word; had signed the Home Rule Bill in 1914 in the very teeth of the Carsonade; and was now being covertly slandered by the Carson following. (1954).

up a meeting about Ireland in the north of London, which we did with good results, and another delegate asked me to come and address his Liberals at Alton. I went to Alton. It was only a small meeting of about ninety people, but at the end, one of the audience asked me to come and address a much larger meeting at Petersfield. I accepted, but later was obliged to ask H.W. Nevinson to take my place, which he did with very satisfactory results (about 350 people there). After that I was compelled to give it up. There was too much work in the office. I could not get away, and found it too great a physical strain to compose speeches after dinner when I had been busy all day. It was very disappointing to find that I could not do more to help those who were suffering in Ireland, but by that time we had quite a large number of excellent speakers who had been to Ireland and spoke with firsthand knowledge. It was far better that I, known to be Irish, should carry on with my task of organising. Several of our lady speakers were doing splendid work all that summer; notably Mrs. Crawford, Miss Buckmaster, Mrs. F.D. Acland, Lady Bonham Carter and Lady Clare Annesley. And Lady Aberdeen who had been a supporter of ours ever since a large ladies' meeting got up by Miss Stopford, was most kind in helping us: also Lady Sykes.

One unfortunate result of my accepting the Liberal Home Counties' invitation was that Basil Williams was very much hurt about it. I had been billed as coming from the Peace with Ireland Council and he felt that he as founder ought to have been asked. He made no concealment at all about the matter and even said to me: "Why, you are not even a Liberal". True; I was not a

politician at all, and did not want to become one, and had not even heard of the meeting until they invited me to it. Williams may perhaps also have been annoyed at my being asked to stand for a Liberal constituency (which I declined) and he was never quite the same to me afterwards. I was very sorry about it. But he was so busy now with his literary work that he could seldom come to the office except for committee meetings, and never spoke for us. People probably did not realise his position on the Council. He was rather jealous of it, - perhaps naturally - and before the end of the summer he had quarrelled with various other people, notably Lady MacDonnell. I spent a good deal of time in trying to prevent these differences.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROPOSED COMMISSION.

I return now to our proposed commission of enquiry which became my principal work during these months, when not occupied with meetings. The plan was perfectly simple. It seemed obvious. To stop the atrocities we must get well-known people to show them up in such a formal manner that the Government would be absolutely compelled to notice what they said. Lloyd George had already refused to institute any official enquiry, but he could not go on ignoring protests for ever. What we wanted was a set of prominent commissioners accompanied by a well-known sound lawyer to collect evidence that would stand any amount of cross-examination in Parliament or in a court of law.

For this purpose the committee voted me £100.

For the next two months, therefore, whenever I could get an instant away from my meetings, I spent it on working at this scheme. No one else on the Committee seemed to be very keen about it at first.

I am bound to say that it was very much harder than it looked. In the first place: Whom could we trust? One had to be very careful. As regards the lawyer, for instance, one knew, that so great was the feeling against Ireland, five out of every six would be perfectly capable of going over there in order to find out all they could, communicate it to the Government, and thus wreck the whole scheme for ever. It had to be an

English lawyer, - not Irish. Everyone was agreed on that point. An Irish Commission or an Irish lawyer would carry no conviction in England, and the influential people would refuse to serve unless they had a legal adviser whose name would bear authority.

At the same time I knew that the Irish would absolutely refuse to give evidence unless to people whom they could absolutely trust. For them it meant endangering their lives and their homes and their cause simultaneously. The difficulty was to find a man or rather a set of men who would be implicitly trusted in Ireland and at the same time implicitly believed in England. This was the impasse. No Irishman would confide in any Englishman, nor any Englishman believe an Irishman. Moreover the people of sufficient importance and integrity were unwilling to incur the unpopularity of having anything to do with Sinn Féin as against the Army.

For a lawyer, I began by trying Sir Charles Russell. I found him useless. He refused point blank. He was a Home Ruler by conviction but not a Sinn Féiner. And doubtless he had his practice to think of.

