ORIGINAL

PART VI

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

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Witness

Commissioner Kevin R. O'Sheil, B.L.,
21 Ailesbury Drive,
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cause at that by-election. Undoubtedly, the Government and their police were very much on the horns of a dilemma. But, be that as it may, the fact that Sinn Féin was able to draft such numbers of disciplined men from such a distance, and the efficiency and good conduct of those men, made a great impression on the people in that area, and did much to raise the prestige of the Volunteers in the North, acting as a strong and effective propaganda for recruitment there.

The result of the election was declared on 1st February. Donnelly, the Newry solicitor and Irish Party candidate, was the victor, with 2,324 votes against MacCartan's 1,305 - not so very far off a two to one triumph over Sinn Féin. We were dumb-founded at the news, as most of us, with the tradition of so many electoral victories behind us, were so certain of another that we were concerned merely with what the majority would be and were betting on the size of MacCartan's majority. Of course, we began looking for excuses, the most facile and obvious one being that Donnelly won by the aid of Unionist votes. That was quite untrue. The Unionists did not, it is true, put up a candidate; or, rather, they put up one to take him down again. His name, Richardson, I think, was printed on the balance sheet, but, so effective was the Unionist Party's solidarity and discipline, that not more than

two or three hundred votes were cast for him, all Unionist of course. The vast majority of Unionists in the North, then as now, would as soon vote for a Nationalist candidate as they would for the Devil himself. No: Donnelly's 2,300 odd votes were at least 95% Catholic.

Sinn Féin was beaten for a variety of reasons. The conservative and practical Northern nationalist could see no future for an out and out "sovereign independence" policy, and he was sanguine of some definite and final solution emerging from the Convention. But, above all, he was intensely suspicious and distrustful of the physical force element in the new movement. He considered the Easter Rising an act of supreme folly and dreaded the country getting into the hands of the "wild men", as he was wont to refer to the Volunteers, tempting their sons over to the insane Fenian policy of the gun. It must be remembered that the Parliamentary voter of that day was no young man of twenty-one and upwards, much less young woman (women had not yet the vote but were to get it within a year). They were all mature elderly men with property qualifications; and to these men the parades of the Clare Volunteers and their charges only confirmed and materialise their worst fears. Their sons, of course, were affected

otherwise, and there was a big increase in the ranks of what had remained of the local Volunteers during and after that election.

In the succeeding two months, March and April, two further by-elections followed in Waterford City and East Tyrone, both equally disastrous for Sinn Féin, though for somewhat different reasons. The vacancy in the former was caused by the death of the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, John Edward Redmond, which occurred on March 6th, 1918 Redmond had been in declining health for some time, brought on and intensified, not alone by the big Sinn Féin threat to his dominance but almost more acutely by the grave divisions amongst his own supporters in the Convention on the shape the settlement of the Irish question should take. Some of his most prominent lieutenants, such as Dr. O'Donnell, the Bishop of Raphoe, and Joe Devlin, the A.O.H. chief, opposed him and voted against him on vital issues therein.

Redmond was a decent, honourable Irishman whose personal integrity was unassailable and unquestionable, but he made calamitous mistakes, graver than almost any other national leader ever made, and undoubtedly in the last decade of his life, a most vital one in the history of this country, he failed to

perceive the huge changes that had occurred in Ireland, blinded largely by his long, continuous residence in London, a notoriously seductive and absorbent capital. One thing must be recorded to his everlasting credit: he made nothing whatever out of politics, dying a poor man, indeed, I understand, deeply in debt.

Though Redmond was dead, his name had still a powerful appeal, especially to his loyal supporters in his great stronghold, Waterford City; and that appeal was certainly not weakened by the choice of his son to replace him, William Archer Redmond, a Captain in the Royal Munster Fusiliers, who had got leave of absence from the front to fight the election. He fought it, garbed in his British Captain's uniform and won it by the conclusive majority of 478 in a total poll of 2,006. His Sinn Féin opponent was Dr. Vincent White, a very popular local medical practitioner who, despite the work of those ingenious electioneers, Dan MacCarthy and Joe McGrath, polled but 746 votes against Redmond's 1,242. It certainly was another crushing defeat for Sinn Féin; but, unlike South Armagh, no one had any doubts as to its cause - the Redmond name in the Redmond stronghold.

The third of the three great, successive defeats of Sinn Féin took place, as did the first, in an Ulster constituency - East Tyrone. That constituency, like South Armagh, was predominantly Catholic and Nationalist, though with a substantial Protestant and Unionist minority. Nevertheless the Unionists, as in the case of South Armagh, did not fight it because, doubtless, of a kind of tacit and unofficial truce between them and the Nationalists whilst the Convention was in existence. The Sinn Féin candidate was Seán Milroy, an original Sinn Féiner and close personal friend of Arthur Griffith, who, though he had fought with his company in the Rising, was far from being a "wild man" or advocate of physical force. He was deliberately chosen for that Conservative Catholic Ulster constituency because of his known moderate views. His opponent was the late T.J.S. Harbison, Solicitor, a member of an old Cookstown Catholic family, who was a popular public man in that neighbourhood. I took part in that election and was appointed Sinn Féin election supervisor at Coalisland, a strong, Nationalist centre, and also, strangely enough, a Sinn Féin stronghold, most unusual at that time in the Six-County part of Ulster.

At Coalisland we had things very much our own way, nearly everybody in the little town - save, of course, the Unionists - being of our way of thinking. Apart from the usual routine work of checking voters' lists, canvassing and distributing propaganda leaflets, my most important job was to see that meetings on behalf of the Party candidate were not disturbed. I regret to say one meeting of their's was badly interfered with by the deliberate planning of local young Sinn Féiners. When the brake containing Party speakers, important personages such as Joe Devlin, M.P., Tommy Lundon, M.P., Richard Hazelton, M.P., and Harbison, the candidate, arrived they were pelted with rotten eggs. At the time I was in our local Committee rooms when two young lads popped their heads into the door, their faces flushed and shining with excitement and delight, "O, Muster Shiel, Muster Shiel, hurry down quick till Harbison's meetin' and watch the Hibs. gettin' pelted wi' eggs"! I immediately left what I was doing and ran down to the meeting. Devlin was standing up in the brake, endeavouring to make his voice heard above the din, appearing to be quite indifferent to the fierce volleys of rotten eggs - their stench was dreadful - that matted his hair and clothes, and also that of his colleagues in the brake. I did what I could to stop the disgraceful and senseless attack, so opposed to the liberty

principles of the new movement, but with little result other than incurring the disfavour of our supporters for my pains. In the North at that time it was an understood and tacitly accepted axiom of politics to break up your opponents' meetings if you were able to do so.

But if we had it all our own way in the town and precincts of Coalisland, we had certainly not to travel far outside those confines to experience a very different state of affairs. For example, Dan Donnelly, a chemist in Dungannon and a prominent local leader of Sinn Féin, and myself went forth, one Sunday morning, to address a meeting after Mass at the Church of Clonoe, a little place but three or four miles distant from Coalisland. As the people were leaving the Church, after Mass, we hoisted our tricolour on our car and proceeded to address them. Immediately there were cat-calls and opposition, but a considerable section of the crowd stood quietly listening. Presently, an enraged cleric darted out of the Church and proceeded to hurl a torrent of abuse at us, calling us "factionists", "players of the Orange game" and, much worse, whilst he ordered the people to go home and not be wasting their time listening to such blackguards as us, I asked Dan who the Reverend Gentleman was, and was much surprised when he told me he was the local P.P. He succeeded in depriving us

of an audience of any size, and there was nothing for Dan and me to do but to take our departure as gracefully as we could.

This election, too, resulted in a decisive reverse for Sinn Féin, Harbison receiving 1,802 votes against Milroy's 1,222. Things were not going too well for the new evangel and it began to be thought that there might be something after all in what the Nationalist and English press were telling their readers, that the tide was definitely turning against the new movement and the new men with an ever increasing momentum, that the danger of rule by the "wild men" and the "gunmen" was passing away; the people were returning to political sanity, the hectic emotional fever, engendered by the post-Easter Rising executions, having spent itself.

And Lloyd-George and his Cabinet thought so, too. On the day after the declaration of the East Tyrone poll, April 5th, the Government had received the final report of the Irish Convention. This precious document was signed by only 44 members of the Convention, less than half of the entire body. There were some Minority reports; but one thing disclosed was that there was little agreement on any of the essentials of settlement. The Ulster Unionists on the Convention, from the very beginning had not the slightest intention of endorsing any

plausible agreement. They were there as "Loyalists" to help the war cause by allaying American uneasiness about Ireland, and so smoothing the way for a full and enthusiastic participation of American man-power, behind the much-harassed Allies on the battle-fields of Europe.

And here, at this stage, once again the British Government committed yet another of her many big blunders in her handling of Ireland, showing a crass lack of comprehension of the country's outlook and reactions. So sure were Lloyd George and his advisers that the temporary whim of the unstable Irish for the Sinn Féin insanity was spent and that Redmond's British and pro-war brand of Nationalism had, boomerang-like, come back, that they decided on conscription for Ireland. That decision immediately created the great conscription crisis. But before I deal with that big crisis of the late spring and summer, I must refer to an event that occupied the public mind in the earlier part of that year. That was the shortage of food that was becoming more and more acute in Ireland; not because of any bad harvests in a country that produced abundant food but because of excessive export to England. As the war progressed and the U-boat campaign became more and more deadly, the overseas supplies of food on which the thickly populated island of

Britain so largely depended, became gravely reduced. This, of course, vastly increased Ireland's importance as a producer and provider for Great Britain. The Government had placed the food resources and distribution of the entire United Kingdom under a Food Controller with very sweeping powers, which he certainly did not hesitate to use in England's favour so drastically and to such an extent that Ireland, a great food producing country, began to feel the pinch. Every day, all manner of agricultural produce was, under the decree of the Food Controller, diverted from the national markets and fairs to the Irish ports and thence shipped across the Irish Sea. True, there was a Food Council set up in Ireland but it was completely subordinate to the chief Food Controller in London; it was nothing more than an advisory body, and what advice it gave could be, and constantly was overridden by him. Protests came pouring in from all over the country - from Labour organisations, from all national parties and groups and even from Unionist centres, but they went unheeded.

The position was going from bad to worse when we opened our morning paper on February 22nd, and read with astonishment that Sinn Féin had intervened in the issue and had taken dramatic and effective action. Sinn Féin, sometime earlier,

had appointed a Food Controller of its own, the late Diarmuid Lynch; and he had, on the previous day, intercepted a herd of thirty-four pigs on their way to the North Wall for transport to England, had them slaughtered and distributed to Irish centres towards the easement of the food scarcity amongst those in the community whom it had hit mostly. This act, needless to say, drew forth strong and indignant protests from the Unionist press and the Castle people, who designated it "an unparalleled outrage", but it certainly greatly enhanced the prestige of Sinn Féin, demonstrating to the country that it was what it claimed to be, the party of action and not of talk, prepared to act drastically when the national need demanded it.

Two things resulted from that bold enterprise; Diarmuid Lynch was ejected from the country and banished to the U.S.A., of which country he was a citizen, whence he never returned permanently to Ireland, and the British Food Controller, seeing the favour from all sides with which that act of Sinn Féin was received, actually had the gumption to pipe down very much on his ruthless grasping of Ireland's food stocks.

(IV) The Conscription Menace.

On April 4, 1918, Harbinson, the Irish Party man, defeated Milroy, the Sinn Féiner, in East Tyrone, thereby registering the third successive defeat of Sinn Féin in three months. Four days later the Report of the Irish Convention reached the Government, registering only one specific thing - no possibility of an agreement on any kind of all-Ireland Home Rule, largely because of the intractability of the Ulster Unionists. The Report also disclosed a substantial degree of disharmony amongst the Nationalists on the Convention as to the precise form Irish autonomy should take - a disharmony in sharp contrast to the stone-wall unanimity of the Ulstermen.

The British reaction to those events was typical in its stupidity and in its superficial adjudgement when dealing with Irish questions. On April 9th, Lloyd George announced the Government's decision to extend Conscription to Ireland, by which his adviser, the notorious Sir Henry Wilson, estimated that they would secure between 100,000 and 150,000 conscripts for the battlefields, which the aforesaid Wilson declared he could easily, safely and profitably manipulate within the vast British Armies of nearly 3,000,000 men.

The Conscription pill was, of course, to be gilded with the usual sugar-coating - yet another "Bill for the Better Government of Ireland"; which no one took very seriously. But whilst the first bill took very concrete shape and passed the House of Commons by 323 votes to 100, the latter was not even thought worth drafting, a mere reference to it being, seemingly, considered sufficient to mollify American opinion - the main reason why it was contemplated at all.

The passage of the Bill worked a veritable miracle in Nationalist Ireland, pulling together at one stroke all its discordant elements and binding them in one strong, and what proved, irrestible union against the grave threat. Sir James O'Connor, no Sinn Féiner, termed the Bill in his history "a crucial blunder", and thus graphically and truly describes the effect of the measure on the country: "Since the days of O'Connell, no such intense and widespread movement had taken place as that which this mistaken policy produced. The injustice of it, which was almost universally assumed, lashed the country to a fury. The feeling was not confined to Republicans; it was shared equally by the Constitutional Nationalists, many of whom were at all times frankly Anglophile, and especially so during the war, wherein they deemed England to be on the side of right and justice. Moderate opinion could

make some allowances for England's difficulties in relation to the Irish problem; it was thought that a claim for a Republic went too far, and the special position of Ulster was, at all events, within the region of argument. That a country which purported to fight for small nationalities and to endorse the policy of self-determination should keep a small country in subjection, and yet should force the manhood of that country to become cannon fodder in England's extremity, was felt to be inexcusable. Catholic Ireland rose as one man to meet the emergency". Thus very Conservative "Loyalist" Catholic opinion: on that issue it went dangerously close to the "rebelly" brand.

The Lord Mayor, Laurence O'Neill, convened a conference of Nationalist and Labour Leaders and on April 18th that conference met under his aegis at the Mansion House. It consisted of John Dillon, M.P., Joseph Devlin, M.P., representing the Irish Party, Arthur Griffith and Eamon de Valera, representing Sinn Féin, William O'Brien (Dublin), Michael Egan and Thomas Johnson representing Labour, William O'Brien (Cork) and Tim Healy representing the All For Ireland League. The Conscription Bill had worked a miracle; getting round the Lord Mayor's table in the Mansion House, bitter political enemies of yesterday. The Mansion House

Committee became a sort of "National Cabinet" with which to face a grave crisis. It drew up an anti-Conscription pledge which, it suggested, should be taken in every parish in the country. It was Dev. who found the formula for the pledge, acceptable by all the interests represented in the Conference; it ran as follows: "Denying the right of the British Government to enforce compulsory service in this country, we pledge ourselves solemnly to one another to resist Conscription by the most effective means at our disposal".

That evening, a deputation from the conference consisting of the Lord Mayor, Dev., Dillon, Healy & O'Brien (Dublin) went out to Maynooth where the Bishops happened to be in session. They, or rather the Sinn Féin element, were anxious to get the Bishops to issue a public statement on Conscription that would be helpful to them, and that would not condemn active resistance should events call for it. They found them sympathetic and well aware of the menace, and that night they issued their Manifesto: "We consider that Conscription, forced in this way upon Ireland, is an oppressive and inhuman law which the Irish people have a right to resist by every means that are consonant with the law of God".

On Sunday, April 21, the anti-Conscription Pledge was signed at specially convened meetings in all the towns, villages and parishes in the country by virtually all Catholic and, indeed, considerable numbers of Protestant Ireland. It was a wonderful demonstration of national solidarity and resolution in the face of grave danger that, as O'Connor truly says, had not been witnessed since O'Connell's days. The great upsurge of resistance in Ireland to the measure had reactions in America amongst the wide-spread pro-Irish element there that greatly embarrassed President Woodrow Wilson, who was moved to warn the British Government that the imposition of Conscription on Ireland might cause serious trouble to his Administration. This was an awkward and unforseen denouément for the British Government, but the wilely Lloyd George found, or thought he found, a means of counteracting that. America was, at the time, up to her neck in the war, and to her people, despite the large German element in her population, Germany and all things German were completely anathema. A bright thought came into Lloyd George's bright mind: "Why not concoct a German Plot?" Obviously the very thing to silence pro-Irish American feeling and so free his hands for enforcing Conscription on the country.

And it so happened that in giving effect to that venture his proverbial luck in his intrigues was once again behind him; he was enormously aided by the timely intervention of a fine deus ex machina. On April 12, the R.I.C. captured on an island off the West Coast a man called Joseph Dowling, a former Irish prisoner-of-war in Germany who had joined Casement's Irish Brigade there. He had come from Germany in a submarine and brought a message in code from the German Government to the I.R.B. regretting that they had not taken the 1916 Rising more seriously and offering substantial military aid for a new Rising. Although arrested and sentenced to penal servitude for life - he was released after 6 years - Dowling had managed to have his message transmitted to Collins.

True, the message from the German Government was authentic but Sinn Féin (to use the term in its comprehensive sense) had neither expected it nor was prepared for it as, at that time, a second Rising was the last thing in its mind. Dowling's appearance on the Irish scene at that particular juncture was most unfortunate, as it gave Lloyd George the colour he wanted for his "German Plot"; and, for a time it was feared that he might succeed in prejudicing the war-roused Americans against us. When presently the American and the

Liberal British Press began calling on him for evidence of the "Plot", he was silent for the simple reason that he had no evidence. How fortunate it was that Dowling was able to dispose of his message (in code on 2 silk handkerchiefs) before his arrest.

The lack of tangible evidence of the "Plot" very much handicapped Lloyd George in putting it across; and he was still further handicapped by his inability, because of that lack, to bring any of the Sinn Féin leaders he had arrested to trial. In fact, Bonar Law, in answer to a Parliamentary Question, declared that it was not the Government's intention to put any of those prisoners on trial; they would just be interned without trial under the wide and elastic provisions of D.O.R.A.

When Lloyd George announced the extension of the Man Power Bill to Ireland I was at home in Omagh attending Quarter Sessions. We were, of course, as excited and concerned by the news as was the rest of the country, and we of Sinn Féin had many meetings and discussions to devise plans to meet the menace. It happened that the Nationalists of the town and district of Omagh were, even at that time, so overwhelmingly Sinn Féin that there were no Party leaders

thereabouts to call into conference, albeit that was not the case in other areas of the wide constituency of Mid Tyrone, such as Beragh and Sixmilecross in the East and Fintona and Trillick in the West where the Hibernians were still strong despite everything. This unanimity in the Omagh area was a curious contrast to the conditions there but a few years earlier where it was one of the worst divided places politically in Ireland.

