PART IV

ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

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short of arms or equipment of any sort, in which respect they cut a pathetic figure vis-vis Carson's well-armed men. One of their biggest handicaps was a lamentable shortage of funds. True, particularly after Larne, funds were pouring in from America, Australia, Canada and, indeed, the world generally, but they were nearly all addressed to and found their way to the Redmondite and Hibernian element on the Executive who, from the beginning, feared and disliked the movement, and, at no time, meant business. But, though the founder members of the Volunteers were thus doubly handicapped, they had no intention of allowing the grass to grow under their feet. They resolved on decisive action to secure adequate arms for their men, without which, as they fully realised, they would be little more than a feckless and worthless mob; for you cannot discipline and control would-be soldiers for very long without putting arms into their hands. In this resolve the leaders were much assisted at that time by Redmond's belated but nonetheless welcome endorsement of the Volunteers, and his call on all Irish Nationalists to join them, to get arms and defend Ireland's rights which looked very much like being filched from her. In other words, to safeguard Home Rule: to see that the Home Rule Bill was made an act and put into effect at the earliest possible date for all Ireland. In

In considering this phase of Irish history it is important to remember that at that time not 2% of the Volunteers were convinced separatists, seeking an opportunity to use the new force to strike a blow for a sovereign Irish Republic. Home Rule and nothing but Home Rule was then the "ne plus ultra" of Ireland's demand, and nothing more. So much was this the case that the avowed separatists amongst the Volunteer leaders were not prepared to make or force an issue towards this target. The late Darrell Figgis puts that aspect of the position well in his book "Recollections of the Irish War". He writes therein: "It must be remembered that at that time none doubted that within a few months Home Rule would begin to come into operation with the transfer of services. And John Redmond plainly said to me that he had no intention of forming a new government with so incommensurable an organisation in the field of dispute of his authority. In Ireland, therefore, the two chief political organisations, the United Irish League and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, were warned; and the new movement began to encounter suspicion and hostility where once all had gone well ..... with a great wisdom and skill the leaders of the Volunteers had, during these early months, avoided all suspicion of opposing political organisations and so had averted hostility.

The fruits of the political crop were, apparently, ripe to harvest, and the Volunteers had been presented as a drilled alte alternative, should that harvest be threatened. Indeed, this was true political wisdom, spoken in all sincerity by the leaders of the revolutionary side of the movement, such as Eoin MacNeill and Roger Casement. It was not the faith of revolutionaries like Tom Clarke. But both were agreed that, however their ends might differ, the Volunteers, to be an effective body, must be kept as a separate organisation, free from political control. Otherwise (it was argued) they would cease to be a drilled disciplined force and become a parade of political fustion, neither picturesque nor practical. And now this danger, long foreseen and adroitly averted, became a continual anxiety, with the alternative of a disastrous split".

Not only in equipment, finance and powerful support had the U.V.F. the advantage over the I.V., but also in unity of aim and leadership. In only one matter had the I.V. the advantage of the U.V.F. - in numbers.

The excitement and furore in the country caused by the successful Orange gun-running coup in the north had nearly faded away, and we had begun to take the constant and unmolested armed activities of the Orange Volunteers for granted, and as part of the day's routine scene, when,

suddenly, the Irish Volunteers produced "Howth" as their complement to "Larne".

The date was July 26th, 1914: an important one indeed; and another date for our "Special Register". On that Sunday morning, some 1,200 Irish Volunteers marched out of Dublin to Howth where they took possession of the Pier. And, as in the case of Larne, the local police and customs officers were prevented from interfering with the work in hands, and the telegraph and telephone wires were disconnected from Dublin.

Erskine Childers' white yacht, which had been lying out at sea behind Lambay Island, making herself as inconspicuous as possible, then sailed into the harbour and tied up at the pier held by the Volunteers, where she discharged some 1,500 Mauser rifles, of old but serviceable pattern, and some 45,000 rounds of ammunition. This cargo, having been safely landed and distributed amongst them, the Volunteers re-formed ranks and marched back to Dublin, most of them proudly bearing rifles on their shoulders. The authorities were taken completely by surprise. For some time after Larne, they had manifested a keen and alert interest in the Irish Volunteers accompanying their parades with strong posses of police, an honour they never, or hardly ever, bestowed on the Ulster Volunteers. They were, very naturally, anticipating an arms

coup like that of Larne; but, as the weeks passed and nothing untoward occurred, save harmless parades of armless men, they lost interest and ceased to interfere to any serious degree. Nevertheless, the Mind of British officialdom, most certainly the Mind of Dublin Castle, had a wholly different outlook on Nationalist Volunteers from what it had on Orange Volunteers, no longer "loyal" as they were. And they reacted accordingly to form and tradition.

At the end of the Howth Road the returning Volunteers found themselves barred by a double rank of bayonets with men of the King's Own Scottish Borderers behind them, supported by a large force of D.M.P. under no less a person than their Assistant Commissioner himself. This individual, Mr. W.V. Harrel, peremptorily demanded, in the King's name, the surrender of the rifles to him. On this point an argument ensued between the police officer and Darrell Figgis, representing the Volunteers, as to the legality of such a demand. The "pour parleys" came to nothing and things ended in a rather serious scuffle when Harrel stupidly ordered his men to seize the rifles, in which two soldiers and three Volunteers were injured, the latter by bayonet thrusts. Whilst renewed parleys were taking place, the Volunteers, save for a frontal facade,

broke ranks and made off stealthily with the rifles, leaving only 25 in the hands of the Crown forces.

Thus did 1,500 rifles and 49,000 rounds of ammunition get into the possession of the Irish "Home Rule" Volunteers. It was, undoubtedly, something; but, of course, it paled into insignificance beside the vast armoury that was delivered so smoothly and safely into the hands of the "Anti-Home Rule" Volunteers but a few months earlier. However, such as it was, it was most welcome to that virtually armless body.

The traditional partisanship of the Castle had seldom, in its history, been more clearly or more patently demonstrated and the demonstration was certainly not lost on the Dublin crowds. They were simply seething with indignation and anger at the Clontarf affair. Carson's men could parade in force and inarms at will in the northern part of the country without let or hindrance, as 5,000 of them did the previous day in Belfast, but when Nationalist Volunteers attempted to do likewise on a much smaller scale in the south, the gun, bayonet and truncheon of "constituted authority" were instantly invoked and put to effective and deadly use.

The emotion of violent indignation that swept over the Dublin crowds that day affected even Harrel's D.M.P. units, a dozen of whom refused to obey his order to seize the rifles

and were at once put under arrest.

After the inconclusive affair at Clontarf, the troops were ordered back to Dublin. They consisted of 110 men of the K.O.S.B. Regiment, under Captain Cobden, who was joined at Fairview by an additional 60 Scottish Borderers under Major Coke. An irate, undoubtedly noisy and hostile, but by no means unruly, crowd followed the soldiers on their return, booing and jeering them; though, beyond some stone throwing, there was no great violence offered them. As against this view, current and generally accepted at the time, the evidence of the Borderers concerned before the Judicial Commission that inquired into the affair was that 25% of the troops were "badly hurt". That, however, is a very relevant term, and certainly did not, as it could not, include a single case of any soldier being knocked out. No doubt the perpetual jeering and booing irritated the troops, but that could not excuse the wanton firing on the closely packed crowd in Bachelor's Walk, particularly by trained units from an army that boasted of its high discipline. Volleys from some 21 rifles were discharged on the unarmed people, resulting in the killing of a woman and two men and the wounding of 38 others.

The Judicial Commission, comprised of three judges, found

that the Volunteers were not "an unlawful assembly" and that the soldiers were not justified in firing, but failed to come to any decision as to whether an order to fire had been given.

I have referred frequently to the partisan character of Castle rule; indeed, it is one of my principal contentions in this statement. Accordingly, I have deemed it well, at this point, to produce some more evidence of that lamentable and traditional bias in the then governors of Ireland towards the aspirations and sacrosanctities of the great mass of the governed. For this evidence I must skip a few years and turn to the records of the Hardinge Committee of Inquiry into the 1916 Rising. At a session of that Commission on 29th May 1916, Colonel Sir John Ross of Blandenburg, former Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, referring gratuitously to the Larne gun-running, said: "Some arms were smuggled into the north of Ireland, and they were secretly and unostentatiously distributed. That proceeding was, of course, very wrong, but the authority of the Government was not defied (sic!) ..... As soon as the arms disappeared from the port of landing, the police were unable to discover their whereabouts ..... Owing to the way in which the landing had been conducted in the north of Ireland, the police had not been able to put their

instructions into force, and the arms remained in the possession of their owners. (Again sic!) ..... He wished to say that the landing of arms at Howth was in open violation of the law. Mr. Harrel ..... went out with a large body of police, as it was his duty to do, and eventually succeeded in taking some of the rifles illegally landed there from the men engaged in this disorderly conduct".

That testimony must surely be a masterpiece of excusatory understatement by an Irish police officer in respect of an act of rebellion and defiance of the law that lasted the better part of a bright summer night. And it is certainly curious to see the Commission permitting a district police chief to adumbrate irrelevantly on matters and events that occurred a hundred miles away from his limited territory and within another police jurisdiction altogether.

Sir John of Blandenburg unquestionably spoke his mind and, in doing so, has supplied us with an admirable illustration of the theoretically impartial police mind on Irish matters; a mirror-like reflection indeed of Irish contrasts on the then official level.

As a balance and a corrective to Blandenburg's evidence I now give an excerpt from that of Sir James B. Dougherty,

the then Liberal Presbyterian Under-Secretary for Ireland: "The National Volunteers were the response of the Nationalists to the Volunteer movement in Unionist Ulster; and the gun-running at Howth was but a natural sequel to the gun-running at Larne. I do not care to enter into details as to the rise and progress of the Ulster movement. I can only say that those who led and encouraged it shouldered a very heavy burden of responsibility. They were, indeed, the persons who played with matches in a powder magazine. It has been sometimes said that Ireland has been made the playground of English politicians, and some confirmation of this saying in the present case may be found in the fact that the earliest attempt to import into the north of Ireland discarded rifles from continental armies was promoted and directed in London. Rifles bought in Hamburg were landed here. They were paid for by an English cheque, and persons most intimately connected with the reception and distribution of the imported arms were closely connected with the political organisation in the important London borough where the arms were found".

With these excerpts, which I shall let speak for themselves, I now pass from the Howth gun-running affair.

"Larne" and "Howth" were high level and exciting news in Ireland and Great Britain and, for that matter, throughout the world. But, when they were being enacted and given the

"place d'honneur" in the world press, a certain other event occurred that horrified the civilised world, though, when it happened, it caused hardly a tremor or fear or anxiety in any of the world chancellories beyond that of the two interested countries. That event was the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince, the Archduke Charles, whilst he was on an official visit to Sarajevo, the capital city of the Austrian province of Bosnia. The terrible event, coming as it did in a period of almost doldrum tranquillity in the world at large, horrified everybody, and Servia, whence came the captured assassin, came in for an avalanche of abuse. But, beyond expressions of horror at the deed, the lamentable deed was not, at that moment, taken too seriously anywhere. People saw in it but another murderous outbreak by those barbaric Servians who, but a few years since, had savagely slaughtered their King and Queen as they lay asleep at night in bed. The world, though profoundly shocked at the murder, lost not a wink of sleep over it and, after the initial shock, dismissed it from its mind, content that the Austrians had caught the culprit and would deal out justice to him.

Other events were crowding in of much more moment, particularly to the peoples of the United Kingdom. One was the Government's Amending Bill which provided for the temporary

exclusion of the four predominantly Protestant counties in the north. This bill passed the House of Commons and went up to the House of Lords where it was altered to provide for the exclusion of the whole nine counties of Ulster - five with Catholic majorities - and its temporary character was eliminated. Somewhat later, on 12th July, the Ulster Unionists, moving from strength to strength, confident in the conviction that they were backed by the overwhelming weight of the wealth, the courtly and social prestige of the Kingdom and the assurance that the British armed forces would refuse to oppose their rebellion, proclaimed and named the "Ulster Provincial Government" which, the proclamation declared, would, on the day the Home Rule Act was signed by the King and put into effect, take over the governance of the province "in trust for His Majesty". In the light of today, it seems just unbelievable that such an outlandish position could have eventuated at any time without having been laughed out of existence. But, indeed, it was; and, seemingly, accepted and allowed to exist without any interference as something quite in the order of things.

Next came the Buckingham Palace Conference. This was undoubtedly initiated by the King himself who, from his

particular position and, having regard to his kingly responsibilities on the one hand, and his close social contact with the leaders and instigators of the rebellion, was, naturally, growing more and more unhappy about the way things were shaping in his hitherto solidly established realm. Some people say that George V was no Home Ruler, and that, at heart, he was on the side of the Ulster rebels. Others, that he was vexed and irritated at the quandary they had put the Crown and himself into. He certainly detested some of the Tory leaders, particularly Bonar Law, whom he never forgave for his rudeness to him, which Law's friends excused and dignified by the synonym "blunt frankness". He could not stand the unmannerly little Glasgow bourgeois, and who could blame him? My readings on that period lead me to believe that he had little "gradh" also for Carson with whom I don't think he ever had a personal or private interview. Carson's crude and irresponsible technique would, most certainly, not be in harmony with the rather sensitive little monarch's grain. I have little doubt, though, that he did dislike "Home Rule" or any kind of autonomy for Ireland, as the Crown always did, no matter who was wearing it, (even, all things to the contrary notwithstanding, the popular Edward VIII); but he recognised

it as inevitable and disliked, even more, the upheaval and disintegration that appeared to be going on in his political institutions and, particularly, in his army.

The King's Buckingham Palace Conference comprised a personnel of eight, viz: Asquith and Lloyd George representing the Liberal Government; Lansdowne and Bonar Law representing the English Unionists; Redmond and Dillon representing the Irish Nationalists, and Carson and Craig representing the Ulster Unionists. This conference was the result of two months' quiet but persistent pressure by the King on Asquith and others. A.P. Ryan, in his book, "Mutiny at the Curragh", describes very pithily how the conference came to be born, not without a gentle touch of satire: "He (the King) saw the Prime Minister in the middle of May and, once more, in the middle of June, urging him to take action with the assistance of Lowther. Asquith still did not feel the time was ripe. He was engaged in yet another series of negotiations behind the scenes. The wooing of Bonar Law and Carson was on again and it was being conducted in a most amiable fashion. All the leaders were now convinced that, somehow or other, some parts of Ulster must be allowed to contract out. Maps of this and that county began to be exchanged. Asquith, writing to ask Carson to let him have

one of these maps which had been prepared in the north, added a postscript to his informal letter: 'I see', he wrote, 'that my late lady friends are transferring their attention to you'! Mrs. Drummond had been making a nuisance of herself on Carson's doorstep.

A few days later, on May 28th, Simon, as Attorney-General, invited Carson to his King's Birthday dinner. As the bidden guest was still being publicly denounced for the part he had so openly taken in the gun-running, Simon anticipated that there might be some little awkwardness in accepting the invitation. 'I should be so proud and pleased if - for old sake's time - you found it possible to come .... I appreciate you may possibly feel a difficulty (though I trust not) and if you came you would add greatly to my pleasure ..... My own feelings of gratitude amd devotion to you for all you did for me will never be altered, whatever happens'.

I should, perhaps, in fairness, explain, before I comment on those letters, that the fulsome expression of gratitude in Simon's last sentence referred to the fact that he had "devilled" with Carson in his early days at the Bar. But the letters are really past comment. They surely speak for themselves in every way. Here we have the King's Prime Minister and, worse still, the King's Attorney General, the custodian

of his law and order, going out of their way to fawn on and entertain a man who was virtually a rebel in arms against the authority they were sworn to uphold. Carson, to give him his due, saw through them and their ilk from the beginning. He well knew, backed as he was by the real power and force in the kingdom, that he had little or nothing to fear from Ministers so supine, and never hesitated to give vent to his contempt for them. Unless we had it in black and white, could we believe that the Attorney-General, on the eve of drawing up an inditement against a subject for levelling war against the King, would write to him, begging of him to vouchsafe him the great pleasure of his company as an honoured guest at a dinner given to celebrate his King's birthday. I understand that Carson - to his credit - and, in this instance, with some sense of decorum, declined Simon's invitation.

The Buckingham Palace Conference lasted for only three days, from 21st to 24th July, breaking down finally and irrevocably on the future of the counties Fermanagh and Tyrone whose respective populations had small but decisive Catholic majorities. That conference can be said to have represented the last straw of hope for a tolerable settlement of the Irish question along strictly limited and constitutional lines.

With the Larne, the Howth, and particularly the bloody Bachelor's Walk affairs so recently in the public mind, it seemed to Irish Nationalists that, seeing that the King had directly and actively intervened, an All-Ireland Parliament would, with proper safeguards to allay Ulster apprehensions, at last result. And safeguards of a drastic character were expected by the Nationalists to be asked for, which the latter, for the sacred principle of unity, were fully prepared to concede. Hence it was that Nationalists were frankly surprised and disappointed at the Conference's failure. They were sure that once the King had taken a hand in it, success must follow.

However, there was not time to indulge in bitter introspection at the result. Events on the continent were taking a turn that was speeding the world into a terrible war at an alarming rate. The little black, or rather, blood-red cloud that appeared over the Balkan city of Sarajevo a month previously had, in the meantime, cast its sinister shadow over half Europe when we in Ireland were all absorbed in the fate of Home Rule. By the first week in August, events that we had hardly noticed had plunged Germany, France, Russia, Austria and Servia into war. Then, on 3rd

August, came the German invasion of Belgium, followed by the British declaration of war against the Central Empires on the following day.

August 4th was, in truth, a most momentous day for the British Empire and Europe, though, at the time, no one could have guessed at its historical consequences. I remember well how we devoured the newspapers in those days; in particular, I shall never forget our reactions to the report of the proceedings in Parliament on that crucial date; how, when Sir Edward Grey, the Foreigm Secretary, referred to Ireland as the "one bright spot" in the surrounding gloom there was a storm of applause from the intensely relieved House, and how Redmond made an unexpected ex tempore speech, indicating that no longer was England's difficulty Ireland's opportunity. That was the speech in which he made his famous offer to the Government. "I say to the Government that they may tomorrow withdraw every one of their troops from Ireland. I say that the coast of Ireland will be defended against foreign invasion by her armed sons, and for this purpose armed Nationalist Catholics in the south will be only too glad to join arms with the armed Protestant Ulstermen in the north". And he asked: "Is it too much to hope that out of this situation there may spring a result which will be good not merely for

the Empire, but good for the future welfare and integrity of the Irish nation?"