Progress was slow, and remained so until, fortunately for me Sir John O'Connell appeared in London. I knew that he, if anyone, could give me good advice, and he did. He quite agreed with me as to the difficulty; in fact he took a less hopeful view than I did. He pointed out (what I already felt) that the lives of the witnesses in Ireland would depend on the importance of the Commissioners; on their capacity to protect those who spoke out from being murdered. And he said that

"nothing was much use" unless the Commissioners would themselves go over to Ireland and make personal enquiries; that it would be hard to get the people to trust their secrets, and to risk revealing clues concerning the Sinn Féin organisation, unless they were quite certain of the bona-fides of the enquiry. Sir John struck me as being in low spirits, - as indeed might be expected from a man living in Dublin, - who felt himself likely to be raided if nothing else.

However he was ready to help the scheme, and gave me the name of a London solicitor who would command confidence in Ireland, a man named MacDonnell.

I cannot remember what Sir John said on this occasion about the Kennedy and Murphy case. He was over in London several times, and I have rather forgotten what he told me on each separate occasion. But as far as I remember, he took the view that the authorities were not genuinely anxious to bring the offenders to justice, - as indeed has since been made abundantly evident.

During the next few weeks I went several times to see Sir John's solicitor namely Mr. J.H. MacDonnell who struck me as rather a remarkable person. He is a nephew of Lord MacDonnell of Swinford and at times developed an almost ridiculous likeness to Miss MacDonnell. But he is legal adviser to the Sinn Féiners in England; spends a large share of his time defending them at a very small profit, and is apparently accepted by Government in this capacity. So he knows the under-side of the movement as well as anyone. I suppose that this thin, wiry, North of Ireland Catholic, with his high cheek-bones and quick brain, quick voice and quick temper, - nervy to

a degree, - knows probably more about the devious ways of either side and could tell more stories of the secret service, check and countercheck, of force, fraud and reprisal and dungeon blackguardism than almost any man in England. He had defended innumerable Sinn Féin prisoners, and was engaged in defending many more when I called on him.

He seemed pleased to see me; but confirmed almost all that O'Connell had said as regards difficulties etc. However, when I put it straight to him whether he would help us, he said he would, and told me that he knew of a large number of cases, including that of the man with his nails torn out, - only most of them were in prison. He gave me the name of a London solicitor whom we could trust, as he himself was rather precluded from appearing in our scheme, owing to the nature of his present practice. The London solicitor was a man named Edwards who was English by birth, Irish by parentage and sentiment, had served both as a Colonel in the Army and a Commander in the Home Naval service during the War, and had lost an eye and won a D.S.O. He was a man whom all could admire.

Well, - to make a long story less long, - at the end of a couple of months I had got the Irish side into working order. Sir John O'Connell was to be chief organiser in Dublin. Under his direction there would be Father Hackett in Limerick and Mr. Barry Egan in Cork, - he being Lord Mayor there in succession to MacSwiney. In Galway there would be a man named O'Connell. I had one or two other men in my head for other districts.

In England I thought MacDonnell the best man, as he and O'Connell trusted each other; and Edwards was to be the solicitor actually attached to the Commission. Acting with him I had found (with the assistance of Maurice Healey) a young English barrister named Du Cane who seemed extremely nice and had a fine war-record. The machinery for finding, collecting and testing the evidence was complete.

But the difficulty was to find the actual Commissioners. There were in reality very few men in all England suitable for the work. Of the Conservatives one could get no one except those who like Lord Henry were already regarded as irreconcilable opponents of the Government. Of the Liberals, the great majority were now Coalitionists; and the rest were all pledged to the Opposition. Anything that they said would be regarded as merely a party move. Similarly with the Labourites. They had already published a report and it had been labelled mere factionism. It seemed to me that the only people to try for were ex-Colonial governors, distinguished Civil Servants, celebrated University professors or scientists, or retired soldiers. But of these, hardly any that I could get were sufficiently well-known. And several like Lord Buxton of Newtimber whom I could appeal to through his sister, our old friend Mrs. Cecil Boyle, refused to have anything to say to the matter. I thought that four or five Commissioners would be sufficient. But I only saw my way to getting two or three. I thought we could persuade one of the Bishops to serve; that Sir Frederick Pollock was a possibility, and that Lady Sykes (not as yet committed on paper) would do for a third. After that, perhaps Sir Henry

Lawson as a soldier, though he was not very satisfactory, as his opinions were already known; or possibly General Gough might be invited.