In the case of our local Sinn Féin, as in the case of Sinn Féin everywhere during that crisis, the military wing was, naturally, in the ascendant; but the political wing was far from being insignificant. We local Sinn Féiners were called upon to address many anti-Conscription meetings throughout Mid Tyrone. I was, accordingly, constantly on the move, speaking from platforms with such local leaders as George Murnaghan, Solr., Seán O'Hanrahan, Solr., Alec Donnelly, Solr., Michael Lynch, Chairman of the North West of Ireland Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd. (who had recently renounced his Justiceship of the Peace), Michael Mulvey, Editor of the "Ulster Herald", and others. Below the open political surface the I.R.B. men - Dan McAuley, Peter Haughey and others - were working silently and efficiently in perfecting plans for local resistance should the attempt be made to enforce the

measure. In our speeches we particularly warned that, unlike the case of Home Rule, the Government was in deadly earnest about enforcing Conscription on the country, and that there was nothing for it but to prepare ourselves for as effective resistance as we could command. We became recruiters for the Volunteers and urged the young men to join up in them; and to this particular appeal there was a remarkable response; our helpers were for hours at night taking down the names and addresses of hundreds and hundreds of new Volunteers. These were, of course, mostly anti-Conscription Volunteers, and when the menace vanished in six months' time with the termination of the war, they vanished too! The premises of the Omagh Sinn Féin Club was located next door to the big R.I.C. barracks of all places. It occupied a prominent position in George's Street on the brow of the Courthouse Hill. The windows of its neighbour, the R.I.C. barracks, were plastered over with recruiting posters calling upon young Irishmen to drop in and sign on for the British Army and revenge the ravishment of Catholic Belgium, a sister small nation. It occurred to me that we, too, might put our own prominent window to good use. Accordingly, we posted up every day on our Club window a single sheet of foolscap containing quotations from British Ministers, prominent individuals and newspapers and journals

indicating and stressing the determination of the Government to carry out in due course its intention to enforce Conscription on Ireland. Our aim was to keep the public interest up to scratch and not let it flag or fade. Fortunately we were well supplied with the appropriate material, for never a day passed without some prominent Briton, politician or Army man giving forth on the crying need for men to make good the gaps in the badly depleted ranks of their armies. It should be borne in mind that those were the highly critical days when Britain and her allies had sustained a grievous and bloody reverse, their forces having been hurled back on a front of 50 miles almost to the Channel Ports. Field Marshal Haig was fighting with his back to the wall. On April 13, 1918, he had issued his famous order: "There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man; there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each of us must fight on to the end". We called our little daily sheet "The Conscription News"; and underneath that title ran the legend, "The paper with the smallest circulation but the greatest influence in Co. Tyrone".

And certainly, for divers reasons, there was not a little colour to that large claim. The Conscription issue

had stirred the populace to the depth; it was so much in the minds of all - Protestant and Unionist no less than Catholic and Nationalist - for it was certainly not anybody's favourite - that our readers were suprisingly numerous and still more surprisingly heterogeneous. Every hour of the day there would be anxious groups round our window reading the news in our "paper". The sheet always ended by advising the young men to go either next door to the police barracks, join up in the British Army and help Haig who was in sore need of aid, or come in to our club and help Ireland to defend herself against Conscription.

It so happened that Ulster Unionism was then in a particularly sullen and resentful humour with the British Government and, indeed, with their great idol, Carson himself. Apart altogether from the fact that they had nearly as little enthusiasm for a system of compulsory military service as the Nationalists, they were suffering from a severe shock. Their Ulster Division had been cut to pieces in the terrible battles of the past few months, and every day, long and mournful lists of their dead and wounded relatives and friends filled the columns of the Ulster papers. Now, it might be asked - Why should they be resentful at such happenings, sad indeed as they were? Were they not proclaimed "Loyalists"

and should they not glory at the opportunity given them of shedding their blood copiously for King and Country, particularly in a cause they believed to be just? We must go some way back to get the correct answer to that one.

When the war broke out in 1914, Carson succeeded, through his friend, Kitchener, then War Minister, in getting a large number of his U.V.F., some 25,000 or so, taken over into the British Army as a separate Ulster Division, under its own officers. In so doing, Carson succeeded where Redmond failed, because of Kitchener's implacable dislike and distrust of Irish Nationalists. Now, rightly or wrongly, the Ulster Unionists believed that their Division would never be sent to the Front. They understood that they were to be retained at home as an impeccably loyal force to protect the country against any further rebellion or insurrection that might be attempted. And that certainly appeared to be Kitchener's intention. Colour was given to this view by the lengthy period of immunity from combat that the Division enjoyed, sojourning for months at Finner Camp, Bundoran, and later in Co. Down, whilst the Southern Irish Regiments were receiving their heavy baptism of fire.

I remember that period well and the growing criticism of the Nationalists at the long immunity from battle of the Ulster Division as contrasted with the heavy casualties suffered by their friends and connections. It is hard to say but it is possible that, had Kitchener lived, the Ulster Division might never have experienced the devastating conflicts which it certainly did experience. Rightly or wrongly, many Ulster Volunteers and their friends were convinced that they would never be sent to the Front but would be reserved for home service in Ireland. They said so openly, and they considered the transfer of the Division to France and the heavy casualties suffered there a betrayal of that guarantee. They were certainly in a very angry mood and were particularly bitter towards Carson, whom they blamed for having induced them to enlist on the said alleged guarantee.

That was all common talk in Ulster at the time; and we heard that Carson's portrait had been removed from the walls of several Orange lodges and that the Orangemen were smouldering with resentment and chagrin at the way their leaders had let them down. And presently we were to have tangible proof of this resentment amongst them.

It was arranged that our Omagh Sinn Féin Club - the Owen Roe O'Neill Club, by the way, would hold a public meeting on a certain Sunday afternoon in Omagh. This meeting only took place outside the Club premises on the broad space at the top of the Courthouse Hill. It was a very large meeting and, in the course of the proceedings, was joined by many Protestants coming from the services in their respective churches. Many of them, passing down the street to their homes, stopped and listened very attentively to our speeches - in itself something of a phenomenon, for your good "Loyalist" would never be seen listening to a "rebelly Papist meeting"- certainly not on "the Lord's Day".

We, on our part, did not neglect to point the moral - how they had been deceived and betrayed and how "the flower of Protestant Ulster, in breach of a solemn guarantee, was lying prone and stiff on the bloody fields of Flanders". Flowery language, and it worked. To our amazement, considerable numbers of them gave us a cheer and a clap, and we received many "hear, hears" from the loyalist lips.

I had further and more concrete evidence of their discontent a few days later when I went one evening to address an anti-Conscription meeting in a hall at Clanabogan, a

country place a few miles from Omagh. When Mulvey, O'Hanrahan and I arrived we were told, to our great surprise, that there were three local young Orangemen in the hall who wanted to join the Volunteers, and thus mark, in a tangible way, their resentment at their betrayal. I was introduced to those men - typical young Protestant Ulster farmers. They made it clear that whilst they were quite prepared to resist conscription after their unpleasant experience, they did not want to fight for an Irish Republic or for any of the other objects of Sinn Féin. We assured them that that was all we'd ask them to do, and that actually there was no question, or intention, of a second Easter Week. That satisfied them, and they remained with us for some while, ultimately, when the Conscription danger vanished with the end of the war, withdrawing once again into their own Orange background. I heard of numbers of similar happenings in other parts of Ulster at the time.

About the time the Government announced its decision to conscript Ireland, old Sam Young, the M.P. for East Cavan, died, thereby leaving a parliamentary vacancy to be filled. Sam Young had been, of course, a loyal member of the Irish Party and one of the few Protestant Nationalist M.P.s, and the Redmondites were, naturally, most anxious to replace him by

one of its own supporters. However, because of the big risk of defeat and ensuing loss of prestige, they were not at all anxious for a contested election. They had chosen M. O'Hanlon, a popular local man, proprietor of the influential local paper "The Anglo-Celt", and wished and hoped, on account of the Conscription menace, that Sinn Féin would agree to have him returned without opposition, seeing that they had, shortly before that, withdrawn in favour of Dr. MacCartan, thus enabling him to be elected unopposed for the Tullamore Division of the King's County. But, for some reason or other, there was no compromise or agreement on this occasion. Sinn Féin had decided to fight it; and soon after Sam Young's death and long before the writ was moved, Arthur Griffith was put forward as its candidate.

Figgis, in his book the "Irish War", claims the credit or responsibility of having Griffith nominated, and says that the latter, when he first heard of it in the press, was angry at Figgis's action, considered that his going forward at that particular time was not in the national interest and wanted to withdraw. They had quite a job in dissuading him from that course.

The Irish Party, hoping against hope that the Bishops, then so prominently forward in the anti-Conscription Cause,

would, sooner or later, insist on no contest, kept putting off the moving of the writ, which, in fact, was not moved till many weeks after the vacancy occurred. This made the by-election an extremely long drawn-out and protracted one.

Sinn Féin, as I have said, was very early in the field, and the constituency, for weeks and weeks before the polling day, was swarming with its numerous and ardent voluntary workers. I was sent to Ballyjamesduff in the S.W. of the constituency, as Sinn Féin election Supervisor for that area. In that capacity I remained there for the greater part of six weeks, with, of course, occasional visits to other centres for the purpose of addressing meetings. My duties were, as the title of my post indicated, of a general supervisory character, co-ordinating and directing the work of the voluntary helpers in the area. It covered the purely political work and organisation of the movement but had nothing to say to the Volunteers or to the women's Cumann na mBan. Both these organisations, then under their own independent governance, were very touchy and resentful of any suggestion of control by the despised "politicians" over them - particularly so the ladies' body. For the sake of the records, I should mention that the O/C of the Volunteers in the area was the late Capt. Brian Houlihan, subsequently killed in his native Co. Kerry

fighting on the National Army side in the Civil War. The Commandant of the local Cumann na mBan was the late Miss Alice Cashel. The enthusiasm for the cause was terrific and I had no difficulty in getting abundance of help, not only in the Ballyjamesduff area, which happened to be strongly behind us, but from Dublin and elsewhere. In particular, I had a very active and well-informed group of canvassers, headed by Joseph Campbell, the poet, who, during the long waiting period, made an exhaustive house to house canvass of the area. The checking and examination of the voters' list for our electoral divisions were undertaken by Christy Byrne of Wicklow, who had recently come over to Sinn Féin from a strong Party background in his native county. In the interests of the Party, their long delay in moving the writ was a big mistake; for it played right into our hands, giving us plenty of time to found new clubs, perfect our machinery and spread the new gospel by personal contact, meetings and the circulation of leaflets and pamphlets.

An interesting and curious circumstance about that and every other election I was in at that time I must refer to in passing. In every district in Ireland there were always one or two "extreme Nationalists" of the uncompromising Fenian school, generally elderly men who had lived all their lives

enshadowed in the prevailing constitutional climate, regarded as dangerous "cranks" and leaders-astray of youth, cold shouldered and avoided for most part of their lives. These men were, needless to say, foremost in the ranks of the new movement. From being, at best, suspects in the community to be avoided, they became with the new resurgence highly respected patriots, looked up to and sought after by the community that but yesterday spurned them. That type of man, wherever I cam across him, had the same extraordinary characteristics - a burning, fervent nationalism, an extreme capacity of self-sacrifice, and an utter contempt for material gain or ambition. They were out-and-out whole-hoggers for the cause of Caithlín Ní Houlihan, and did not stop to estimate anything that they could command, money (the little they had), time and health in the cause. They were the salt and savour in the movement's local units.

Every Sunday during the long "Interregnum", huge demonstrations were organised at various centres in the constituency which were addressed by prominent leaders who came down from Dublin for that purpose. We had a few such in the big square in Ballyjamesduff at which Dev., Griffith, Father O'Flanagan, Rev. Dr. Paddy Browne, Seán MacCoilte, Walter

Cole, Seán Milroy, John O'Mahony, Joe Murray and others spoke.

It is hard now to give an impression in words of those monster demonstrations that were such a feature of Sinn Féin in those early days of its career. They were enormous. It looked as though the entire population of neighbouring counties, men, women and children, had poured into the town for the day, headed by bands, and escorted by long lines of marching Volunteers and Cumann na mBan girls, innumerable tricolour flags fluttering and flashing above their heads. The enthusiasm and fervour were intense, the very atmosphere appeared to be charged with exhileration and high emotion. I have never experienced anything like it since, nor never shall. The R.I.C. would be present in considerable strength at those demonstrations but, whatever the reason, did not interfere with the speakers, nor, still more strange, with the marching companies of Volunteers. We had some strange incidents, too, at that election. The British circulated a number of spies, disguised as Commercials, through the hotels in the constituency where prominent Sinn Féiners stayed and used as local headquarters, mainly to discover what secrets they could about the military side of the movement. And that might well have been the reason why the Volunteers, on the

whole, were not interfered with. Some of their spies were women, and attractive women at that. One of these women put up at the Royal Hotel, Ballyjamesduff, where we stayed during the election and where we had our local headquarters, the proprietors, Mr. & Mrs. Goldrick being very well disposed to us. This particular lady was by way of being a traveller for "Spirella" - then a very popular brand of corsets, of which commodity she carried samples and literature and made calls on the various drapers in the town though none had ever seen or heard of her before. In those days women Commercials were almost unknown, especially in small Irish country places. She was a Mrs. Something or other, was it Woods?, a very pleasant and friendly Englishwoman of about 35 or 36, with undoubted feminine attractions which she knew well how to deploy and use with effect. She made herself most entertaining to our fellows, seemed to have plenty of money, was always buying drinks and knocking them back herself, and ensured, in the last analysis, that none of them would suffer from loneliness or ennui if she could help it. The lads fell for her, of course, and even some of our maturer personalities, for she clearly had a definite enticement for men. At first I thought little about her, putting her down as one of those man-mad women who was always looking for male company and

unable to get on without it. Then, as the days passed by and she was still sojourning in the hotel, it began to strike me and some others of us that it was definitely curious. Surely, we reflected, she must have booked all the corset orders possible in that little district; and why was she not moving on to "pastures new"? Another more matter-of-fact reason for her betaking herself elsewhere was in my mind. She had got quite a coterie of young Volunteer officers and some of our younger canvassers round her, was constantly standing them drinks and preventing them from doing their work. I dearly wished she would betake herself and her charms thence, and was wondering how to effect that, when, suddenly, of her own accord and without notice or a single good-bye to her gallants, she disappeared. It appears she went to Cootehill, as we subsequently discovered. We all then felt that there was something very phoney about her ladyship and sent a full description of her to Cootehill. We heard later that the Volunteers thereupon raided her room and that of another younger and even more attractive lady "Commercial" and captured their note-books which, I understand, proved amply that they were on espionage work and that they were no amateurs at that work either. They were given a day to clear out of the constituency, which order they obeyed with alacrity and were heard of no more.

Shortly before the East Cavan vacancy, the Government replaced Lord Wimborne, the Viceroy, by Field Marshal Lord French. To those who could read the signs of the times that was a significant and sinister change. It meant one thing clearly - that the Government had decided, on the failure of the Convention and because of the disaster in France, to take the advice of the Henry Wilsons and impose Conscription on Ireland. And in order to prepare the way and blunt American opposition, the "German Plot", as we have seen, was invented. Despite the colour given to the "Plot" by the unfortunate landing of Dowling and his apprehension, nobody believed in its genuineness, least of all the superseded Viceroy, Wimborne, who shortly after its announcement declared in a letter to the press that he "considered the German Plot, and the recent activity connected with it, as coming more from the zeal of the new broom than from any fundamental changes in the condition of Ireland". The "German Plot", in conjunction with the Conscription issue, dominated that election; and the zenith of the official plan of campaign was reached on the night of May 17th when widespread and sweeping arrests of Sinn Féin and Volunteer leaders were made all over the county. I was in the hotel in Ballyjamesduff on that night. Sometime very early in the morning I was awakened by Brian Houlihan,

who told me the place was surrounded by military and that military and police were in the hall parleying with the proprietor. I dressed hurriedly and went downstairs. There I saw the local Sergeant of the R.I.C., whom I knew, with police and military officers. They were looking for John O'Mahony. They went to his rooms and woke him up with difficulty from a deep sleep, telling him to dress and come away with them. John was something of a play-boy and could act a part well. He was a big burly man, round about 18 stone, with a deep voice. As he dressed he called for a drink, and the Sergeant obligingly went down stairs and got him a tot of whiskey. John, then fully dressed and prepared to go, turned dramatically on his guard, saying "So you thought you'd take John O'Mahony alive, did you? Never", he roared, as producing from his waistcoat pocket 2 white pills, he shot them down his throat with the glass of whiskey. A few seconds after this his eyes rolled, he clapped his hands to his side and fell heavily like a log on to the floor. The consternation of his guards was something worth seeing. The poor Sergeant - a decent, harmless fellow - knelt down beside him: "Oh Mr. O'Mahony, Mr. O'Mahony, surely you wouldn't go and do the like of that, and you a Catholic". So realistic was big John's acting, for acting it was (the pills were

aspirins) that I confess I had some qualms myself, especially after his heavy and most realistic fall. John O'Mahony was the only one they arrested in Ballyjamesduff; but in other centres of the constituency they made many arrests. Indeed, in that one night, all over the county, they bereft us of our leaders, hoping that by so doing they would secure the disruption and downfall of the whole movement, thereby clearing the way for the enforcement of Conscription.

How foolish and myopic they were! Far from doing us harm, the arrests increased the ardour of our workers and brought us many more converts. They foolishly arrested our candidate, Arthur Griffith, and interned him, which, seeing that his rival was scot free, addressing meetings on his own behalf all over the constituency, caused a terrific wave of sympathy to surge up for the absent candidate. For the first two weeks of the campaign there was great doubt as to the result of the election. In my view, had the election occurred within that period, Griffith might well have been beaten. And, most certainly, had there been no threat of Conscription and no arrests, he would have been beaten. Cavan was a Northern, Conservative County. It was extremely well organised for the Irish Party with A.O.H. halls in every

half parish. And, finally, they had an excellent local candidate in O'Hanlon.

The election took place on June 21st, on the old register, of course. Griffith received 3,785 votes, and O'Hanlon 2,581; a conclusive majority of 1,200. The by-election had been fought mainly on the Conscription issue, with Ireland's representation at the Peace Conference as a secondary one. Sinn Féiners told the East Cavan electors that a vote for Griffith "was a nail in the coffin of Conscription". They argued that if the man who stood for Ireland's independence and for Ireland's representation at the Peace Conference was victorious, the enforcement of Conscription would be impossible; whereas, if the man who stood for some kind of union with England, and for England's war, was returned, Conscription would be inevitable.