Redmond's statement certainly reflected the feelings of the vast majority of Irish Nationalists of all schools and sects. Even we "dissenter" Nationalists were delighted with it and acclaimed him for making it. But we also noted that Redmond's, to us, generous gesture evoked no response from his Ulster opponent. Indeed, the day after, Redmond received a direct rebuff from Carson who, in pursuance of his conciliatory policy, he sought out and had an interview with him in the presence of the Speaker. Gwynn describes what happened in his "History of Partition". Redmond, at the interview, "took it for granted that Asquith would agree immediately to put the Home Rule Bill on the Statute Book though its operation might have to be delayed. He had written to this effect to Asquith on the previous day and he now informed Carson of his attitude. But their interview showed that Carson was still determined to prevent the Bill from becoming law. Redmond reported the conversation immediately in a letter to Asquith, stating that:

> "I had an interview this afternoon with Sir Edward Carson in the Speaker's Library. The Speaker was also present. I found Sir Edward Carson in an absolutely

irreconcilable mood about everything. So much so, indeed, that it was impossible to discuss matters calmly with him. The gist of our conversation was this ..... that if the Government dared to put Home Rule on the Statute Book, he and the Tory Party would obstruct the Appropriation Bill and revive all the bitterness of the controversy. He would not listen to any suggested way out of the difficulty at all, and is evidently in the worst possible temper".

Such was the attitude of Carson, the self-acclaimed super-loyalist, when that Empire for which he had so often proclaimed his undying love, found herself joined in deadly combat with powerful foes. As far as he was concerned, it was "To hell with the Empire", if it meant, even at that dread hour in its history, the mere symbolical placing of the Home Rule Bill on the Statute Book.

Thus came World War No. I to Ireland and her then rulers. I cannot hope to convey in words today the shock of that news to my generation in its youth forty years ago. I have already pointed out that the long spell of peace that European countries had enjoyed had banished the very conception of a major European war from our minds. The idea of such a war struck us as fantastic and, indeed, ludicrous. It was almost as incredible as though we hard that man had reverted to cannibalism. Yet, there it was without the shadow of a doubt.

All around us, wherever we looked, were tangible and unmistakable signs of its ugly reality. The roads, streets and railways were crowded with soldiers and sailors on their way to barracks or to entrain at stations, and reservists and half-pay men on their way to rejoin the colours.

An incident stands out in my memory of those days. A very happily drunken Royal Inniskilling Fusilier was staggering along John St., Omagh, chanting some ribald ditty to the cheers of a group of spectators, most of whom, like the soldier, were Catholics and Nationalists. At a point on his rocky route he slipped and lurched into a window in one of the offices in that street, smashing it to pieces. Pulling himself together and resuming his wobbly course, he told them to their vast amusement that they could "send the bill to Kaiser Bill".

There can be no doubt at all that for the first years of the war Ireland's sympathies were almost wholly on the side of the Franco-British allies. Apart from the events of the war itself, there had always been a traditional friendship for France in the country, that France to which so many thousands of the "Wild Geese" fled and where they found succour and honour. Our parents and elders remembered well the Franco-Prussian War of the 1870's when the country was strongly

pro-French and anti-German, a partisanship that was unquestionably emphasised by the fact that Victoria and her Court and all the ultra-loyalists were then as strongly pro-German and anti-French. At the time, thousands of young Irishmen were prepared to rush to the help of France and would have done so had they not been effectively checked by the British Government. The only fly in the amber of our Francophilism was that the French Republic was then ruled by men who were persecutors of the Church - "Atheists" and "evil-livers". But not even that lamentable fact had any effect on our enthusiasm for the cause of our "old friends".

In those days of constant surprises and crises, the event that excited and stirred the country most deeply was the invasion of Belgium. And not so much the invasion iself as the burnings, shootings and lootings that the newspapers told us followed in the wake of the conquerors. I can still remember those lurid reports and their profound reactions on our feelings. One morning it would be the razing of several villages or streets in Belgian cities and towns. On another there would be an account of the shooting of hundreds of civilians, and the decimation of long lines of captives. And then, worst of all, to the deep perfervid

Catholic conscience that predominated in country districts and the small towns, came accounts of the burning of cathedrals and churches and the tragic destruction of the great University Library of Louvain and the beautiful cathedral of St. Pierre.

I have since learned, of course, that many of those stories of German atrocities were, to say the least of it, greatly exaggerated and embroidered, and were, as often as not, clever projections of British propaganda. But, be that as it may, they certainly had what, doubtless, their writers intended, the desired effect on us. They filled us with something very like detestation and hatred for those Teutonic despoilers of "little Catholic Belgium" and undoubtedly gave recruiting an enormous stimulus.

This resentment affected and stirred every class in the country. For example, after the destruction of Louvain, the Dublin mob rose up and, in its anger and indignation, sacked and looted the German-owned pork shops in the city, and the D.M.P. had the greatest difficulty in preventing those premises from being set on fire. I think Dublin was the only city in the then United Kingdom where such riots took place. And this keen, spontaneous pro-ally spirit was manifested in a very remarkable way when the same Dublin crowds that had booed and

mobbed them less than a fortnight before, turned out in great force and gave the K.O.S.B. men of Bachelor's Walk notoriety a rousing send-off as they marched to the docks to embark for the front.

In those daye, Ireland was nearer the English point of view than she has ever been before or since. England had the country, for the first time in the co-history of the two nations, psychologically in the hollow of her hand. But, within a few years, she was destined by her crass stupidity and the inherent fear of the Irish of her ruling classes, to turn that abundance of goodwill and sympathy into hostility and hatred. Is it any wonder that an empire in the hands of such people has wilted and faded away in the post-war years?

The intense feeling for Belgium and sympathy with her in her grievous sufferings were manifested in a practical way when the refugees began to pour into the country. Associations and organisations sprang up overnight to help run the camps and centres where those unfortunates were stationed. The women-folk in my family, in common with most other families, whatever their religion or politics, busied themselves from morning to night on all manner of work for those new guests of the nation - knitting, sewing and making garments, and cooking and packing

food for them. Actually, there were no Belgian refugees accommodated at Omagh, or, as far as I can recollect, at any town in Co. Tyrone, so our women had to have their charitable products collected and sent off to where they were required. A popular "stunt" on the part of young women was to "adopt" a Belgian soldier, to maintain a correspondence with him and send him, from time to time, such comforts as tobacco, clothing, chocolate, &c. My elder sister did this and, though she knew French well, which language, I am sure, her soldier also knew, nothing would do her, in common with all her contemporaries, but to write to him in Flemish with the aid of one of those English-Flemish dictionaries with which the book- and the stationery shops were then flooded. The soldier always replied regularly to her, even from the trenches where he generally was, until, poor fellow, he fell in battle. He always wrote in a curious but quite comprehensible mixture of good Flemish and bad English!

Recruiting for the British army was, as I have said, very brisk after the invasion of Belgium; indeed, brisker than it had ever been; and that army was getting, for the first time, in considerable numbers, the splendid farming type of Irishman that theretofore had always completely avoided it. But

Kitchener, who had lately taken over Asquith's second portfolio of the War Office, was shouting for thousands, for hundreds of thousands of men to fill the innumerable gaps in his continental armies at the time being pressed back, with their French allies, further and further into France. Kitchener wanted far more men, and particularly Irishmen, for his tattered vanguards.

The fact that the Home Rule Bill was not yet law, despite all the talk and fuss, caused a decided hold-back in the country districts, and there was a danger that the pristine enthusiasm for the allies' cause might evaporate or die down if that much-vexed measure were not finally disposed of. Accordingly, on 15th September, to the great annoyance of Carson and Bonar Law, Redmond at last succeeded, after great pressure, in getting Asquith to put the Home Rule Bill on the Statute Book. The old Amending Bill had been dropped, but a new Suspensory Bill was passed at the same time. It provided that the Home Rule Act must not come into operation until a year after the termination of the war.

But Carson and Law need not have been so worried. Asquith's extraordinary promise to them in the House of Commons should have assured them that there was no substance whatever in their alarm. He announced that "the employment of force,

any kind of force, for what you call the coercion of Ulster, is an absolutely unthinkable thing. So far as I am concerned, and so far as my colleagues are concerned - I speak for them, for I know their unanimous feeling - that is a thing we would never countenance or consort to". He further gave the assurance: "which would be in spirit and in substance completely fulfilled, that the Home Rule Bill will not, and cannot, come into operation until Parliament has had the fullest opportunity, by an Amending Bill, of altering, modifying or qualifying its provisions in such a way as to secure the general consent both of Ireland the the United Kingdom".

A very confused, opaque and, from the then legal standpoint, inaccurate melange of words for a man gifted with the clarity of thought and facility of expression of Asquith to make. He forgot himself so much as to put "Ireland" as a separate entity on a level with the "United Kingdom" of which body she then formed part, and would have continued to have formed part had that Home Rule Bill eventuated.

Denis Gwynn, in his aforementioned book, writes:

> "But these promises did not allay the anger of the Unionists ..... Bonar Law was deputed to deliver a final diatribe of denunciation and then all the Unionist members walked out of the House in protest. Carson's biographers

> make full admission of their bitter sense of defeat: 'Thus ended at that time the great controversy over the ill-omened third Home Rule Bill. Mr. Asquith had requested Birrell to request Redmond that there should be no crowing over the victory, but it was, in fact, no victory either for Redmond or for Carson. In this judgment of Solomon, the baby was to be dismembered: both were left with ghastly fragments of that for which they had fought. Redmond had won the south and Carson the north; Redmond had lost a United Ireland and Carson had lost a United Kingdom".

For Redmond, it was indeed a Pyrrhic victory; but he could, at least, go forth and claim that he had "put Home Rule on the Statute Book".

Redmond's nationalism, during his long years of residence in London and his daily association with all manner of English M.P.s in the House of Commons, had, not unnaturally, become strongly impregnated with imperialism. He had come to believe sincerely in the benevolent greatness of the British Empire, and now that Home Rule had reached the famous book, Redmond felt himself free to go forth and advocate a wholehearted participation by Ireland in the cause of that Empire and its allies. And so he betook himself to Ireland, and there, at Woodenbridge, in the Co. Wicklow, he delivered, on 20th September, his first positive recruiting speech. That speech, whilst endorsed by official and conservative nationalism,

reacted violently on the separatist elements in the country, who, though by no means strong, had been consolidating and expanding their position through their half-grip, as it were, on the governing body of the Irish Volunteers. They determined to act at once, even though, as they well knew, it would mean a big split in the Volunteer movement. "A moment was chosen", writes Darrell Figgis in his "Recollections", "when an announcement to that effect would make the greater noise. Mr. Asquith was due to speak with John Redmond at the Mansion House, Dublin, on the night of the 24th September, and, on the night before, a statement was issued by the greater number of the original members of the Provisional Committee that John Redmond's nominees would no longer be deemed to form part of that Committee, that the original constitution of the Volunteers would be resumed and that a Convention would be called to elect a new Committee, which would be entrusted with the formulation of a sound national policy".

Thus, after almost a year of uneasy and inharmonious co-operation on the governing body of the Irish Volunteers, the shaky peace between the imperial nationalists and the separatist nationalists was broken irrevocably. The die was cast which was to shape the pattern of the new and very different Ireland in the not far distant future.

THE DUBLIN INSURRECTION
(1914-1916).

The scene in the House of Commons on the declaration of war against Germany, when Sir Edward Grey described Ireland as "the one bright spot" and declared that the "feeling there had made it unnecessary to take the Irish question into account", and Redmond pledged the Irish Volunteers to defend the coasts of Ireland with the Ulster Volunteers, and which concluded with the entire House, including Nationalists, O'Brienites, as well as Redmondites, spontaneously rising to its feet and fervently chanting "God save the King" can be said to have been the climax of the policy of the "union of hearts". That union was to fade and vanish completely and for ever in the course of the next four or five years. But the ardour was not to abate for some considerable time. On the contrary, it had still much of growth and expansion before its "diminuendo" set in. It was clear to the Liberals that if Redmond's prestige was not to be gravely injured, thereby affecting very adversely the war cause and recruiting in Ireland, they would have, at least, to plant the Home Rule Bill, covering the entire country, on the Statute Book. So Asquith, on 14th September, announced

that the parliamentary session would end at once when the Home Rule Bill became law automatically under the Parliament Act, but that, co-terminous with that event, the Government would introduce another Bill postponing the operation of the former till after the war and, at the same time, pledged itself to introduce another Amending Bill, designed to assuage the fears and qualms of the Ulster Unionists by some kind of partition, before Home Rule would become operative.

Thus did the sad shadow of self-government for Ireland reach the Statute Book at last; but, mere shadow that it was, it produced violent and very unloyal reactions against it on the part of Carson, unaffected, seemingly, by the fact that the empire of his prime devotion was locked in mortal combat with its foes. Not even for that empire in its hour of peril would he compromise to the smallest extent. In a manifesto to his followers, Carson reiterated "Ulster's" determination never to submit to Home Rule; but, at the same time, he urged them to be true to their motto of "our country first".

This manifesto was followed by one from the Irish Unionist Alliance (by that time having shrunk from being the organisation of all Irish Unionists to being that merely for those of the south and west) protesting against the "flagrant breach of faith of the Government", but, at the same time,

pointing out "the duty of Irishmen to undertake their full share of Imperial responsibility in the present national emergency" and calling upon its supporters to continue their efforts to secure recruits for the army.

On the same day yet another manifesto was issued; this time a highly important one, by no less a person than Redmond himself. Redmond issued his manifesto at a great demonstration of Nationalists at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, calling on the people of Ireland to take their part in the great crisis "to the nation and the empire" and asking that Irish recruits for the expeditionary forces should be kept together in an Irish Brigade under Irish officers. Nor did the leader of Nationalist Ireland stop there. A little more than a week later, on 25th September, he, with Asquith, Dillon and Devlin addressed a great recruiting meeting in the Dublin Mansion House, presided over by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the Right Hon. Lorcan Sherlock. Guarded by large bodies of police and of Redmond's Volunteers, this meeting was a great success, the Round Room being packed with an enthusiastic audience. Mr. Asquith declared that the Irish Brigade which would be formed would be "the free gift of a free people"; and the meeting concluded with the singing of "God save the King"

and "God save Ireland". Many other recruiting meetings, addressed by Nationalist M.P.s followed on this one throughout the country, which were well attended, and at which, at first, there was no interruption. The whole Nationalist Press, with hardly an exception, were unanimously behind the war and the campaign for recruits, and endorsed the unanimous action of the Dublin and Cork Corporations in removing the name of the great Celtic scholar, Dr. Kuno Meyer, from their lists of freemen. Stephen Gwynn, Tom Kettle and Redmond's brother and son were amongst those M.P.s that joined the British army.

Redmond and Carson were both, in their very disparate ways, avowed imperialists, all for maintaining and defending the vast, heterogeneous corpus known as the British Empire. Redmond had sacrificed much for that empire; but Carson, despite his declaration of love for it, nothing at all, unless we are to regard his betrayal of the Southern Unionists and the Unionists of the three Ulster counties, included under Home Rule, as his "sacrifice".

About this time, another and very different voice arose in the land and grew daily more articulate and insistent. That was the voice of "Sinn Féin", using that expression in its later connotation as incorporating all the various separatist and extremist sects and divisions of rationalism.

That voice did not, as it could not, remain silent at those wholly unexpected and, indeed, unparalleled actions and commitments of the Irish leader. Accordingly, on 24th September, the eve of Redmond's recruiting meeting in the Mansion House, the 20 original founder-members of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, headed by Eoin MacNeill, issued their particular manifesto denouncing Redmond for consenting to a "dismemberment of Ireland" and accusing him of being willing to "risk another disruption by announcing for the Irish Volunteers "a programme fundamentally at variance with their own published and accepted aims and pledges, namely, that it was their duty to take foreign service under a government that was not Irish". In view of this development, they declared that the nominees of Redmond ceased to be members of the Provisional Committee and they concluded their manifesto by re-affirming, without qualification, the manifesto proposed and adopted at the inaugural meeting, repudiating any responsibility for the partition of Ireland and declaring that Ireland could not, with honour or safety, take part in foreign quarrels otherwise than through the free action of a national government of her own. Among the signatories to this document were: Pearse, Joseph Plunkett and Thomas McDonagh - all to be executed two years hence.

This action on the part of the Sinn Féin elements appeared not to be without substantial support in Dublin which support was demonstrated on the night of Redmond's recruiting meeting in the Mansion House by Volunteer parades through the city in support of MacNeill amid cheering masses of spectators.

Thus was the gauntlet laid down by the MacNeillites, and Redmond was not slow in taking it up. He appealed, with striking success, to the provincial centres of the Volunteers and, at a convention quickly assembled in Dublin on 30th September, a new provisional committee was elected for his section of the Volunteers with himself as President.

The Sinn Féin Secessionists reorganised their section of the Volunteers as the "Irish Volunteers" in contradistinction to Redmond's "National Volunteers". So there were then no less than three sets of Volunteers in the country, all deriving from and owing their genesis to Carson; a fact that Carson, far from trying to hide, acclaimed with pride. At the Primrose League in that May, he said: "I am not sorry for the armed drilling of those who are opposed to me in Ireland. I certainly have no right to complain of it. I started that with my own friends".

At that time, and for a long time afterwards, the

"Irish Volunteers" cut a poor figure vis-a-vis Redmond's Volunteers. According to the police reports just after the split, the Redmondite Volunteers amounted to 180,000, and the MacNeill Volunteers to but 11,000. But, by that October, the former had dwindled to 20,000 to 160,000, and the MacNeillites had risen to 13,000. The big drop in Redmond's Volunteers was, undoubtedly, largely due to the numbers thereof who had answered his call for recruits for the British regiments.

As I have said, the Irish, or Sinn Féin Volunteers were then, and practically till, and, indeed, after, the Easter Week Rising, a negligible, ill-armed body with comparatively little influence in the country. The people were all strongly on the side of the allies and, to that extent, pro-English for the first time in their history. The R.I.C. reports are exceedingly interesting on this aspect of things. For example, they reported in the previous June that, in the north "that distrust and hatred between Protestant and Catholic had never been so deep". A few months later, they reported that, during the mobilisation necessitated by the war, the U.V.F. and the I.N.V. were turning out together with their bands to escort the troops leaving for the Front. The same was true, in varying degrees, all over the country at that time. Ireland, as I have said,

became pro-English, and ardently pro-English, virtually overnight.

All those events, particularly the attack on Belgium, aroused the anger and pity of Catholic Ireland and led to large numbers of young men in the Volunteers joining the British forces. For example, in Enniskillen, young Wray, the son of a nationalist solicitor, led 300 men of the local National Volunteers into the British army, and from that war great numbers of them, including young Wray, never returned.

The outbreak of war worked a revolution in the state of Party feeling , reported the R.I.C. What an opportunity our British rulers had then of developing that uniquely favourable position in the "sister isle", an opportunity that they completely missed, or, in fact, never seized. The late Allison Phillips, Professor of History in T.C.D., referring to that time, writes: "From August 1914, to the end of 1915, the reports from every county agree that there were practically no displays of Party feeling. Ireland seemed, at last, united in a common effort for a common end. The union seemed symbolised by the support given to the Irish National Volunteers by prominent southern Unionists and the occasional fraternisation of the U.V.F. and the I.N.V. in the north. To those who know

Ireland and its deep-seated passions and antagonisms the mere list of the names of the notabilities who attended a great recruiting meeting at Warrenpoint on 7th July 1915, reads like a miracle. There were present the Lord Lieutenant, Redmond, the Lord Mayors of Belfast and Dublin and the Mayor of Derry". Carson was invited to this meeting but declined the invitation; he could not bring himself, even for the cause of empire, to stand on and speak from the same platform as the nationalist leaders, and never did.