At this point the matter was rather suddenly taken out of my hands by Oswald Mosley who was more or less second-in-command of our Council. He was an excellent man to do the work, as he was an M.P., the heir to a baronetcy and married to Lord Curzon's daughter. Had I ever supposed him to be keen about the matter I should have appealed to him long before, but he had never shown any great signs of interest in it. Now however he asked me to come to his house and bring Edwards and one or two of my other friends. The upshot was that with all the enthusiasm of youth he threw himself into the scheme for four or five days and then went abroad to Italy for three weeks. But during those four or five days he had done excellent work. Being an intimate friend of Lord Robert Cecil he had succeeded in interesting him in the matter, and between them they managed to persuade old Lord Bryce to give his name to the Commission, although he refused to become a member of it, on the grounds that he was compelled to go abroad. This was a great step. Lord Bryce's name was one to conjure with in a matter of this sort. Mosley formed a very strong committee for the purpose of selecting a conference from which the Commissioners should be chosen. He took over my work as far as it had gone (except Edwards of whom he disapproved), but did not invite me to sit on the committee. I was a little hurt at the time, but when I saw the names of the Committee, concluded that there was nothing that I could do which

they could not do as well without me. It was a very strong body. And when the Conference met about a month later, after Mosley's return, I was invited to become a member of it.

The Conference was perhaps the most distinguished body of which I, who have never aimed at being in public life, had ever found myself a member. Lord Bryce was Chairman. I cannot give a complete list of those present, but I recollect Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, Lord Buckmaster (ex-Solicitor General), Sir John Simon (ex-Home Secretary), General Sir Bryan Mahon (the reliever of Mafeking), Bishop Gore, Sir Charles Russell, Dr. Horton, Lord Robert Cecil, Sir Frederick Pollock, Oswald Mosley, Basil Williams, Miss Stopford as Secretary, and several other distinguished people, Lord Aberdeen, I think, and one or two ladies whom I cannot now remember. With such a body as this one would have thought that some practical result was certain to ensue. We met several times and I was much gratified at noticing that everyone, especially Lord Bryce made a point of being exceedingly civil to me. But unfortunately the results did not ensue. It seemed impossible to find anyone who would devote himself to the work. The weeks dragged on. A large number of distinguished men were invited but we never succeeded in getting more than two or three definite acceptances before the truce arrived, of whom the Bishop of Oxford was perhaps the most stalwart. I was greatly disappointed, especially when I thought of Ireland and the poor tortured men whom I had set out to help. There was only one consolation for me, namely that I had done my best for them, and that if a body containing so many distinguished

people each at the very highest rung of his profession were unable to achieve success, it was not very likely that I could have done so when I tried at first, a private individual, practically single-handed.

And, looking back on it now, I wonder whether in reality it produced no results. True, we did not succeed in persuading these men to sit on our Commission. But it did not at all follow they did not sympathise with its objects. As a matter of fact most of them did sympathise with us, but did not like to take the side opposed to the Army during a war, or to help in showing up what would undoubtedly be regarded as one of the most disgraceful episodes in English history. I cannot but think that the fact of there being a Bryce Commission in process of formation, for the purpose of doing the same work of publicity in Ireland which had formerly been done in Belgium by Lord Bryce, must have reached the ears of the Cabinet, and cannot have failed to produce <u>some</u> effect. All over England there were people of the most honourable type in touch with us; men such as Lord Grey of Falloden who has since said that if the war broke out again in Ireland, he would certainly "come into the open". If the struggle had continued any longer, we should almost certainly have persuaded them to come forward and take their part.

CHAPTER XII.