But, despite Griffith's great triumph, the Government's resolve to extend the Military Service Act to Ireland certainly showed no signs of slacking. On the contrary, Castle activities against Sinn Féin became more general, more sweeping and more coercive after Griffith's return. Many cities, towns and districts were proclaimed, and money awards were offered for information as to the whereabouts of arms and ammunition.

On July 4th, 1918, American Independence Day, Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBan, the Gaelic League, and the Gaelic Athletic Association were proclaimed as dangerous and illegal bodies. The next day, General Sir Frederick Shaw, French's new commander-in-chief, issued an order prohibiting meetings and assemblies without prior sanction from the police or military. Sinn Féin countered by decreeing that no body under its authority was to apply for such permits; meetings under Sinn Féin auspices were to be held without British sanction.

Presently Sinn Féin's answer was translated into much more concrete and impressive terms. On August 4th, no less than 1,500 hurley matches of the condemned G.A.A. were held successfully all over the country; and on August 15th hundreds of public meetings without British permits were held, equally successfully, throughout the country.

Conscription was definitely "in the air"; it was the dominant theme, and there was every intention of enforcing it at the psychological moment. Sir Henry Wilson, its ruthless and persistent advocate, records in his diary a dinner party he attended earlier in the year with Lloyd George and Lord French There was complete agreement amongst the company that Ireland must be conscripted. "Lloyd George", writes Wilson, "impressed

on Johnny (French) the necessity of putting the onus for first shooting on the rebels. The Prime Minister, moreover, declared that he was going to table the Order in Council for Conscription in Ireland at the same time as he tabled the Home Rule Bill". Beasley writes in his "Michael Collins" book: "On the night of October 15th, large bodies of military, fully armed and equipped for active service, occupied many public buildings and various points of importance in Dublin City. At 11.30 p.m. on the night in question, the staff of most of the principle telegraph offices throughout Ireland were ordered to go on duty in their offices and hold themselves in readiness for any contingency. Next day the military abandoned their various positions without anything having happened". The view of the Volunteer G.H.Q. on these mysterious operations was given in "An tóglach" at the time: "These military activities" it said, "were in pursuance of orders previously given, as it had been arranged by the English Government and the military authorities that the Order to enforce Conscription in Ireland should be laid on the table of the House of Commons on that day - the day of the reassembling of the British Parliament. It was felt, and rightly felt, that the Irish Volunteers would accept the publication of this order as a formal declaration of war, and

act accordingly, and the military arrangements were taken with a view to this. The plot to initiate a long and ruthless warfare in Ireland in the hope of exterminating the most vigorous elements of the population and rendering Ireland impotent, was deliberately planned, and there was no change in the English Government's intentions up to the Cabinet meeting on Monday. However, the unexpected arrival of the German Peace Note, and President Wilson's reply to it, creating an entirely new situation, distrubed the plotters; and Mr. Shortt, when questioned about Conscription on the Tuesday, had 'nothing to say'".

World War 1 ended at 11 a.m. on November 11th, 1918. I was in Dublin on that day and remember it well. The City was teeming with British and imperial military and in the evening, in conjunction with the Rathmines Jingoes and "Loyalists", they paraded aggressively through the streets, waving Union Jacks and singing the British National Anthem and British war-time songs, "Tipperary" and the like.

That same day Sinn Féin opened its election campaign for the forthcoming General Election by a big meeting in the Mansion House. When that meeting concluded, the Sinn Féin crowds clashed with the rejoicing pro-British crowds, and there

were several melées and clashes between the contending parties. Those fights and skirmishings continued in the City for the following few days, culminating in a deliberately organised and very violent attack on the Sinn Féin headquarters, No. 6 Harcourt St., by British soldiers and their friends, which was beaten off by a carefully picked garrison of Volunteers, the soldiers suffering considerable casualties.

The Armistice and the surrender of the Germans put an end, of course, to the Conscription danger; and Sinn Féin proceeded to fight the election on Ireland's right to representation at the Peace Conference to have her case for independence put forward there.

Sinn Féin decided to contest every constituency in the country, thereby giving the entire country a chance to vote for its policy. However, it didn't wholly succeed in doing that. The Ulster Catholic Bishops feared that a split in the Catholic and Nationalist vote in their constituencies in the North, where they had a majority, would result in letting in a Unionist, and called upon Sinn Féin and the Irish Party to put forward an agreed candidate in those constituencies so as to maintain their representation in Catholic hands. Sinn Féin's solution was that each of these constituencies should decide by plebiscite which party they would back. That was as far

as Sinn Féin was prepared to go as, being a definite lay, republican movement with many Protestant and non-Catholic supporters, the one thing it desired to avoid was any colour that the Catholic Hierarchy, as such, dominated it. The movement appointed Eoin MacNeill to discuss the matter with Dillon and Cardinal Logue; but, to the great annoyance of the Sinn Féin Executive, MacNeill yielded to the demand of the prelates for an equal division of the seats, whereby Derry City, East Down, North-West Tyrone and South Fermanagh were assigned to Sinn Féin, and South Down, North-East Tyrone, East Donegal and South Armagh to the Irish Party. It was, indeed, a retrograde step, seeming to indicate that the great new independence movement, despite its proud claims, was controlled by the Catholic Hierarchy, and it did us considerable harm in Protestant Liberal circles that were tending towards us.

On November 25th, 1918, the British Parliament was dissolved, thereby giving the signal for one of the fiercest and most epoch-making general elections ever fought in Ireland. With the exceptions already stated, Sinn Féin nominated candidates for most of the Irish constituencies. An election Manifesto was drafted and published wherein it was set out that "Sinn Féin gives Ireland the opportunity of vindicating her

honour and pursuing with renewed confidence the path of national salvation by rallying to the flag of the Irish Republic". It declared that "Sinn Féin aims at securing the establishment of that Republic by withdrawing the Irish Representation from the British Parliament and by denying the right and opposing the will of the British Government.... to legislate for Ireland. By making use of any and every means available to render impotent the power of England to hold Ireland in subjection....."

Such was the material clauses in the Sinn Féin election Manifesto. The Republic was there certainly, but, as P.S. O'Hegarty writes, with, I think, much force, "in fact what was sold to the electorate, what they voted on, was not Sinn Féin, not the Republic, but Easter Week. The swing over to Sinn Féin, after Easter Week, was only to a limited extent due to conviction about the policy, or about the Republic. There had been in operation, since 1914, a disillusionment about England's good faith, about Home Rule, about the Parliamentary Party in general, a hardening of opinion towards a policy of doing things ourselves, of operating in Ireland and ignoring what went on in Westminster. But the executions changed that. If there had been no executions there yet would have been some response to the Insurrection itself.....

but it would have taken years to have made any impression on the Parliamentary Party. But the executions roused Ireland out of apathy and patience and hope long deferred into grief and wrath and determination, grief for the men who had died, wrath at the way they had died, and determination that the people for whom they had died would not let them down".

Sinn Féin fought the General Election of 1918 under very grave handicaps. Most of its leaders and, indeed, its candidates, were imprisoned or interned, most of its newspapers and journals were suppressed and what was permitted of them so severely censored that they were of little propaganda value. But, of course, these grave handicaps were largely compensated for by the terrific enthusiasm and labour, willingly given free, of the thousands of young and fervent workers for "the Cause".

Bob Brennan, the Sinn Féin Director of Elections, was arrested, but his place was at once filled by James O'Mara, and filled in a most capable manner.

I had sent in my name to headquarters offering to help in any capacity anywhere I was wanted in the country. One evening when I got home to my digs in Whitworth Road, Drumcondra, I found a letter awaiting me. It was from James

O'Mara asking me to call to see him without fail next morning at 6, Harcourt St. I did so, and found James up to his eyes in election work, interviewing innumerable emissaries from the country and giving out orders and commands all around him, the while he smoked innumerable cigarettes. A cigarette was never out of James's mouth, even when he was talking, with the result that the edge of his rather thick moustache was always singed. "Hello, O'Shiel"! he called to me when his eye caught me. "Congratulations! Take the 3 o'clock train from Amiens St. this afternoon for Lurgan. Donnelly 'll meet you there. Good luck", and he turned to attend to someone else.

I was completely non-plussed by this most curious greeting - half-welcome, half command; but I soon found out what it meant. It appeared that the South Antrim Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Féin had "unanimously" selected me as their candidate for that constituency. When I realised my fate my heart dropped, and a feeling of something far from elation at the signal honour done me, took hold of me. When James asked me was there anything further he could do for me, I replied with a sickly grin that all I would look for, or expect, would be a republican funeral! South Antrim that returned the prominent Orange leader, Captain Charles Craig,

second only to his brother, the famous James, was a great Orange stronghold where no candidate of any other colour would have a ghost of a chance. I didn't mind at all the prospect of being devastatingly defeated, which was inevitable, but I confess I feared for my skin in that area, so traditionally turbulent during an election contest. I had lively memories of past riots in the area and of the awful mauling meted out in the past to a Liberal candidate who dared to challenge the Orange hegemony there; it did not take much mental effort to imagine that if that was how a constitutional Liberal was treated, what kind of treatment could a "non-constitutional" Separatist expect?

However, there was no time to "chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy" on such indelectable prospects. That night saw me the guest of Fr. McKillop, the P.P. of the Parish of Aghagallon, a rural district about 5 miles north of the Co. Armagh town of Lurgan. The Parish of Aghagallon, lying on the extreme S.W. of the Co. Antrim, up against the Co. Armagh border and not far from the shore of Lough Neagh, was (and, I suppose, still is) a Catholic oasis in that overwhelmingly Protestant region. Its P.P., Fr. McKillop, and his curate, Fr. McSparran (brother of James McSparran, the well-known

Northern Q.C. and Nationalist M.P.) were ardent Sinn Féiners, a remarkable singularity in itself seeing that the vast mass of the Catholic clergy in the Diocese of Down and Connor were, at the time, strong Irish Party supporters and backers of Joe Devlin, the popular M.P. for the Falls Division of Belfast, in so far as they were political at all.

That evening I opened my very forlorn campaign by addressing a small but very enthusiastic meeting in the Parish Hall, presided over by the P.P. At this meeting, the curate, Fr. McSparran, and Eamon Donnelly, the chief Sinn Féin organiser for Ulster, also spoke. If I remember aright, there was another speaker, a Canon McMeel of the Archdiocese of Armagh.

After that meeting I discussed my plan of campaign with the two priests and Eamon Donnelly. One thing, at the outset, was only too clear - that in the whole constituency they were the only two priests that Sinn Féin could rely on. The others not only would not help, but would be nearly certain to react hostilely to what they resented as an unwarranted intrusion into their good neighbourly and peaceful community by a wild harum-scarum movement from Dublin. However, despite that very inauspicious factor, all agreed that I would have to

make a serious attempt to fight the election; and Fr. McKillop, a little man with a big and very stout heart, decided that next day he'd drive me round my constituency, and would look up supporters here and there, and even call on some of the hostile priests and, to use his words, "put it up to them, whether they liked it or not". Hence it was that next morning, after breakfast, Fr. McKillop and I started forth in his modest little two-seater car. At Antrim Town we called on the P.P., the famous Fr. McCotter, a very prominent supporter of the Irish Party and a close personal friend of Joe Devlin, the influential A.O.H. President.

When Fr. McCotter came into us in the sitting-room of his home, it was clear that he did not know who I was or what our business could be, for, after a short word of welcome with Fr. McKillop he asked, coming towards me smilingly, his hand extended for a handshake, "And who is your friend?" When Fr. McKillop answered that question in his blunt, decisive way, explaining that I was the Sinn Féin candidate, Fr. McCotter stopped dead, the hand fell to his side, the smile vanished from his face, a cloud descended on his brow as he said: "Oh, I'm very sorry, very sorry indeed, Sir, but I cannot welcome you. You and your friends are trouble-makers.

You've already caused far too much trouble in the country. I cannot help or countenance you or your campaign in any way. I beg of you to leave us here in the peace and good will of all our neighbours that we enjoy, and go back to Dublin".

That unfriendly outburst caused my fiery little clerical friend to boil over with wrath and indignation. He attacked his clerical colleague bluntly and boldly, and in very unclerical language, for his attitude, and seizing his hat and taking me by the arm he hurried me out. It was quite some time before he recovered his equanimity.

The next stop was Randalstown. There happened to be a large fair in progress there as we arrived in the town, and the wide square was full of big flourishing farmers from the good farming lands in the neighbourhood. Those farmers were, of course, all, or nearly all, good Protestants, mainly Presbyterians. Fr. McKillop brought me into a small hotel where he introduced me to some young men who were our local supporters. They suggested that I take advantage of the fair-day crowds and address a meeting in the square. They thought it would be better for Fr. McKillop to make himself scarce as they were anxious to stress the non-demominational character of the new republican movement. Fr. McKillop saw their point,

quickly appreciated it and betook himself off to read his office.

The young men and myself went out into the square and mounted some vehicle or other, I forget what, where we unfurled a tricolour and proceeded to address them. One of the young men presided; I regret that his name, and the names of the others, have eluded me. A crowd of farmers gathered round us and, with hands in their trouser pockets, sticks under their arms, listened stolidly to our oratory as they puffed their pipes. When my turn came to speak I decided to build my speech on the doings of their rebel forebears that the Rising and Sinn Féin had so suddenly resurrected and popularised. So I began by asking: "Men of Randalstown, supposing someone stood up here and said that your great-great-grandfathers were the greatest rogues and traitors that ever breathed, what would you do?" One amongst them shouted, to the acclamation and "hear, hears" of the others: "Be kripes he wouldn't say it twice"! Of course that provided me with the very clue I wanted, enabling me to point out that we in Sinn Féin were all for their gallant forebears who fought and bled in that town and elsewhere in the country, over 100 years back, for an Irish Republic. It was because of those forebears of theirs, I pointed out, that we were in Randalstown that day.

And we were there to stand up for, to support and to spread their doctrines". At this a man interrupted: "They fought for the Presbyterian religion", to which I replied, "If they did, why had they so many Papists amongst them"?

We were getting on quite nicely and were appearing to interest our audience when a group ran across the square towards us from the Unionist Committee Rooms opposite, bearing Union Jacks which they waved as they sang "God Save the King". The stoical farmers grinned, but as the singing and shouting effectively put an end to the meeting there was nothing for it but to abandon it.

In the hotel bar where we proceeded to refresh ourselves after our labours, we met several of those big Co. Antrim farmers. Fine, decent men they were, and friendly too, standing us drinks whilst they counselled me "to go back to Dublin fer y'are only losin' yer time and money here fer nothin'".

I would like to stress here that neither on that occasion nor any other whilst I was endeavouring to carry on my campaign in that constituency was any violence shown to me or my supporters. The Unionist crowds contented themselves with verbal interruptions, songs and odd cat-calls. At that time

they gave us credit for being superior to our Irish Party rivals in honesty, but decidedly below them in practicality. Sinn Féin declared openly that they were out for separation from England in the form of a sovereign Irish Republic; whilst, according to the Orangemen, that was also the objective of the Redmondites but they hypocritically disguised it in the form of Home Rule. We were honest, they said, but impracticable rainbow chasers, and not worth the serious attention of responsible men.

Whilst on this aspect of things this is, perhaps, the best place to record a truly phenomenal happening, an extraordinary break with the long-established Orange tradition governing contested elections. As I have said, in former contests in an Orange stronghold like South Antrim, the Liberal opponent and his aiders and abettors went, literally, in fear of their lives. And amongst the bravest were their impersonation agents, those heroes and essential adjuncts to the electoral machinery who attended in the polling booths and, on behalf of their party, challenged prospective voters as to their voting bona fides on one or other statutory grounds. In the days of the Liberal contests, their unfortunate impersonation agents had always to get police protection on their way to and from their respective polling booths.

With the memory of many such a tempestuous "temps perdu" vividly imprinted on their minds, my impersonation agents were certainly not looking forward with much comfort to their polling-day jobs, though valiantly determined to go through with them whatever the consequences. But what was their surprise when the actual day arrived and they took up their posts in fear and trembling, to receive a cordial invitation from the ladies of the Commissariat for the Orange election helpers to share their food with them. This invitation our fellows were only too glad to accept, as the resources of their poor local organisation could not rise to such equipment. That particular election turned out to be one of, perhaps, the most peaceful, friendly and orderly in that notoriously turbulent district's electoral history. There were, of course, other areas in Ulster (and, indeed, elsewhere) where electoral contests did not come off so happily, but, in general, the Orangemen and Ulster Unionists behaved themselves well during that General Election. Curiously enough, one of the most violent and riotous elections that ever I witnessed occurred at that very time in a neighbouring constituency, but the tumult could not be blamed on Orangemen. It was the work of Catholic Nationalists. I refer to the Falls Division of Belfast where de Valera contested the

the election against Devlin, the sitting members. I spoke at a few meetings on behalf of Dev. in that election, and how I wasn't hit I can't understand, as most of the other speakers on the brake were cut and bleeding, whilst some of them, like the late Archie Savage, a Belfast publican and recent convert from Hibernianism, was knocked senseless. I shall never forget that wild, yelling, maddened Hibernian mob that pelted us for two hours with sticks, stones, rivets, rotten eggs, dead cats and rats. Only for a strong draft of Volunteers and, later, some belated help from reinforced R.I.C., I doubt if any of us would have survived intact. One of the bravest persons on our platform was Miss Eileen Davitt, Michael Davitt's daughter. She, like myself, was not hurt but she might have been, as she stood up for a full 15 or 20 minutes endeavouring to make herself heard. As a matter of fact, those of us who were called upon to undertake electioneering and

and organisation work in Ulster at that time could not but be conscious of the unhostile, if not quite friendly attitude of Orangemen to the Nationalist "new look" that we represented. If not entirely friendly, they were certainly interested, and numbers of them attended our public meetings, listening seriously to what we had to say. Sinn Féin, in its new republican garb, constantly pin-pointed and stressed the non-sectarian and secular character of its political doctrines and programme, recalling and reiterating the broad principles of toleration from the philosophy of the 1798 founders of the democratic ideal in Irish national politics. But events, as so often happens, to some extent and in certain areas, got the better of that fine pristine idealism; the new philosophy, in practice, as time went on, was not able wholly to eradicate, from certain elements within the movement, a certain core of narrow religiosity, as distinct from religion, which, when given tongue to, got more publicity and attention than it deserved or was worth. That factor played into the hands of the professional Orange bigots, ever on the look-out for reasons to maintain their vested interests, with

disastrous results - the more's the pity.