But to return to the autumn of 1914; Redmond and the Nationalists were most anxious for the War Office to take over the National Volunteers, equip them with special uniforms, or at least, permit them to wear badges on their uniforms indicating their distinctive origin, as was granted the Ulster Division, and put them under the leadership of Irish officers. To this end, Redmond had a number of interviews with Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, who had replaced Asquith as War Minister, but he found him adamant. His sympathies were definitely anti-Irish. Indeed, he and his ilk in the War Office feared an armed and well-trained Irish Brigade under its own officers returning after the war to the country. He would make no concession whatever to Irish Nationalist sentiment, not even

to help the war effort, and he rejected the presentation of flags worked by enthusiastic nationalist ladies for the famous Irish regiments. There would be no special Irish Brigade, no special uniform or officer cuff markings such as the Scottish regiments long possessed. Irish recruits would just have to join ordinary regiments in the ordinary way. This was, in all conscience, bad enough, but Irish matters, as managed by the War Office, were much worse. Carson also had seen Kitchener about placing his U.V.F. and, though he found him difficult, there can be no manner of doubt that the chief British War Lord was vastly more friendly to Carson's attitude than to Redmond's. He was certainly vastly more accommodating, for we were presently to see a brand new Ulster Division in existence governed by its own officers and permitted, nay, commanded, to wear the U.V.F. political badge of the rebel U.V.F on the King's uniform, a sanction that theretofore would have been regarded as an outrage on the King and against all military tradition. This preferential treatment accorded their antagonists and their own overt and grievous snubbing by the War Office were big elements in the slowing down of recruiting in the south that followed. But, despite every encouragement that the friendly War Department gave them, recruiting was not much brisker in the north.

For example, out of the U.V.F.'s 85,000 men in August 1914, little more than 20,000 of those perfervid loyalists had joined up by the end of that September; and, at the close of 1915 the U.V.F. still amounted to the substantial total of more then 56,000 able-bodied men. It is well known that Kitchener and the War Office were deeply infected with the traditional official distrust of the Nationalist Irishman and made little attempt to disguise the fact that they were anxious to retain the Ulster Volunteers intact in Ireland as a reserve against the Nationalists. And that design was soon clearly reflected in the War Office's actions.

The southern Irish divisions were no sooner formed and given the minimum of training when they were posted off to the various battle fronts, taking their full share in the vanguard of the bloody battles that were raging in France, Flanders and the Dardanelles. The Ulster Division, on the other hand, was stationed at places like Finner near Bundoran and elsewhere in the north and kept in those camps so long that it became the object of severe criticism, a criticism that grew louder and more articulate when the heavy casualty lists of the southern Irish divisions began to pour in. Eventually, and much later, the Ulster Division did, of course,

go to the front and conducted itself with true Irish valour at Thiepval and elsewhere. I shall refer to that phase of events later; here, I shall only say that nowhere was there more surprise at its transfer out of Ulster to the front than in that Division itself. The rank and file, as I often heard in those days, were convinced that they were being held in Ulster as a garrison in case of any "fireworks" during or after the war, on the part of any of their 3,000,000 "disloyal" countrymen. And that was certainly what the distrustful Kitchener, the War Minister, wanted.

All the stirring and unprecedented events of that crucial year, coming as they did in rapid succession, made, as they were bound to make, a profound and indelible impression on the youth of Ireland. The average young Nationalist was, for a time, torn between conflicting ideas of duty, conflicting appeals and conflicting emotions. In my own case, I hardly knew where I stood. On the one hand, I found every day more and more of my contemporaries, my fellow-students of yesterday, donning the khaki, drawn to the army by the appeals of John Redmond, and, much more so, by the sufferings of invaded Belgium. That I should do likewise was frequently suggested to me; and, despite such setbacks

as the postponement of Home Rule, I was gradually becoming convinced that I should. The pressure from my friends, and my parents' friends and associates in the north was, though gentle and unblatant, very persistent, and was exactly symbolised by the refrain in the popular song of the year, generally sung at us by pretty girls:

"We don't want to lose you,
But we think you ought to go,
For your King and your country
Need you, you know".

A number, or, rather, a mixture of circumstances made me hesitate and held me back. In Dublin I had latterly begun to associate with a set of young fellows who, far from being extremists in any sense of the word, were keen critics of the official Nationalist Party and its war policy, and were most disheartened at the postponement of Home Rule. The Sinn Féin and advanced nationalist papers were then beginning to expand and to influence bodies of nationalists, mostly young, who, a few months previously, would have nothing to say to them. Subtly, clearly and constantly they appealed to and drew out the latent and nationalistic separatism inherent in nearly every young Irishman, thereby developing in us an extremely critical attitude towards the Party and the Liberal Government.

Because of my anti-Party background, this kind of propaganda got from me a ready response. In particular, we

had grown profoundly suspicious of the Liberal Government's efforts towards Partition, particularly us northern Nationalists But, whilst that suspicion was somewhat allayed by the placing of the Home Rule Bill on the Statute Book, it was again stirred by its postponement to some indefinite date "after the war", and particularly by Asquith's gratuitous and very definite assurance at the time to Carson and Law that they would never be forced to accept the Home Rule Act. But, anyhow, there it was on the Statute Book, such as it was, and the Redmondites could claim, as they did, that, in theory at all events, the great battle "on the floor of the House of Commons" had been won. The war was raging at its very height. The stories in the press and, more vividly through the lips of refugees, about the awful happenings in Belgium, a nation of small Catholic farmers like ourselves, stirred Ireland, young and old, to its depths.

So much has happened in the ensuing 44 years that it is quite impossible for anyone today to realise how deeply the nation was affected then by Belgium's plight. The urge to help Belgium was strong amongst us and only checked, as I have said, by two disappointments, viz: the postponement of Home Rule, the tacit official consent to partition, and the failure to form the 180,000 Irish Volunteers into an Irish army corps.

Had the War Office taken Redmond's request "on the hop" and absorbed the 180,000 Redmondite Volunteers into such a corps, given it a distinctive uniform, its own Irish colours and its own Irish officers, there is no question that the response in Ireland would have been overwhelming, and the future of Irish history might, in my opinion, despite all that had happened in that year, well have worked out very differently from what it actually turned out to be. Once again, English stupidity and incredible folly failed to seize and make every use of a unique opportunity in the furtherance of England's direct interests. Had such an Irish army corps been formed, I have no doubt at all but that I myself and my critical nationalist comrades would have all unquestionably joined up in it. But it wasn't; and, instead of it, there, before our very eyes, were the rival Ulster Volunteers, splendidly equipped, led by their own Volunteer officers whom they were permitted, against all army tradition, to elect; and, again, against all army tradition, proudly sporting, officers and men, on their tunics, the metal partisan badge of the U.V.F. with its red hand surmounted by the motto "We will not have Home Rule"!

That October, I returned to Dublin after the Autumn Quarter Sessions in the county, to pursue my calling as a barrister in

the Law Library of the Four Courts. But, truth to tell, with all the terrific happenings that were going on in the world around me, my heart was elsewhere than in my law work. In the train I met a young officer whom I knew as a halfway medico in Dublin and whom I always regarded as an "Extremist" and very anti-English, full of rousing old Irish martial ballads which, at the smallest provocation, he sang, and sang extremely well. And there was this Irish "rebel" (which I was not, at the time) sitting opposite me smartly caparisoned in the enemy uniform! His talk was most interesting to me and, though but my own age, he had seen a deal of fighting, had been wounded, and was now rejoining his unit, having been lately promoted a full lieutenant in, I think, either the Dublin Fusiliers or the Leinster Regiment. He was still quite anti-English and was quite frank as to his motive in joining up - "poor little Belgium" and his yearning to "get a belt at those bloody bastards and swine, the Huns". I listened absorbed to his tales and adventures and did not feel the time passing till our train slid along the platform at Amiens St. terminus.

As I made my way through the city to new "digs" that I had taken by letter in the northern suburb of Phibsborough, I could not fail to be reminded of the war, even if I wished to forget it. The streets were full of uniforms - soldiers,

naval men and those new curiosities that Irish eyes found it difficult to get used to - the "W.A.A.C.s" and "W.R.N.S". and other types of female warriors. And, regarding those women's corps, I must here interpose an incident concerning them which, though trivial in itself, illustrates the reaction of the "common or garden" man of those days to them. During the October Quarter Sessions of that year of the war, my father, on leaving the Omagh Courthouse, encountered its caretaker, Henderson, on the steps outside. "Mr. Shiels", said Henderson, to my father, "Will ye for goodness sake look at them!", and he pointed to the two Miss Millars, daughters of a local militia major, walking up the High St. attired in full "W.A.A.C." outfit. "What d'ye think of them? Did ever ye see the like?" - And, with an expression of extreme disgust, he added: "Wouldn' it make ye throw off, sir!?". Now, Henderson was a good, God-fearing Presbyterian, and the ladies, the object of his displeasure, were habilitated in khaki, it is true; but there was nothing either unseemly or unfeminine in their get-up save that the skirt was rather short vis-a-vis the prevailing fashion. What would Henderson say about the trousered females, young and old, that are commonplace today?

Companies, detachments,and, now and again, whole regiments

of troops were constantly marching along the streets to their various assignments. The latter, led by a band and fully equipped, were for the docks, en route for the Front, accompanied by crowds of friends and supporters, cheering them off. An entirely novel note in our insular capital was struck by the numbers of French and Belgian soldiers walking amongst the pedestrians on the pavements in their colourful uniforms and jaunty little "kepis". The hoardings and dead walls were papered over with posters calling on Irish youth to join up and do their bit for"King and Country" and informing that youth that "England expects every man to do his duty". (At a later stage, separatists altered the slogan to read: "England expects every Irishman to do her duty"). Nearly every dead wall in the city had an enormous outsize picture of Kitchener's forbidding countenance pointing a huge forefinger at us with the single pronoun in huge capitals "YOU!" I always thought that a particularly repelling poster; and it must have acted on the Irish, at any rate, more as a deterrent than as an inventive. Save in one case, those war posters were void of any appeal to Irish sentiment; that was, posters showing the ruined churches and monasteries and universities and schools of Belgium with pictures of clerics before firing squads, or

lying dead amongst the debris and rubble, with flashes calling attention to the "Huns'" vile treatment of a fellow-Catholic country.

In the sitting room of my digs I was much intrigued by an arresting and attractive miniature flag that I noticed sticking out of an empty flower vase on the mantel piece. It was the one thing in the clean but very drab and rather depressing room that really interested and held me. I have always had an interest in history and politics and prided myself on knowing and recognising the flags of all the nations; an interest which the war had greatly quickened in me. And I had grown accustomed to the habit, since the war, of suchlike miniature flags being displayed in drawing rooms and sitting rooms and pinned on the clothes of men and women, indicating their special predilection amongst the allies. They were often displayed in trios, the most usual combination being the French, Belgian and Irish (green with crownless harp) in nationalist homes, and French, Belgian and Union Jack in Unionist homes. But that particular flag beat me. Presently the door of the room opened and in came my fellow-lodger. This was none other than the future Dr. Brian Cusack. He was then a final year medico, having started in University College, Galway, and was then taking out his final courses in the city. He was a man

considerably older than I, having begun life as a teacher under the London County Council which, in due course, he relinquished for medicine.

In the course of our talk I discovered that, far from being enthusiastic for the allied cause, he had no belief whatever in the much proclaimed altruism and bona fides of England, and was extremely sceptical of the war news and, in particular, of English war propaganda, even doubting to my surprise, the stories of atrocities in Belgium. At times, I felt quite impatient and, indeed, vexed with him and his attitude of seeming indifference to the terrible happenings in Europe. But he was polemically very well equipped and well up on data about the origin and causes of the war, presenting me with a surprisingly new outlook on the matter, totally different from that I then held.

According to him, England had embarked on the war only because she was convinced that if she did not do so, Germany would replace her in the dominance of the seas and of the world markets. He pointed out that England was wavering up to the last moment, for she was convictionless as regards principles of any kind in the matter. Only a few days before the Declaration of War had not Sir Edward Grey promised the Kaiser

to remain neutral if he would oblige him by avoiding Belgium in his invasion of France, and that, despite the earnest appeal of President Poincare to the King to let the Kaiser understand that if he made war on France he would have France's ally under the Entente Cordiale, England, arrayed against him. He talked about Ireland and how Ireland owed England nothing, seeing the way she had behaved over Home Rule; and so the talk flowed on, Brian full of Ireland's wrongs, and finding in me a ready listener, my "Irish" being lit up by his words. Suddenly, it dawned upon me that I was face to face with that phenomenon of the day, dreaded by the respectable - an "extremist".

With my eyes constantly wandering to the fascinating little flag on the mantel piece as I was listening to Brian, my curiosity eventually got the better of me, and, at last, I asked him what country did it belong to. "It's the flag of the Irish Republic" he told me; and he explained to me the significance of its colours - green for the old, or Catholic Irish, orange for the new, or Protestant Irish, and white, the bond of peace between them.

Words can convey little idea of the effect of that intelligence on me. Even now, after the passage of nearly 45 years, I can recall vividly my emotional reaction to that

significant bit of cloth on learning its history. So there was an Irish Republic possessing its own distinct flag proclaiming its sovereignty, a republic of which I was, or might be, a citizen, a state which I could like and be loyal to, in a way that it was quite impossible to like or be loyal to England. And what a fine, bright flag it was - I thought - like a flame of hope. As I gazed on it, how dull and inanimate like a dead fish, Home Rule of any degree appeared vis-a-vis an independent republic, and a republic with its own distinctive flag!

It is impossible to explain why a little piece of coloured cloth - green, white and orange in parallel order, should have stirred me so deeply. All I can aver here is that it most certainly did. I could not help looking at it on every possible occasion, even finding myself, when I was leaving or entering the house, opening the sitting-room door to get yet another glimpse of it. The flag, the tricolour of the Irish Republic! Oh, if it were only possible and not just a beautiful chimera!

I saw a good deal of Brian Cusack during that year, living as I did for a good part of it in the same house with him. The late Dr. Charles McCauley, then but lately graduated, was lodging there too, and the three of us soon became fast friends

Charles McCauley, like myself, was, though no "out-and-outer", a sharp critic of the Irish Party, and, being a northerner, he was, naturally, a strong opponent of partition. Though I did not come round to his clear-cut Fenian separatism then, nor for a good while later, Brian's talks, always to me most interesting, completely cured me of all intention or desire to don the khaki and fight for John Bull. I began to buy and read advanced nationalist papers of which the moderate "New Ireland" was my favourite, and to which I used to send an odd article or letter. "New Ireland" was a weekly journal, at that time run by Denis Gwynn,as editor, and Paddy Little. Later, when Denis Gwynn joined up in the British army, Paddy Little became editor, and the paper became much more advanced. It was, then, however, regarded as quite an advanced organ of enlightenment and, whilst strongly critical of the ruling political make-up, was in no sense a separatist paper. Articles on the war and the brave conduct of the Munsters at Festeberte were side by side with articles advising Irish youth not to join up unless and until there was an Irish Brigade to receive them, and other articles advocating something very much like Griffith's Sinn Féin policy.

Recruiting for the Irish regiments, at first brisk, fell

off as the year advanced, and the Irish began to realise that they were as far away as ever from Home Rule and from that Irish Brigade that Redmond had been advocating, and that Asquith had promised him at the Mansion House recruiting meeting. But, worse still; after the retreat from Mons, the War Office replenished the badly shattered ranks of English infantry battalions by Irish recruits transferred from the Irish regiments they had joined. Furthermore, keen resentment was caused by the War Office transferring the entire artillery of the (16th) Irish Division to the Guards regiments. A matter of another character that was also deeply resented was the gratuitous and clearly organised attacks on Irish emigrants embarking at the Port of Liverpool for the United States. These assaults by jeering hooligans were so persistent that they led to the ships' crews refusing to man the ships bearing the emigrants, thereby putting a complete stop to trans-Atlantic migration for the duration of the war.

All these things combined to irritate and inflame Irish public opinion and cause the pristine enthusiasm in the country for the allied cause to die down, and the recruiting movement to lose its momentum. In 1915, the country could be said to be changing from strong pro-allyism, through disillusionment, to neutralism. Of all the Volunteer forces in existence, in 1915,

the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army alone displayed any activity in drilling and exercising. Considerable numbers of the Ulster Volunteers, as I have said, were stationed in various parts of the north and showed little indication that they were destined, at any time, for the battle front. Indeed, as I have already said, it was generally thought and freely noised about that they were not to be transferred out of Ulster at all, but maintained there in their traditional capacity as a loyal garrison. And I know that that idea of their ultimate purpose was quite common among them. Apart from those that joined up in the Ulster Division, there were many more thousands, nearly 60,000, I believe, that remained, as they were, members of a well-armed force that no longer functioned.

As for the Redmond-ite/Volunteers, they were in process of rapid decay, like a melting snowball. My battalion, though one of the first after the split to proclaim its allegiance to John Redmond, through its captain, J.M. Muldoon, just withered away and vanished into thin air. Growing, as I was, disgusted with prevailing politics, I had ceased to attend and can be said to have "demobilised" myself from it and a good while prior to that act of faith. That was my one and only connection with the Volunteers movement in any shape or form.

With the disillusionment over Home Rule, and over the alleged aims of the war, there came a big drop in the supply of recruits from Ireland, and a marked drift in the country from its pristine pro-ally enthusiasm to a kind of psychological neutralism - a neutralism that was growing more and more cynical and disinterested in all causes. It was only amongst the Sinn Féiners and their Volunteers that there was any enthusiasm for anything in the country. And, though their numbers were increasing very slowly, they had grown into a compact, confident body with a clear-cut objective and abundance of fervour, self-confidence and altruistic voluntary service at their command. But the general public, as I have said, steered clear of them - whatever abstract sympathy they m might have had with their target - an Irish Republic - they counted its achievement an utter impossibility and regarded them as an ill-balanced lot of idealistic - "rainbow-chasers", as someone had christened them. Even at that stage, the general public were far from being separatists, and, if they had lost their collective interest in the war, far too many individuals amongst them had strong reasons for a personal interest in it. Never before in history had so many young Irishmen of good nationalist and Catholic stock, from rural as well as urban regions, joined the British army, and, in

those days, one was constantly encountering young men in khaki, back on leave from the Front, staying with their relatives on either farms or town houses. And, were one to get inside one of those houses, one would inevitably see, in the "place d'honneur" on the walls or the mantelpiece, large framed photographs, more often than not, coloured, of sons, nephews, brothers or cousins in the uniform of British army officers or privates, between pictures of other relatives; often, incongruously, priests and nuns; and, from time to time, there were incidents that showed the anything but pro-Sinn Féin feeling in the country.