CROZIER REAPPEARS: NOW BRIG. GENERAL F.P. CROZIER, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O*

For the short period of three days I kept a diary of my work in the office and then decided that it was a mistake to do so. Because work from 10.15 a.m. to 7 or 7.30 p.m. is as much as I can achieve now that I am fifty. I can still work in the evenings but only if I have had some free hours during the day. And of course there were plenty of other good reasons for not keeping a diary just then. But as that brief effort gives a fairly clear glimpse of our daily life during that rather curious epoch, and moreover happens to describe the visit of General Crozier to our office, it seems worth including in this small record.

It will be remembered that General Crozier resigned his commission because eighteen Auxiliaries whom he had dismissed for looting, were reinstated by the Government. This was an extraordinary action on the part of the authorities, and of course entirely subversive of discipline, that discipline which they professed themselves to be upholding at all costs. So strange was their decision that it seemed explicable only on the grounds which Crozier alleged, namely that when the Auxiliaries were brought across to London they blackmailed the Government by threatening, unless they were reinstated, to reveal what they knew about the Drumcondra trial and several other murders. At all

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* For all information about Crozier, v. his own autobiography. (1954).

events, whatever the reason may have been, the fact remains that they were reinstated and General Crozier resigned. But he too was quite capable of coming to London. And it was not long before he visited our office, and several others as well.

I may say that neither we, nor I believe Sinn Féin ever had much to say to him. The stories which he told might be true, - and plenty of them certainly were true, - but one always remembered that some of the worst murders committed by the Auxiliaries had taken place during his period of command. He offered to tell me his whole story privately. But I never availed myself of the offer. But there were various people who heard everything that he had to say, and I cannot help supposing that that fact must have caused some considerable uneasiness in Government circles.

Monday. "Stamattina sono arrivato dalla campagna per lavorare all'ufficio". So runs my diary in its usual dog-Italian. How deeply it irritated me to think that an ordinary respectable law-and-order man like myself, a pillar of the village church (!) should be reduced to keeping his diary with such undignified, idiotic precautions.

"This morning I arrived from the country to work in the office. Everyone was waiting for 'Staff'. I had known nothing of his coming, but he turned up at about half-past twelve. ✱

✱ That was in May 1921. I forget the exact day.

This translation of my diary gives a very slight idea of the way in which 'Staff" as he was nicknamed for safety, surprised us that morning. We were absolutely astounded at his boldness. He walked straight into the office where six of us were congregated, none of whom had he ever seen before, sat down and opened out at once in a loud voice with the statements recorded below. Right off the reel he gave us, all strangers! enough information to hang three or four of his brother-officers, or else to land himself in prison for years. Apparently he did not care three straws whether his words were repeated or not.

He was a curious little man; reminded me more of an outside broker (a "bucket-shop" owner, as they vulgarly call them in the city), than of an officer, although I believe he had been in the old army in his youth. Small, stoutish, and rather pale, with thick features and a turned-up nose, but smiling and brisk; rather an adventurer. He told us many most interesting facts about his life at Dublin Castle. My diary continues:

"It is now some three or four weeks since he resigned his appointment because the eighteen Auxiliary policemen whom he had dismissed for theft, had been reinstated by the Government. He told us the real reason for their reinstatement. The fact was that these eighteen brigands had actually come over to England to blackmail the Government by threatening that they would make revelations about all the assassinations that had taken place under the aegis of the English régime, and especially about those of Kennedy and Murphy (the

Drumcondra murders now under investigation - it will be remembered that I myself have seen and helped Murphy's brother while I was in Dublin). Consequently the Government was obliged to reinstate these Auxiliaries. And "Staff" had therefore resigned. For some time (so he said) he had been precluded from speaking out and from telling the truth, because the 'trial" was due to come on shortly (the Drumcondra trial), and he knew that the accused officer K(ing) was guilty, and that if "Staff" had revealed the whole truth K(ing) would be condemned and executed. Therefore he holds his peace. But he says that in the Castle there had been great alarm. It was said: 'We suppressed the evidence all right in the case of Father Griffin, but we can't do it in this case. We're done for!" Nevertheless when the trial began, all the witnesses were prepared to prove an alibi and K(ing) was acquitted. Everyone said that it was the finest alibi ever seen.

He added that one officer had told the truth, namely Freyer. He was called a perjurer. And that in the House of Commons Colonel Guiness actually put a question as to whether: "the law would not be set in motion against that perjured officer", well-knowing that Freyer had spoken the truth.