Such things, in conjunction with the shooting of Swanzy, D.I., R.I.C., (leader of Lord Mayor MacCurtain's assassins) in Lisburn on a Sunday morning, after Church service, gave the aforesaid professional Orange bigots the needful opportunity and excuse to work up and rouse the inherent and traditional fear of "popery" in the heart of Ulster Protestantism.

Well, to return to South Antrim. I traversed the whole constituency, from Toomebridge to Lisburn, and from Dunmurry to Chapeltown, holding what meetings I could, here and there, though never very large ones, for a substantial section of the Catholic and Nationalist population were irritated with us and against us, and, ultimately, if they did not vote against me, they did not vote for me. But, if my meetings were small, they made up for their size by their enthusiasm. I not only held public meetings, such as they were, but I called on as many of our supporters that I was able to contact. One of the strongest and most active of these was young Gilmore of Lisburn. His uncle had a flourishing spirit grocery in

the main street of Lisburn, and he worked with him in the business. They were well off, and both were ardent Sinn Feiners. They suffered severely in the riots after the shooting of Swanzy, their premises being burned out, compelling them to leave Lisburn. I went round a good deal in the company of Gilmore who, of course, knew the terrain well; and it was mainly through him that I made my contacts. One day, he took me by car to attend a meeting of the South Antrim Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Fein. It was to meet in the house of its President, who was a large farmer, and a Presbyterian in religion. The farm was situated in that progressive agricultural country between Antrim Town and Randalstown. We drove up a pleasant avenue, lined with trees, coming to a large, handsome dwelling-house. Our host, the President, whose name I am sorry to say I have forgotten, was a tall, spare, young man, in the early thirties, I should say, with a neatly cut brown beard. He was a cultured, quiet-spoken man, with a remarkable knowledge of Irish history and traditions, a very sincere, fervent and convinced Nationalist of the strongly separatist and republican type. He gave me a meal, after which the Comhairle

Ceanntair met. I was, of course, not a member; neither was Eamon Donnelly who was also present, nor, I imagine, old Dobbyn from Belfast. The President was a good chairman, and was re-elected to that post, despite the fact that some ignorant bigot raised the question of his religion - the one jarring note; but he was promptly and effectively sat on by the others, and reminded that that was not a meeting of the A.O.H. We Catholic Irish cannot afford to ignore the fact that the Orangemen have, unfortunately, no monopoly in bigotry in this little country.

Save for the names and personalities I have mentioned, I cannot remember another one of that goodly group of fifteen or twenty people. Such are the vagaries of memory.

Whilst my campaign in South Antrim was thus proceeding, Eamonn Donnelly turned up a Father McKillop's one morning, bringing with him a letter for me. To my huge surprise, it turned out to be a letter from an electoral committee of prominent Nationalists in Enniskillen, inviting me to stand for North Fermanagh as

their candidate. The letter was clearly genuine and could not be ignored, for the names were those of leading local personages, headed by the parish priest, the Ven. Archdeacon Patrick Keown, and including that of Cahir Healy - a well-known advanced Nationalist and Gaelic Leaguer.

I was exceedingly puzzled and did not know what I should do about it, particularly as I had but recently read in the press that the Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Fein for North Fermanagh had selected George Irvine to go forward as its candidate. George Irvine was that extremely rare thing - a Northern, Protestant, Separatist Republican, who had fought through the Easter Week Rising in 1916, had been arrested thereafter and interned, but recently liberated with other Sinn Fein prisoners. Irvine, having been duly selected by the organisation in North Fermanagh, I could not see, for the life of me, why I was now invited to stand for the same constituency and in what looked like the same interest. True, my inviters did not specifically invoke Sinn Fein, and some amongst them, like Dean Keown, were not Sinn Feiners (he was non

political); but, against that, there were a number of prominent Sinn Fein names to the invitation - that of Cahir Healy, for example, that could not be discounted.

In my bewilderment, I consulted Eamonn Donnelly, the Chief Organiser of Sinn Fein for Ulster. He, too, couldn't make out what had happened there so suddenly, and could only conjecture that, perhaps, Irvine, for some reason or other, had decided to withdraw. However, he advised me to go to Enniskillen forthwith and see my inviters, and, if the coast was clear, not to refuse to let them nominate me for that constituency, in addition, of course, to the South Antrim one.

Donnelly and I discussed that North Fermanagh situation, upside down and inside out, in all its aspects and possibilities in so far as we could gauge them. One possibility that occurred to us was that there might have been some hugger-mugger, some chicanery, as the result of which George was being ousted, perhaps by Hibernian influence which was exceedingly strong and well-organised in that area. I told Eamonn that, if I found that that was the case, I certainly would decline the invitation to stand; and that, anyhow, I would only stand with

Irvine's consent. Eamonn endorsed that decision, said it was the right and proper course in such circumstances.

On arriving at Enniskillen, I was met at the station by Cahir Healy, George Irvine, Sean B. MacManus, Frank Carney, Sean Nethercote and others of the advanced and anti-Party blend of Nationalism.

In Enniskillen, I soon discovered the solution of the mystery. It must be remembered that North Fermanagh, unlike South Fermanagh, possessed a Unionist majority on the voters' register, and was held by a Unionist, albeit by a small margin, not more than six or seven hundred votes in a total electorate of over fourteen thousand. Nevertheless, it was conclusive, and was so recognised by the Nationalists, who never contested it. True, a Liberal used to fight it, and, I think, on one occasion was actually returned; but a Nationalist, never. In pursuance of the order of Sinn Fein to contest all seats in the county, whether Unionist or Nationalist, the North Fermanagh Comhairle Ceanntair was one of the first to carry that into effect. So, shortly after the dissolution of Parliament, the Comhairle Ceanntair met

and selected George Irvine as the Sinn Féin standard-bearer for the area. Thereupon, the official Nationalists and Hibernians then began to consider putting up a candidate. It should be mentioned that, because of the recent electoral Act, conceding manhood suffrage and permitting women of thirty and over to vote, Nationalists were expected to stand a good chance of winning, provided, of course, that there was no split amongst them. Eventually, it appeared that the man the official Nationalists were contemplating putting up was Joe Gillen, a publican in the town, the local Hibernians' chief, and personally a very popular man with everybody. But it was clear to all that, if Irvine and Gillen went up, the Catholic and Nationalist vote would be fatally split, giving the Unionists an easy walk-over. Hence, overtures were made to both sides to come together and arrange some via media that would obviate all possibility of a split.

It was eventually decided to hold a plebiscite. So, on a certain Sunday after Mass, Nationalists, who were on the register of voters, voted outside their churches for the Party of their choice. I cannot now recollect the figures, but the result of that plebiscite was that Sinn

Féin won by a clear, but by no means overwhelming majority. The result came as a profound disappointment to the official Nationalists and the Hibernians, who were deadly certain that they would win, for they had a splendid local organisation, with Hibernian halls scattered all over the area. Some thought that it was doubtful whether they would ever have consented to a plebiscite, had they had any doubts as to the result. At all events, the Hibernians were exceedingly irate and bitter at their defeat, and, despite their pledge, by no means inclined to submit to a verdict so distasteful to them. They proceeded to bring forth all kinds of excuses and reasons for declining to carry out their pledge to vote. They declared that the plebiscite had not been free and impartial, that gross duress had been brought to bear on large numbers of voters by Volunteers and young Sinn Féiners, to compel them to vote against their Redmondite and Dillonite allegiance, that the voting papers had been tampered with, and that several, who were not on the register, were allowed to vote, etc., etc. Finally, they declared that nothing would induce them to go out and vote for George Irvine whose parents, they declared, sold bibles and tracts in

the town of Enniskillen and proselytized. The fact that poor George was a distinct human being, in his own right, and clearly by deliberate choice and his rebel actions, poles apart from the politics and outlook of his parents, made no appeal to them, and caused no change in their narrow and bigotted outlook. Had he been a Party supporter, it is just possible that they might have overlooked the sins of his parents; but he was on the revolutionary side of Irish nationalism, then nearly more unpopular with official Nationalism than Unionism.

As a result of this unexpected development, George Irvine generously withdrew his name, though against the wishes of many of the young Sinn Féiners and Volunteers who thought he should go forth and fight the election, even if he lost badly. Accordingly, when Irvine withdrew, I was written to and invited to stand in his stead.

Having had the position explained to me, I sought a private tete-a-tete with George Irvine, when I put my position clearly before him. I told him I was wholly ignorant of all that background until that day, and that, unless I had his willing consent to do so, I would not permit them to put me forward for the constituency, but

would go straight back next morning to South Antrim, where I was in the middle of my campaign and where, as their candidate, I was badly wanted. George, without hesitation, said I had to go forward. As far as he was concerned, having regard to the hostile attitude of the Hibernians to him personally, which he appeared to resent keenly, he said it would be useless his going forward, as, despite their undertaking, they would not vote for him; and he declared that, save for the bad taste in raising the personal element, he did not mind so much about whether he or somebody else stood for the constituency; the only thing he did mind very much about was that, whoever stood, he should be a man who stood for the principles of 1916 and Sinn Féin. He expressed himself as being satisfied in that regard about myself, and declared that, to show his endorsement of my candidature, he would stay in the constituency and help me. I thanked him for his generous reaction to an unfortunate situation, and one that must have been very painful for him.

My troubles, however, were not at an end. When I returned to my hotel, the Royal, I found my old friend and adviser, Cahir Healy, waiting for me. The Hibernians, it

appeared, were still smouldering. They were complaining that they were being ignored, and that their chief men had not met me, or heard what I had to say, or what exactly was my programme. They were saying that they knew nothing about me beyond the fact that I was a young barrister who occasionally visited their town on the hunt for briefs. Cahir said I would have to meet them; and that I should do so by myself, as any local person connected with Sinn Féin would be anathema to them. I, although a Sinn Féiner, had the advantage of being a stranger. Accordingly, it was settled that their "County Grand Lodge", or whatever it was called, would summon itself in solemn conclave for the next evening in their hall in the town, so that I could appear before it, explain myself, and let them vet me.

Next night, a cold, bleak, damp winter's night, I climbed the dark stairs of a house in Townhall Street to the room where the Grand Council of Hibernians for the County was in session. I was met on the landing, outside the closed door of the sessions room, by a man in full regalia who was clearly expecting me. He explained to me

that he was the "tiler", "porter", or guardian of the door, and bade me remain there on the landing until such time as he may have to summon me before the presence of the Grand Council.

I must have spent an hour, at least, on that draughty, dark landing, with nothing to do, or see, but to listen to the clamour of talk that was going on inside the "lodge". I could not make out a word they were saying but, judging from the din and terrific crescendos of verbiage that arose every now and again, I appeared to be the subject of a very definite controversy, and my "Cause" was having a pretty stormy passage before them. At length, the great murmuration of talk ceased abruptly, and gave place to a sudden silence, the door opened, and "Brother Tiler" brought me to the threshold, but stopped me crossing it. Then I heard a voice, in good Ulster accent, to this effect: "Brother Tiler" (or was it, "Brother Porter"?), admit the stranger!"

With a final injunction, sotto voce, from "Brother Tiler" not to say a word unless and until Brother President called upon me to do so, I was conducted up the long, narrow room to a long table, and told to stand there till

further notice. Opposite me, sitting at the table, were the chief rulers and local dignatories of the Order, resplendent, or comparatively resplendent in their trappings of office - collarettes, aprons, sashes like their Orange rivals, but, unlike the brilliant colours of those rivals, confined to two colours only, green and gold, which were not very exciting.

The silence was impressive after the terrific babble of voices I had heard, shortly before, on the landing. Presently, the President spoke, as far as I can remember, something to this effect: "Brothers of the Grand Council of the A.O.H. for the County Fermanagh, is it your wish that the stranger shall be heard?"

"Aye, aye!", came the responses from the roomful of brethren.

The President, having ascertained from "Brother Tiler" or "Brother Porter" that the door was well and truly sealed, then called upon me to address the assembled brethren, which I proceeded to do. I need not record my speech here; it resembled thousands of speakers of the patriotic type, then much in vogue. I remember referring

to the heroic Maguires of Fermanagh and their exploits, and a good cheer followed, as half of them were Maguires. I was particularly careful not to go too deeply into the controversial side of Sinn Féin philosophy, and, of course, I refrained from saying anything critical, much more offensive, about the constitutional movement. On the contrary, I gave that movement a few pats on the back for its past achievements, which, I have no doubt, did not do me any harm with the worthy brethren.

When I had finished, the President shortly and gravely thanked me, in the name of the brethren, and I was conducted forth from the conclave by "Brother Porter", and told to wait once more on the landing. In about fifteen minutes, Brother "Porter" reappeared and ushered me in before the President again, who informed me that the brethren found they could support my candidature, and would do so throughout the constituency. I duly thanked them, and took my departure.

The A.O.H. kept its promise to vote for me, by doing so, if not wholeheartedly, at least in substantial numbers. Their leaders, however, were shy about appearing and

speaking on our platforms.

As I have said, there was little or no excitement and few scenes in the course of that election. As, unlike South Antrim, there was a good fighting chance of winning the seat, I spent most of my time, during the election, in North Fermanagh, with occasional trips to my other constituency.

Dublin headquarters had instructed candidates to visit and speak at every town, village and centre in a constituency, and particularly, on no account, to ignore the Protestant and Unionist districts in the North, for we were fundamentally a propagandist movement, bringing the new evangel to all and sundry in the country. Now, there was one particular town in the constituency of North Fermanagh that proudly boasted that it was a hundred per cent. Protestant, loyal and Unionist, and that it possessed neither a Catholic church nor a Catholic family. That was the little town of Ballinamallard in the north-east of the constituency, not far from the Tyrone border. When I told my agent, Dick Herbert, of my intention to hold a meeting there, he thought I had taken leave of my senses, and proceeded to retail for me terrific stories

of anti-Catholic fury of the Ballinamallardians, which, certainly, didn't make me more enamoured of speaking there. Finally, it was arranged that I would visit the place one afternoon, as Dick had little difficulty in convincing me that a night-time meeting there would not be good for our respective healths.

Accordingly, one afternoon, Dick and I drove into Ballinamallard. The car pulled up in the main street, and, in no time, we had a crowd of about two hundred round us - mainly women and children. The men, I was relieved to see, were conspicuous by their absence - away at work. At first, they gave us little trouble, their curiosity being aroused to see what sort was the "Dublin man", as I was invariably called, though I was as Ulster as they were. Having discovered that I was just an ordinary fellow like their own fellows, without horns or a tail, they soon began to interrupt, shouting, "To hell wi' the Pope's man!" Again and again, I explained that I had nothing to say politically with His Holiness in Rome, who wasn't even aware of my existence; but it was all of no avail. And it was just surprising the din those women and children could create. Soon, they got stronger help. Three

drummers appeared on the scene, lashing their drums with canes, and this nearly turned those good women into harpies. They took the long hat-pins from their hair, and made wicked stabs with them at us. I can say I was mighty glad when our driver started his engine, and we sped out of Ballinamallard amidst a shower of stones and clods and a salvo of curses.

The polling day for most constituencies in that general election was December 13th. When the poll closed that evening, all the boxes were duly sealed and conveyed, under police guard, to Enniskillen where they were deposited in the town hall, to await the count which was postponed over Christmas, to December 31st. This was a complete departure from the usual custom which was to start the count as soon as the boxes had been collected and conveyed to the constituency centre; the reason for it was to give time for the postal votes of the soldiers and sailors, and others in the fighting services, to come in. Enniskillen was an important garrison town, and the families in the back streets there had a long, traditional connection with the local regiments, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Inniskilling Dragoons. Those back-

street people were all Catholics, who originally came from Connaught and who formed a sort of distinctive but highly respectable community within the larger one of the township, keeping, more or less, to themselves, and living a kind of communal life of their own. Indeed, even their speech was different, with more of a Connaught than an Ulster flavour in it. As I have said, those "back-streeters" automatically joined the British Army, on reaching man's estate, and made their career and livelihood in that army, often spending years abroad, guarding the far-flung bastions of empire. With the opening of the army to women in the 1914-1918 war, their daughters and sisters also joined up, largely in the W.A.A.Cs, the W.R.Ns, the W.R.A.Fs and so forth. This enthusiasm for the British Army amongst those worthy folk was not due to any particular loyalty to it and to all it stood for, but merely because they happened to like the soldier's life, and soldiering provided them with a means of livelihood and a way of life that suited them.

December 31st, 1918, found me back at Enniskillen for the count. The town was full of soldiers and W.A.A.Cs, home on furlough for the Christmas holidays, parading in

groups up and down the streets. I spent most of that day in the town hall, in the company of my rival, Edward Mervyn Archdale, the Unionist candidate, watching the progress of the count. Archdale was a man of about sixty-five years of age, with bushy, gray side-whiskers, and a very bald pate. He looked what he was, a typical Irish small country squire of the Victorian era, more learned in hunting, shooting, fishing and rural affairs than in politics, certainly politics on anything like high horizons. He had, it seemed, served for some years in the Navy, but one would never have deduced from his appearance that he had ever been a sea-faring man.

During the count, Archdale and I were thrown much together, as everybody else in the great room was busily engaged, he and I alone being idle but highly interested spectators. He struck me as a mildly spoken, gentle old chap, quite prepared to discuss with me any topic provided that it was not controversial and that he knew something about it. He was acutely, indeed, nervously anxious about the result of the count, far more so than I was, as I could not see much real hope of my winning the seat, despite the optimism of my supporters - the small but

substantial Unionist margin in the register of voters would, I felt, from the start, provide adequately against that.

Another circumstance that was of enormous help to the Unionists was that the terrible and deadly post-war "black flu" was raging furiously throughout the constituency at the time, and falling with incredible partiality on the Catholic element, the Protestant element being uncannily immune. The explanation I got for that phenomenal state of affairs was that the Catholics were, as they were bound to be, far better church-goers than their religious and political antagonists, and hence the dire disease spread much more rapidly and more easily through their ranks.

Archdale, as I have said, was extremely anxious about the outcome of that election. And he had every reason for his anxiety at mid-day, for when the proceedings in the town hall were stayed for lunch, I was discovered, to the surprise of everyone, to be leading by several hundreds. The poor old chap was very downcast, for more reasons and less altruistic ones than the "loyalist"

cause. The old man was extremely hard-up, his farm and his naval half-pay not nearly sufficing for his needs and those of his family. It was understood that, if he were successful in retaining the seat, he would get the job of Vice President of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland, the ample salary for which would put him on his legs again. He was so miserable and anxious that I could not help feeling sorry for him, and, when he declared to me, in melancholy tones, that it looked as though I had won, I comforted him by telling him that the solid, decisive votes were always at the bottom, and reminded him that the boxes from the Unionist strongholds of Kesh, Edernay, Irvinestown, Tempo, Lisbellew, and, of course, Ballinamallard had yet to be counted.