For example, on Whit Sunday, 1915, some 700 Irish Volunteers held a parade in Limerick. When returning to the station, after the parade, through the Irishtown quarter where many soldiers' families lived, they were furiously attacked by a crowd of women - wives of Munster Fusiliers. Another such instance occurred at Tullamore where a hostile crowd of townsfolk attacked the local Irish Volunteers, broke into their hall and damaged their property. Again, on November 19th, 1915, at Loughrea, Co. Galway, on the formation of a branch of the Irish Volunteers, the rival National Volunteers resurrected themselves from their moribund condition to parade through the town in protest and smash the windows of the shops and

houses of prominent local supporters of Sinn Féin.

Another extraordinary instance of the anti-Sinn Féin animosity of nationalist elements occurred at Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone - an area with a traditional sediment of extremism in its population. There at a Concert Hall, on 29th January 1916, attended exclusively by local Catholics, desperate hand-to-hand fighting broke out between the rival parties. The Sinn Féiners held the Hall, but were besieged by infuriated Hibernians. The Sinn Féiners shouted for the Kaiser and the Hibernians for the Allies, King George and the R.I.C. The fighting continued till a late hour when the Sinn Féiners abandoned the Hall and were escorted home by the R.I.C.

This year, too, the Government began to take tangible notice of the Sinn Féiners. In February, Sean O'Hegarty and James Bolger were arrested and deported to England under the provisions of "D.O.R.A." (Defence of the Realm Act); and several Sinn Féin and Labour periodicals were suppressed.

By July 1915, the Sinn Féin element had made its first big capture - the Gaelic League - electing a Sinn Féin Executive Council, which led to the resignation of its founder, Dr. Douglas Hyde, and his replacement by Professor Eoin MacNeill. The War Effort got another bad blow when, after the Whitsun recess, the Asquith Government was reconstructed on a coalition

basis, the Unionists being brought in. To the chagrin of even the official Irish Nationalists, Carson, the rebel "par excellence", the father, after centuries of Irish re-armament and Irish rebellion, secured the high law-and-order post of Attorney General. Redmond was offered a port-folio but refused it; and, when it leaked out that that port-folio was the minor post of Postmaster-General, there could be no doubt in the country that his former prestige and importance in British governmental circles had vanished. Thereafter, they could ignore and treat him as they wished, which, to a large extent, they did. He had given them everything for a shadow and he had no come-back.

This year, too, a Conscription Bill was passed, limited to men between the ages of 18 and 41. Everyone thought it was going to be extended to Ireland and that was certainly the Government's first intention. However, more prudent counsels prevailed and Ireland was excluded. Another of the many causes of friction between the two countries arose in connection with this measure. When it was passed, many young Irishmen in employment in England left for Ireland and were, once again, the objects of mob violence when embarking at the Port of Liverpool.

It was, as I have said, a time of transition; a time

when the long-accepted views of Nationalist Ireland were in process of a slow, but, nonetheless, sure and very radical change. Certainly, that was the case with the youth, with those of my own generation. My particular set of friends and acquaintances felt ourselves being more and more influenced by Arthur Griffith's famous paper "Nationality". We read it eagerly, column by column; its sharp hammer-like sentences sinking into our minds and staying there. But, whilst Griffith's brilliant journalism had completely captivated us, that was far from being the case with his novel political theory of the restoration of the kingdom, destroyed by the Act of Union, and which alone, of course, was entitled to the name "Sinn Féin". We saw the logic of his policy, founded as it was on the English Renunciation Act of 1783, as we could hardly fail to do, but we were not convinced of its feasibility, or of the practicality of its avowed means, passive resistance. Our views, at the time, on Ireland's political future were fluid, hazy and undefined in the extreme. Home Rule, as we had known it, we felt was dead, killed by those disparate and unconscious allies - Carson and the Liberal Government; but we also believed, in a kind of vague way, that, seeing that the war was being avowedly waged by the Allies for the freedom and rights of all small nations, our historic small nation could

hardly be ignored, must surely get something out of it at the Peace Conference, something that would be certainly an improvement on the last Home Rule Bill, at best, perhaps Dominion status; for none of us was so infantile as to expect any greater status; anything, for example, like the complete, sovereign independence of a republic.

Fred Dempsey and I had become such admirers of Griffith that we decided we must see him. We knew that he was wont to resort to the "Ship" tavern in Middle Abbey St., and thither one evening we repaired. Neither of us had ever seen him in the flesh, or in a picture, and so we had to ask the curate behind the bar if he were there, and, if so, to be good enough to point him out to us. He happened to be there. The curate pointed out to us, at the other end of the bar, near the door, a small, broad-shouldered, stockily built man with a large moustache, drinking stout with a few friends. We went over to him, introduced ourselves to him and told him how much we enjoyed his papers, which seemed to please him. We two young men, of course, meant nothing to Griffith, but he was kind to us in his shy, aloof way, and stood us a drink or two. He was, however, very quiet and non-committal, taking occasional glances at us through his pince-nez with his short-sighted, blinking eyes, and leaving the talking to his loquacious friends, only

too willing to oblige in that respect. Such was my first interview with one of the great Irishmen of his day.

It was about this time that I met a man who was to be my close friend for the rest of his life, a period of more than forty years. This was the late Edward Millington Stephens, B.L. I met him at a King's Inns dinner. He was one of the company sitting at my table. There happened to be a preponderance of Unionists amongst us on that occasion and the talk naturally turned on the war which, at the time, was not going well for the Allies. At a certain stage, a very arrogant young man, of extremely loyal convictions and with one of those extra-ordinary accents that are accepted as top-level "English" in this country, opened up on the somewhat controversial topic of Irish recruiting. The young man was horrified - "ashamed of being Irish", he sadly confessed - that so few had rallied to "the colours". It made his blood boil to see the countrysides and towns full of "great hulking fellows" who should be in the ranks doing their bit at the Front against the Hun. He said it was largely the fault of "us good-class professional chaps" not giving "the peasants" the lead they wanted. There should be an O.T.C., he said, attached to the King's Inns, in the same way that there was an Inns of Court O.T.C. in London;

and, according to him, "every bally barrister of military age should be kicked into it". In fairness to this very loyal young man, I should say that he had applied for and was awaiting his commission. Stephens got into a tough argument with this individual and, to my surprise, revealing himself as a strong nationalist of the extreme type, got far and away the better of the contest; so much so, that the loyal young man lost his temper and told Stephens he should be ashamed of himself for not wearing the King's uniform. Stephen's replied that the only uniform of the King he ever hoped to wear was the broad arrow of the felon. At the time, I was immensely taken with that retort of Stephens. In the argument I had supported him as well as I could against the other; so, when dinner was over, we walked back from the King's Inns together.

After that, and during the ensuing years, I saw a great deal of Ned Stephens and his wife, Lillo - still, thank goodness, amongst us. Ned's nationalism had been planted in him and his elder brother, Frank, by his famous uncle, John Millington Synge, the dramatist. He told me he remembered, as a child, Synge marching him and his brother out of the Mariner's Church, Dún Laoghaire, when, at a service there for the King's birthday, the organ played "God save the King". Ned's brother, Frank, a solicitor, was a fine Irish scholar. After some years in practice, he abandoned his profession and

devoted himself to the teaching of Irish.

Two more young Protestants of strong nationalist outlook, with whom I was very friendly, were Diarmuid Coffey, the son of the famous archaelogist, George Coffey, and Henry L. Conner, son of the late Judge Conner. Henry's father, as a King's Counsel, had been a rather prominent Unionist; but Henry's tendencies were decidedly nationalistic. In his case it was hard to explain this; but a reason might be sought in the fact that the famous '98 rebel, Arthur O'Connor, belonged to his family. Harry's nationalism, however, did not stop him joining up in the Royal Flying Corps. Before going off he left me books and papers relating to the famous Arthur O'Connor to keep for him, should he return, and he explained that his departure to the wars was more for the excitement of the thing and the gaining of a knowledge of flying, which interested him very much, than for any particular loyal reason.

As the year drew near to that fateful Easter Week of 1916, there was nothing in the atmosphere or pattern of the national life to give the slightest indication that anything untoward was on the way - certainly not a rising, of all things. The country had seldom been more peaceful, as can be seen from the police reports of the time. Crime of all kinds was almost non-existent; even that endemic affliction in Irish rural life,

agrarian crime. The country was crowded with soldiers and sailors, and, even though there was no longer any enthusiasm for recruiting, the military were far indeed from being unpopular. They were well received almost everywhere and entertained by elements in the population who, or whose forbears never had a British soldier within their dwellings before. In garrison town and military depot centres, dances were organised for the soldiers and those dances were attended by all and sundry - a great change from the past when the vast mass of Nationalists always boycotted them. The only piece of friction, the only jarring note on the otherwise tranquil scene, was the Irish Volunteers. But, even they caused little trouble save by the speeches of some of their leaders which resulted in certain of those leaders being incarcerated in prisons or deported from time to time. Those Volunteers kept up their marchings and manoeuvres with much persistency, and one was constantly passing companies and platoons, some of them armed indifferently with rifles of various models and periods. They certainly did not look a dangerous crowd in any military sense. Sometimes a unit marching by would be headed by a standard bearer carrying a large tricolour flashing gaily in the breeze like a flame. Always when I saw that flag

I stopped to gaze upon it with wonder and admiration. What an exciting flag it was, and what a lot it meant! The Republic, the Irish Republic! A glorious impossibility, of course, but it was good to contemplate its flag and dream for a few moments about it. And how drab and dull and commonplace beside it was the once stimulating green flag with the crownless harp; merely the emblem of a political party - the Nationalist - in the same way as the Union Jack was, in Ireland, at all events, the emblem of the rival political party - the Unionist.

Nevertheless, despite their meaningful banner, the Irish Volunteers, even on the threshold of Easter Week, cut little or no ice. Few in the country then believed in "MacNeill's ridiculous" and ill-equipped army, and no one, outside its own ardent devotees, took seriously its avowed objectives.

For the Easter holidays of the year 1916, I was, as usual, up in the north at my father's house in Omagh. There I had latterly got to know some of the local adherents of advanced nationalism such as Dr. Patrick McCartan, Mr. Dan McAuley and Mr. Peter Haughey. Dr. McCartan was dispensary doctor in the mountainous district of Gortin, about 8 miles from Omagh. He was an avowed republican, in the full-blooded Fenian tradition, and never attempted to conceal his opinions. I have told how he helped the Unionist gun-runners at Larne and got from them

some serviceable rifles for his own Volunteers in appreciation of his aid. This action of his, though bitterly denounced by the Hibernian politicians, was quite consistent with his particular brand of national principles, as I have already explained; and, if it infuriated the Hibernians, it gave him quite a standing amongst the Unionists which was of use to him later on, as shall be seen.

The doctor, at this time, became more conspicuous because he used to go about dressed in a lounge suit made of the green Volunteer uniform material. Dan MacAuley was at that time chief assistant in the office of the late Frank O'Connor, solicitor; he was a quiet, retiring man, who certainly took no active or open part in politics. The third, Peter Haughey, a dark, tense, but rather small Napoleonic-looking man, was a house painter.

These men, I later learned, were all advanced I.R.B. men. I got to know them and used to meet them occasionally from time to time, because I shared with them their strong views on the hopeless policy of the Irish Party. They knew me to be very sympathetic for a much more advanced national programme, and I suppose that was the reason that I received a message on the morning of Easter Saturday, asking me to go to Frank O'Connor's law office in John Street, where those people wanted to see me

on something of the gravest import. The person who actually gave me that message was my cousin, Vincent P. Shields, at that time a young solicitor's apprentice to my father, who was in very close touch with Dan MacAuley. My cousin, who was much better in with the "secret men" than myself, did tell me, in point of fact, that he thought a rising was contemplated in which the Republic was to be proclaimed. This news I found it frightfully hard to accept, but I had an instinct that there was something serious and grave in the air. I went to the office, as arranged, at 8 o'clock that evening. I remember the day as well as if it were yesterday. The evening was bright and clear, not yet dark, with the sun, a great red ball, beginning his descent behind the twin spires of the Sacred Heart Church. As I crossed Campsie Bridge, the swallows and house-martins were, I remember, hawking above the river for flies in great numbers for that time of the year in the north. The town was quiet after the weekly market, the shops closed and the streets almost deserted.

On knocking at the door of O'Connor's office in John St., I was admitted by Peter Haughey, who led me into an inner back room. In this room three men were seated; they were:- Doctor Pat MacCartan, Dan MacAuley and Denis McCullough. I said I had received a message from my cousin, Vincent, and that he

had informed me that the Republic was going to be proclaimed in Dublin. My own words I clearly remember. They were: "This is momentous news. Is it credible?". They assured me that there was no doubt at all about the news. The doctor had only returned that day from Dublin fresh from a meeting of the inner committee of the Volunteers, and the rising was planned for the next day. I inquired what action, if any, had been settled for our locality. Dr. MacCartan, who seemed to be the person there with the most recent information, said the orders were to assemble all available Volunteer units in or about mid-Tyrone at Carrickmore where there was a strong and, even then, largely sympathetic nationalist population, and proceed with them in the Enniskillen direction to the west where they were to make contact with the Connacht men. I was not then, and never have been, a soldier, save for my slight contact with St. Michan's Battalion in Dublin, but I did think that was a very dangerous plan for them to attempt to put into effect. I pointed out that they would r equire a large and well-armed force to carry out that order successfully, seeing that there was a strong military garrison in Omagh, and another, even stronger, one in Enniskillen, both much strengthened since the war; and, in between them, on their very route, there were numerous R.I.C. barracks. The position was as clear to them

as it was to me, but the doctor felt he was bound by his orders. He also explained to us that the reason for contacting the men of Connacht was that the Germans were sending an invading force with large quantities of arms and ammunition which was expected to land somewhere on the western seaboard, and it was essential to have as many men as possible there to meet it. The doctor thought he might be able to rely on anything up to 500 Volunteers; but I gathered that arms and ammunition were very scarce.

Denis McCullough was very much concerned about the need for helping the Dublin men. He seemed to consider that to be of prime importance; and, of course, it was. But how just to help the Dublin men any way effectively was the question. I suggested that with the very small and inadequate force they had at their command it might be better for them to abandon the western plan altogether and concentrate on blowing up railway bridges that would impede, to some extent, the transfer of military reinforcements to Dublin and the south. The question then arose about explosives for such work, but it transpired that they had none.

After some further general and rather vague talk, the little conference broke up, and we left O'Connor's office.

There was no definite decision as to what would be done other than what Dr. MacCartan had told us. Denny McCullough said he had ~~tried~~ to find his way back, I think, to the Belfast area and hold himself in readiness there for further orders. Dr. MacCartan said that he had to be in Carrickmore next day where there would be a Volunteer mobilisation. On leaving, I told them that if they thought I could be of any help to send me a message and I should be at home.

As I walked home in the charming spring evening, the terrific news with which I had been entrusted completely occupied my thoughts. I kept asking myself could it be true? Was it possible that we were on the eve of another Irish rebellion? Memories of my readings and of all I had heard about '98, Emmet's rising, and the Fenians ran through my mind. Would the Germans really invade the country and land men and arms in any quantity? I was very sceptical, not only of that possibility, but of anything effective being achieved with the comparatively small number of Sinn Féin Volunteers, not more than 20,000 at the outside, scattered in units of varying size throughout the country. If the forthcoming insurrection was to achieve any worthwhile result, it could only do so by a substantial German invasion. I ruminated, but I saw little prospect of that. Whatever about the

continent where the Germans seemed to be doing well, there was little doubt that John Bull was still master of the seas.

I, of course, never mentioned that meeting, or its purport, to anyone at home or elsewhere. My own folk thought I had gone on one of my usual fishing expeditions.

Next day, Sunday, I was expecting to hear from my cousin, or my friends of the previous evening, and, in due course, I did get a message from a man who arrived at the house on a bicycle, to the effect that Eoin MacNeill, the head of the Irish Volunteers, had cancelled all Volunteer mobilisations throughout the country. I must say, in all honesty, that the news came to me, personally, as a big relief; and I dismissed from my mind any idea that another Irish rebellion, at that late stage in our history, was, or could be, a probability. We must wait till the war was over and then get our leaders to unite and put our strong case for self-determination before the Peace Conference.

What, then, was my astonishment to learn, about noon of the next day, Easter Monday, that the rising had, indeed, broken out in Dublin where desperate fighting was taking place. I need not recount here the events of that week in Dublin. As for the town and district of Omagh, no place in the world could have been more peaceful. The police, we heard, did some

questioning of the few suspects that then existed, but they made no arrests. Unquestionably, Dr. MacCartan would have been arrested had he been found, but he had vanished. Many thought he had made for Dublin and joined the insurgents. Later, we heard there had been some mobilisation of Volunteers at Carrickmore, but it was most disappointing, hardly 100 men turning up. Doubtless, the MacNeill cancellation had something to do with this, for it was widely published. Dr. MacCartan, I think, endeavoured to reach Dublin when his own plans collapsed, but, failing to do so, went, as he certainly had to, "on the run" in Co. Tyrone for some time. The doctor was well-known; indeed, "notorious", for many years as an avowed republican and separatist. He made no secret of his extreme political principles. Apart from that, he was an able doctor and very popular with all classes and creeds in the country. His particular job was that of medical officer of health for the dispensary district of Gortin, some 8 or 9 miles from Omagh in the mid-Tyrone hills. In that district, there was a large house and demesne known as Beltrim Castle, owned and occupied by a family called Cole-Hamilton. After the rising, Mrs. Cole-Hamilton, a staunch Unionist in politics, befriended the doctor, putting him up whilst he was "on his keeping" for a very considerable time in her Castle. And, stranger still! If one

wanted to communicate with, or get in touch with the doctor, one had to go to a small stationery and tobacconist's shop on the Dublin road, Omagh, kept by a good Orangeman with the 18-carat Unionist name of Carson - Sammy Carson! I myself often brought secret letters there to Sammy which were all safely transmitted to the doctor. The Unionists had certainly a "gradh" for Dr. Pat MacCartan for the assistance he had rendered them during the Larne gun-running.

The reactions of the people of the north to the Rising were much the same as those in other parts of the country. They were, at first, exceedingly hostile, and many a bitter word I heard uttered against the insurgents by stalwart nationalists of long standing. They felt it had delivered a mortal blow, not to say a stab in the back, at that nationalist end-all and be-all, Home Rule; as, indeed, it had. And there were not a few, particularly among the older people, who feared that it would result in a long, diehard Tory regime that would impose a coercive reign of terror on the country akin to that of the Yeomen rule after the '98 rebellion. Almost everyone I met, Nationalists as well as Unionists, condemned Pearse and his colleagues on what they were unanimous in regarding as their wild and wickedly insane action; and, in this regard, the priests were at one with the laity, if not even more condemnatory.

I remember meeting one day a few of the local clergy and they did not mince words in condemning the rebel leaders as "cranks and soreheads", vain and selfish men on the lookout for notoriety. Home Rule, they said, had been killed and buried and not by the Orangemen, its natural foes, but by our own criminally irresponsible young Nationalists, seduced and led astray by the aforementioned "cranks". They fully endorsed all Redmond had said when, speaking on behalf of himself and his colleagues in the House of Commons on 27th April, he expressed the feelings of detestation and horrow with which they regarded the rising; and he joined with Sir Edward Carson who, in this approach, was not inarticulate, in the hope that no attempt would be made to use the rebellion as a political weapon against any Party.

