

"It's possible all the same. . . There's a bridge, you know, which leads across to the road," said Nora, trying to subdue her own fears. But suddenly it seemed to her as if her feet had turned to lead, so difficult was it to raise them, and her eyes opened with a staring wildness, as she tried clearly to distinguish what she saw before her.

"Stay here, stay here, Miss Nora!" said Landolfo, seizing her violently by the arm. "That is no place for you."

But Nora tore herself away from his grasp, and rushing forward fell upon her knees in a state of blind despair. Her worst expectations seemed to have been realised; her instinct had led her surely. A dark form lay stretched out in the water, whilst the head alone rested upon a stone; the smallest movement, and the water which flew rapidly along, would have carried the body away. Had he intended to cross the bridge, and his foot slipping, fallen in? Had a sudden giddiness caused his fall? Or had it been of his own will that he now lay there, and Providence's mercy had saved him at the last moment?

Nora, hardly conscious of what she was doing, helplessly tried to draw the inanimate form to herself. But Landolfo had already joined her, and said in a commanding tone: "Be calm! I entreat of you to be calm!" But his own face was livid, and showed how far from being calm he himself was. Cold sweat stood upon his forehead, and his teeth chattered in his head. With a firm grasp, however, and considerable adroitness, he raised the body, and placed the head carefully upon Nora's lap.

"He is not dead," he said, after having placed his hand upon the poor man's heart, "he has only fainted." So saying, he heaved a deep sigh of relief. "Unloose the comforter about his neck and rub his pulses as hard as you can," he continued to Nora, "whilst I go to the town for a doctor. Remember that the bridge broke under him," he said significantly, as he destroyed with his foot the last remnants of the decayed planks of the bridge.

(To be continued.)

The Irish Revolution and How It Came About

(By William O'Brien)

CHAPTER XXV.—(Continued.)

The completeness of the overthrow was variously accounted for. The Hibernian theory that it was the shooting of twenty of the rebel leaders by Sir John Maxwell that turned over a whole people from fanatical allegiance to the Board of Erin before the Rebellion to fanatical allegiance to Sinn Féin after its defeat was of a piece with the rest of the foolish miscalculations of the doomed Party. The claim of Sinn Féin that the General Election meant a conscious and deliberate establishment of the Irish Republic by the main body of the voters was, I think, a greatly exaggerated one, also. The Sinn Féin candidates put forward no rigid Republican programme—in fact, put forward no programme at all. I can answer for the half-a-million All-for-Irelanders, who turned the scale in the South that the issue for or against a Republic did not even cross their minds as a supreme decision binding them for the future. For the overwhelming mass of Irish opinion it was a choice between a Party corrupted, demoralised and effete, who had misused in the interest of an English Party the most irresistible power ever held by Irish hands—who, for the sake of establishing for themselves a boundless monopoly of patronage in Dublin, had conspired to separate nearly a fourth of the country into an Orange Free State—between a Party who to the cries of "Trust Asquith!" "Trust Redmond!" and "Up, the Mollies!" had for years led the most ignorant and credulous of the masses shamefully astray, and had held the most enlightened part of public opinion powerless to express itself by an unheard of tyranny of violence, bribery and Press manipulation—and on the other hand a band of enthusiasts, young, gallant, and clean of heart, of whom all they knew was that whatever mistakes they might make would be those of a too passionate love of Ireland, and who would at the least clear the road of

the future by disencumbering it of a Parliamentary imposture which was ending in putrefaction. The country did not opt for any particular form of government, but did unquestionably transfer its confidence to the new men who were to frame it.

"The Party" was as dead as Julius Caesar, but even in their ashes lived their wonted incapacity to understand wholesome Irish feeling. Captain Redmond, intoxicated by his family success in Waterford, blithely undertook from the hustings that he and Mr. Devlin were about to proceed on a pilgrimage from constituency to constituency throughout the island to reclaim the erring ones from their heresy, but no more was heard of the crusade of the twin Peters the Hermits. A defeated candidate in Roscommon—one Mr. Hayden—founded a brand new Home Rule Association of his own with thrilling proclamations through the *Freeman* that it was about to sweep the country; but after three meetings the Association and the speeches in the *Freeman* expired. Mr. Dillon had no sooner pulled himself together after his monumental overthrow in East Mayo than the ex-M.P. addressed an encyclical to some ghostly Branch raised from the dead for the occasion predicting that "before six months" the country would have returned to its allegiance to "The Party" and the rightful King would have come by his own again. He ought not indeed to have needed the reminder how sadly his prophetic stock had fallen on the National discount market for he must have received thousands of such reminders from the unpurchased tenants and the beggared shareholders of the *Freeman* who were beginning to haunt his doorstep. He had foretold that the Purchase Act of 1903 would land the country in bankruptcy and lo! the *Freeman* office was the only conspicuous venue the bankruptcy messenger had visited, while the tenants he had forbidden

to purchase were now putting forth sighs from broken hearts for the opportunity of purchasing which was no longer available.* He had predicted that if the Act of 1903 were permitted to work there would be an end of the National movement in six months and behold! among the heroes of the rebellion thirteen years afterwards the sons of the new occupying owners were among the foremost. He now added a new prophecy with the advantage that it was one calculated to fulfil itself. It was that Sinn Féin had destroyed for ever the sympathy of America with Ireland and the shaft was barbed by reference to an incident much paraded in the anti-Irish press, in the course of which some children in a western village wishing to tear down a British flag carried by the children of local British recruits by accident tore down also a Stars and Stripes, whose folds were mingled with those of the Union Jack. The unworthy appeal to American prejudice was so little heeded that American funds poured into the Sinn Féin exchequer in greater volume than had been subscribed in all the years since the Land League put together.

If there was anything wanting to complete the contempt for Parliamentary methods, it was the insignificance of the surviving Seven in the succeeding Parliament, when the Coalition passed Mr. Lloyd George's Partition Act of 1920 formally establishing the two rival Parliaments of "Northern Ireland" and "Southern Ireland." With the whole force of the Labor Party and the remnant of the "Wee Free" Liberal Party saved from the shipwreck at their backs, they might have offered an all but irresistible opposition to that infamous measure, forced upon Ireland without the sanction of a single Irish vote, Northern or Southern. The trouble was that Mr. Devlin denouncing Partition was in the position of Arius denouncing Arianism. If he now affected to hold out for "an undivided Ireland" he was met with the retort that the Partition Act was only the formal enactment of the "Headings of Agreement" he and his late Party and his late Liberal Prime Minister had collectively bargained for; if he protested (as he now plaintively did) his conversion to the doctrine of an Irish settlement by the commingling of Irishmen of all racial and religious origins, he laid himself open to the taunts of the tardiness of his conversion since the days when shouts of "our hereditary enemies!" and "Black-blooded Cromwellians!" were hurled at every Irish Protestant Unionist who extended a fraternal hand, and of his own special recipe of "ordering the police and military to stand aside and make a ring," while he was disposing of the Ulster difficulty in the streets of Belfast. Accordingly he and his Liberal friends could think of nothing better than majestically to withdraw altogether from the Committee stage of the Partition Bill and by that stroke of genius left Sir E. Carson free to gerrymander at his sweet will

*As this book goes to Press the Free State Ministry have summoned a new Land Conference of landlords and tenants to try to resuscitate Land Purchase, destroyed by the Hibernian Act of 1909.