How right I was! The count had not been long resumed after the luncheon interval when my quite substantial morning majority proceeded rapidly to diminish and presently to evaporate altogether, leaving Archdale finally the victor, with a majority of five hundred odd in a total poll of about twelve thousand. We both polled six thousand odd, he getting the majority on the odds.

Archdale and myself, with our respective election agents, Jimmy Cooper and Dick Herbert, accompanied the Sheriff on the town hall balcony. When the Sheriff announced the news to the sea of upturned faces below, the air of strain and hush that permeated the atmosphere gave way to terrific excitement, the Unionist crowds - few, significantly, in uniform - cheering madly again and again. Presently peal after peal of joyous chimes issued from the belfry of the Church of Ireland; but, suddenly, in the midst of one long peal, stopped abruptly. After about twenty minutes or so, the chimes were resumed, and rang for at least half-an-hour, more and more thunderously and joyously than ever. We learnt later the story of the sudden stopping of the chimes and their resumption. It appeared that, whilst the enthusiastic loyalists were ringing the bells, the Rector - was he Canon Walker or MacManaway? - entered his church and, in great anger, stopped the operators and ejected them from the sacred precincts.He told them that his church was a House of God for worship and prayer, and not for politics or for partisan demonstrations which, he declared, were irreverent and wholly out of place in the House of God.

When the ejected bell-ringers told their "loyal" friends what had happened, those friends were very wrath, indeed, with the Canon. So wrath were they at his interference with their "loyal" rejoicings, that a gang of them broke into the church, took possession of the belfry and, in blatant conflict with the Rector's wishes, restarted the thunderous ringing referred to. The sequel to all this bell-ringing was amusing, leaving, as I think, the final honours with the Rector. The next issue of the two local Unionist weekly papers, the "Fermanagh Times" and the "Impartial Reporter", carried numerous indignant letters, attacking, indeed, abusing the Rector for stopping the bell-ringing. However, in the next succeeding issue of these papers, there appeared a dignified letter from the Rector, putting forth his views about the impropriety of using "bells dedicated to the service of God" for a purely political purpose. But his piece de resistance was his concluding paragraph, wherein he revealed that the gang that had broken into the church after he had stopped the original ringing were all Presbyterians, not one of them being a parishioner or even a co-religionist of his! I should mention that, far from being a Nationalist or even a Liberal, the good Rector was

a strong Unionist and active supporter of Archdale; but he had a sound conception of the fundamental proprieties that large numbers of his fellow-Unionists lacked.

When the Orange cheers died off, the victor advanced to address his exultant supporters. As his words fell on my ears, I could hardly credit that I was not dreaming. Were that voice and those words, the voice and words of the nervous, mild little man in whose mellow company I had spent the day? It was a violent, rabble-rousing, bitter speech, such as would be made by the average semi-educated Orange mob orator. I have, of course, long forgotten the verbiage, but its gist I could not forget. He congratulated his "fellow Orangemen and fellow Loyalists" (I think that was the sequence) for clearing the "rebels, traitors and pro-Germans out of loyal North Fermanagh", which ever would remain under the Union Jack and the King's Crown. And so on and so on, in those stereotyped Orange lines.

When he had finished, I stepped forward to speak, seconding the vote of thanks to the Sheriff and his officers as was my right, indeed, duty, by electoral tradition and custom. But not a word of mine could be heard.

Archdale's violent speech had so inflamed his crowd that it became a yelling, raging mob. I stood there on that balcony, looking down on a sea of roaring mouths and fluttering Union Jacks - helpless - shouting myself hoarse, but not being able to hear a word I uttered in the terrific din. Beside me was Archdale, grinning appreciatively at his supporters and waving to them, obviously pleased at their prompt reaction to his provocative harangue, and not making the slightest effort to stop them.

Suddenly, in the midst of all this racket, a great yell came from further up Townhall Street, and, the next instant, I saw a huge mob of soldiers and sailors, with a goodly sprinkling of W.A.A.Cs, all, of course, in uniform, come charging down the street. "Army backers for Archdale's crowd", thought I to myself, apprehensively; and I began to wonder how on earth I'd manage to get back to my hotel with a sound skin. But - <u>mirabile dictu!</u> - almost as such anxious thoughts were passing through my mind, the khaki crowd, instead of joining in with the brawling "loyalists", milled into them. Yes, incredible to relate, His Majesty's soldiers and soldieresses were

actually attacking their, presumably, fellow-loyalists! Five or ten minutes of a terrific melée ensued, in which several "loyalists" were stretched out on the street, resulting in the wholesale rout of Archdale's men. On looking down again, I beheld a great swarm of khaki-clad soldiers and W.A.A.Cs, now in complete occupation of the town hall frontage, waving innumerable Sinn Féin flags, cheering and giving tongue to such slogans as "Up Sinn Féin!, "Up the Republic!", "Up the Rebels!" To my utter astonishment, it dawned upon me that His Majesty's soldiers were not loyal Archdale's supporters but mine. They escorted me back to my hotel in great force, chanting lustily, as they marched, the "Soldier's Song". Only for that latter episode and the tricolour they carried, a stranger, coming suddenly on those scenes, would undoubtedly have taken me, surrounded as I was by enthusiastic supporters, seventy per cent. in uniform, as the "loyalist" candidate, and that Archdale, with his almost entirely civilian supporters, was the rebel candidate

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Next day, I had to travel by a morning train to Lisburn to see my South Antrim supporters there, either

to commiserate with them on my defeat by a majority of of over twelve thousand, or to rejoice that, despite all the difficulties, the preponderating Unionist vote in the constituency, the small help from the clergy and the local Nationalist leaders, that we managed to save our deposit of £150, and to get it returned.

When I arrived at Enniskillen station for my train, with my friends, Cahir Healy, Frank Carty, Sean Nethercote and Sean Carty of Belleek, who were seeing me off, I was surprised to find the platform crowded with soldiers and W.A.A.Cs on their way back to rejoin their various units after the Christmas recess. When they saw me, they swarmed round me, cheering and shouting rebel slogans and waving tricolours, to the embarrassment and obvious vexation of their officers who stood by, with frowning visages, but powerless to interfere. I had the company of those enthusiastic backers of mine to the parting of our ways at Dundalk, I changing there for Lisburn and they going on to Dublin. All of them, who had votes, seemingly voted for me as they informed me more than once during that journey, for it was the aftermath of the Christmas holidays,

and the spirit of festivity was still within them.

Well, so much for that particular North Fermanagh election. Archdale's bitter and provocative speech does not seem so incredible to me today as it did forty years ago. In the perspective of forty years, I can more objectively measure up the position as it then was, and see its crucial possibilities much clearer than I could then. The great fear of the Unionists and their great relief when their victory, albeit by a narrow majority, removed, or greatly weakened that fear, are very understandable today; for, had I won, it would have meant that the entire parliamentary representation of the County Fermanagh would have been held by Sinn Féin - in other words, by anti-partitionists of the most uncompromising type. It should be borne in mind that, at that time, partition talk in connection with Lloyd George's latest Home Rule Bill, was rife, and hovered as ever over what the precise area was to be. Had I won, that must have meant that it would have been extremely difficult, not to say impossible, for the British Government to have placed the County Fermanagh under a Belfast Partitionist Parliament. In that event - and it very nearly came

off - the "Six Counties" would have been only the "Five Counties"; and we would have been the "Twenty-Seven Counties" instead of the "Twenty-Six Counties". It had, indeed, been a narrow shave, and their explosive relief, in the shape of turbulent conduct and violent language, was, doubtless, understandable, if not excusable, in the circumstances. Archdale had, of course, a further and most material reason for elation at the result, particularly salient in the case of an old man - his contingent job. And the double reasons, his future well-being and the fate of the County in the coming order of things, no doubt accounted for his tirade, and made it less inexcusable.

There was one quite unexpected happening after the election that affected the local Sinn Féin organisation in a quite unexpected way. I have told how George Irvine, a Protestant Republican who had fought in the G.P.O., had, prior to the church-door plebiscite to secure unanimity amongst anti-partitionists, been selected by the local Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Féin to stand as its candidate at the election. His selection had also been duly ratified by the Sinn Féin Headquarters in Dublin.

Owing to subsequent events that I have already gone into, I was brought on to the Fermanagh scene in great haste (as it was then close to nomination day), and knew little then about all these happenings and the background that gave rise to them. As I have said, I accepted the invitation of the local Sinn Féiners to stand, having first got the approval of Eamonn Donnelly, the Chief Sinn Féin Organiser for Ulster, and the consent of George Irvine. I told the latter that, if I did not get his assent to my nomination as candidate, I would absolutely refuse to go forward. As I have recorded, I not only got his assent but his support, which facts he has magnanimously acknowledged in letters to the press then, and on numbers of occasions since.

Now, it appeared that a number of his friends and supporters in the local organisation were, not unnaturally, greatly annoyed at the way he was treated - rejected because of the antagonism of sectarian elements amongst the Nationalists, not because of anything he did himself, but because of what his parents had done. Well, to make a long story short, the whole matter was brought up before

the Standing Committee of Sinn Féin in Dublin, which found against the rejection of Irvine and the subsequent approval of me by the local Comhairle Ceanntair.

I confess I am very hazy as to whether the local Comhairle Ceanntair was suspended by Headquarters or suspended itself; but there was no doubt as to the result of those proceedings, which were that the entire Sinn Féin organisation of North Fermanagh remained outside the official national Sinn Féin movement for over the year; and carried on, during that term, quite satisfactorily as a kind of "independent Sinn Féin" body. It was, of course, ultimately readmitted to the fold. In this respect, the North Fermanagh Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Féin can be said to have made history, as I do not think that there was another case like it, certainly on so large a scale, involving so many clubs.

. . . . . .

I have little more to record about South Antrim. I was, of course, thoroughly trounced by my formidable Orange opponent, Captain Charles Craig, brother of Sir James Craig, the Ulster Unionist leader. It remained only for

me to go there and thank my good friends and supporters for the splendid help and backing they gave me in an utterly forlorn cause.

On the day I arrived in Lisburn, there was a great Orange demonstration in the town to celebrate the victory over the "rebelly Shinners". I happened to be in the shop of my good friends, the Gilmore's, which was situated in one of the central streets of the town, talking to Mr. Gilmore, his nephew and a few others, who were telling me all about how very peaceful the election had been, and how kind the Unionist Commissariat and its ladies had been to our election agent and helpers. Outside, there was a rising crescendo of that "musical noise" which is ever the characteristic of Orange processions, an extraordinary melange of divers sounds - brass instruments, fifes, melodeons, bag-pipes, crowned and nearly drowned by the thunder of the numerous big drums and the continuous rattle of the kettle-drums.

As the procession was passing the shop, two little Unionist lassies whom I had met and chaffed about the "awful Sinn Féiners", gay with Orange and "loyal" bunting

and ribbons, ran into the shop to me, crying, "Come'n out, Muster Shiel! Come'n out'n watch yerself bein' burnt wi' Kaiser Boll!" So, each seizing an arm, they pulled me out into the street,, where presently I found myself walking alongside the big procession not far from a great lorry that was, clearly, the central feature of the procession. On a platform erected on that lorry were two dummy figures, fondly embracing each other. The girls explained those figures to me. "Ye see th'auld fellow wi' the big whoskers, carryin' the German flag?" - pointing to a dummy with a huge, upturned handle-bar moustache - "Well, thon's the Kaiser! An' ye see the fellow wi' the Sinn Féin flag in Kaiser Boll's arms? Well, thon's yerself!"

The procession and bands paraded through the town, myself, festooned by my fair escort, along with them. Everybody knew who I was, the worsted Sinn Féin candidate, and I got much chiding and back-cracks - but all the best of good humour. It was a "fiesta"; and Lisburn was out to enjoy itself. Finally, the procession halted at the bridge, and "Kaiser Bill" and "myself" were duly set on fire, and hurled in flames down into the Lagan, where I

watched my "corpse" and that of my "ally" firely dissolving in the dark waters, to the hilarious but extremely good-humoured cheers of the crowd. Later, I repaired, with some your Orange friends of my fair escort, to a tavern, "till we wake ye!", which, with much affability and hospitality, they did. Next day, I took leave of my good friends, Orange and Green, of Lisburn and returned to Dublin.

THE FOUNDING OF DÁIL ÉIREANN.

The final results of the historic general election of 1918, published on December 30th, disclosed that out of Ireland's 105 elected M.P.s, 73 were Sinn Féiners, 26 Unionists, and 6 were all that remained of the once powerful Irish party that had dominated the Irish scene for nearly half a century. It even lost its new leader, John Dillon, who, in his Mayo constituency which he had held for the greater part of a lifetime, had been replaced by de Valera who received 8,843 votes to his 4,451 - almost a two to one majority which Devlin's sweeping victory in the Falls Division of Belfast of 8,488 votes to de Valera's 3,245 did not compensate for. Even so recently as the beginning of that year, the Irish Party and O'Brienites had held 80 seats. The people had voted against the Irish Party and for the new Sinn Féin policy, particularly that part of it which dealt with the bringing of Ireland's case for independence before the forthcoming Peace Conference, by 70% of the valid votes cast. In all Ireland, out of a total of 1,526,910 recorded votes, the Unionists received 315,394, or about 20%.

(I have taken these figures from Dorothy Macardle's "The Irish Republic". They seem to me to represent the position

as it emerged from that election. But, for purposes of comparison, I give those from a singularly hostile and biassed source, Serjeant A.M. Sullivan, in his book - "Old Ireland" (P.237) gives this version and analysis of the voting at that General Election: - "Total on Register - 1,926,274. In contested seats, 1,451,496. In non-contested seats, 474,778. Total who voted in contested seats, 1,008,551 = 69.3% of votes on the Register; 443,000 voters abstained from voting in contested seats. Analysis of the Voting - Sinn Féin - 474,540 or 32.2%; Nationalists - 225,188 or 15.5%; Unionists - 308,823 or 21.2%. Sullivan's analysis strikes me as completely phoney as even English papers conceded that the country had gone solidly Sinn Féin, but I have not the time to check it.

The fundamental principle of Sinn Féin was not to ask others, particularly not the Conquerors, to concede us our freedom, but, if and when backed substantially by the people, to go forth boldly and proclaim it, and set about creating the necessary machinery to maintain and operate it. In the face of that undoubted mandate from the people, it was now up to Sinn Féin to carry out its promises as far as it was able to do so. Accordingly, 3.30 p.m. on January 21st was the hour and

date appointed for the assembly of the elected M.P.s, all of whom had been duly notified accordingly. Only Sinn Féin M.P.s, however, accepted the invitation, and of these only 36 were free to, and actually did turn up, no less than 37 of their colleagues being "Fé ghlas ag Gallaibh" and so unable to do so. The proceedings of that assembly opened with a prayer in Irish by Father Michael O'Flanagan, the Chaplain, after which a document called "The Provisional Constitution of Dáil Éireann" was read by the Chairman - Cathal Brugha - and passed unanimously. That extremely brief document consisted of six short sections, in none of which is there any reference to much less a definition of, the Irish Republic or what area it covers. The first of these declared that "Dáil Éireann shall possess full powers to legislate and shall be composed of Delegates (Teachtaí) chosen by the people of Ireland from the present constituencies of the country". It provided for a Cabinet or Ministry of five - a President elected by the Dáil and four Ministers chosen by the President so elected and endorsed by vote of the Dáil. The Ministers so created were those of Finance, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence, filled respectively by Eoin MacNeill, Michael Collins, Count Plunkett and Dick Mulcahy.

The name of the State was declared to be, in English, "The Irish Republic" (not, be it noted, "The Republic of Ireland), and in Irish "Saorstát Éireann". A Declaration of Independence was then read in Irish and English and duly passed. The essence of that document, also praiseworthily brief, was that having recalled that the Irish Republic was proclaimed in Dublin on Easter Monday, 1916, it went on to say that "Now therefore we, the elected Representatives of the ancient Irish people in National Parliament, do, in the name of the Irish nation, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make this declaration effective by every means at our command". The acceptance of that Declaration was proposed by the Chairman, Cathal Brugha, and seconded by Pierce Beasley, when all Deputies rose to their feet and, raising their right hands, pledged themselves in Irish to endeavour to make it an effective reality by every means in their power.

At this first meeting of the Dáil there was also passed a "Message to the Free Nations of the World", and a very radical and highly dubious "Democratic Programme" that, in the course of time was discreetly dropped and forgotten about. That historic session, the first of the First Dáil, lasted

but two hours. The proceedings were watched by numerous interested spectators, including many foreign visitors and journalists. Everything went off most successfully. The new Irish State, by the will of the people, had been well and truly founded. But it might not have been; at least on that occasion and in that wise; for it was only long, long afterwards that it was known that the Irish Privy Council held a meeting and decided by a majority of one vote not to suppress the Mansion House assembly. By such slender margins is history made.

The dignified and efficient character of that first meeting of Dáil Éireann attracted the British and foreign press, and drew from them, even the inimical ones, encomiums of praise and appreciation. Curiously enough, it was a traditionally friendly paper that lost its sense of proportion and turned somewhat "catty" in its observations on the event. In its issue of January 22nd, the "Manchester Guardian" thus commented: "The Republican theatricalism, which had its absurd climax in the gathering of the Irish 'Constituent Assembly' will not be taken seriously in this country". Strange language, and sadly unprophetic at that, to come from the great organ of enlightened Liberalism; but, as we know, even Homer nods.

January 21st, 1919, can now be recognised in perspective as one of the significant, indeed, crucial dates in latter-day Irish history. On that day a sovereign democracy had been decreed to exist in Ireland, and though the number of elected M.P.s so decreeing it amounted only to about a third of the entire Irish Parliamentary representation and to only half of the Sinn Féin members, it was, nevertheless, effective and had certainly behind it, in principle, at all events, the will and good wishes of at least 70% of the populace though it did not claim to do more than establish a Provisional Constitution. Many and great changes in the country flowed from that happening. From that time onward interest in the doings of the British Parliament and its personnel, for so long prime items of news in Ireland and the national press, decreased strikingly and, in a remarkably short time, faded away altogether. The men of the new movement, by their imaginative action, had thereby succeeded in carrying out that first maxim of Sinn Féin as advocated for so long by Griffith, viz. to concentrate national attention on the national parliament, Dáil Éireann, and not on that of Westminster; in other words, on Ireland and not on England. In the new House of Commons

that assembled early in the year, nearly 70% of the Irish representation was missing and their seats vacant. That Parliament, won on the despicable and wholly dishonest slogan "Hang the Kaiser", returned an overwhelmingly Conservative representation, practically annihilating the Liberal Party and seriously attenuating the Labour. Lloyd George, the ex-Liberal and quondam Radical, became Prime Minister again, this time of a Government euphuistically styled a "National Coalition" but, in fact, a virulently Tory one.