"Staff" also told us that Father Griffin had been killed by an officer called Guard (or Garde) and by an Auxiliary called Barker; the latter had confessed to "Staff" himself on board the steamer.

I asked him why they had killed those two boys Kennedy and Murphy; he said it was because they were taught to assassinate every Sinn Féiner.

Shortly afterwards my architectural friend (1) came in, and I took him out with Miss Stopford to lunch. He confirmed many of the above statements. As regards the "trial" he said it had been impossible to bring the truth to light because there were so many witnesses on the other side. I know this very well. Incidentally I had given a copy of Murphy's affidavit to the Daily News for publication, but even the Daily News did not dare to publish it. (2) And to-day when we have issued an appeal for funds for our Council, it has appeared tucked away in a corner of the paper, almost invisible.

But I am getting forward with the plan which we know about. I saw Miss Llewelyn Davies. Our chief (but it was not our Chief, it was Oswald Mosley) wants to employ Messrs. Lewis and Lewis. But I do not believe in this idea. I have found another.

In the evening I received a letter from Mrs. Corbally describing a case of rape in Ireland. A woman was raped, and when she made complaint (to the authorities) her house was burnt as a reprisal.

Tuesday. A day of work at the office. I saw my architectural friend and he told me that he had received a narrative from 'Staff' which would arouse twenty libel actions if published. In the evening I saw our chief (Lord H. C-----.B----.) as regards employing Lewis and Lewis and he accepted the proposal to employ

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(1) Cope: soon to become Sir Alfred Cope.

(2) Here I am mistaken. The reason that the D.N. did not publish the affidavit was because it had already appeared in the Manchester Guardian.

the other man instead. I showed him Mrs. Corbally's letter and he said that it would be a fine case to begin with. When talking about 'Staff' he said that a friend of his who was a Yeomanry officer had told him that troops in Ireland shot down a Sinn Féiner simply without bothering about the matter. But that he personally believed we should have peace before very long. I told him I would give anything in the world for peace, - but it must be an honourable peace. This evening I feel as if I did not care what I did; embittered against the whole human race. All the ideals of my younger days seem to have departed. The Empire is merely a system for establishing domination by means of murder. Religion in England is simply hypocrisy.

Wednesday. A long day's work with very little to show for it. In the morning, our General Sir Henry Lawson, my companion in Ireland made his appearance. He seems to believe almost all that 'Staff' has told us. He invited me to dine with him on the eleventh to go to the great Liberal meeting.

I went off with J.L. Hammond to lunch with my architectural friend who told us many interesting things about the Castle. He says they all thought that King would be done for over this murder; that they spoke quite openly about it and said it served him right for using a pistol with so small a bore, when he went out to kill the two unfortunate boys Kennedy and Murphy. 'What do you expect when you take a .38 instead of a 45?'.

An extraordinary thing! To-day we could not find 'Staff'. He had given us a wrong address, in fact

two wrong addresses! He must be in danger of his life and is covering up his tracks. It looks as if he slept under a different roof every night; he who until a few weeks ago was receiving twelve hundred a year until he resigned owing to their reinstating the eighteen * cadets whom he had dismissed for theft. And now these eighteen blackguards will be brought before some military court and awarded some trifling ridiculous punishment, - in order to save the face of the Government. These days are hardly imaginable!

Sir John Simon's reply to Lloyd George has created a great impression. It is a splendid reply.

Most unfortunately my friend MacDonnell does not return to London until Saturday. Another week lost! And I have six large meetings to provide for! I have no time to find the Commissioners.

To-day in the House of Lords Lord Parmoor made a good speech on the Castleconnell episode. His brother had a narrow escape of losing his life in that fight between the Auxiliaries and the Black and Tans".

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* Crozier gives the number as sixteen, not eighteen v. his Autobiography (1954).

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END

Personally I always date the beginning of Greenwood's breakdown from a slip he made in the House of Commons on May 30th or 31st 1921. It was over a case in Ireland during which two men had been tortured in prison, just before they appeared in court as witnesses. The judge publicly refused to take their evidence, as being given under the influence of ill-treatment. And Sir Hamar Greenwood was duly cross-questioned in the House of Commons about the case.