Throughout the country, the condemnation of the Rising was virtually unanimous. From high and low came anathemas against it. Many of the bishops spoke in strong condemnation of the "mad and sinful adventure", and, as I have said, many priests spoke similarly. Public bodies appeared to vie with each other in registering their disapproval. The late Sir James O'Connor gives a selection of those resolutions in his History. Carlow U.D.C. recorded its "abhorrence of the appalling crime" and expressed themselves ready to assist the

the authorities, as far as in our power, to eradicate now and forever the elements of disorder in Ireland". Youghal No. 2 R.D.C. (May 5th) "condemn in the most emphatic manner the action of the so-called Sinn Féiners". Naas U.D.C. (May 11th) "strongest condemnation of the wickedness and insanity of the recent rising". Kinsale U.D.C. (May 2nd) "condemn in the strongest possible manner the insane and disastrous conduct of those dupes in Dublin and elsewhere in Ireland of the German Government". Galway U.D.C. (May 4th) "express our condemnation of the deplorable riots". Tralee U.D.C. "deplore with horror the outbreak in Dublin, which brings the blush of shame to every honest Irishman".

Those resolutions, in nearly every case, expressed the unanimous opinion of the Councils, and a remarkable feature in connection with them was that in numbers of instances they were passed after executions of the leaders had taken place, or whilst those executions were actually proceeding. Nevertheless, the executions played a prime part in changing the opinion and sympathies of the country. Long drawn-out and lingering as they were, it took them to wipe out completely and in a remarkably short time the hostile attitude of Irish Nationalist and Catholic thought to the Easter Rising. Before the last execution had been carried out in the barrack square at Arbour Hill, a profound and radical psychological revolution

had begun in a people that was and is notoriously conservative, in some ways to an almost obscurantist extent, and that had, after great toil, been wholly won round to purely constitutional agigation. And, within a year or two of the Rising, that psychological revolution was completed. Irish nationalism was, in that small space of time, transformed from constitutionalism and a pro-Empire outlook, not only to a violent anti-English and separatist outlook, but to a total renunciation of parliamentary methods, and a return to those of physical force and Meagher's "Sword"; a revolution even more remarkable, and infinitely more speedy, than that which it replaced.

Any of my moderate Unionist friends and neighbours, men of the professional and strong merchant class, seemed to me, in conversations I had with them, to dislike the executions as much as the Nationalists, though, of course, they never said so in so many words, confining themselves to pitying the victims of the firing squads.

As for the Orange leaders, some, at least, of them felt not a little guilty at the essential preliminary and basic part they and their Ulster Volunteers played in the affair. For it is undoubtedly true that, had it not been for them and their pre-war activities, the Easter Week Rising of 1916 would have been wholly impossible.

Shortly after the Rising I happened to be travelling by train from Omagh to Pomeroy on my way to my cousins at Altmore, there to spend the remainder of the Easter vacation. Among the passengers in my carriage there chanced to be a prominent local U.V.F. leader and a prominent nationalist solicitor. The rebellion was what was uppermost in every mind, and the talk of the carriage inevitably came round to it, despite the caution in the north in discussing anything appertaining to politics or religion at chance meetings. The company in the full carriage was clearly mixed - Orange and Green - and all were unanimous in their disapproval of the "mad" and "wicked" Dublin outbreak. The nationalist solicitor was particularly vocal against it; but, suddenly, he turned on the Orange leader and accused him and Carson of being the "fons et origo" of the whole tragic business. He complained more than once that there could have been no rebellion had it not been for the work of Carson "and yourself, Andy, and fellows like you. Every damn one of you are responsible for what happened last week in Dublin and damn well ye know it". Andy protested weakly and tangentially that that was ridiculous, that he and his were "loyal" and would have no truck with rebels &c. But the solicitor had no time for such tangents, kept on to his target that Carson and his U.V.F. made it possible for the "Dublin

Fenians" to arm and, having armed, to rebel. The solicitor got considerable assistance from the nationalist element in the carriage, but the Unionists present were not very articulate in support of their protagonist; all of them, including the protagonist, struck me as being decidedly guilt-conscious, if not exactly conscience-stricken about the events of the prior three years. Such a discussion on politics, in a public place in the north of Ireland, where a great psychological canyon exists between the two sections of the populace, was quite unprecedented; that it took place at all indicates how tense and all-absorbing was the topic of the rebellion in those days.

Altmore House, where my cousins lived, is situated, as I have pointed out, in a high mountainy county amongst the hills of East Tyrone. The house itself is 900 feet over sea level and, adjacent to it, is a large reservoir that supplies water to the town of Dungannon, eight miles away. A short mile from the house, the little hamlet of Cappagh, with its white-washed houses, crowns the top of a "brae" through which the road to Dungannon runs. When I arrived at the house I found everyone in a state of considerable excitement. It appeared that, that morning, a company of military had arrived from Belfast and had quartered themselves in Cappagh. The purpose of their occupation was stated to be to protect the waterworks from

damage or poison. That, curiously enough, was a phobia that was widespread in those days. In many places, such as Dundalk, Drogheda, &c., military and National Volunteers, side by side, guarded reservoirs and waterworks. Soldiers in the Altmore hills created great local excitement as, not since the middle of the eighteenth century, had British soldiers been seen there.

The guard at Altmore were drawn from the Royal Irish Rifles and were all young, indeed very young, Belfast lads. Few, if any, of them had ever been far outside that city and none, I am sure, had ever been on a farm. They were a decent quiet, well-behaved lot of youngsters and took a great interest in the farming operations of my cousins' farm. You could never go through the yards or round the extensive out-offices of the house without encountering numbers of them hanging around, smoking and chatting to the men and maids. One of the hands on the farm was a young fellow called John. This John was a bit of a character, and, one morning, when he was digging up a small lawn in the garden, preparatory for the sowing of some crop, three or four of these young soldiers came along and watched him cutting round and lifting up the grass sods. One of the soldiers asked John to let him have a try at the spade. The young fellow dug up a sod with much difficulty, and, to John's disgust, replaced it on the ground with the

grass side uppermost. "Naw, naw", drawled John, with thinly veiled contempt, as he took the spade from him and proceeded to dig up a sod with great expedition, "that's not the way. What kin' o' Belfast fellas are ye at all, at all? Surely ye know to keep the green down", placing his sod on the ground, the grass side downward, "like that, d'ye see? Keep the green down; always keep the green down, surely ye know that".

Such was the famous Easter Week Rising of 1916, as I experienced it.

AFTER THE RISING.

With the executions of James Connolly and Sean McDermott on May 12th, the Dublin Easter Rising of 1916 can be said to have been closed. The official casualty list of the outbreak, published on May 11th, put the total casualties figure at 1306, of which 300 were fatal. Of the total deaths, 120 were those of the British army and the two police forces. When, in the tranquil background of Omagh we read that information, we were astonished, for, judging from the newspapers and other reports of the alleged savage fighting in Dublin that week, we were expecting to hear of the deaths being numbered in tens of thousands. But, although the fatalities were surprisingly small for a week's hard fighting in a very concentrated area, they certainly made Carson's constant talk of "blood" come true at last.

On July 18th, 1913, at Clough, Co. Down, for example, he declared that he "was inspired by the call of blood". And here was, not only the "call", but the thing itself. And, as in the first bloodshed in latter-day Ireland, that at Bachelor's Walk, the British army acted with an eagerness and alacrity - no resignations or suggestions of resignations from officers - that was in strong contrast with its attitude

towards Ulster. On the occasion of Bachelor's Walk and Easter Week, the British army exercised exemplary "impartiality" and completely eschewed anything in the nature of "politics". We also read that the damage done to property was estimated to amount to £3,364,100, an extremely high figure in the then currency, of which £2,614,000 was in respect of buildings and £750,000 in respect of stock - all of this was mainly the result of the bombardment.

According to the evidence of Col. Edgeworth-Johnstone, Chief Commissioner of the D.M.P., before the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Rebellion, the Irish Volunteers in Dublin murdered 2,225 (of whom little more than half were actually in the Rising) and they had no more than 825 rifles. Against them were, at the start, 4,000 British soldiers all, of course, adequately equipped with the latest armaments. These were greatly increased ultimately by reinforcements from England so that, by the end of that week, there were up to 20,000 British soldiers in and around the city.

Two things can be justly said about that Rising. On the one hand it was a remarkably fine fight for so few untrained civilians with still fewer rifles, with no artillery, not even a machine gun, and very limited ammunition, to put up against

(ultimately) more than ten times their number of fully trained professional soldiers; and, as we shall see, Asquith paid a generous tribute to their courage and clean fighting record. On the other hand, all things to the contrary notwithstanding, it has to be admitted that, with some very nasty exceptions, the British fought equally cleanly and, on the whole, behaved themselves well. That they were neither ruthless, cruel or vindictive is amply demonstrated by the almost trivial number slain in such an extensive affair - not more than 300, of whom not more than 180 were civilians and insurgents.

The universal hostility shown to the rebels and the welcome given the military by the Dublin crowds was, in itself, a tribute to their conduct under most trying conditions. Had they acted otherwise, had they resorted to that violence and ruthlessness that recent times have accustomed us to, their reception would have been very different. I can never forget a story the late Michael Collins told me that admirably symbolises the popular reaction at the time. After the suppression of the Rising, he and his fellow prisoners were marched under strong armed guard to the docks to embark for their places of internment in England. The beautiful, cloudless weather of the week had disappeared and had been replaced by a heavy grey sky from which descended on the dispirited, defeated and unshaven rebels

a cold, constant drizzle. They were escorted on their way by a motley crowd of men and women from the back streets and rat infested tenements who kept up a continuous boohing and jeering. One dreadful old hag, in particular, remained indelibly imprinted on Michael's memory. Her nose was eaten away by some disease and, with only a black shawl over her head to protect her from the heavy drizzle, she kept pace with them the whole way, reiterating: "Ye're after ruinin' our beautiful city, ye bastards, ye".

A feeling of profound depression, chagrin and frustration fell on the country in the immediate wake of the insurrection. Home Rule, we all believed, was dead, and we saw little hope before us of any future for our country after all the years of agitation and organisation. It took the long-drawn-out lingering executions of the leaders to stir us, and stir us deeply to r esentment and anger. Had they all been slain in the hot blood of battle, or even executed in a few batches after a drumhead courtmartial immediately after the surrender, there would not have been anything like the same soul-searing effect. And, had they been pardoned or given sentences of penal servitude, not only would the rebellion have been crushed, but its message of separatism and republicanism would, I believe, have been killed as well.

This resentment was still further inflamed like a festering sore by the fact that Carson and Bonar Law, the two prime begetters of all violence and insurgency in latter-day Ireland, were members of the Cabinet that endorsed the executions and, of course, equally responsible with their fellow-Ministers for them. And, as if that were not enough, Roger casement was, at that very time, being prosecuted in London for high treason by the English Attorney-General. That guardian of the country's law and order was none other than the famous "Galloper" (F.E.) Smith, one of the most fire-eating of all the rebels in the Ulster movement. Here is a sample of his oratory in his rebel days. Speaking in Co. Antrim on 21st September, 1913, he said if war was made on Ulster, "from that moment we hold ourselves absolved from all allegiance to this Government. From that moment we, on our part, say to our fellows in England - To your tents, O Israel. From that moment we stand side by side with you, refusing to recognise any law". It was surely a scandal of the first order and wholly against the great principle of English law that not only must justice be done, but it must seem to be done, that such an individual should have been given the commission to prosecute Casement to his death.

As the weeks passed, the country began to realise that, in one way or another, it had been let down, not only on Home Rule, but as to the special status of its fighting men in the British army that Asquith had promised; whilst, on the other hand, the Ulster Unionists had had all their demands met with the utmost consideration in nearly every respect. Another rather glaring example of official consideration for the "Ulster" cause was shown in the report of Lord Hardinge, Judge Shearman and Sir Mackenzie Chalmers, the Commissioners who inquired into the origin and causes of the Rising. In that report, published on June 26th, 1916, not one mention is made of the Ulster Volunteers and their originating part in the arming of the country, although Sir James Dougherty, a former Under-Secretary for Ireland, in his evidence before them, pin-pointed that part. He said that the Irish Volunteers were the response of the Nationalists to the Volunteer movement in Unionist Ulster; and the gun-running at Howth was but a natural sequel to the gun-running at Larne. "I do not care", he continued, with curious diffidence, "to enter into details as to the rise and progress of the Ulster movement. I can only say that those who led and encouraged it shouldered a very heavy burden of responsibility. They were, indeed, the persons who played with matches in a powder magazine".

The bitterness over the executions was certainly not allayed by the mad epidemic of arrests that seized the Government, some 3,430 men and 79 women being swept up all over the country, and incarcerated in concentration camps in Britain. Many of those thus interned knew little or nothing about the rebel movement or its doctrines; but, after a few months' indoctrination in such "rebel academies" as Frongoch, Knutsford and Wakefield, they became as thoroughly Sinn Féin as even the stoutest rebel in the Post Office could have been.

The first rift in the heavy cloud of despondency that hung over the country at that time was when, to the astonishment of everyone, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, paid a sudden and wholly unexpected visit to Dublin. The day before he left for Dublin, 11th May, he paid a generous tribute to the insurgents. "I agree", he said in the House of Commons, "as to the great body of the insurgents that they did not resort to outrage. They fought very bravely; they conducted themselves, as far as our knowledge goes, with humanity..... That tribute I gladly make"

Mr. Asquith spent about a week in Ireland - the longest visit in history that ever any acting English Premier paid the country - and, in addition to talking to "representative exponents of the various shades and complexions of Irish opinion", to use

his own words, he visited prisons and "talked with the utmost freedom to a large number of those who had been arrested and detained". That was a surprisingly courageous thing for a man of Asquith's cautious and, by no means, heroic character to have done; and he deserves full credit for it. Clearly his mind was far from easy about the Dublin outbreak. That wholly unexpected psycho-political earthquake shook him to the core of his inherited Liberal heart. Asquith was a man of exceptional intelligence and political acumen. He knew well the background behind the outbreak and the very material part that his Cabinet colleagues, Carson and Bonar Law, had played in making it a possibility. The Liberalism in him - deep down in him under the layers of flunkeyism and toadyism - was profoundly stirred and bruised; and he brought with him to Dublin something not unlike a guilty conscience. On his return from Ireland he informed Parliament that the dominant impression on his mind was "the breakdown of the existing machinery of Irish government" and that he had commissioned Mr. Lloyd George to negotiate with the Irish Party leaders with a view to a compromise settlement of the vexed question, a settlement that would enable the Home Rule Act to be brought into immediate operation. Professor Allison Phillips thus comments; with considerable force, on Asquith's intervention: "The Rebellion

was thus advertised to all the world as the most successful failure in history. What years of constitutional agitation had failed to secure had been secured by one short week's rebellion".

Another unexpected but gratifying ray of light in the encircling gloom, albeit of a minor sort, was the letter of that staunch if somewhat contrary Irishman, George Bernard Shaw, published in the "Daily News" on 10th May, 1916: "My own view", he wrote, with admirable courage: "Is that the men who were shot in cold blood, after their capture or surrender, were prisoners of war, and that it was, therefore, entirely incorrect to slaughter them. The relation of Ireland to Dublin Castle is, in this respect, precisely that ..... of Belgium, or the city of Lille to the Kaiser, and of the United States to Great Britain. Until Dublin Castle is superseded by a National Parliament and Ireland voluntarily incorporated with the British Empire .... an Irishman resorting to arms to achieve the independence of his country is doing only what Englishmen will do, if it be their misfortune to be invaded and conquered by the Germans in the course of the present war".

Unquestionably, Asquith's visit to Ireland in the circumstances of those times, and, to a lesser extent, Shaw's letter, acted on the country as a tonic, dispersing to some

extent its depression, and holding out to it a definite sign and promise of hope that all was by no means lost. And, incidentally, it certainly did no harm to the insurgent cause.

Lloyd George, the Government's "Welsh Wizard", set to work on his solvent with his famous "gusto". Lloyd George had numerous conferences in London with the leaders of the Irish political parties, but, unlike the Premier, he did not visit Ireland.

On June 10th, a meeting of the Irish Nationalist Party was held in the Mansion House, Dublin, when Mr. Redmond put before it the Lloyd George proposals that were, in substance, as follows:

(1) To bring the Home Rule Act into immediate operation.

(2) To introduce at once an Amending Bill as a strictly War Emergency Act to cover only the period of the War and a short interval after it.

(3) During that period Irish M.P.s to remain in Westminster in their full numbers.

(4) During that period the Six Ulster Counties to be left as at present under the Imperial Government.

(5) Immediately after the war, an Imperial Conference of representatives from all the Dominions of the Empire to be held to consider the future government of the Empire, including the question of the government of Ireland.

(6) Immediately after this Conference, and during the aforesaid particular period, the permanent settlement of all the great outstanding problems, such as the permanent position of the six exempted counties, would be proceeded with.

Redmond succeeded in getting that meeting to adopt those terms with its partition proposals thinly disguised as "temporary" therein.

A few days later, on June 12th, a full meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council was held in the Ulster Minor Hall, Belfast. At this meeting, which was private, Sir Edward Carson presided and put the aforementioned terms to it, with one important amendment, viz: that the Six Ulster Counties were to be permanently excluded from the Home Rule Act, a specific guarantee that, as subsequently transpired, Lloyd George had privately given him. Carson succeeded, after much difficulty, in getting the proposals accepted by a substantial majority of the delegates. Their reluctance to do so was very natural, seeing that it involved the reneging of their Covenant Oath; and that reluctance and guilty-conscienceness was reflected in the long-winded resolution they passed. The resolution re-affirmed their "unabated abhorrence" of Home Rule, but, as the Cabinet considered that the settlement was in the interests of the sorely-tried Empire, they would accept it as "in this crisis in the Empire's history, it is our duty to make sacrifices". And it concluded with a particularly obvious face-saving and futile clause, designed to conceal the guilt they undoubtedly felt over the matter. "And, further, we hereby pledge ourselves as follows: That, in the event of a settlement being arrived at on the basis above-mentioned, we shall use all the influence, power and resources of Ulster" - this comprehensive term they

suitably abridge - "(that is to say) of the six counties to be excluded from the purview of the Act) in the future for the protection of Unionists in the Counties of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal against justice or oppression at the hands of the Irish Parliament or Government". This "guarantee" to their betrayed fellow-Covenanters meant just nothing as, of course, their influence, in such circumstances, in those counties would be non-existent. It was indeed a case of adding insult to injury. They were saving their own skins at the expense of the non-excluded Unionists, not only of Ulster's nine counties, but of all Ireland's thirty-two counties, whom, by the betrayal of their oath, they had thrown under the heel of the terrible papistical Dublin Government. So much for that"mystical affirmation" as the "Times" called the Covenant whereby "Ulster seemed to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Diety". So much for Carson's solemn pledge on July 14th, 1914: "For my own part I know nothing of legality or illegality..... All I think of is my Covenant. My Covenant to me is the text and the foundation of what was illegality and what was legality; and everything that was necessary to carry out my Covenant, I believe, in my conscience, I am, under heaven, entitled to do".