Apart from its imaginative and symbolistic significance to the country, the newly created Dáil was soon to discover that an assumption of governmental functions and authority involved, in due course, the taking on of grave responsibilities, to say nothing of the risks. My chronicle, as it proceeds, will record some of those responsibilities and the steps taken to discharge them. Now, whilst I am on the subject of Dáil Éireann I might as well trace out here its evolution and its constitutional development within that year of 1919.

On March 9th, the British Government, in one of its queer see-saw and vacilating reactions that so characterised

its Irish policy, suddenly released, unconditionally, all the Sinn Féin members it had interned without trial and held in England for months past. Because of those compulsory absentees from the inaugural meeting of the Dáil in January, the Ministry then elected was, avowedly, but a temporary stop-gap one. Accordingly, on April 1st Dáil Éireann was recalled and met in open session in the Mansion House for two days. Brugha's Ministry resigned and de Valera was, thereupon, elected "Priomh-Aire", or First, or Prime Minister of Dáil Éireann. And here is, perhaps, as good a place as any to draw attention to the fact that neither then, nor at any time prior to the Treaty of 1922, was there express and specific provision made in the Constitution for the office of "President of the Irish Republic" let alone of the "Republic of Ireland". Beasley, in his book on Collins, thus explains the reason for that rather fundamental lacuna in the Constitutional instrument; on P. 295 he writes:

> "It was manifest that Dáil Éireann could not arrogate to itself the right of electing a 'President of the Irish Republic'. The constitution made the position of the Priomh Aire quite clear. Dáil Éireann was defined as the supreme Legislative power, and the Aireacht or Ministry as the supreme executive

power; the Aireacht consisted of the Priomh-Aire, or Prime Minister, elected by the Dáil, and other Ministers nominated by the Priomh-Aire and ratified by vote of the Dáil. In accordance with this Constitution, de Valera was unanimously elected Priomh-Aire, and nominated eight other Ministers to constitute the Executive, his nominations being unanimously approved by the Dáil. The most noteworthy change was the appointment of Michael Collins as Minister of Finance. The other Ministers were: - Arthur Griffith, Home Affairs; Cathal Brugha, Defence; Count Plunkett, Foreign Affairs; W.T. Cosgrave, Local Government; Eoin MacNeill, Industries; Countess Markievicz, Labour; and Robert Barton, Agriculture..... The most essential departments were Home Affairs, Finance, Defence and Local Government, and, to a lesser extent, Agriculture".

Dev. was undoubtedly known in English as President de Valera, but, in view of Beasley's explanation and the absence of any more specific qualification, he would appear to have been President of the Ministry, just as he was President of Sinn Féin and President of the Irish Volunteer organisation. Although the Irish Republic had been re-proclaimed and set up, its specific headship had, seemingly, not been definitely created or filled for the reasons given by Beasley, P.S. O'Hegarty and other writers on the period who had the great advantage of participating in those events. To a certain extent, the position was not unlike that of Switzerland, where the First, or Prime Minister

in the Government is also the actual head of the Swiss State, save that in this case, he is so by a direct provision in the Swiss Constitution. But whatever about that, Dev., as I have said, held these three presidencies of Dáil Éireann, Sinn Féin and the Volunteers simultaneously, which, to a considerable extent, were co-ordinated in his person. But whilst I am on this subject I should record that, at a session of the Dáil held on August 26th, 1921, during the Truce and the Treaty negotiations, for the purpose of electing its officers, Dev. was proposed for the position of "President of the Irish Republic" by Gen. Seán McKeon, T.D., and seconded by Gen. Mulcahy, T.D. There was, however, no attempt to define that expression and, in fact, in the absence of definition its functions appeared to equate to those of Priomh Aire, which, as we have seen, was provided for in the Constitution. Otherwise he was being elected to an office that was not to be found in the Constitution. Whatever about the political body of Sinn Féin itself, it was obviously important for the Dáil, under its appropriate organ, to get and maintain control of the Volunteers on which the new government had to rely for its defence and its striking power. The need for that control was, apparently, recognised at a very early

stage in the life of the Dáil. On this point of the relationship of the Volunteers with the Dáil, Beasley writes in the aforesaid book on Collins: -

"As to the attitude of Dáil Éireann and its Ministry, it need only be pointed out that Cathal Brugha, first as the Acting President of Dáil Éireann, and later as Minister of Defence, was responsible to the Ministry and the Dáil, and accepted entire responsibility for all the acts of warfare of the Irish Volunteers; that sums of money were voted to the Ministry of Defence regularly by the unanimous vote of the Dáil; that verbal reports of the activities of the Volunteers were submitted by the Minister at every meeting of the Dáil; that it was open to any Deputy on any of these occasions to ask any question or raise any objection he wished to the war policy of the Volunteers; and that on no occasion did any Minister or Deputy express dissent from that policy except at a meeting held in January, 1921. On that occasion..... two members, and two only, Roger Sweetman and Liam de Róiste, objected to the war policy of the Volunteers, but every other member was emphatically in favour of it, and the decision of the Dáil was virtually to give the Volunteers a free hand".

It would appear that there was considerable hesitation amongst some of the Volunteer leaders in desiring to be taken over by, and put under the control of the Dáil. Figgis in his "Irish War" (P.260), referring to the Volunteers, writes: -

"Since that body had been founded in the autumn of 1913, it had been responsible to no authority other than its own elected Executive. Now (January, 1919), however, the Irish Volunteers as such ceased to exist, and the organisation became instead the Irish Republican Army. It is significant of the independence that the Volunteers had always asserted that in the late spring, or early summer of the year 1919, they held a special Convention to consider whether they should accept the change, and submit to the authority of Dáil Éireann..... I have sometimes wondered, indeed, whether that submission would have been gained but for the high authority of Eamon de Valera. In the end, however, as the result of the firm stand he took on that question, the Volunteers..... became the Irish Republican Army, directly responsible to Dáil Éireann, through the Minister for Defence appointed with the consent of that Assembly".

When we remember that Figgis was one of Dev's most constant and articulate critics, that is, indeed, a high tribute to him.

As I have already pointed out, the attitude of the new Sinn Féin, as remodelled and refloated after 1916, and later, the earlier attitude of Dáil Éireann, was far from being belligerently offensive. Indeed, until events made that impossible, the policy was to play down the military end of things as much as possible, and to emphasise more the constructive and pacific side of policy. It is true that the Volunteers had been remodelled and expanded at the time of the Conscription threat, for it was obvious

that, if the Sir Henry Wilsons and the Castle had their way, and Conscription was enforced on the country, the Volunteers would have been the nation's sole means of meeting it in any effective way. The President, de Valera, put the position thus before the Dáil in its session of April 10, 1919:

> "Towards the persons of those who hold dominion amongst us by military force we shall conduct ourselves with all needful forbearance. We shall observe the rules they have laid upon us so long as those rules do not violate our personal liberty, nor our consciences, nor our duty to our country".

Once again to quote Beasley:

> "Dáil Éireann attempted to function peaceably, with the approval of the majority of the people, and there was a disinclination for some time to resort to drastic measures; but the attempted suppression of the National Government, the raids, arrests, and outrages forced the Volunteers, more and more, to extreme measures".

To follow the changes and growth, such as they were, in the very rudimentary Constitution of the new state, we come next to August, 1919. On the 20th of that month a secret session of the Dáil was held in the Mansion House, and at that session Cathal Brugha proposed a motion that every deputy, officer and clerk of the Dáil and every member of the Irish Volunteers "must swear allegiance to the Irish Republic

and to the Dáil". He thereupon put forward the following form of oath, adapted from the American form: -

> "I, A.B., do solemnly swear (affirm) that I do not, nor shall not, yield a voluntary support to any pretended Government, authority or power within Ireland hostile and inimical thereto, and I do further swear (or affirm) that to the best of my knowledge and ability I will support and defend the Irish Republic and the Government of the Irish Republic which is Dáil Éireann, against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and I will swear true faith and allegiance to the same, and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, so help me God".

Nevertheless, despite the appointment from the start of a Minister of Defence, and despite that oath that all Volunteers had to swear, there would appear to have been always a considerable element of doubt as to what control the Dáil actually had over the I.R.A. and its activities. So late as March 11th, 1921, we find Dev., as President, speaking thus to the Dáil: -

> "He felt in America and since he came home that the Dáil was hardly acting fairly by the Army in not publicly taking full responsibility for all its acts. He mentioned this view to the Minister of Defence, and his criticism was that to accept war now in any more formal way than they had done, could be misrepresented as an admission that they were not

carrying it on in a regular manner heretofore.....
He discussed the arguments for and against formal acceptance, and said it was a very serious decision to take, and he would like the meeting to consider it carefully. If the acceptance were agreed to they could instruct their consuls abroad to look for belligerent rights. His opinion was they should agree to the acceptance of a state of war. It meant every member would take an equal responsibility".

In speaking on the motion re the preparation of a statement on the matter - which was passed - Deputy MacEntee said he thought the Dáil should accept the army as being the army of the Republic, which came under their control in January, 1919.

If that was the case, there did not seem to be any call for the President's apprehension on the matter.

(Extract from Sir James O'Connor's History, P.310).

That oath was the third document that together can be said to constitute the fundamental or foundation instruments of the newly erected sovereignty. The other two were (a) the "Declaration of Independence" and (b) the "Provisional Constitution of Dáil Éireann", both enacted by the Dáil at its inaugural meeting on January 21st, 1919.

As regards the first, we have seen that a polity called the "Irish Republic" was therein proclaimed, but no

attempt was made in that instrument to define what that expression meant, or what it referred to or included. As regards the second document, the provisional constitution, there is no mention of a republic, or, indeed, title of any government. As regards the third document, the oath of allegiance, the pledge swears to "support and defend the Irish Republic and the Government of the Irish Republic". Again, whilst there is no definition of the expression "Irish Republic", or no indication as to what it is intended to comprise - one county, ten or thirty-two , for example - there is a clear definition of the term "Government of the Irish Republic" which is declared to be Dáil Éireann. All those instruments, from the Easter Week Proclamation onwards, would have been much clearer and much less confused and uncertain on the cardinal point of the entity they referred to and were meant to apply to, had the expression, so current to-day, been used, viz. the "Republic of Ireland". One thing, however, emerges with certainty from these fundamental documents, viz. the supreme sovereign power of the undefined state referred to in the body known as "Dáil Éireann". But all this is, of course, pure legalistic pin-pointing, for, though those documents were vague on the

important point of the actual description of the new State, there was no doubt at all in the minds of the public as to what it was, and what it was intended to be. But, as we know, the rigid letter of the law in matters at issue, more often than not, prevails. Hence the importance of having written Constitutions made as water-tight as possible. That, however, was hardly possible of achievement in the highly disturbed times and violent conditions which then obtained. All that could be arrived at was what actually was arrived at, an ad hoc provisional constitution carrying the barest working essentials.

The much-vexed question as to what the precise character of the polity decreed by the First Dáil - for example, its Juridic in contra-distinction from its popular concept, was one that thirty years ago, intrigued men's minds vastly and led to an enormous amount of intense, and, indeed, bitter controversy. The differences of view on what exactly was intended were extreme, for the men leading the two irreconcileably disparate and sharply clashing schools of opinion were men of absolute integrity and honesty. However, as I have, as I had to, touched on the matter, albeit but lightly, I had better give yet another view from a prominent

polemic of the Griffith school, so as the better to round off what I have written about it. I shall let Darrell Figgis speak for himself: -

"For this was the meaning of the news borne to us (in Durham Gaol) by the papers that came from Ireland. They announced that all the national representatives available had met in solemn assembly as Dáil Éireann in the Mansion House, Dublin, on the 21st January, 1919..... One of the few remaining copies of the original published proceedings (entitled in Irish, Dáil Éireann) lies before me as I write; and there it appears that a brief temporary Constitution in five articles was moved and adopted in Irish. The first article declared that of the deputies elected by the Irish people from the constituencies that then existed, Dáil Éireann should be constituted, with full powers to make laws. The second created a Premier-Minister (not, be it noted, a President, for the word is Priomh-Aire, of which the interpretation is Premier-Minister, and four other Ministries..... The third created a Chairman of Dáil Éireann, under the name of Ceann Comhairle..... The fourth made the Minister for Finance strictly accountable..... to Dáil Éireann. And the fifth declared this Constitution to be of a temporary nature, stating the procedure by which it might be changed..... But now followed the famous Declaration of Independence - a right and proper prelude to war, but not right (as I thought) or proper, as a prelude to an appeal to a World's Congress. This declaration is usually referred to as the declaration of the Republic; but the wording adopted in Irish, French and English, speaks deliberately of the ratification of the declaration of the Republic

already made as the prelude to the Easter Rising.

Let me, in candour, repeat that the misgiving in my mind existed purely in regard to procedure, not in regard to the end to be sought. In the mind of none of us at that time (except, perhaps, Arthur Griffith) was there question of the intention to establish a Republic. But the next act of the Assembly was to appoint three Envoys to lay the case of Ireland before the Peace Conference..... and I asked myself, would Envoys petition a Congress to investigate the case made by their nation for independence, when their mere reception would imply that the Congress had already received them in the name of an independent State, proclaimed and established? Obviously, those who had decided on this procedure had perceived this difficulty..... For the next act of the Assembly was to adopt a 'Message to the Free Nations of the World', and the first paragraph of this 'message' read: - 'The Nation of Ireland having proclaimed her national independence, calls through her elected representatives in Parliament, assembled in the Irish Capital on the 21st January, 1919, upon every free nation to support the Irish Republic by recognising Ireland's national status and her right to its vindication at the Peace Congress'. The 'message' then proceeded to recite the arguments in favour of that recognition..... And, so framed, it was clearly an attempt to avert the difficulty that had already been created; but..... it could hardly hope to do that. For hardly would the free nations of the world be expected to give their official recognition to an act so hostile to a great Power like Great Britain, though they might have been asked, reasonably and without prejudice, to

investigate a national claim - and that of itself would have been a notable advance".

If I have understood it aright, Figgis's contention would appear to have been that what the Assembly of 21st January, 1919, did was to create and proclaim a provisional constituent assembly, vesting it, in the name of the Irish People, with full powers, primarily for the express purpose of presenting a national case before the forthcoming Peace Conference.

And here I will leave that vexed subject, which I confess I do not fully grasp, to the historical lawyers of the twenty-first century should they think it worth their while to disentangle it.

THE DÁIL LOAN.

Dáil Éireann, being the very tangible symbol of the national sovereignty that it was, certainly had no love thrown away on it by the British Government. That Government was not slow to see in it, powerless and pretentious as it appeared to be, a serious menace to its authority. Hence its members were constantly harried and pursued, gaoled, interned, released, re-arrested, re-gaoled etc., and there were warrants out for the arrest of those of

its Ministers that were still at large. In its early life it was allowed to hold its sessions in the open without any interference, for, I think, two reasons: firstly, because it consisted of duly elected representatives of the people, and it hardly looked well, in the eyes of the world, for a country that proclaimed it had been fighting a purely altruistic war for the preservation of democratic institutions, to come along and suppress convocations of its elected representatives; secondly, there was always that consummation devoutly to be hoped for in matters Hibernian - another thundering good "split" after the Parnell model. At all events, despite the enormous difficulties created for it by its powerful foe, the Dáil Government took itself very seriously indeed, and was taken very seriously by the people from whom it had sprung, and for whom it acted. It met at intervals, openly in the Mansion House when possible, or secretly where and when it could, and passed its Acts, or "Decrees" as they were called.

A very important, audacious, and, in the circumstances of the times, highly optimistic decree was "Decree No. 3" passed on the third day of the second (private) session. That Decree authorised the Ministry to issue 5% Republican

Bonds in respect of a National Loan to the value of £250,000 in Ireland and (subsequently) 5,000,000 dollars in the U.S.A. Michael Collins, as the Minister for Finance, was the driving force, indeed, the genius behind the loan, and the man principally responsible for its phenomenal success. He advertised its issue in all newspapers as follows: -

> "The proceeds of the Loan will be used for propagating the Irish case all over the world; for establishing in foreign countries Consular Services to promote Irish Trade and Commerce; for developing and encouraging the re-afforestation of the country; for developing and encouraging Irish industrial effort; for establishing a National Civil Service; for establishing Arbitration Courts; for the establishment of a Land Mortgage Bank, with a view to the re-occupancy of untenanted lands, and generally for national purposes".

These objectives in that statement might have been taken holus-bolus from the original aims and objects of Sinn Féin as drafted by Arthur Griffith. It was cleverly worded, and not one of the objects set forth in it were, or could possibly be construed as being in any way illegal from the British angle. Even the establishment of Arbitration Courts; for there was nothing in English law to prevent parties, by agreement, bringing their disputes before arbitrators to

arbitrate thereon. Nevertheless, all the papers that published that advertisement were at once suppressed by an Order of the British Military Authorities. Amongst the papers that succumbed under that order was Griffith's "Nationality", but his other paper, "Young Ireland", escaped, curiously enough, and he carried on with it. It is of interest to record here that most of the work outlined in that statement was duly carried out by the invisible Dáil Government and its departments, driven underground as they were.

As I have said, the Dáil was very much in earnest, and, in particular, its very able and active Finance Minister, whose motto, off reiterated in those days, was, "Get on with the work". Inefficiency always roused Collins's wrath, and failure due to ineptitude threw him into a thundering passion. Once a course of action was decided on, Michael had but one idée fixe in his head, to get it done as thoroughly and as speedily as possible. The people were, unquestionably, four-square behind the new national government in a way that they had never been behind anything since the days of O'Connell. But Collins knew that though that was an exceedingly favourable background to work on, it was not enough. If the loan was to be successful, hard work and organisation

were essential.

So, he set himself out to build up, all over the country, a network of machinery for its propaganda and collection; and, having collected it, to see to it that the money was safely lodged under the control of his department. He was a superb organiser, neglecting no detail that could be of the smallest assistance. He issued an instruction to every M.P., or T.D. as they now came to be called, and to every Sinn Féin candidate in constituencies where Sinn Féin had been defeated, to go down, each to his respective area, stay there, and give all the help he could in collecting the loan. This instruction sent me back again to North Fermanagh, where I spent ten days going round from parish to parish, and village to village, interviewing people of every politics and faith, endeavouring to get them to buy Republican Bonds. This work was, of course, wholly illegal under the British law that then prevailed, to collect for the loan or get people to buy it; therefore it was necessary to proceed very stealthily and cautiously. I was lucky in my meanderings on behalf of the National Loan, for though I was searched by the R.I.C. on a number of occasions, they could find nothing "incriminating" on me, such as Dáil Loan papers, (I took good care that they

wouldn't) and had to release me. I stayed overnight in various places - curates' houses, farmers' houses, hotels etc., wherever I could. I was on Boa Island, the biggest island in Lough Erne, collecting the loan when word came that a police boat was sighted, making for it. That useful piece of intelligence, I was told, came from Protestant and Unionist sources, for the population of the island was half Catholic and half Protestant. I was thus able to slip out of the island and get away to the mainland, which I reached just about the same time as the police boat docked at the island to pursue its useless search.