In replying he actually made the extraordinary admission that he thought it showed good courage on the part of the judge to have spoken as he did. Instantly he was asked: Who need the judge be afraid of? There could be only one answer, namely that the judge stood in danger from agents of the Crown. Here then was an admission absolutely sublime, as coming from a Cabinet Minister, firstly that two men had been tortured in prison: secondly that this had been so serious that the judge refused to take their evidence, and had publicly condemned this hideous crime; and thirdly that he, Hamar Greenwood considered the judge courageous to have done so. I remember how Lord Buckmaster drew our attention to this episode, during the first sitting of the conference, with every mark of indignation; and also how magnificently he made his point a week or two later before a crowded audience at a large meeting at Oxford. When he had finished, one man in the crowd tried to

shout back at him, but Buckmaster simply thundered back at him with an overwhelming scorn that entirely effaced him. "Think of it. Think, - if you have a mind at all".

Meanwhile our daily work at the office went on as usual. Our efforts now, as far as they were constructive, consisted in urging the Government by every means in our power to meet and negotiate with Sinn Féin. Of course Lloyd George had already expressed himself willing to do so, but never without stipulating some condition that was unacceptable. His principal remaining claim was to except certain leading Sinn Féiners, on the ground that they had blood on their hands; that they were murderers. This of course Sinn Féin refused to admit. And our conviction in the Peace with Ireland Council was that he was not justified in making any exceptions.

Personally I saw so plainly what a magnificent chance lay there, that doubt seemed impossible; the chance of making peace forever with Ireland. I knew how generation after generation had grown up bitterly resenting the stigma of the conquered nation; not necessarily hostile to England, but always pining to restore their national honour. And here at length was the opportunity of wiping out that stain for ever. Let them make an <u>honourable</u> peace. Let them negotiate while they had arms in their hands. It would be the truest course of all. The great, the broad-minded and the far-seeing course. It would enable the future generations to be friends with England. They could say: We were never forced into the Empire. We never

surrendered. We came in voluntarily on equal terms. They could then feel that they rendered willing service, which is the only service worthy of free men.

This I urged on my friends, not as being an Irishman, but because I genuinely believed in it as being a chance in a thousand of doing right by both sides.

Lady MacDonnell of Swinford who had joined our Committee was now taking a very active part in the work. And I constantly felt an admiration bordering on astonishment when I saw this lady at her age and in her position, coming out to toil and speak in a cause that was always uphill work and very unpopular socially. And doing so from no motive, but sheer enthusiasm for Ireland. I came to know her well, and she told me something of her husband's career in India; how he had gone from one province to another, usually organising or reorganising their administration during the days when he and she had often been regarded as virtually the ruling power over millions of people. She told me of one great occasion in a province where the land question was the principal rock of difficulty, when her husband had called a great assemblage of all the principal men, and had begun his speech by saying to them: "Now I, who am Irish, can realise what you feel about the land"; and had then delivered an address so sympathetic that it was received almost as if it had been inspired. What a curious and what a fine career his had been!

I urged Lord MacDonnell to write an account of his time in Ireland, and to give to the world his views on the Castle. For a great administrator such as he, to criticise and explain the governmental machine in

Dublin would be profoundly instructive and helpful to the younger generations. And he could speak with all the authority of the expert who knows how to work it, and who actually has worked it during several important years. But I fear the idea did not greatly appeal to him.

Apropos of his time in Dublin, Lady MacDonnell told me rather an interesting little anecdote. I had asked her about Mr. Balfour's complicity in the Devolution scheme, and reminded her how, after two months evident hesitation, (apparently for fear of some letters being produced), he had finally risen in the House of Commons and denied that he ever knew anything about it. "Yes" she said, "My husband was sitting in the gallery just above him, and had a letter in his pocket which would have incriminated Balfour. It would have created a sensation if my husband had dropped it on his head".

