

mand, but the captains he attracted from the old Fenian host were men of as weighty a political judgment as his own, and the actual physical force movement had declined into a small and beaten sect, while the original Sinn Féin intellectual group had almost disappeared when the men of the Easter Week Rising by an absurd accident were forced to inherit their name, and the ferocity with which Dublin Castle persecuted every form of open and advised action every month increased the secret predominance of the men of action.

Mr. Lloyd George's unlucky response perforce threw Mr. de Valera more and more into the hands of the more revolutionary of his counsellors. The Dail was secretly assembled and the Republic solemnly proclaimed. A more serious matter still, the members were made to take an oath of allegiance to the Republic, and the difficulty of getting the young idealists who were the flower of the movement to break the oath by which they were thus consecrated to the service of the Republic as an organised reality became the most insurmountable of all the obstacles in the peace negotiations later on. When I commented to Mr. de Valera upon the unwisdom of thus prejudicing the ultimate issue by an engagement so notoriously sacred in Irish eyes, he answered (I again quote from my *précis* of our conversation), "that he was from the beginning opposed to any oath of any kind being taken. It was while he was in prison the first Dail began by swearing allegiance to the Republic, and at the second Dail they had to follow the precedent."

I did not myself take too tragic a view of Mr. Lloyd George's *non possumus*. It was impossible to know him without counting upon his readiness with a new set of opinions whenever the old set proved unworkable. I construed his letter as an order that the war must go on—until further orders. One of the brainiest of the Republican leaders, who afterwards became a Minister in the Cabinet of the First Dail (Mr. Austin Stack) has more than once reminded me of my prognostication at the time: "If you can hold out for six months longer, you'll have a sporting offer from Lloyd George," and his own amused reply: "If you're a true prophet, that's all right; we can hold out for two years longer against man or devil."

Before the six months were over, the Prime Minister was wobbling, and the "sporting offer" if it had not already come was on the way. In the meantime, Sir Hamar Greenwood's desperadoes grew more frantic than ever. Fresh regiments were poured across from England, it was made death to be in possession of firearms (two men were actually hanged for the offence) and the war of reprisals from both sides month by month assumed a more bloody and inhuman aspect, while a third party to the quarrel made its appearance in the shape of bands of highwaymen (mostly demobilised soldiers of the British Army) who roamed the country, plundering individuals and banks with impartial pistols. It is curious to remark that, for the bank robbery campaign, as for the substitution of assassination for persuasion in the case of the Constabulary, it was the Black Cabinet in Dublin Castle who set the example. They directed one of their Resident Magistrates, Mr. Alan Bell, to hold a Star

Chamber inquisition at the Castle, at which he took forcible possession of the most confidential books of the Munster and Leinster Bank and laid hands on £20,000 of their funds on the suspicion that they belonged to Sinn Féin depositors. The unfortunate magistrate was promptly taken out of a tramcar on his way to the Castle, and shot dead on the roadside, and the bank robbery initiated by the Government was copied with interest on the other side, until armed raids on the banks became everywhere a common incident in the anarchy.

If women's purses (even that of General Strickland's wife) were snatched in the public streets by the Black-and-Tans, still less were the ministers of religion spared, and the higher their station the more ferocious was the relish with which they were persecuted and murdered. Dr. Fogarty, the Bishop of Killaloe, was the only one of the Irish bishops, since the death of Dr. O'Dwyer, who openly took his stand with Sinn Féin in its time of agony, but he was none the less an innocuous politician who had been up to a quite recent date a fervid admirer of the Parliamentary Party. The Bishop's palace at Ennis was raided in the middle of the night by an armed gang whose object, it can be charged upon unanswerable evidence, was to murder him. It came to my knowledge, upon the testimony of an actual eye-witness, that the Inspector of Constabulary, who commanded the Raiders, was shortly afterwards summoned to Dublin Castle to give a report of his expedition to his principal in chief command of the Auxiliaries. He related, with somewhat bumptious pride, the perfection of his arrangements, but "cursed his rotten luck that the old fox had given him the slip," and attributed to "some damned Catholic peeler" the warning which had saved the Bishop's life. My information (which comes from a quarter not open to doubt) is that the Commandant, far from rebuking his subaltern's murderous zeal, followed him to the door when he was leaving, and took him by both hands with this shocking parting message: "Good-bye, old chap. God bless you! Better luck next time!" And for months afterwards the hunted Bishop was "on the run" for his life in the mountains of Clare, like the most persecuted of his predecessors of the Penal Days.

