

world, being at least one armed soldier for every able-bodied man of the population in the eight or ten counties to which the burden of the battle was confined. Against this host there was arrayed no visible force of any kind except bands of half-drilled youngsters, without so much as a field piece, with the scantiest equipment even of rifles, with no really serviceable weapons at all except revolvers to confront the heavy artillery, the tanks and armored cars massed against them under famous generals fresh from their victory over German armies counted by millions. Before the revolution which the World War made in methods of warfare as in the whole structure of civilisation, no Irishman outside a padded-cell could have dreamed of pitting these parcels of raw youths in the open field against the ironclad might of England. By a curious irony it was a war in which the armaments of England surpassed tenfold any in her history that caused Ireland, Egypt, and India to laugh at her colossal military power, and it was after the war, on its great fields, had been triumphantly concluded that her armies were covered with disgrace and shame by a Young Ireland furnished with weapons little more dangerous than blackthorns. "It was, of course, solely because the principle of the sacredness of the liberties of the small nationalities on which she had been forced to fight the war, if she were to obtain the aid of America, now interposed its veto against the annihilation of Ireland by her militarist armies, and the fine chivalry with which she had egged on or rewarded with their National Freedom the rebels of the Austrian, the Russian and the Turkish empires, was now retorted upon herself and withered her arm when she came to deal with the Poles, and Teheco-Slovaques and Jongo-Slaves of her own Empire.

Mr. Lloyd George, however, stripped England of all the credit she might have had if she had of her own motion added Ireland to the constellation of free nations it was her boast to have set shining by the Treaty of Versailles. He took a course which dugged a new gulf of hatred between the two islands, he tore open centuried wounds which were all but healed. He tortured the patient nation-builders of the original Sinn Fein programme out of their peacefulness and he supplanted them with the Irish Republican Army. He affected to mistake a world-wide race for a murder-gang, and never gave up the policy of "frightfulness" and insult by which he calculated upon cowering them, until he had kindled them into a war of liberty which was the admiration of the world, and until the heaten bully was reduced to suing for a visit to his Cabinet Room at Downing Street from the most noted of the murder-gang. It was not, however, until he had first compelled the tortured nation for two years to undergo a sweat of blood. This is not the place to relate the history of events, *quorum pars minima fui*—which I was compelled to witness in blank and helpless inaction and of which the recital must be left to those with a better title to write from first-hand information. Two things it may safely be affirmed will appear with more certainty the more searchingly the investigations hitherto forbidden are pushed home—

there will be found no page in England's story more shameful than the war of the Black-and-Tans, and none in which the fortitude of the youth of Ireland and their idealism as lofty if sometimes also as cloudy as our Irish skies will figure more proudly in the eyes of their posterity.

The Irish Republican Army could not hold the open field for an hour against ten thousand regular troops; they nevertheless succeeded in worrying an army of a hundred thousand out of the country. Battalions without end poured into the remotest villages, without any visible resistance to their armored cars and great artillery; but the practical results of their occupation vanished as promptly as the fortifications built by children on the foreshore, to be quietly swallowed up by the next tide. Not less unchainable was the ocean that swelled around their barrack-walls, for its ebb and flow was moved by the two primeval attractive forces that agitate the soul of the multitudinous Irish race—the Spirit of Liberty and the Spirit of Religion. The nation was seized by a holy fire such as inflamed the first Crusaders at the call of Peter the Hermit. The Republican army into which the young men flocked was not more truly an army than a great religious Confraternity as fanatical as the processions of the White Penitents which traversed Europe in the Middle Ages. They went into fire or mounted the scaffold with the placid conscience of those who have received Extreme Unction and are about to step straight into Heaven. Not only had death no terrors for the finest among them; they courted it and insisted upon it as the most precious of honors, and that with the modesty of true heroes. Kevin Barry, a medical student of sixteen, who was hanged for an attack on a military lorry in one of the streets of Dublin, was a perfectly fair specimen of the Republican recruit. Two days before his execution, the boy met some of his comrades in the prison-yard at Mountjoy, and was permitted to shake hands with them. As they parted, his dying speech was: "Well, good-bye, boys: I'm off on Monday!"—that and nothing more. Death, even under what might well seem to the young soldier ignominious conditions, was too much a matter of course to waste words about. Against happy warriors such as he—who recited their Rosaries or sang their "Soldier's Song" with equal fervor—who appeared and disappeared on the track of the British troops with the mysterious facility of Ariel—who accepted sentence of penal servitude or death without answering a word in recognition of England's Courts-martial—who even in the depths of the English prisons where they were entombed carried on the war as stoutly as ever, raised barricades and engaged their torturers with bare fists, escaped over the prison walls under the eyes of their gaolers, died of hunger by inches, rather than acknowledge any criminal taint, held their dances in the intervals of their ambushes in their mountain bivouacs and in all these wild years never laid an irreverent hand upon a woman, or tasted intoxicating drink, or bred a single informer in their ranks—against the spirit of ten thousand Kevin Barrys, the garrisons of the armored cars

might as well discharge their great guns against the heavens.

More amazing even than the fanaticism of the Republican Army was the genius with which their operations were conducted. Nobody knew who were the men in command. Nobody knows for certain even yet. The young clerks and schoolmasters and artisans like Michael Collins, Cathal Brugha, Richard Mulcahy, and Major General McKeown, "the blacksmith of Ballinalee," who are now the legendary heroes of the fights, were at that time unknown even by name outside their secret council-chambers. But General Macready and the most acute of his staff officers were the first to recognise the military genius of the anonymous captains who lay in wait for them and baffled them—the accuracy with which their plans were worked out to their smallest particular—the versatility with which, as soon as one mode of attack was exploded, they turned to another and a more provokingly ingenious one—the ruthless punctuality with which they answered "reprisals" by "counter reprisals"—the methodical precision with which the account for the hanging of six soldiers of the Republic in one morning in Cork was squared by the shooting of six soldiers of England the same evening in the same city—and the cheerfulness with which they took their punishment whenever even native wits like theirs were no match for the overpowering army against which their revolvers and shot guns were pitted. As the plot thickened, savage crimes began to dog the march of the Republicans as well as of the Black-and-Tans. *A la guerre comme à la guerre!* was spoken by the most chivalric of the war-nations; war is always and everywhere a hideous and bloodguilty thing obeying its law of nature which is to beat the enemy into subjection by whatever brutalities it may. But these were only the rare blots upon a guerilla war which would have been the admiring wonder of England and the enthusiastic theme of her poets had it been waged against any power in the world except her own—a guerilla war as gallant as that which drove the French out of Spain more effectually than Wellington's Army—waged against far more terrific odds than that of the Greeks which excited Byron's lyric raptures—and perhaps with more scrupulous weapons than those employed against Austria by Mazzini whom, as these lines are written, Mr. Lloyd George has been extolling as "the greatest name in the history of Italy"—the name of Dante himself being forgotten, if ever heard of.

(To be continued.)

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