However, - to return to the office. We continued to plod along through this phenominally hot summer. Waller, besides his other performances, had now come out as a speaker. Of course, owing to the nature of his work, which consisted in studying the newspapers all day to get material for speeches or questions in the House, there were probably few people in London who knew the subject as well as he. And he was extraordinarily obliging about speaking at any meeting, even at the shortest notice. I remember too, how good I thought it of my old friend John Boland, formerly a Nationalist M.P., to come forward and speak for us, even at the most unattractive meetings. He had devoted his whole life to Ireland; only to be cast

off when Ireland got self-government. Yet he was ready to do the spade-work required.

Then, - rather unexpectedly though some of us had noticed indications, there came THE TRUCE.

I well remember our feelings, but they are hard to describe.

I think the first general sentiment was that we could hardly trust it: it was too good to be true. Will it last? What ought we to do to clinch it, to make it permanent?

Most of us thought we ought to redouble our activities. Then we decided that we had better consult the best authorities that we knew. We split up into several groups, and went off to talk matters over. And when we came back there was only one opinion; that we had better do nothing.

All the best advisers that we could consult were of the same opinion: "Do nothing. Something has happened. We do not know what. The Government were just preparing a big offensive, and now they have reversed their policy. You do not know what it is, and if you take action, you may make serious difficulties".

This was the opinion given me by everyone at Liberal Headquarters. They attributed the truce either to some move in America, or to some action by the Colonial premiers. Personally I

thought it very possible that several things had happened simultaneously, both abroad and at home. *

We felt more hopeful about conditions in England than ever before.

There was no doubt that the political atmosphere was entirely different from that in which we had begun our work nine months before. In every branch of our small organisation we felt it. We had not succeeded in winning over the Press. Most of the great newspapers were still opposed to us. Nevertheless people believed what we said. Primarily of course this was due to the extraordinary steadfastness of Sinn Féin and indeed of the whole Irish people. Primarily it was due entirely to them. But we felt as if we had been of some assistance by our work in England, by creating an atmosphere of peace.

To give an idea of the changed conditions in England, one need only refer to the results now obtainable in each particular department of our Council. With regard to my meetings, for instance, I well remember how carefully we had been obliged to proceed at first. How nervous had been the organisers. How scrupulously cautious the speakers. Whereas now,

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* As far as I have been able to learn, (October 1922) the Peace was due: firstly, to the persistence of the Sinn Féin resistance, and their success in getting arms; secondly to the work (largely attributable to Colonel Moore who had gone to South Africa as delegate to General Smuts) of the Colonial premiers who attacked Lloyd George; thirdly I think to our own work, as given in the text; and I may add that I have since been told by the Editor of the Sunday Times that peace came largely because the Army began to refuse to work. He said that in one regiment alone, no less than eleven officers sent in their papers when ordered to Ireland: and this was not an Irish regiment. Fourthly there was America; its commission and various other activities. I heard that over a million copies of this Commission's report were sold.

during the previous fortnight at Lady MacDonnell's suggestion, we had run a campaign of thirty-three meetings in ten days all over London, and every one of them out-of-doors. Open-air addresses to which any passer-by might come and at which our speakers said anything they liked without being even once seriously interrupted. And various colleges of quite important status were applying to me for lectures on Ireland.

Similarly in Parliament the whole tone had altered. Waller's constant flow of information for his clique of M.Ps., accompanied by searching questions had revealed the truth to everyone. About this branch Oswald Mosley was enthusiastic. He said: "Why at first you could not tell them anything without being shouted down. But now you can attack them and say what you like and they don't even answer."

Our literature was constantly asked for, usually by people who were entire strangers. It was perhaps our strongest point. I have already set forth a list of the well-known writers who had given us their work and their names from sheer good-will to our cause.

And finally, - which seemed to me an excellent sign, - we had now about thirty branches of our Council established all over England. This was largely due to Grey, whose efforts in this respect had been absolutely invaluable. But it was really remarkable that so many local people should have been willing to imperil their popularity by raising and forming local organisations, subordinate to our London committee, and with the perfect knowledge that there was no kind of reward to be obtained for all their troublesome work.

In some cases it took two or even three months of constant toil and expense before the Branch was finally formed; and often in the face of the bitterest opposition from influential people.