Altogether, the amount of Dáil Loan bought in North Fermanagh amounted to something over £1,700, small in comparison with the huge sums collected in the southern and western constituencies, often amounting to £6,000 or £7,000 for a constituency. But then North Fermanagh was not a typical constituency. It was a doubly divided constituency, divided almost 50-50 between Catholics and Protestants, with the Catholics again divided sharply between the Hibernian and Sinn Féiners. Considering everything, it was not a bad total, and it was contributed to by many Hibernians, as well, of course, as nearly all Sinn Féiners and even a few Unionists.

Some of the latter, I understand, were chaffed by their fellow Unionists, saying that they'd never see their money again; but what a laugh our Unionists investors must have had when the first Cosgrave Government repaid the loan extremely generously, giving, I think, 8/- back with every £1 invested. Few good Ulster businessmen could boast of a better return on their money than that.

I should say that I did little in the actual collecting of the loan. I carried no script appertaining to the outlawed Republican Bonds, but went around in the company of local leaders and junior clergy (the senior clergy were very cagey about us and not at all sure of us), calling on people and requesting them to buy the bonds. Sometimes I entered their names in a small note-book, but never entered money opposite them. If caught, I could always say that the names were those of people whom I was canvassing in pursuance of my position as parliamentary candidate; but it might not have been so easy to explain away sums of money, especially as the Government knew well the Loan was being collected, and had ordered their forces to do all they could to stop or check it.

The main brunt of the actual collection of the loan in North Fermanagh fell on the shoulders of that splendid, selfless patriot, Cahir Healy; who did Trojan work and succeeded, with his faithful and ardent team of helpers, not only in gathering in the money but getting it all transmitted to headquarters without mishap. Many of the younger priests gave excellent and most valuable assistance, and were particularly useful in transmitting the money to Dublin as the authorities hesitated to search them. I am convinced that the North Fermanagh loan would have fallen far short of the figure it reached had the younger clergy not taken the active part they did in collecting it. In particular, I would like to mention one fine, young priest, Father Peter Connolly, C.C., then of Garrison, I think. I know he was afterwards curate at Bundoran (was he, later still, P.P. there?). With Father Connolly, I travelled through most of the North Fermanagh parishes, from Garrison and Belleek to Ederney, seeing priests and people, with most satisfactory results. Another good, active man was Seán Carty of Devenish West (Garrison); and there were many more, priests and laity, whose names I, unfortunately, forget.

The Dáil Loan was a huge success, being over subscribed in both Ireland and the U.S.A. The total Irish figure came to £378,858, bought by 135,000 persons, or £138,855 more than the figure asked for. The total American figure came to $5,123,640, bought by 275,988 people, or $123,640 oversubscribed.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

It was indeed a doctrine of perfection, or, rather, of extreme simplicity that few indulged in, to expect that Dáil Éireann would be permitted for long to "usurp the functions of His Majesty's Government in that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland". During the two preceding years, and particularly since the Conscription threat and the "German Plot", conflict between the two disparate and contrasting concepts of Separatism and Unionism, heightened and intensified with an ever-increasing crescendo as the months sped by. At first, beyond some isolated raiding for arms and gelignite, the Volunteers, under orders from their own Executive, refrained from violence, even in self-defence and in face of great provocation; but, as time went on, particularly after they had been taken over by the Dáil

and made definitely the military defenders of the Dáil Government and, apparently, the executant of its decrees, retaliation on their determined enemy and his forces became more and more general until, presently, the nation perceived that it was in the midst of a widespread guerilla war. That, of course, was inevitable. If the Dáil intended to be taken seriously, if all the promises and undertakings of its members were not just so much meaningless eye-wash, it could not permit its foes to harass, impede and subvert it with impunity. Clearly they had to be resisted and, if and where possible, eliminated, or, at least, rendered harmless.

Now, the gravest and most formidable obstacle to the rule of the Dáil was not the British regular amy which, at its height, had nearly 60,000 officers and men in the country, but the Royal Irish Constabulary - that extremely efficient quasi-military gendarmerie numbering about 11,000 men and officers. I cannot do better here than allow some of the contemporary writers to tell you readers of the twenty-first century about that truly unique asset of the conquerors. Pierce Beasley wrote:

"A great deal of misunderstanding was caused abroad by the English device of referring to these men (R.I.C.) as 'policemen'. When a foreigner read of 'policemen' being shot in Ireland, he naturally pictured to himself those civic custodians of law and order who function in normal countries. It should be made clear that the R.I.C. were never policemen in the sense in which the word is understood in free countries. The R.I.C. were a military force, armed with rifles and living in barracks. Their primary, essential purpose was to hold the country in subjection to England. In furtherance of this aim, the force was kept at a strength out of all proportion to the requirements of a normal police force. In districts where crime was practically unknown..... barracks full of strapping young men, armed with rifles, were maintained at the expense of the people of Ireland. Every village had its barracks, with its garrison holding the post for England and dominating the countryside. The R.I.C. were recruited from the ranks of the people for the purpose of spying on the people. To ensure that no personal sympathies or friendly ties would influence them, it was a regulation of the force that no constable could be stationed in the county of which he was a native. The R.I.C. had established an elaborate system of espionage which was carried to a wonderful pitch of perfection. In every town or village, all the movements of persons were watched and reported upon. All popular organisations were kept under observation, and all persons who expressed patriotic opinions

were the object of surveillance. Even their activities in such matters as teaching Irish, or acting in Irish plays, were duly reported; and Dublin Castle, as the result of these reports, had the most exact information as to the personnel, strength and methods of all national movements in the country. So perfectly was this done that the people concerned had not the slightest idea of the extent to which they were being spied upon. When I read the evidence given before the Royal Commission on the Insurrection of 1916, I was amazed at the exact information possessed by the R.I.C. as to the strength of the Volunteers in the various districts, and the number of rifles possessed by them..... The Royal Irish Constabulary were not only the right arm of the English administration in Ireland, they were also its eyes and ears, and without them it could not function effectively. As long as they were allowed to continue on their old lines we were not likely to get much further. It was obvious that the first steps towards breaking down the English administration in Ireland must be taken against this force. If they collapsed, the whole machinery of English administration in Ireland would come down with them".

("Michael Collins", p.p. 319-21).

(2) P.S. O'Hegarty wrote: -

"The minds of the men (R.I.C.) were moulded as cleverly as were the minds of Janissaries. The first duty inculcated on them was loyalty, not to Ireland, but to England, and they were loyal to England. By virtue of this loyalty they bullied, terrorized, and, when ordered, murdered their own

people without compunction for nearly a hundred years. Their influence was very much greater than their actual members. They were a source of corruption to all their relatives and friends, to the shopkeepers in the vicinity of their barracks to whom they gave their custom and for whom they could say a word to the Big Houses, and when they retired from police work they were given 'confidential' employment as door-keepers, caretakers, rate-collectors, wherever the long arm of Government could reach to plant them. They were an 'Irish' force sitting on the necks of their own people, maintaining on them a minority Ascendancy and a Foreign Oppression".

("A History of Ireland under the Union", p.p.402).

(3) Paul Dubois, the French observer, wrote in 1907: -

"England meantime retains a firm hold of one instrument of Government, which is, perhaps, the most necessary to her of all - the police. It is very doubtful whether the Constabulary in question ought to be called a police force at all. It consists of 12,000 men, or, rather, 12,000 soldiers, armed with carbines and bayonets and disposed through the country in a thousand or fifteen hundred fortified forts. These 'police stations' are regular block-houses, situate in strong, strategic positions and defended by iron doors and shutters. The picture contrasts strangely with that popular institution in Great Britain, the corpulent and legendary "bobby", with his paternal aim and readiness to oblige, and a truncheon for sole symbol of authority. The Constabulary in Ireland is a military force, an army

of occupation encamped in a conquered country. It is a supplementary corps of the regular army which is stationed in Ireland as a main guarantee of the security of British rule..... The police in Scotland cost £400,000, in Ireland £1,300,000. Does this mean that there is a greater degree of criminality in Ireland? The case is quite the contrary, and nothing could be falser than the prejudice which paints Ireland as a pandemonium of brigands and assassins. There is no professional criminal class in Ireland....."

(L'Irlande Contemporaire - Paris - 1907 - trans. by T.M. Kettle, p.p.196).

(4) Moritz Bonn, the German Economist, wrote: -

"The cost for the administration of justice, for police, and for internal administration was found in 1895 to amount to: -

(a) In England & Wales, with 30,000,000 inhabitants - £1,400,000;

(b) In Scotland " 4,100,000 - £219,000;

(c) In Ireland " 4,600,000 - £2,025,000.

(The police, of course, were an Imperial charge in Ireland, not in Great Britain where they were controlled by the democratically elected local bodies).

The administration of Ireland lies, to a large extent, in the hands of the R.I.C., an excellently organised little army, subject to the central Government. The number of the R.I.C. from 1876 to 1895 averaged about 12,000 men; the yearly expenses were £1,400,000. The strength and organisation of this constabulary, and also the costliness of the Irish Government, prove that to English administration in Ireland the feeling of perfect security is unknown.

It rules through its police, and, in point of fact, only makes itself noticeable in other respects by travelling inspectors from the different departments".

('Modern Ireland & Her Agrarian Problems", p.p.10-1906).

(5) Erskine Childers wrote: -

"No village or hamlet was too insignificant to be accommodated with a barracks and a garrison of a sergeant and a few constables. The force was the most potent of all weapons used by the British Government in subduing the Irish people, because it was recruited from the people themselves, and in the work of political oppression was able to draw upon intimate local knowledge and strong local influence, as well as upon intelligence and courage which are the common attributes of the Irish race..... Stripped of all disguise, the R.I.C. stood forth as the Irish portion of the military garrison".

("Constructive Work of Dáil Éireann").

Such being the structure and nature of that most formidable organisation, composed largely of Catholic Irishmen, there was obviously no alternative for the Dáil Government but to strike at it in the first place and render it innocuous before the R.I.C. had time to destroy that Government as, otherwise, it certainly would and could have done. As a first step towards that end, the Dáil in its second session on April 8th, 1919, on the motion of de Valera, seconded by MacNeill, unanimously decreed that "members of the police forces acting

in this country as part of the forces of the British occupation and as agents of the British Government be ostracised socially by the people of Ireland". Dev. made a very strong speech in introducing the motion, and concluded by saying that the "Irish people, as an organised society, have a right to defend themselves. The social ostracism which I propose, and which I ask you to sanction, is a first step in exercising that right. These men must not be tolerated socially, as if they were clean, healthy members of our organised life. They must be shown and made feel how base are the functions they perform, and how vile is the position they occupy. To shun them, to refuse to talk or have any social intercourse with them, or to treat them as equals, will give them vividly to understand how utterly the people of Ireland loathe both themselves and their calling, and may prevent young Irishmen from dishonouring both themselves and their country by entering that calling". Thus was the first national sanction taken against the R.I.C. And it will be noted that albeit a severe sanction, was, like most of the sanctions that preceded the period of actual warfare, non-violent in the sense at any rate of being non-physical force. The people, in their representation, were

not prepared, at that stage, at all events, to sanction anything involving bloodshed on a wide scale. True, there had been shootings and blood sheddings by the Volunteers, or those purporting to act in their name, before the Dáil took over control of their organisation, but they were not numerous and were generally the work of isolated groups. True also, the first attack on an R.I.C. unit ending fatally for some of those men, was that of Soloheadbeg which occurred on January 21st, 1919, the very day the first meeting of the Dáil took place, but this synthesis of events on that particular date was a mere coincidence, for the Dáil had nothing whatever to say in that affair. As I have said, the whole tendency of the movement and, later, of the Dáil Government, was one of hesitancy, indeed reluctance, in resorting to the gun, trying every other method first and only falling back on the gun when there was no alternative to it but defeat and destruction; and, even then, not until several warnings, some very forceful ones such as tying up particularly bad offenders, had been issued.

Well, the ostracisation decree of the Dáil was obeyed by the people over the greater part of the country with

remarkable unanimity, and in a remarkably short space of time. No doubt that was partly due to the vigilance and activities of local branches of Sinn Féin and local units of the Volunteers, or I.R.A. as they came to be known after the Dáil had taken them over and, apparently, assumed responsibility for their actions. Those bodies saw to it that there was no weakness or laxity in giving full effect to the decree. In those comparatively few cases where it was ignored, warnings were issued, and where, for example, girls continued to be friendly with young R.I.C. men, they occasionally suffered the loss of their tresses. That method of dealing with obdurate maidens whose passion for the male encased in uniform, became far more common when, at a somewhat later stage, the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries took over. But it had a boomerang effect, for, when and where it was carried out, the Black and Tans and Auxies retaliated similarly on patriotic maidens.

As I have said, the social boycott of the R.I.C. proved surprisingly successful, having regard to the conditions prevailing in the country. One of its first effects was to discourage drastically recruitment to the Force, so that,

what had been but a short time previously a very popular, legitimate and honourable career for any young Irishman to embark on, with long waiting lists of splendid types of manhood to ensure its existence and replacement, became overnight, so to speak, a thing so discredited and shameful that few could not touch it without a sense of dishonour and, indeed, defilement.

And so by the winter of 1919 those long waiting-lists had evaporated, and the numerous vacancies in the Force's ranks stood gaping there, with hardly a young Irishman to fill them. The Force was still further weakened by continuous resignations, increasing with every passing month. In many places, too, the boycott was extended far beyond the Dáil's decree, to, for example, the supplying of food and goods, local merchants and tradespeople being forbidden to deal with the R.I.C. or supply essential commodities to their barracks. This, however, was not quite so successful as the social boycott, and was soon broken by armed R.I.C. and military detachments making descents on the shops and seizing what goods they required to replenish their scanty larders. In most cases, the R.I.C., still a fairly disciplined body, paid the shopkeepers for the goods thus taken;

but things were different with the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, who, more often than not, just brazenly looted the shops and stores that they honoured with their attention.

Despite the killing of recruitment and numerous resignations, there nevertheless remained a very substantial corps of several thousand R.I.C. men who were prepared to carry on in face of everything, and that corps still supplied the Castle with eyes and ears, albeit with much dimishing vision and audition. As the months passed by, the strain between the R.I.C. - still numerous and more full of fight than ever - and Dáil Éireann increased and intensified, as was inevitable. Clearly what remained of the Constabulary were not going to submit meekly to the Dáil's sanctions, still but moral sanctions (for the use of a better adjective in English). After all, they had the power, the organisation and the full support and backing of Britain and her vast empire, victorious after a deadly war and more powerful than ever before in her history. Furthermore, they had their careers to pursue and look after; and constabulary work in Ireland had always been pleasant, non-arduous and prestigeful. They consoled themselves, that very substantial number that stayed on despite the boycott and the gun, that Sinn Féinism

and I.R.A.-ism belonged to those eruptions like Young Irelandism and Fenianism that periodically broke out in the Irish body politic. They had little doubt that it would be suppressed and stamped out, like its predecessors, and then, when peace was restored and the tranquility of the British Raj had once more descended on Ireland, they would certainly not be forgotten by that same Raj whom they had served so well and at such grave risk, whilst the people would, in due course, renew their old and friendly association with them. Accordingly, that very substantial corps of the R.I.C. that remained, despite everything, "loyal", dug its heels into the ground and determined that it would let the "Shinners" know that the R.I.C. that had for so long dominated the towns, villages, parishes and countrysides of Ireland, were by no means finished; on the contrary, they were, as they had always been, a body to be reckoned with, and reckoned with seriously. These R.I.C. men were no cowards. They were brave men though, as I believe, in a wrong cause. After all, they were every bit as Irish as their I.R.A. antagonists. The same blood exactly flowed through their respective veins; and, in general, they fought as well as their attackers, and that is, indeed, high praise, though as the struggle went on

their morale deteriorated, for, unlike the I.R.A., they had no ideal sufficiently racy of the soil to stimulate and stay them. Physical courage, as we know, is a very common or garden commodity in our martial nation. Would to God that we had an equally high level of moral courage! But that is another story. At all events, arrests, suppressions of meetings and papers, shootings, baton charges etc. became more and more the order of the day. Eventually things came to such a pass that the Dáil and its I.R.A. had, willy-nilly, to abandon its predeliction for a purely constructive and non-violent policy, and resort to the gun.

Accordingly, that very eventufl and crucial year was, in due course, characterised by a new and quite unprecedented development in Irish history - organised wholesale attacks on R.I.C. barracks and R.I.C. escorts and patrols. The barracks were very stubbornly defended by their garrisons, and it was not until April 20, 1919, that the I.R.A. succeeded in capturing one. That was Araglen Barracks in Co. Cork. As the winter of 1919 progressed, those attacks on the R.I.C. became more and more intense and widespread, so that before the Spring of 1920 they were general all over the country; sometimes several in the one night. When a barracks was

captured, the police were disarmed and released, and, where possible, the barracks was set on fire; but that was not generally possible as the Verey lights let off from the roofs of the building in those radioless days were always likely to bring reinforcements speedily down on them, so the I.R.A. men had, perforce, to make themselves scarce, with their precious booty, as speedily as possible.

Whilst, undoubtedly, the big concentration at that time was directed against the R.I.C., there were also plenty of attacks on, and disarmings of units of the British military, and even raids on their barracks. By such means did the I.R.A. arm itself. Furthermore, there were raids on post offices and mails which delivered into the hands of the I.R.A. much valuable information about espionage against them, leading to the shooting of spies and informers. In those days, the papers were full of such happenings. Side by side with the account of an attack on a barracks or military or police post, one would read of an ambush of British Forces in this county or that, or of the shooting of Detective This or That. For example, Detective Sergeant Smith of the D.M.P. was shot dead in Dublin on July 30th, 1919. Pierce Beasley tells us in his Collins book that that was the first execution

carried out under sanction of Dáil Éireann, which by then had assumed responsibility, under its Ministry of Defence, for the activities of the I.R.A., if it did not definitely and directly control them. And here, perhaps, I should record that I understand none of those people were drastically dealt with without ample, often numerous warnings, some of a very vigorous and pointed character, the reality of which they could not mistake. Spies thus slain were usually found with labels attached to them bearing the inscription: "Tried and executed by the I.R.A. Spies and informers beware"! But those killings were by no means all official executions of spies by the I.R.A. I have been told by those who should know that quite a number of them were committed by the R.I.C. and the Black and Tans on sound Republicans, with the object of inculcating an atmosphere of suspicion, distrust and fear.