Two other strokes of "frightfulness" which it was counted would mark the final subjugation of Sinn Féin, in reality put an end to the last possibility of breaking its spirit. One was the capture by a British warship on the high seas of Most Rev. Dr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, on his way to pay a last visit to his aged mother in his native country. The deportation to England of the Archbishop (admittedly the most powerful man in the Australian Commonwealth next to, if even next to, its Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes), and the paltry insolence of refusing him a last interview with his old Irish mother had the double effect of exhibiting the realities of the Irish situation to all civilised mankind in a way there could be no suppressing or falsifying, and of stirring up the spirit of resistance in Ireland to a pitch incomparably more passionate than could have been roused by the few public speeches it was the poor strategy of the British kidnappers to strangle.

A still more stupid offence against humanity was the slow torture to death of the young Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence Mac Swiney. He was seized during the ceremony of his inauguration in succession to his predecessor, Thomas MacCurtain, who was called out of his bed at midnight by a band of Auxiliaries and murdered in the presence of his wife and children, and who, Sir Hamar Greenwood with a face of brass assured the House of Commons had been assassinated by his brother Sinn Feiners. Young Mac Swiney, once in the toils of these monsters of lying and foul play, made the last protest that was open to him against the iniquity of his imprisonment by devoting himself to the slow torments of death by hunger. Day by day, week after week, the world kept watch outside Brixton Gaol while the Irish idealist lay calmly looking into the eyes of death every hour of the day and of the night with a steadfastness outlasting that of Mutius Scævola, whom History has made immortal for plunging only an arm into the flames. His gaolers were as inexorable as Death, but, as the clumsiest experimentalist in human nature might have anticipated, it was the dead idealist who left Brixton Gaol the victor, and not they. Sir Hamar Greenwood himself began to understand when an Archbishop and six Bishops, with their mitres and croziers and in their purple robes, tramped through the streets of Cork before the coffin of Terence Mac Swiney.

By this time the sea-change was beginning to work in the Prime Minister. As the Commission of Inquiry from the Labor Party and the foremost publicists of the American and French press swarmed over to see for themselves and published their experiences to a horrified world, Sir Hamar Greenwood's early manner as a professor of able-bodied mendacity could no longer yield much comfort to his chief. The first indignant denial that there had ever been reprisals had to be given up for shambling admissions that reprisals—and no doubt reprehensible reprisals—there had been; the stories that the Mayors of Cork and Limerick had been murdered and a hundred towns and villages given to the flames by the Sinn Feiners themselves could no longer be got to pass the lying lips of the mythomaniacs, although they have never to this hour been honestly apologised for. But at least the reprisals, it was promised, were henceforth to be "official reprisals" carried out under responsible military authority. The more barbaric vengeance of the Black-and-Tans were without doubt discouraged, instead of being instigated, by humane and gallant soldiers like Sir Nevill Macready. It was not possible for such men to come to close quarters with those miscreants without being obliged to report that they had placed themselves outside the pale of civilisation and that their deeds, far from diminishing the power of Sinn Féin, had maddened the country into a system of resistance so irresistible, so omnipresent, and so ably conducted that no army could put it down without a general massacre of unarmed old men, women, and children, which would make the name of England an astonishment and a hissing among civilised men.

(To be continued.)

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