The discarded Covenanters in the three included counties found a voice to give utterance to their grievances. That voice belonged to that redoubtable but intensely honest old war horse whom we have already encountered in these pages - the Rev. Canon T.L.F. Stack, B.D. He spoke often and much against the breach of the Covenant. His views are fully given in a sermon on 8th July, 1917, before the Orangemen in his Church of Lower Langfield, Drumquin, Co. Tyrone, when he preached on the text: "They kept not the Covenant of God" Ps. LXXV111, 10, which, anticipating somewhat, I shall now quote from. The first part of his sermon is taken up with examples from the Scriptures of the divine punishment and awful fate that befell those that repudiated their covenant. The Ten Tribes lapsed into idolatry and were lost. The Gibeonites obtained by fraud and lies a covenant with Israel. The princes swore to them by the God of Israel to let them live tho' He had commanded them to slay the Gibeonites for their abominable sins. He instanced also the cases of Zedekiah, Jephthah and Saul's rash oath. His sermon is copiously besprinkled with scriptural texts bearing on his theme. "When a man sweareth..... to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth". (Num. XXX. 2). "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say

thou before the angel that it was an error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thy hands?" (Eccles. V.6). "Thus sayeth the Lord God: As I live, surely mine oath that he had despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, will even bring it upon his own head. And I will spread my net upon him and he shall be taken in my snare ..... And all his fugitives in all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered towards every wind; and ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken it". (Ezek.XVll. 13-21). Referring to Jephthah's vow (Judges Xl.30-31), he declared it "shows how even a rash promise made to God must be kept even at the tremendous cost of slaying an only child as a burnt offering".

Coming to the Ulster Covenant itself, he quotes from a pamphlet published by the Ulster Unionist Council called "Ulster's Appeal", and which consisted of letters by prominent Unionists - Covenanters - to the press: In the first the covenant is thus defined - "I would ask the electors of Great Britain seriously to consider what manner of men they are who have sworn a most solemn and binding oath to resist Home Rule to the death". Commenting on this the Canon says: "If this view needs support we have it in the Covenant itself, and in its administration. Ulster Solemn

League and Covenant declares that we take this pledge 'Humbly relying on the God Whom our Fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted..... In such confidence that God will defend the right'. It was administered after Divine Service, ordered by the Church, with special forms provided. Indeed the Covenants might be termed a Sacramentum or Military Oath sworn by nearly half a million men and women to resist Home Rule! Hence a Provisional Government for Ulster was formed, and the U.V.F., some 150,000 strong, armed and drilled. Yet at the first summons the Council yields - abandons four-fifths of Ireland, including one-third of Ulster with its Covenanters, casting them to the wolves, if only six counties may escape.... By what casuistry can this betrayal be reconciled with the Oath of the Covenant 'to resist Home Rule to the very Death?' The heri-keri demanded of the fringe counties by the noble Six, for 'paramount Imperial necessity' was useless. None such existed. And those Counties, having been inveigled by mistatements into momentary surrender of the Covenant, now justly reclaim its aegis". And the indignant old man goes on to tell his Orangemen that there has been a breach of faith. "Our leaders pledged themselves to the U.V.F. that whilst they served in the Ulster Division there would be no tampering with

Home Rule. That pledge was broken when last year (i.e. June 1916) the Council provisionally accepted Lloyd George's proposal to set up immediately Home Rule for four-fifths of Ireland..... the Sinn Féiners are honest; they never concealed their faith but fought and died for it. Ulster surrendered hers without a blow".

But to return to June, 1916. Though the point of view of the Rev. Canon Stack about the violation of the Covenant oath had a considerable amount of support behind it in Ulster, particularly in the three "discarded" counties of Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan, it was not strong enough to prevail against Carson and his well-organised Unionist and Orange machine. Indeed, so ineffectual and disorganised was that body of dissident opinions, considerable in size as it was, that we find the deserted Unionists of those counties expressing themselves in the following terms on June 12th, the day of the meeting in Belfast of the Unionist Council: "That we protest in the strongest possible manner against the proposals of the Government to revive the Home Rule controversy, owing to the continuance of the war, and during the absence of so many Covenanters serving in His Majesty's forces. And we further protest on behalf of those Covenanters from the three counties we represent, against any settlement

of the Irish question which excludes them from Ulster. But, if the Six Counties consider the safety of the Empire depends on the basis suggested by the Government, the responsibility must be clearly understood to be theirs and the delegates of the three counties must abide by their decision". Rather a flatulent resolution in the circumstances, but it does register a certain amount of ill-concealed chagrin against their quondam brothers-in-arms. And even they limited their protest to the "Covenanters of the three counties we represent", though as sworn covenanters they should have protested on behalf of all the discarded Unionists of Ireland on whose account that covenant to the death had been sworn.

Meetings were held by the Canon Stack Unionists in various places, not alone in Ulster but in the South and Dublin, viewing with dismay the exclusion of the Six Counties and pointing out that in agreeing to special arrangements for the Six Counties the Northern Protestants had been guilty of breaking the solemn covenant to which they had subscribed three years earlier. These accusations found their targets in the sensitive, self-righteous bosoms of Carson's ex-Covenanters and they felt

bound to endeavour to answer them. This they did in a most specious and uncandid way. Their argument was that, far from breaking the Covenant they were keeping it "in the spirit if not in the letter" because a spearate Ulster Government (actually not then even contemplated!) with a Catholic minority under it would be a better guarantee for the just treatment of Protestants in Catholic Ireland than if the whole Protestant body were to form a minority in a Catholic State. The hollowness and falsity of this argument were easily shown up by two things. In the first place the great Unionist contention on which their whole resistance to Home Rule for all or any part of Ireland was based and in respect of which they had sworn the Covenant, was that no group or body of Protestants, however small, could be thrown under the tyrannical, anti-Protestant heels of a Dublin Government. That was Carson's big Number One plank in his whole campaign of violence, and here he was deliberately abandoning the large Protestant minority in three Ulster counties as well, of course, as those in the South and West. The real reason why Carson and the Unionists of the North-East corner elected to opt for a Six Counties isolated from Home Rule was a far from altruistic one, as the late Sir James Craig,

in his blunt and honest fashion, revealed some years later. Speaking in the House of Commons in 1920. on the question of area, Craig said: "We had to take a decision some days ago as to whether we should call upon the Government to include the nine counties in the Bill, or be satisfied with the six..... We admit quite frankly that we cannot hold the nine counties. Then we decided, in the interests of the greater part of Ulster, it is better we should give up the three counties". That, then, was the true and candid reason why the Six Counties became the area of the Northern Government. They were thus selected deliberately "in the interests of the greater part of Ulster", a wholly arbitrary area, the largest possible in the country with a predominant Protestant majority that "could be held"; and the Unionists elsewhere in the country could sink or swim under horrific "Papish" control as best they were able despite the solemn farce of the Covenanting Oath.

The Irish Party Convention in Dublin on June 10th, and Carson's convention in Belfast on June 12th, had, as we have seen, accepted Lloyd-George's proposals, or rather, as subsequently transpired, their respective versions of

them. The Dublin Convention's action came as a surprise and a keen disappointment to us Mid-Ulster Nationalists. We were astonished that any body of Nationalists could be got anywhere in the country to endorse even a pseudo-temporary form of Partition. And we were all greatly irritated by the articles of an accepted Nationalist, the late Arthur Clery, that appeared in that highly respected paper, "The Leader", under the non-de-plume of "Chanel", arguing the case for Partition. However, we did not attach much account to them, dismissing them as the outpourings of an accentric intellectual. But when, however, on June 20th, only three days before the determining Convention of Nationalists of the Six Counties were to meet and vote on proposals in Belfast, Father Michael O'Flanagan's famous "Partition" letter was published in the "Freeman's Journal", we were furious. And, perhaps, what enraged us most about the letter was that it contained the best, most cogent and cleverest arguments in defence of Partition that had ever been advanced from any quarter. "If we reject Home Rule rather than agree to the exclusion of the Unionist parts of Ulster" wrote that able Sligo curate, "what case have we to put before the world? We can point out that Ireland

is an island with a definite geographical boundary. That argument might be alright if we were appealing to a number of Island Nationalities that had themselves definite geographical boundaries. Appealing as we are to continental nations with shifting boundaries, that argument will have no force whatever. National and geographical boundaries scarcely ever coincide. Geography would make one nation of Spain and Portugal; history has made two of them; geography has scarcely anything to say to the number of nations upon the North American Continent; history has done the whole thing.. Geography has worked hard to make one nation out of Ireland; history has worked hard against it. The island of Ireland and the national unit of Ireland simply do not coincide. In the last analysis the test of nationality is the wish of the people. A man who settles in America becomes an American by transferring his love and allegiance to the United States. The Unionists of Ulster have never transferred their love and allegiance to Ireland. They may be Irelanders, using Ireland as a geographical term, but they are not Irishmen in the national sense. They love the hills of Antrim in the same way as we love

the plains of Roscommon; but the centre of their patriotic enthusiasm is London, whereas the centre of ours is Dublin.

We claim the right to decide what is to be our nation. We refuse them the same right. We are putting ourselves before the world in the same light as the man in the Gospel who was forgiven the ten thousand talents and who proceeded immediately to throttle his neighbour for a hundred pence. After 300 years England has begun to despair of compelling us to love her by force. And so we are anxious to start where England left off, and we are going to compel Antrim and Down to love us by force". Thus wrote the famous Father Michael O'Flanagan in June, 1916 - the man that within the next five years was to develop into an advanced republican die-hard. As I say, we in the North were wild at his letter because of its clever pleading and because of the time when it was published. Re-reading it though to-day, I am forced to admit that, though his basis of argumentation is rather faulty, there is definitely something in what he wrote. The Convention of representatives of the people directly concerned, viz.

the Nationalists of the Six Counties, met in St. Mary's Hall, Belfast, on June 23rd. I was in Omagh at the time and vividly remember the time, feeling and strain amongst the local Nationalists. They had never reconciled themselves to Partition in any shape or form, even to temporary Partition - which they not unreasonably suspected as being but the thin end of the wedge of permanent Partition. The idea was abhorrent to them, and they felt intensely about it in a way and to an extent that it is quite impossible to convey to the present generation. And, I might say, the local Unionists were hardly less happy about it, and looked to the Belfast Convention with almost as great hope as the Nationalists that it would repudiate the proposals, but for a rather different reason - that, in that event, Home Rule for all, or any part of Ireland, would be killed. There were few telephones and, of course, no radios at that time, and the only way we Omagh folk had of obtaining news about important events was to go round to Davy Young's little tobacco and sweet shop in the High Street and read the telegrams that always seemed to make for "Davys" on such occasions, pasted up on his window. Davy Young was a

good Presbyterian and strong Unionist, although by no means a politician. He was too keen a businessman to indulge in active politics, and his "Cigar Divan" and "Sweeteries" was a kind of centre of intelligence and information that drew all and sundry thither when rumours were in the air. That evening I walked into town to learn the verdict. I found a large and mixed crowd, Nationalists and Unionists, gathered round the window, and noticed that those who had read the tidings came away with serious and far from cheerful countenances. And when I read the telegram giving the result I did likewise. To our amazement, the representatives of the Nationalists of the Six Northern Counties had accepted the plan of their temporary exclusion from all-Ireland Home Rule by the large majority of 210 in an assembly of 740, of whom some 265 voted in the minority. The result of the vote, backing as it did a highly unpopular scheme in the eyes of Ulster Nationalists, was a personal triumph for Mr. Joe Devlin, M.P., whose impassioned eloquence carried the day. A great part of the substantial minority comprised the delegates from the two counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh possessing small but conclusive Nationalist majorities.

I walked home that evening from Young's shop with a feeling of deep depression that I never experienced till then, and not often since. Looking back on it now, it does seem strange that that news should have so affected me and many thousands of others in those counties. But there it was; partition, even temporary partition was then regarded as something so fantastic and unnatural that its existence simply could not be contemplated, much less endured or tolerated. The delegates who voted against the proposal were received as heroes when they returned to their areas, bands turning out to meet them; whilst those in Tyrone and Fermanagh who voted with the majority received a very different kind of welcome. All our local leaders of official nationalists, headed by Frank O'Connor, Solicitor, and Michael Lynch, Managing Director of the "Ulster Herald", sided and voted with the minority. Indeed, the outstanding leader of that minority was Frank O'Connor. He was an excellent orator of the popular type, and could sway and hold an audience with consummate ability. For years he had been the leading personality in Mid-Ulster politics, always a steadfast supporter of the orthodox official Irish Parliamentary Party and a prominent delegate from the area in all their conventions.

He was certainly a member of the United Irish League, but I doubt very much whether he ever was a Hibernian. He was one of the main leaders in the anti-Murnaghan split that I have described, and I am not at all sure that had his personality, eloquence and popularity been with (instead of against) Murnaghan, that split would never have occurred. O'Connor was undoubtedly a politician by nature, but , as his action in Belfast showed, he was far from being a time-server or a place-hunter. It took a lot of courage on the part of men like him and Lynch to oppose the all-powerful party machine with its secret Hibernian auxiliaries , and brave wrath and vengeance, particularly having regard to the split tradition in the area. Their action was bitterly resented and repudiated by their former friends. They were all attacked as "Sore-heads", "Factionists", "Disrupters" and "Disappointed place-hunters". The last epithet was particularly unjust, as before the Convention they stood at the head of their party in the district and had immensely more to lose than to gain by their action.

O'Connor, Lynch and a very large section of their followers in the U.I.L. and the A.O.H. shortly afterwards

severed all connection with that official Nationalism that they had served so long and so well, and joining in with the old-time Murnaghanite dissidents, proceeded to organise an anti-Partition opposite to the Lloyd George plan.

The opposition to the plan spread rapidly throughout the two counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh, and to such Nationalist strongholds as Derry City, South County Derry, South Armagh and South Down. The other parts of Ulster did not, save for individuals and groups, register any particular organised opposition, certainly not any very marked collective opposition. But no district in the province was without a sediment of strong feeling and opposition to Partition, and that sediment formed in every case the nucleus of the future Sinn Féin movement therein. But not only were large sections of the Nationalists on the warpath against Partition, but, as we have seen, there was a rebellion too amongst the Northern Unionists which had quite a following in the border or "Fringe" counties and was particularly articulate in Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan. However, I have already dealt with that movement and its tough old leader, Canon Stack of Drumquin. Anti-Partition committees sprang up in many parts of the province, particularly in Tyrone and Fermanagh where the dislike of the proposal was strongest and most articulate. One of those Committees was formed

after Mass outside my local church at Killyclogher, about a mile distant from the town of Omagh. It was presided over by the local curate, Father Charles O'Callaghan. Among the speakers were my father and George Murnaghan, his partner. Suddenly, to my surprise and embarrassment, I was called on to speak, which I did. That was my first political speech.

Whilst these activities were proceeding in the North, a trial that attracted an enormous amount of interest was taking place in London; the trial of Sir Roger David Casement. And a significant circumstance in the personnel at that trial certainly did not escape notice in Ireland. The case for the Crown was led by the Attorney-General in England, who was none other than the Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick Smith, K.C., P.C., M.P. In other words, the man who was assigned the task of prosecuting Casement on his life for high treason was one of the strongest and most violent abettors of the Ulster Volunteers in their highly seditious activities, which the prisoner at the bar only endeavoured to emulate. In all the circumstances there could hardly have been a more unseemly or improper choice of a prosecutor, violating, as it undoubtedly did, that prime principle of English law that not only must justice be done, but it must be seen to be done. At all events, no one had greater practical experience of the charge he was to

prove than the famous "Galloper"; and when he opened the case for the Crown by informing the Court that "the charge against the prisoner was the gravest known in Law", no one could say that he did not know what he was talking about.

"New Ireland", at that time a supporter, though a critical one, of Redmond's Party and the Cause of the Allies in the War, made this sharp and courageous comment on Smith's position in the trial in its issue of July 29th, 1916: stating that it was shocking that Smith, "the former preacher of rebellion and sedition, should be the chief law officer of the Crown and, as such, should have prosecuted Sir Roger Casement; having done so, he might have had the decency of giving the latter the fullest chances for his life". He had refused Casement a fiat for an appeal to the House of Lords. The paper continues: "In the meantime, it would satisfy our sense of justice to see Sir F.E. Smith tried for high treason and sentenced, as he ought to be, to be hanged - if the matter were expedited the two hangings might take place on the same day". This put into succinct language the reactions of even conservative, constitutional Nationalism to Casement's trial and his prosecutor. When his execution took place after such a trial, it is not hard to understand

the much more acute reactions to it in the country. Smith, of course, succeeded in proving his charge. Roger Casement was condemned to death and hanged on the morning of August 3rd at Pentonville Prison, London. And though his hanging took place very early in the day, a considerable crowd gathered outside the gaol and when the announcement was affixed to the door that sentence of death by execution had been duly carried out on Roger David Casement, they had the execrable lack of taste and humanity to break out into cheers and song. That unsavoury incident so upset me that I sat down and wrote a bitter condemnation of it, comparing it to the ribald scenes that occurred outside Manchester Prison on the execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien during the Fenian times. My article was duly published in the "Ulster Herald".

The anti-Partition movement spread rapidly throughout Ulster, particularly in what were called the "Fringe Counties" - Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Armagh and Down. It was greatly stimulated by the Bishop of Derry, Dr. MacHugh, who made his support of it unmistakably clear in a letter to the press of July 13th, 1916. "The tragic events" he wrote, "that are reported in the press from day to day show that the fate of Ireland a Nation is in the balance". And having criticised the Irish Party for its failure "to defend her

(Ireland's) integrity", he continued: "In all the trying vicissitudes through which our poor country has passed, she has remained one and undivided. Her liberty and her independence were bartered and betrayed in the sordid transactions of the Union, but still she was sold, not piecemeal but as one..... Surely Ireland is not yet dead. No doubt, through the apathy of the people, she is on the dissecting table"! And he added a postscript, very telling in the tense climate of the day: "The Parliamentary Report of to-day says, in the words of Sir Edward Carson in which Mr. Asquith acquiesces, that the Six Counties have been definitely struck out of the Act of 1914. The meaning of this is that the Lloyd George Home Rule Act shall be repealed and annulled for the Six Counties, and that a new Home Rule Act must be framed and passed through Parliament before these counties and the cities of Belfast and Derry can ever again be united to the rest of Ireland". This letter, with its fateful message of permanent partition, coming from so eminent and respected a prelate, gave an enormous fillip to the already fast-spreading movement and had the effect of throwing into its ranks many of the Conservative elements of weight and influence in those counties that up till then had held back. And soon the

Northern Nationalists were to see the Bishop's statement about Partition virtually confirmed by an even more eminent personage than he, none other than the Prime Minister himself. Speaking in the House of Commons on July 24th, 1916, Mr. Asquith said that "the agreement come to in regard to Ireland by the Secretary for War, subject to the approval of the Government, embodied two main points, which were accepted by both sections of the Government, Unionists and Home Rulers. The Unionists in the Cabinet agreed that the Government of Ireland Act should be put into immediate operation, and, on the other hand, the Home Rulers in the Cabinet agreed that six Ulster Counties should not be brought in, except by their own consent and on the express authority of a new Act of Parliament. In course of settling the bill to give effect to these objects, two questions arose which required consideration. The first was as to the form in which the exclusion of the Ulster Counties should be provided for. The Government believed that it was common ground to all parties to the agreement that this area should not be subjected to automatic inclusion, and they did not propose to do more than make thus sure. The other question was the retention after Home Rule of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament....."