THE COURTS OF DÁIL ÉIREANN.

During the winter of 1919, the struggle against British power, particularly its efficient and highly dangerous Irish auxiliary, the R.I.C., was relentlessly sustained and pursued by the I.R.A., and as relentlessly met and countered by their powerful foe. The numerous and constant captures and burnings of R.I.C. barracks and the ambushing of their patrols, together with their complete social boycott, throwing them into the position of harassed, isolated and, indeed, besieged units living in the midst of an intensely hostile populace, not only rendered them useless to their employers but made life a hell for them. The strain was more than even that peculiarly but mistakenly loyal Force could stand; and so to retrieve what was left of it through resignations, the Castle was compelled to withdraw the R.I.C. units from wide country districts and concentrate them in substantial numbers in the sizeable country towns. When these withdrawals had taken place, the I.R.A. immediately moved in and destroyed the abandoned barracks, so as to prevent their re-occupation. In one night alone, 183 deserted R.I.C. barracks throughout the country went up in flames. In all, between 500 and 600 barracks, in addition

to workhouses, courthouses and other buildings capable of being so utilised, were destroyed by I.R.A. action during the conflict. The "Irish Times", in a memorable leader, referred to those blackened ruins dotted over the country as "the sepulchres of British prestige in Ireland".

The result of all this was to leave vast areas in the country entirely free of any resident British Forces. True, constant forays and raids were made into those areas from the towns to which those forces had been withdrawn, some, indeed, of a very murderous character; but they were purely fugitive and passing mobile efforts, the raiders, or invaders, withdrawing to their bases after their activities in the cleared areas. The army paper, "An tóglach", very ably edited by Pierce Beasley, was able to make the following claim, with a great deal of truth, in its issue of February 15, 1920: "Eighteen months ago it seemed as if the initiative lay with the enemy - to-day the enemy is on the defensive, and the initiative lies with us". In an article which I wrote for the special "Ireland" supplement of the "Manchester Guardian Commercial" in May, 1923, I thus described the position: -

> "With the year 1920 a new political situation arose in Ireland. All moral power, and, in the remoter country districts, a considerable degree of actual power too, had passed from the hands of

the British authorities at Dublin Castle into the hands of Sinn Féin with its interdicted Government and Dáil. The R.I.C. had lost all prestige as a police force, and had been withdrawing from most rural areas to the towns. The Law Courts were vigorously boycotted, and in many districts no bench of magistrates or county court had held session for several months. Judges of Assize, heavily guarded, still went on circuit, but their work was more formal than real, and over the greater part of the country their writs did not run. The effect was that the Castle Government exercised authority in the towns as in the days of the Plantagenets, but left the people supreme in the country districts".

Indeed the position that emerged at the end of that winter of 1919-20 was an extraordinary one, and one that neither the British nor the Dáil Government had anticipated. Here were whole vast areas of the country, cleared of any resident Crown forces or functioning officials of any kind, handed over on a plate, as one might say, to Dáil Éireann, which, although created by more than a million Irish votes, had been proclaimed on September 10, 1919, as an "illegal association" and "seditious body". But the Dáil Government was as surprised and shocked at its staggering success as was Hitler at Dunkirk; and, of course, had made absolutely no arrangements to supply the vacuum of police and courts, essential for all organised, civilised societies. Country

districts in Ireland, though remarkably free from serious crime, have all, of course, their quota of wrong-doers only looking for a safe opportunity for their malfeasance. Here, indeed, was their chance; and they were not slow to seize it, and to make, or to attempt to "make hay" while their particular sun shone. As the account in the "Constructive Work of Dáil Éireann" (1921) puts it: -

> "The neglect by the R.I.C. of ordinary police work had given to the criminal elements which exist in all societies a large measure of immunity. Petty crime, mainly larceny, was on the increase, and a number of large robberies indicated the presence of professional English criminals. The I.R.A., with the people on their side, addressed themselves whole-heartedly to their task. Malefactors were tracked down, arrested, convicted and punished; and stolen property was recovered and restored, often within twenty-four hours of the theft".

Nature, as we know, abhors a vacuum; and this is particularly true of civilised human nature. The aforesaid vacuum left in rural society by the phenomenal success of the I.R.A.'s winter campaign, had to be filled at once if society was to be protected. Accordingly, in the beginning the I.R.A. took over and dealt with serious crimes by means of courtsmartial, before which the apprehended criminals were

brought and sentenced. There was no express law of Dáil Éireann for this save the supreme law, "Salus populi". The old legal maxim was at work in its most fundamental form: - "There can be no wrong without a remedy". At this early stage there were, as I say, no civil courts, only those I.R.A. courtsmartial; and no Dáil police had, as yet, been created. Law and order and the punishment of crime depended on the I.R.A. in the cleared regions of the country. And very good work, indeed, they did in that interregnum before the establishment of the Dáil Courts, especially when it is remembered that their main purpose, their raison d'etre, was to carry on warfare against the British Forces which were constantly harrying them, that they were nearly all "on the run" and "on their keeping", liable to be arrested and imprisoned, or shot dead, at any moment. As an example of the importance of the work they undertook and successfully dealt with, let me recall the famous Millstreet Bank Robbery. To quote again from the aforementioned Dáil publication:

> "Two bank officials travelling in cars to a local fair on November 17th, 1919, one carrying £10,000 and the other £6,700, were held up by armed and disguised men, and robbed of the whole sum of £16,700. The British police were informed, but did not even visit the scene of the robbery, or take any serious

steps subsequently to trace the criminals. Meanwhile, it was freely stated in the British Press, without a particle of evidence, that the robbery was committed by Sinn Féin. The Republican police took up the case, but at first made slow progress. Eventually, however, a clue was discovered and skilfully followed until April 24th, 1920, when warrants were issued against the ten men who composed the gang. On the same night, eight were arrested in their homes in Millstreet and the neighbouring villages, and on the following days were brought before preliminary courts of inquiry. On the second occasion, the ring-leader, Buckley, broke down, confessed, and disclosed the hiding-place of his share of the money. Four of his confederates did the same, and a total of £9,208 was at once recovered. On the 28th, the eight prisoners were courtmartialled, and the whole story of the conspiracy - a highly dramatic one - was established by witnesses. Seven of the eight prisoners were found guilty. Five were sentenced to transportation from Ireland for various terms of years from fifteen downwards, and two to deportation from the district. The sentences were carried out under armed escorts. Buckley returned, but was again arrested and transported. The money was returned to the bank".

I greatly wonder whether the reference in this statement to "republican police" is correct, for I much doubt whether such were in existence then, or, indeed, for a long time subsequently, according to my experience, at all events. The I.R.A. and their courtsmartial for criminals did good work and supplied a dire want at a most critical time, but they could not continue running

our judiciary as well as fighting for the Dáil. Soldiers are soldiers, and not judges. For a crucial interval the I.R.A. came to the rescue with practical ad hoc temporary military courts. That was not their job, but they did it well. However, even were it possible, it would not be desirable for them to function as courts of law. The Dáil that insisted on ruling was bound to supply a proper judiciary to replace the alien one it had overthrown, or was in process of overthrowing. And that it proceeded to do, so soon as it had got its "second wind", so to speak, from the shock of its remarkable and wholly unexpected successes.

Accordingly, at its 4th session, held on June 18th, it passed "Decree No. 8, Session 4, 1919", which ordained the establishment, forthwith, in every Irish county, of "National Arbitration Courts". But, beyond just passing that decree, which was but a mere outline without any attempt to detail a judicial structure, nothing more was then done to establish a regular and properly prescribed judicial hierarchy. The Ministry of Justice was, at the time, seriously handicapped by the fact that its Minister, Austin Stack, was confined in prison without charge or trial on suspicion of implication in that figment of Lloyd George's brain,

the "German Plot", and, although a Committee had been actually appointed by the Minister to draft a suitable scheme of Courts, with appropriate rules, its progress was slow, which it could not avoid being, engaged as it was in such work in those disturbed and hazardous times. However, pending the sanctioning of any such regular system of courts, every constituency was left to its own resources and predelictions in giving effect to the Decree. And here I should point out that the Courts to be established under that decree were arbitration courts. That was deliberately designed to cope with enemy interference. Under English law, there was nothing illegal in parties to a dispute agreeing to submit it to the determination of some person or persons whom the disputants select. All that is necessary is some evidence that they have so agreed; and that was generally provided by a form of agreement that the parties duly signed before going into the arbitration court. The idea of circumventing British judicial tribunals by means of arbitration courts, perfectly legal in the eyes of English law, was no new one. In the rousing days of O'Connell, when the great Dan was himself fired with the idea of repeal of the Union, the establishment of a system of Arbitration Courts was one of

his ideas; but, long before he thought of putting it into practice the leaven of nationalism within him had spun itself out, and the idea came to nought. It was also one of the big, constructive ideas that the very constructive mind of Arthur Griffith had seized on and placed foremost among the immediate objectives in his original Sinn Féin programme.

It would appear that West Clare was the first to take action under the Decree of the Dáil. Nowhere had the fight against the R.I.C. and other British forces been waged with greater determination than in that constituency, and as, save for Kilrush, it possessed no sizeable town, that wide region, stretching from Loop Head to Burrin, and from Kildysart to Miltown Malbay and Ennistymon, was practically cleared of Crown forces. At that time in West Clare the Dáil was not alone the de jure, but also the de facto government. That achievement was mainly due to the courage and high qualities of leadership of the Brothers Brennan, the local I.R.A. Commandants.

Accordingly, when Brian O'Higgins, the M.P. for West Clare, got back to his constituency after the Dáil Session, he lost no time in calling a conference of representative Republicans to discuss the matter. That conference set up

a District Arbitration Court with jurisdiction throughout the whole constituency, and Parish Arbitration Courts for each parish within it. A constitution was drawn up with the aid of local lawyers, together with rules of court; judge-arbitrators and registrars were appointed, and a scale of court fees, costs and fines was settled. Presently the first District Arbitration Court in Ireland was functioning in that area, dealing with all manner of causes and disputes that, shortly before, had gone to the British Courts. The personnel of that historic tribunal was the local M.P., the President of the local Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Féin, and three other Parish Courts, consisting, I think, of three justices, were also set up and soon busily functioning. The result of that Court activity in West Clare was that, by the end of the year 1919, the withdrawal of litigation from British Courts was far advanced there; for it was a part, an essential complementary part of the Dáil Court plan of campaign that, where its courts had been set up, litigants were expected to patronise them and to boycott their British counterparts.

West Clare led the way in establishing Courts of Dáil Éireann, and its example was followed in due course by other

constituencies, albeit very tardily at first. I should, however, except from any taint of tardiness the Co. Mayo and the Co. Galway constituencies, which were, I understand, very close in time behind West Clare. In Mayo in particular, a most active man in promoting Courts was Conor Maguire, then a local Solicitor, to-day Chief Justice of Ireland.

At all events, the great bulk of constituencies preferred to await the national scheme of Courts that the Dáil was to draw up and put into commission.

When the Minister of Justice, Austin Stack, was able to return to his official duties, after his sensational escape from Strangeways Prison, Manchester, he at once set up a committee of lawyers to draft the Constitution and Rules of a national judiciary. That committee consisted of James Creed Meredith, K.C., Arthur Cleary, B.L., Cahir Davitt, B.L., Diarmuid Crowley, B.L., Conor Maguire, Solicitor, and myself. The judicial system that emerged after a little time from the deliberations of that committee was a simple and effective one, and one well fitted for the times and conditions it had been called into being to serve. It consisted of three levels of Courts - Supreme (& High) Court, District Courts and Parish Courts.

The Supreme Court was to sit in Dublin and to comprise not less than three persons of proper legal qualifications and of at least 12 years' legal standing. We do not appear to have provided for a Chief Justice, but James Creed Meredith was, I think, generally regarded as President, and always presided when the Supreme Court sat. If it was nothing else, his much longer period at the bar than any of the rest of us would have entitled him to do so.

Arthur Cleary, Diarmuid Crowley and Cahir Davitt were High Court Judges who, when necessary, made up the Supreme Court. Conor Maguire and I were Judicial Commissioners of the Land Settlement Commission but, as High Court Judges, were available to hear High Court cases, and also to sit in the Supreme Court. I sat in the Supreme Court during its "sub rosa" period with Creed Meredith, Arthur Cleary and/or Cahir Davitt on a number of occasions; but, as the reader shall see, my Dáil Court work was mainly confined to matters agrarian. The District Court comprised five members and its sittings fell into two divisions - circuit sittings and ordinary sittings. Those courts were composed of local lawyers (when they could be got), prominent republicans and, occasionally, priests. A

circuit sitting was presided over by a Circuit Judge, and that tribunal had appelate as well as original jurisdiction. Such a Court sat three times a year, whilst the ordinary District Court sat once a month. The code of laws to be administered was declared to be "the law as recognised on January 21st, 1919, until amended..... except such portions thereof as are clearly motivated by religious or political animosity". There was, also, a dangerous provision inserted, no doubt, to meet the prevailing perfervid conditions of national sentiment, permitting reference to "the early Irish Law Codes, or any commentary on them, in so far as they may be applicable to modern conditions". The Parish Court consisted of three members and could hear civil claims not exceeding £10 and petty criminal cases. It could not deal with cases affecting titles to land.

Those Dáil Courts, whether they sprang up out of the soil, as it were, like the West Clare ones, or whether they were formed pursuant to the Dáil Decree, were, from their beginnings, phenomenally successful. They relied for their maintenance and for the success of their functioning, not so much on force but principally on the united support

of the people whose collective will had summoned them into being. Without that background they would have been hopeless failures, for they had little of the apparatuses deemed essential for the full exercise of judicial power. They could not imprison anyone as they possessed no prisons, and that proved a serious handicap when, later on, the big enemy assault was made against the courts. The nearest thing in that direction was the practice, in the Land Courts, of bringing offenders to an "unknown destination" which I shall deal with further on in these pages. Not being able to imprison the convicted and the guilty, other punishments had to be resorted to, such as fines, banishment from the district or county, and, in grave cases, deportation from the country, with the warning that if the deportee returned before his term of banishment had expired, he was liable to lose his life.

Those Dáil Courts won golden opinions from the press, foreign and home, and even from the inimical press.

"These Courts", wrote the Manchester Guardian on May 10, 1920, "are the natural result of the strong, common will for national responsibility. Their object is simply the promotion of peace and of economic justice through an authority that derives its sovereignty from the general will".

And the English Daily News about the same time: -

> "Sinn Féin has accomplished an amazing work in producing law and order in those parts of Ireland in which it is in power. Sinn Féin has a sanction behind it such as no other law in Ireland has had for generations".

Wrote the Daily Mail's special correspondent, also about the same time: -

> "In scores of miles I never saw a policeman, a row or a drunken man".

On June 1st, 1920, the Irish Independent reported: -

> "Sinn Féin Courts are in widespread operation in the South and West. They command confidence and their decisions are respected and obeyed".

Lawyers - particularly barristers - were, in the beginning, very timorous and chary about appearing in the new Courts and pleading before them for fear of compromising themselves with their professional authorities. The control of the two legal professions, the Barristers and the Solicitors, were in the hands of those who were hostile to the Dáil and Sinn Féin. That was so in regard to both professions, but the Bar Council, which controlled the professional conduct of barristers, was much the more vilulent, so that nobody was very much surprised when that

august body met on June 23rd, 1920, and ruled that barristers practising at Sinn Féin Courts were guilty of professional misconduct. The ruling (by a majority) was, however, hotly disputed by the Nationalist minority on that Council, and, in practice, proved wholly ineffectual as not a single barrister who ignored it and pleaded in the Dáil Courts was ever summoned before it, or punished by it for so doing. That curious inaction with regard to the violations of their ruling, which, as time went by and the Courts got more firmly established and flourishing, became increasingly numerous, may have been influenced by the more tolerant attitude of the sister-society. That body, the "Incorporated Law Society of Ireland", met some weeks later on July 25th, 1920, and ruled that "under existing circumstances the Council saw no objection to solicitors appearing to protect their clients' interests in the Arbitration Courts referred to".

Side by side with the incredible success of the Dáil Courts there was, as there had to be, a correspondingly steep decline in the business and prestige of the British Courts. The lowest level of those Courts, the Courts of Petty Sessions, were the first to succumb in any area where the

Dáil judiciary was established. They vanished overnight, as it were, for their personnel, lay Justices of the Peace, surrendered their commissions and, in many cases, went over to officiate on the benches of the Dáil Courts, leaving only their stipendary Chairman, the Resident Magistrate and his clerk to occupy a lonely Court, deserted save for the attendance of Royal Irish Constables, heavily armed. The County Courts soon also became deserted, as well as the Assize Courts, run by the judges of the "High Court of Judiciature in Ireland". Those once busy and highly respected Courts formerly filled with litigants, witnesses, counsel and solicitors, presided over by dignified judges in wig and gown, or, if Crown Judges on Assize, resplendent in scarlet robes trimmed with ermine, radiating enormous prestige and attended by formidable guards of police and military, were now deserted, save only for their official attendants who were bound to be there, which made their magnificent isolation appear all the more striking and incongruous. Across the road from the stately edifice of official justice, or in a nearby street, there would probably be a small, insignificant and rather shoddy hall where the Sinn Féin Court was conducting its proceedings.

Unlike the deserted British Court, it would be packed out to the doors by an intensely interested audience. At a rough table drawn up at the end of the hall would sit the justices - three or five men, as the case might be, in ordinary tweeds or lounge suits, with another, acting as registrar, sitting before them, or at the end of the table. It would not take a spectator long to see that their job was no sinecure. They had, clearly, abundance of work; and, as a matter of fact, they often would have to sit on till midnight to clear their lists. The issues they would be adjudicating were largely, but not entirely, made up of causes withdrawn from the purview of the Crown Courts, probably that very day. When the cases would be called in the Court of the County Court Judge, or the Judge of Assize, whatever it might chance to be, the reply was ever the same, "Withdrawn, My Lord". And none to witness it but the much humiliated Lord Justice, the Clerk of the Crown and Peace, the Judge's registrar and the magnificent and very substantial bodyguard of stalworth constables. No wonder the ire of those abandoned judges rose up within them at the sorry state of affairs, accustomed as they had been for so long to profound respect and deference and to the sense of being very much the centre of the picture; and, can they