At all events the truce had arrived at last.

A few weeks later Miss Stopford resigned her secretaryship and went to live in Ireland. Basil Williams accepted a lectureship at McGill University in Canada. Waller became secretary. And I was obliged to take my wife abroad for her health, to Italy where I now am.

But before leaving I went across to Ireland for a fortnight. People were extraordinarily kind there. I saw the Childers and all those with whom I had been in touch and many old friends. They gave me a ticket for the first meeting of Dáil Éireann after the truce. It was most interesting. And I believe it was the first day in the life of the new Ireland about which we have dreamed for so many years.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

APPENDIX 1.

LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS FOR THE PEACE WITH IRELAND COUNCIL.

MEN.

CONSERVATIVES.

* Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck M.P.

* Lord Ffrench.

* Lord Monteagle (Chairman London Committee of Irish Dominion League).

Oswald Mosley Esq. M.P.

* The Right Hon. Sir Horace Plunkett. K.C.V.O.

H. Hull Esq.

Aubrey Herbert.

Philip Morrell Esq. (Lord Henry's brother-in-law).

LIBERALS.

* The Rt. Hon. F.D. Acland M.P.

Capt. Agnew (Hon. Sec. London Committee of I.D.L.)

Captain Wedgwood Benn, D.S.O. D.F.C. M.P.

Annan Bryce Esq. (ex-M.P.

Lieut. General Sir Hubert Gough, K.C.B.

* J.L. Hammond Esq. (well-known writer).

* Maurice Healey Esq.

Commander the Hon. J.M. Kenworthy M.P.

* Lieut. General Sir Henry Lawson K.C.B.

The Right Hon. C.F.G. Masterman, P.C.

Mr. Doran

Lord Buckmaster.

* Sir John Simon.

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* Those who did most for us.

LABOUR.

J. Lawson Esq. M.P.

* H.W. Nevinson Esq. (the writer and war-correspondent).

* Brig. General Thomson D.S.O.

Charles Roden Buxton.

NON-PARTY.

* Bishop Gore.

* Captain Henry Harrison, O.B.E. M.C.

* R.C. Grey Esq.

* - Norman Esq. (Speaker for Sir Horace Plunkett's Co-operative organisation in Ireland).

- Grogan Esq.

Comm. Guy Rogers M.C.

* John Boland (ex-M.P.)

* B.C. Waller.

Mr. Needham (Sheffield).

G. Bingham McGuinness.

Captain Sheehan.

Dr. Orchard.

Dr. Garvie.

Bishop of Kensington.

Major B. Teeling.

Bishop of Oxford.

WOMEN.

CONSERVATIVES.

* Lady (Mark) Sykes.

LIBERALS.

* Lady Aberdeen.
* Mrs. F.D. Acland.
* Lady Bonham Carter.
* The Hon. Margaret Buckmaster.

Lady Byles.

Mrs. McKenna.

LABOUR.

* Miss Margaret Bondfield.
* Mrs. Crawford.

Miss Susan Lawrence.

Miss Maude Royden.

Miss Evelyn Sharpe.

NON-PARTY.

* Lady MacDonnell of Swinford.
* The Hon. Anne MacDonnell.
* Lady Clare Annesley.

APPENDIX 11.

Copy of a letter from Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck received when I was obliged to give up my work in the Peace with Ireland Council, in order to take Mrs. Berkeley abroad for her health. (I did not go until I knew that the Peace Conference was fixed between Sinn Féin and the British Government, September 1921.

Underley Hall.

Kirby Lonsdale.

Sep. 12.

My dear Berkeley,

Thank you for your very kind letter. It is a sad blow to hear that (you) cannot help us much more. I am sure I can speak on behalf of the Council when I thank you most heartily for all you have done. The Success of our work was due very largely to your devotion, self-sacrifice and ability. I hope the ship is now entering safe anchorage! We shall know in a day or two. The Government has no other choice but to offer the complete restoration of the ancient Kingdon of Ireland. Somehow I feel confident that the solution will take this form. The kingdon of Ireland should surely appeal to their imagination, particularly if accompanied by virtual independence.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Henry Bentinck.