Concluding the debate which followed, Mr. Asquith said he had laid it down on the floor of the House that there must be no coercion of Ulster, and that the six counties which were being excluded by the arrangement should not be brought back by any automatic process but only by express Acts of Parliament.

Carson had been asserting from the moment Lloyd George had first consulted him about the proposals that the Six Counties were to be permanently excluded. The Battle of Jutland had taken place on May 31st and, ending as it did in a near British defeat, produced, in conjunction with the grave set-back of the French Army in the protracted Battle of Verdun, feelings of dismay and great uneasiness. According to biographer Colvin, Carson thought "the game was up; but he could still make terms - and his main idea was the exclusion of Ulster from a Home Rule settlement". He could still make terms, his own terms, and he did, and got from Lloyd George the famous letter confirming his contention and his claim: written from Whitehall Place, S.W., on May 29th, 1916.

"I enclose Greer's draft proposals. We must make it clear that at the end of the provisional period Ulster does not, whether she wills it or not, merge in the rest of Ireland".

Surely no words could be more crystal-clear in meaning than these; yet there are intelligent people to-day prepared to argue that they do not mean at all what they say - indeed, quite the opposite! Not even in the face of imminent disaster to the Empire, as they then thought, would Carson compromise or would Lloyd George do aught but counsel him never to compromise.

There was no doubt that once again, as in the crisis over the 1909 Budget, poor Redmond had been badly humbugged. So, when the Bill containing the vital altered provisions was introduced on July 25th, he had no alternative but to refuse to accept it. In moving the adjournment, he denounced the Government for having "disregarded every advice we tendered to them, and now in the end, having got us to induce our people to make a tremendous sacrifice and agree to the temporary exclsuion of these Ulster counties, they threw this agreement to the winds and they have taken the surest means to accentuate every possible danger and difficulty in the Irish situation".

Once more a "solution of the Irish Question" proved no solution at all, but left the position more sore and inflamed than ever.

These developments added grist at a great rate to the anti-Partition mill. Coterminous with the advance of that organisation in Ulster and other parts of Ireland, there was a formidable up-surge of anti-British feeling in America, due, in the first place, to revulsion at the executions, but in due course the Partition issue, as it has developed since the Rising, became a big issue amongst the American Irish and they were soon organising and collecting funds for its defeat.

At the end of July 1916, Duke, K.C., became Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Viscount Wimbourne, who had resigned, was re-appointed Lord Lieutenant; James H. Campbell, K.C., another of the prominent Ulster seditionists, was made Attorney-General for Ireland and thereby entrusted with the guardianship of law and order there. The anti-Partition committees, particularly in central and western Ulster, were beginning to feel that some organisation more positive and national than a mere local negative one should be created to fill the big gap left in the national life by the decay and discreditment of the old United Irish League. Accordingly, delegates from a large number of anti-Partition committees met in Derry and founded the Irish Nation League,

where it had the support of the clergy, headed by the Bishop of Derry, the late Dr. Charles McHugh. But as a provincial centre was considered to be hardly the headquarters of what aimed to be a national organisation, it was to take premises in Dublin. However, before that stage was reached a great anti-Partition demonstration, under the auspices of the Nation League, was held in the Phoenix Park on 10th September, 1916. This was presided over by the late J.J. O'Meara, Solicitor and City Councillor. It was a very large demonstration indeed, with at least half a dozen platforms.

We of the Nation League rejoiced exceedingly at the huge assembly that had come together under our auspices to hearken to and applaud our "winged words", which they certainly did with a vengeance. We were sure we had "struck oil" so to speak, and were witnessing the birth of a great new national movement, better and more virile than any that had preceded it. How mistaken we were we did not then know; it took us that winter in Dublin to realise it. Save for the Northern contingents, the driving force behind that great demonstration did not emanate from us at all but from the I.R.B. and Volunteer elements. Those made use of the big gathering as a cover to come together again,

contact their leaders and their key-men and re-knit, as far as they could, their hidden and military organisations, shattered and dislocated as they had been by the Rising and by subsequent arrests and internments.

After that meeting, the prominent Irish Nation League leaders and speakers met in Vaughan's Hotel, Parnell Square. Those made the first draft of the Constitution of the new body and prepared a manifesto to the Irish people which was issued to the press next day. A provisional Executive Committee of the new League was formed, the chairman of whom was the late J.J. O'Meara, T.C., Solicitor, and which included, as far as I can recollect, F.T. O'Connor, Solicitor, Omagh - the real leader and driving force behind the movement - Michael Lynch, Managing Director of the 'Ulster Herald', Omagh; Seán O'Hanrahan, Solicitor, Omagh; George Murnaghan, Solicitor, Omagh; Alex E. Donnelly, Solicitor, Omagh; Barney Campbell, Solicitor, Belfast; Charles McLoughlin, Solicitor, Magherafelt, Co. Derry, Paddy Little, Solicitor, Dublin - proprietor and editor of '<u>New Ireland</u>', J.J. O'Kelly("Sceilg"), Stephen M. O'Mara and Michael O'Callaghan, Limerick; Roger Sweetman, B.L., Derrybard, Glendaloch; P.W. Kenny, Kingsmeadow House,

Waterford; Archibald Savage, P.L.G., Belfast; John Cummins, Wexford; Edward Stephens, B.L., Dublin; Lawrence Casey, Dublin; John Crozier, J.P., Chairman Enniskillen Poor Law Guardians, Vice Chairman Fermanagh County Council; F.J. Little, Solicitor, Dublin; Art MacCumhail, Dublin; P.J. McCorry, B.L., Belfast, and Alderman P. Lane, Cork.

The late Archibald Nicholls, L.L.D., and I were made Secretaries, and George Murnaghan and Stephen M. O'Mara, Trustees. Premises were taken for the Nation League at the Mansion House Chambers, 27, Dawson St., Dublin. I should mention that Cahir Davitt was one of the first members of the I.N.L. At a later stage a vacancy occurred in the parliamentary representation of Donegal, and the Nation League wrote Davitt, inviting him to contest the by-election under its auspices. He wrote back declining, saying that for the present, at all events, he would remain merely an ordinary member. The Nation League set out to be an organisation of a very advanced and progressive type of nationalism, but it was pledged to strictly constitutional methods and did not believe in a policy of abstention from Westminster, at least a policy of complete and uncompromising abstention. Its compromise was occasional abstention to mark and bring into the limelight any particular grievance.

Similarly it was far from being separatist or republican in character, and in its Manifesto expressed its principal objectives to be as follows: -

"(1) To maintain the unity of Ireland; to secure complete national self-government and prevent any division or partition of the nation.

(2) To preserve and cherish national ideals and the distinctive features of Irish life: its history, tradition and language; to cultivate patriotism and good citizenship.

(3) To obtain justice for Ireland in the matter of Imperial taxation.

(4) To develop the natural resources of the country; to revive its industries and improve its agriculture.

(5) To promote friendship and cohesion between the Irish people and their exiled fellow-countrymen for the furtherance of the objects of the Irish Nation League".

Fear of the paralysing and de-nationalising influence of the House of Commons on Irish members was reflected in the provision in its constitution that placed the Nation League M.P.s very definitely under the control of its Executive, which latter body could at will, seemingly, call on them to withdraw from Westminster. And that was as far as the Nation League got to the Sinn Féin principle of complete abstention from the British Parliament. Another

check on prospective Nation League M.P.s at Westminster was that they would have to pool their State allowances of £500 (then) a year.

When I returned to Dublin that autumn I beheld a vastly changed city in more ways than one. There was the extensive area of ruins in the central parts, caused by the bombardment, and the strong military and police guards everywhere who seemingly had the right to stop and question passers-by. Some things that have now, Thank God, disappeared completely from the Dublin scene had remained in full flavour, untouched by the upheaval, for example, the numerous ragged beggars of both sexes that dogged the pedestrian's passage through the streets, often, particularly in the case of the "fair" sex, arrogant and abusive, the line of umemployed or work-shirkers that reclined against the walls of the dreary and generally forbidding taverns, the extremely miserably-garbed and hungry-looking human beings who predominated in most thoroughfares, and, of course, the wretchedly-clothed and perennially bare-footed but always heroically bright and gay newsboys. Yes, the Dublin I returned to in the latter part of 1916 was still dear, but dirtier than ever before. However, more marked and far-reaching to anyone who knew the pre-Rising Dublin was the

extraordinary change that was in process in public opinion. A few months earlier it would have been difficult, despite the city's traditionally rebel reputation, to find anyone who had a good word to say for the rebels, or the outbreak. Now there was praise of them everywhere, even from those, still the great majority, who condemned their action. And side by side with that admiration for the rejected and detested of a few months since was a profoundly felt sympathy for those who had been executed. How sound was Pearse's calculation and hope that he and his colleagues would be executed and thus the message of the Rising would be saved.

This radical change in outlook was strikingly manifested by the change in the contents of the windows of the bookshops and stationers' shops which from being filled with publications with war and the Allied cause (many giving stirring accounts of the valorous doings of the Irish regiments), with picture postcards of the Allied leaders and Generals (which, in turn, had replaced those of the reigning stage stars of pre-war days), were now wholly monopolised with the portraits of, and works on the "Men of Easter Week".

The Rising had stimulated thought, political and literary, to an extraordinary degree. Everyone you met seemed to have become, all of a sudden, vitally interested in politics and the new shapes of national thought that were cropping up in all directions. Men and women were being drawn together in groups, clubs and societies for discussion and debate all over the city. A veritable renaissance was taking place in the general mind, and the atmosphere was abuzz with thoughts and ideas of all kinds. At that time, I, like my contemporaries, was greatly moved and stirred by all those happenings and manifestations. One of the people I came in contact with and saw a good deal of, was Paddy Little, lately T.D. for County Waterford and Minister for Posts and Telegraphs. He was then the senior partner in the Solicitors' firm of Little, Woods & Proud, Eustace Street. John Kirwin Woods - the second partner in the firm, a good speaker of Irish and an enthusiastic Gaelic Leaguer - about this time changed his name to Seán Ó hUadhaigh, which led to a corresponding change in the name of the firm. Such changes were common enough at the time and quite a number of shops in Dublin had their names transported into Irish.

Paddy Little, still happily with us, owned and ran

very well indeed an excellent weekly journal called "New Ireland" which supplied to a large extent a big want in what I may call the nation's cultural and higher and more thoughtful periodical reading. Indeed, there is to-day no paper in existence quite of its type - full of well written and thoughtful articles dealing with the most controversial matters in an admirably objective and charitable manner. Paddy Little deserves the greatest credit for providing at that time, and mainly out of his own pocket, so admirable and well-conducted a forum that supplied a very necessary centre for all us young men with our legions of ideas about, and on, all questions of the day. We could well do with such a journal to-day.

"New Ireland" was a paper of, by and for the educated youth of the country - its first editor had been Denis Gwynn, son of Stephen Gwynn, one of the Irish M.P.s. Denis, sometime before Easter Week, left the editorial chair for the field of Mars, joining up in, I think, the Dublin Fusiliers.

With Paddy Little I met and came to know well his associates, the chief of whom were the late Lawrence P. Byrne ("Andrew E. Malone") and Mario Esposito, son of the famous composer. Larry Byrne, who, unfortunately, died many years

ago in his prime, was a Dubliner, born and bred, a man of much natural ability with a strongly developed journalistic flare who, at a moment's notice, could knock off a first rate and most readable article on the most difficult and abstruse questions, whether in politics or economics. He was deeply interested and well versed in economics, which he had given much study to and of which he had considerable practical experience in his capacity as an official in the Irish Co-Operative Wholesale Organisation in Lord Edward St. He was, of course, a keen co-operator and an admirer and loyal supporter through every vicissitude of Sir Horace Plunkett and Father Tom Finlay, S.J. In politics Larry was a stable middle-of-the road man, temperamentally adverse to extremes of any kind, whether they came from Right or Left. He was an avowed admirer of English Liberalism in its best manifestation and could not wish for any better Government than a Constitutional democracy such as England had evolved; and he did not care in the least whether that democracy had a monarch or a president at its head. He was also deeply interested in the problems that then agitated the resurgent Dublin labour world. Indeed, his interests covered a wide field. I think, however, that his predominant interest and love was the drama, of which he was

an excellent critic, and abouts its Irish aspect he has left us an admirable history. Larry was very far from being a Separatist, and, as a convinced Liberal, had no time for physical force or uprisings of any kind. He thought mankind should solve all its political and economical problems by the application to them of the enlightened machinery provided by democratic Liberalism. Hence he detested Carson for the fatal legacy his recklessly destructive and negative policy left Ireland and (what Larry admired nearly as much) the British Commonwealth of Nations. He was a delightful companion and a sincere and warm-hearted friend.

Paddy's other chief prop for his paper was, as I have said, Mario Esposito, also happily with us and now living in Florence. Mario, a very gifted man who left T.C.D. after a distinguished course there, soon made a name for himself in the world of classical scholarship. In appearance he looked a passionate Italian, with his large dark eyes, thick eyebrows and rather sallow complexion. But appearances, we know, are often deceptive. They certainly were so in Mario's case; his character and temperament were the exact antithesis to his looks - calm,

cold and extremely objective to a remarkable degree. Mario did little or no writing for the paper but was extremely useful, indeed essential, as a reader of Mss. and a corrector of proofs that often needed much correcting and re-writing.

His views on politics, Irish in particular, were amusedly, but by no means cruelly, cynical. He might, I suppose, be described as a nationalist, though of a very vague type; certainly he was sympathetic to Irish nationalism in a general and undefined kind of way. But I don't think he ever took, or could get himself to take it seriously. It would not, I think, be too far from the truth to say that his main reason for interesting himself in Irish nationalistic matters was because he profoundly disliked the personalities that made up Irish Unionism.

Whilst, therefore, I cannot say that he enthused for Irish nationalism, or indeed for anything at all, he was definitely with us and gave great and valuable support to the paper in very difficult times. And we shall see presently that he was prepared to go very far and take serious risks in the Cause.

Another quality he had that made him a delightful companion - a highly developed sense of humour, if of a somewhat satiric type. He and I became extremely friendly and spent many pleasant hours together in long walks, debating and discussing about the "times that were in it". Now, before I leave Mario, I must recall the incident already referred to, though it occurred at a much later stage - in the last year of the War.

Our republican authorities, it seemed, were anxious to get someone to get out, by some means or other, to Switzerland so as to be on the spot with Ireland's case when the war was over. To do this at that time was really next to impossible, as there was no ordinary passenger traffic out from the British Isles, and any attempt to get out, with the war raging at its height on land sea, would almost certainly be checked at any of the heavily-guarded ports. Mario, however, volunteered to go. He pointed out that his knowledge of languages, Italian, French, German, would be very useful, if not essential, in such a task. The point then arose, how was he to get out with the war raging on the Continent, the Germans nearly in Paris, and Haig fighting "with his back to the wall"?

He said he had, or could get, an Italian passport, as he was technically an Italian subject, and as he knew, or was friendly, with the Italian Consul-General in Dublin, he thought he wouldn't have much difficulty in getting visa'd and getting out, on the plea of bad health, to Switzerland. There were many doctors who would give him the necessary certificate. However, he soon found out from his Italian friend that there was not an earthly hope of his getting the visa. Nothing daunted, he decided to get the Italian stamp forged, and that, to my astonishment, he actually succeeded in doing. I saw it, and it certainly was an excellent piece of work - all marked up to date, with the appropriate Italian official's signature admirably counterfeited, the whole guaranteed, I should think, to deceive the most lynx-eyed of detectives or preventive officers. All this, however, took a considerable time to accomplish, and when Mario got it the War was over and the whole enterprise fell through.

An old friend of mine on the North West Circuit - he subsequently transferred to the Connacht - Charles Bewley, was also one of our group. He had a brilliant academic career at Oxford, where he won the Newdegate Prize for Englis

poetry, won, I believe, by John Milton in his day. Bewley had a biting wit and a wide and very flexible literary talent, and contributed many telling articles, sketches, short stories and verse, all with a tooth in them and none without savour and distinction. He generally wrote under the pseudonym of "Patrick J. Gibbons". He was later our Minister to Berlin and the Vatican, and now lives in retirement in Rome. The journal "New Ireland", like the nation itself, also underwent a metamorphosis in its outlook and policy. And as that metamorphosis, in its gradualness and in its ultimate extremity, was a remarkably true reflection of the wider change that was simultaneously taking place in national public opinion, I shall dwell a little on it here and, by way of illustration, give instances of it.

"New Ireland" was founded by young men who were supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party under John Redmond. They belonged, however, to the highly critical and very outspoken "Young Ireland Branch" of the United Irish League whose chairman was, I think, Francis Sheehy Skeffington and who numbered amongst its membership the brilliant Tom Kettle, later killed in the War. The

original policy of the paper was, therefore, strictly constitutional and orthodox, even if critical. That policy was pursued pretty faithfully, even to the extent of supporting the Lloyd George proposals for the so-called temporary Partition which was endorsed by a majority of the Convention of the Nationalists of the Six Counties in Belfast on 23rd June, 1916. Its declared reason for this was "the bird in the hand" one, and, in its own words printed later - "we supported the exclusion proposals because, at the time, we believed it would lead to Home Rule for all Ireland by consent."

Since the War, and until well after Easter Week, it supported the Entente against the Central Powers , with particular emphasis on the Irish Regiments, their achievements and requirements. In so doing it pursued the exact same policy of at least 95% of all varieties of the then very representative Constitutional Nationalism press. Only the small and, at the time, insignificant Separatist press took any other line on the War, and even that dissident press never went further then than the advocacy of neutrality for Ireland. It is interesting and curious to look through the files of that Journal (preserved in the

National Library, Dublin) for those years. Turning over these pages, we find that the paper is obsessed with two main themes: Ireland, particularly Home Rule, and the conduct and progress of the War. We come across articles and verses galore about the War and the Allied Cause. There is, for example, the "Story of the Munsters" at Etreux and Festurbert by Mrs. Victor Rickard, ultimately issued in pamphlet form by the "New Ireland Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd.", post free 7d. There is also the "Story of the 10th (Irish) Division at Gallipoli" by Michael McDonagh, the biographer of William O'Brien, exclusive to New Ireland. In its issue of 9th September, 1915, we find this comment: "We want to know why Admiral de Robeck in his historic dispatch from Gallipoli omitted all mention of the Irish Regiments; or why Lord Kitchener, in his survey of the recent phases of the war, is lavish in the praises of the Colonial troops but ignores the Irish, whose achievements have been of equal importance..... We ask, along with many other Irish journals, are the Irish regiments to receive no official recognitions except in the casualty lists?" And that was about the height of it. Even when we were Britain's allies there were prejudice and dislike of the Irishmen

in her armies fighting bravely in the forefront of her battles; nay, there were worse than prejudice and dislike - emotions that cannot be helped - there was downright injustice. Was it any wonder John Bull lost us? Katherine Tynan had a moving poem in the issue of 5th May, 1915, entitled "A Prayer to Those Who Shall Return".

Even when, after a silence of nine weeks, the journal reappeared after the Rising on 24th June, 1916, the interests of the Allies were still in its mind. Explaining its pre-Rising attitude, the Editor wrote: "As to the past, we strive for a peaceful issue of the Irish Question..... Our views dwindle into insignificance before the events of Easter and before their causes..... The immediate inspiration of the Rebellion (sic) was the idea of an Irish Republic. The idea was wholly unfamiliar to the majority of Irishmen. The aim of Colonial Home Rule (sic) filled the political horizon of 9/10th of the Irish people, and the whole justification of the present Home Rule Act was that it led in the direction of that aim..... The policy of New Ireland is that the Home Rule issue be settled at once as a measure to be carried in the interests of Ireland first, and of all the Allies in the War".

And in the following month, July, in an article pleading for Casement's life - he was then under sentence of death - it writes: "One thing is certain, that if Sir Roger Casement is hanged, the effect of that terrible act will be electric throughout the world. We are not anxious to increase the difficulties of the Allies, hence we advocate humane treatment". (The parenthesis is mine).

Another note about that time tells the Irish Party not to compromise the question of Irish membership at Westminster.

By August, 1916, "New Ireland" is attacking Asquith, who compromised so heinously in the House of Commons on Partition, as we have seen. "The complete failure of the Westminster politicians", it commented in its issue of 12th August, "has aroused no feelings in the country but contempt and distrust. Again Irishmen are driven back upon themselves and upon their own resources. It is useless to attempt to return to the Partition proposals. The long delay, the shillyshallying of Mr. Asquith, gave ample opportunities to the enemies of the settlement, and to the enemies of partition to carry through their campaign and the final breach of faith with the Irish politicians, having discredited Partition for ever.

The paper's outlook was certainly becoming more uncompromising nationally. But still the Union idea, albeit in federal garb, was by no means eradicated, for we find in the next issue this comment under the letters A.M.G. (Asquith must go!): "So also from the radical standpoint, the democracy of the United Kingdom must be freed from this Old Man of the Sea, for he has brought nothing but dishonour upon the cause of small nations, and injury to the Allies' interests".

These quotations from a progressive constitutional organ of nationalist thought illustrate well the change of mind that was taking place at the time in young, educated and rather conservative Nationalists. And that change from orthodox constitutionalism towards a more revolutionary policy was going on through every level in the nation. Yet there was still no heady current. The one bishop who identified himself conspicuously with the Rising and went out of his way to condemn in strong terms the executions and General Sir John Maxwell, was Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick. This made him, in the eyes of many, a national hero, and ways and means were sought of showing appreciation for his acts of

defiance. In that September, Councillor Paddy Lane, a Nation Leaguer, proposed a motion in Cork Corporation that he be granted the freedom of that City, but, to the surprise of everybody, it was turned down by the very conclusive vote of 16 to 7 - more than two to one. However, an amende honorable was made a week or so later by his own City of Limerick, which, at a special meeting of its Corporation, conferred its freedom on him unanimously. In returning thanks, the Bishop remarked, significantly and aptly, that "they all knew the fickleness of the populaire's aura....."

I should say that in the following week a branch of the Irish Nation League was established in Limerick City at a largely attended meeting in St. Ita's Hall. Michael O'Callaghan (afterwards, when Mayor of the City, murdered by Black & Tans) was in the chair, and he introduced Michael Lynch, J.P., of Omagh, who, as member of the Organising Council of the League, was chief speaker. The officers elected were: Michael O'Callaghan, President; P. MacMahon, Vice President; D. O'Donovan, Treasurer; M.S. O'Mara and M. Roche, Hon. Secretary.

The big meeting in the Phoenix Park was followed by two others, the first in Banba Hall, Parnell Square, and the second in 41, York St., where a North City and a South City Branch of the Nation League were respectively established. Weekly meetings of the two branches were held which were at first very well attended. As the weeks went by, however, the numbers dropped steeply, and a small, disruptive but persistent element that succeeded in getting a footing in both branches set to work to make trouble, hinder business by marathon speeches and so smash the movement in Dublin. I could never ascertain for certain who were behind those trouble-makers. Some of us thought they were organised by the A.O.H. and the U.I.L. that could not have welcomed the arrival on the horizon of the capital of a rival constitutional movement; but others blamed the I.R.B. and the extremists. I was very doubtful about admitting some of those branch-busters, but I was over-ruled by my less suspicious colleagues. The leader was a thick-set fellow of medium height, with a head of black curling hair and a square, sallow-complexioned face. If I recollect correctly, his name was Sheehy-Walshe. He always came accompanied by his

pretty, young wife and his young brother-in-law. No one I have ever met could make better use of his moderate abilities or could better place his assets in the front window. He claimed to be a close connection of Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, and that his brother-in-law (another one) had been out in the Rising and was interned. No one could speak so long and so continuously as Mr. Walshe. Once he got on to his legs he was good for the rest of the evening, words in his deep voice streaming forth from his mouth continuously, without pause or breath, like a ribbon of toothpaste pressed from a tube. He had most of the equipment of a first rate meeting - obstructionist , aided by his confederates, and there was nothing we could do against him once he got to his feet, to the howls of his backers. Some of my colleagues doubted the "national record" of his brother-in-law who, they alleged, was in Frongoch, whereupon the young Mrs. Walshe, opening her bag, produced some document - I think it was a censored letter - duly authenticating the claim. The document was passed round; a shout of applause from the company greeted the near-kin of the incarcerated hero, and so great was the aura of Easter Week that it was thereupon clear to us that

thenceforward Mr. Walshe, the fortunate in-law of a Frongoch man, could practically do what he liked with our meeting.

These disruptions succeeded in due course in driving away many of our serious members and in compelling us to abandon the North City branch altogether, where Walshe (at the League's expense) reigned supreme, and confining ourselves to the York Street branch, where, by a system of guarded entrance and the non-admittance of the disrupters, we managed to hold our own and carry on.

At those meetings we emphasised that the main raison d'etre of the Nation League was to "give constitutionalism a last trial", and we proclaimed our desideratum for Ireland to be "colonial Home Rule for the whole of Ireland". The word "Commonwealth" was not then in general use as a substitute for "Colonial"or "Imperial". And "New Ireland", which had now become our chief mouthpiece, wrote: "The fact that Ireland, a unit with the same status as South Africa or Canada, will be a strong support of what Mr. Curtis, of Round Table fame, calls the Commonwealth". The official nationalist press, headed by the Freeman's Journal, had, of course, no use whatever

for us, and attacked us vigorously and at times quite unscrupulously, declaring that we were nothing more than a league of place-hunting lawyers who had failed to secure safe and remunerative jobs by other means, and reiterating that we were verily the "League of the Seven Attornies". The Freeman's Journal was not the coiner of that title; that honour belongs to the editor of an obscure Ulster weekly paper, the late Mr. MacAdam, editor of the 'Donegal Vindicator', published in Ballyshannon in that county. True enough, there was considerable colour for such a cognomen, for amongst our Organising Committee there were certainly "seven attornies", as well as a number of barristers.

Besides the official press, certain independent weekly organs of nationalist thought also attacked or criticised us. One of these was 'The Irish Nation', run by a Mr. M.T. Judge, who sprang violently and suddenly from obscurity to fame by having received a superficial bayonet wound from the Scottish Borderers on the Clontarf Road after the fracas with the Volunteers returning from the Howth gun-running in July, 1914. Judge became instantly a national hero, and from his bed in hospital received, during his convalescence, continuous streams of visitors, from the highest and the lowest in the land, bringing him gifts and comforts. This rather turned

the little man's head, and after Easter Week (which, I rather think, he had no part in), convincing himself that the mantle of Elijah had fallen on his shoulders, he started his paper. As it was then the only independent organ with a definite separatist tendency, it soon attained a huge circulation and Judge flourished for a limited interval as a kind of national oracle and mentor. He had quite a sense of humour, of a somewhat crude type, which he called on occasionally with devastating effects. This, for example: In those days that great Montyback, Horatio Bottomley, M.P. for Hackney, was at the crest of his journalistic and fraudulent career, running a weekly paper, 'John Bull', through which he exerted an enormous influence on the Britain of those days. That paper, under Bottomley, maintained a kind of independent, critical and super patriotic outlook, alighting, with equal alacrity, on those whom it considered disloyal and on those whom it charged with usury and fraud - a subject on which the editor should undoubtedly have known much. In sport it appealed to the prejudice of the English petits-bourgeoisie and working classes, which prejudices it took special care to feed. Bottomley, in his pose of England's chief patriotic

watch-dog, attacked, of course, the Dublin Rising violently, and after it was constantly calling for more coercive measures against the Irish "disloyalists" and, in particular, for the suppression of the Nationalist "rag" and "mosquito" press. He had a special "down" on Judge's paper; every week he had quotations from it, followed by demands for its suppression and Judge's trial for treason. All this, I need hardly say, did not upset Judge in the least; the notice Bottomley's celebrated and widely read paper was taking of him was right down the little man's garden path.

Having ignored Bottomley for some weeks, Judge finally replied in his comments column that he cared not a thraneen for him, but that if he met him, all he would do would be to knock the affix off his name and kick what was left of it.

Judge, in his 'Irish Nation', attacked members of the Organising Committee of the Nation League for having, as he charged, stood on recruiting platforms. Whether he was right or wrong I could not say, but he could well have been right as, at that time, many sound Nationalists had addressed recruiting meetings, urging young Irishmen, in all sincerity, to go forth and fight against Hunnish tyranny and in the cause of freedom for small nationalities.

But Judge had not only a journal at his disposal to carry out his self-appointed messianic mission; he had also a remnant of Volunteers. These he reviewed in the Phoenix Park. Their importance and size can be gathered from an account of that review in, I believe, Herbert Moore Pim's paper, the 'Irishman'. He records that there were present "General Judge, Brigadier Judge, Colonel Judge, Major Judge, Captain Judge, Lieutenant Judge, and last, but not least, Private Judge".

I am afraid poor Judge's bid to lead the "Irish race at home and abroad" was not impressive, and when a little later he abandoned republicanism and advocated an Irish Kingdom under the Queenship of King George V's daughter, Mary, in a leader headed "Bravo, Queen Mary of Ireland"!, his star set instantly and he returned to the obscurity whence he emerged with equal suddenness.

The late D.P. Moran also criticised the new League, but more temperately and thoughtfully, on the ground that it was not necessary to found a new organisation. He thought the Nation Leaguers should go in as a body to the U.I.L. and influence it in the right direction rather than make themselves responsible for yet another split. But what Moran did not perceive was that, were the I.N.L. to make such a proposal, it hadn't the faintest chance of being accepted by

the official party organisations, whose method was the instantaneous expulsion of any telling critic as a "factionist".

Though weakened by organised disrupters and beset by many difficulties, the single branch of the Nation League struggled on as best it could in Dublin that winter. But the League cut little ice in the metropolis. True, its strong anti-Partition stand got it considerable but rather isolated support throughout the country, but nowhere, save in the fringe counties of Ulster, could it be said to have drawn any popular support. Its most important influence in the country was through the columns of 'New Ireland', ably edited by P.J. Little, which had, as I have stated, adhered to its policy and had become the Leaguers' chief mouthpiece. Also, its Executive Council, which met at regular intervals in the Mansion House Chambers, Dawson St. (acquired for it by Paddy Little), was pretty well attended. From time to time, as occasion called for, it issued statements and manifestos to the nation, and there was always a certain amount of money, mainly from the North, coming in. On 4th November, for example, it published the aims and constitution of the Irish Nation League. No; the I.N.L. did not catch on in Dublin or in the country generally, despite its anti-Partition efforts and its appeal to give

constitutionalism a final chance. It did not catch on because its appeal came too late. Constitutionalism of any kind, although none of us realised it at the time, had been killed, not by the Rising but by the executions. We in the Nation League were speaking a political language that the country had grown out of, a political language that had become archaic in six months, and we were talking that archaic tongue in an atmosphere that was changing rapidly even while we spoke.

In my opinion, one thing and one thing only could have given constitutionalism another lease of life - the immediate putting into effect of the Home Rule Act for the whole thirty-two counties of Ireland. But that was out of the question; and after Asquith's volte-face on the Partition question in Parliament on 24th July, the mass of the country turned from any further trust in British politicians of all political colours.

Nor was Nationalist Ireland the only element in the country, albeit by far the largest, that lost faith in the existing political leadership - the Southern Unionists were equally disillusioned and chagrined at events, as the following quotation from the 'Church of Ireland Gazette' of 14th October, 1916, amply demonstrates:

> "Unionist Ulster compromised the whole moral strength of its conditional acceptance of Mr. Lloyd George's abortive 'settlement'. There are two courses open to it, and only two - to revert to the Covenant and strenuously oppose Home Rule, not for Ulster alone but for all Ireland, as the Bishop of Clogher proposes; or, on the other hand, to take an active share in an attempt at a real settlement. There is no middle course: the partition of Ireland has passed out of the domain of practical politics". An eminently sane outlook despite the incorrectness, alas, of the final settlement".

While these things were taking place in Ireland, John Redmond and his colleagues over in Westminster were, for the first time, growing uneasy. Some of the wash from the radical revolution in public opinion that was going on in the former country had seemingly reached them. On 18th October, Redmond moved virtually a vote of censure on the Government, charging it with maintaining in Ireland a system of administration inconsistent with the principles for which the Allies were allegedly fighting. He demanded the recall of Maxwell, the abrogation of Martial Law, the release of 500 untried prisoners, the treatment of the remaining prisoners as prisoners of war, and concluded by adjuring the Government to show its trust in the Irish people

by putting the Home Rule Act into immediate operation. Only one thing came of this rather feeble display of belated opposition Sir John Maxwell was recalled on 5th November and was succeeded by Lieut-General Sir Brian Mahon as General Officer Commanding in Chief, the British Forces in Ireland.

A few prisoners had been released since the Rising, one of them being Herbert Moore Pim. He was a curious character, originally a Protestant who, having been fired by enthusiasm for Ireland and all things Irish, at one bound became both an extreme Catholic and an extreme Nationalist of the Griffithite Sinn Féin variety. He was a conspicuous individual - tall and dark - and took care to make himself still more conspicuous by growing a vast black beard of the Anthony Trollop model. Unfortunately, his rather impressive personality had one blemish or weakness - he possessed a thin, light voice that sounded quite incongruous as it flowed forth through the mighty black beard. But that did not deter Mr. Pim, who was one of those (of whom there were not a few at that time) convinced that he was destined to lead the nation and to become the Parnell of the new renaissance. Before the Rising he was a prominent figure in the Volunteers and left-wing Nationalist circles, and a céilí or Volunteer dance in the City would not be

complete in those far-off pre-Rising days without his familiar figure predominating, generally surrounded by a group of bright and sometimes admiring young cailíní of the authentic political vintage. He wrote quite good verse and better prose, and was, indeed, a talented man with a considerable knowledge of literature. Like all poets and hankerers after "la vie bohemienne", he was addicted to the tenderer sex and wrote odes to an unknown "Dark Lady of the Sonnets" (a la Shakespeare). He liked to be thought a bit of a devil and was known to remark as he stroked his luxuriant sable whiskers: "My beard has ruined many homes". If that was the case, I am glad to report that the "homes" were like the castles in Spain - in the air. He was a Belfast man and appeared to have some private means. On his release, he started a paper called the 'Irishman', which, I think, was published in Belfast. It appeared at a lucky time for its success, hot on the discrediting and collapse of Judge's 'Irish Nation', and supplied to some extent a focus for the outlook of the men of Easter Week and the great numbers that were then coming round to that outlook. Pim had a definite literary flair and he ran his paper well, which, supplying as it did at that crucial time the want that existed amongst thousands for the "new learning" nationally, soon attained a huge circulation. In the issue of 9th December of that year,

Pim explained in the 'Irishman' the policy of Sinn Féin to be "a combination of passive resistance to foreign aggression and of a co-ordinated development of national resources, together with the fostering of national characteristics. It rejects Parliamentarianism and seeks a National Council, a lever to upset the whole foreign administration of the country". This was, of course, pure Griffith.

On 23rd December, the first large batch of prisoners were released from British internment camps. Amongst them was Arthur Griffith - the greatest national journalist since Thomas Davis.

TOWARDS REVOLUTION.

The new year, January 1st, 1917, found a new government in control of the then United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Asquith had been overthrown by a sort of palace revolution within the Cabinet, led by his quondam lieutenant, Lloyd George, and the two covenanting rebels, Carson and Bonar Law. At long last, Lloyd George got his life's ambition, the Premiership, and he immediately put into effect his radical changes in the Cabinet structure, viz: a small War Committee with absolute control on the war position,

consisting of himself as chairman, his two confederates, Carson and Bonar Law, and a Labour member - Henderson, I think. Duke continued as Chief Secretary for Ireland, with Sir Bryan Mahon as G.O.C. British Forces in Ireland.

In Ireland, the tide towards the teaching and policy of the Easter Week leaders was flowing surely with a gradually quickening tempo, being helped thereto by the folly of the Government and their soi-distant "loyal" supporters in the country. For example, on 23rd of that January, Patrick Houlihan, Seán Milroy, George Lyons and Andrew O'Doherty were arrested and tried by courtmartial for having permitted Irish songs and recitations at a concert. And, a few days earlier, the Royal Dublin Society committed an act of great stupidity - to call it nothing else - by expelling Count George Plunkett from their membership by 236 votes to 58, for no other reason at the time than that he happened to be the father of the three Plunkett boys, one of whom had been executed, and two given sentences of life imprisonment for their part in the Rising. Just at that time, as a sort of counterbalance to Irish events, President Woodrow Wilson had delivered himself, for the first time, of certain important principles, of which a great deal more was to be heard in the ensuing years. Wilson declared that "no nation

should seek to extend its policy over any other nation or people, but that every nation should be left free to determine its own policy". Such was the famous doctrine of self-determination as it first came to the world - in its birthday suit, so to speak. It was received delightedly by a keenly interested Ireland where it became a prime text, a veritable doctrine of faith for political speakers and writers of the advanced and progressive nationalist schools. In England, however, it was received very differently, being regarded as an unwarranted interference in the "private" or "domestic" affairs of friendly neighbouring nations by a foreign ruler, thereby causing such nations grave embarrassment, particularly where they were engaged in deadly warfare for their own survivals. Actually, Bonar Law called it a "barbarous doctrine". Herbert Moore Pim, to whom I have already referred in these pages, took up this question of self-determination and pressed it strongly in his paper, the 'Irishman'. He was the first Irish journalist, to give him his due, to advocate Ireland's representation at the Peace Conference.

On February 17th, the "Irish World" appeared to preach the policy of full independence and separation;