

sence of a doctor was a matter of the very smallest consequence to Quish. Nothing but his herculean bodily strength was keeping him alive. As to Father Phil's own mysterious surgery of the soul, who can tell how fared it? All I know is that, ten minutes afterwards, when the old priest in his violet stole and silvery nimbus, pronounced the august words of the Absolution and bade the Christian soul go forth to meet its Creator under the pitiful wings of escorting angels, the lonesome mountain cabin looked as holy a place as more pretentious temples. What a Leveller the Church is! What a Revolutionist whose barricades are death-beds! What a Socialist whose one ceremony of initiation is to die! How strange it seems, and good—the thought that to the angels hovering in the turf-smoke the soul encased in Quish's gnomelike body, and peeping out from behind Quish's twisted eyes may have looked more beautiful than many a soul that escapes from flesh of rose-tinted satin on a death-bed of rustling laces and in clouds of perfume! The old mother herself, kneeling by the bedside with the lighted taper in her hand, while the dying man was being marked with the sacred chrism, looked no longer like the weird sister caught riding on a broomstick, but rather like some gaunt female eremite of the desert kneeling for her eternal reward. The very night-winds appeared to have changed their dismal chant into a pathetic requiem.

(To be continued.)

THE AMERICAN COMMISSION ON CONDITIONS IN IRELAND

INTERIM REPORT

(Continued from last week.)

CHAPTER V.

Policy of Assassination

The assassination of members of the British forces began in 1919, after three years of the British terror in Ireland, and has since proceeded intermittently, and still continues. With the exception of the shooting of the British officers (one of whom was Lieutenant Angliss) in Dublin, on November 21, 1920, the victims of the assassinations of which we have cognisance were isolated individuals, not groups. No women or children, priests or ministers, or prisoners of war seem to have suffered. These assassinations have occurred all over Ireland, from Lisburn to Cork, from Dublin to Galway. They have been carried out under the most public circumstances and within the very shadow of Dublin Castle, a mockery and a defiance of British rule. And officers of high rank in the British system of Imperial authority have been numbered among the victims. The assassinations of Swanzy and Smyth and the kidnapping of General Lucas seem to indicate to us that a nation-wide organisation, with a very perfect secret service, and with disciplined men to execute its orders, must have been created in Ireland to make such punitive measures possible. There is no evidence that this is a British organisation. It would seem to exist in spite of British efforts to suppress it and to be continuing to function with effectiveness. Under these circumstances it would appear that the Imperial authorities are not free from responsibility for the failure to take proper precautions to safeguard their officers in Ireland.

"The British troops," says Mrs. Robinson, "must go about from point to point sometimes in quite small bodies. The policemen have also done that. And that has made it comparatively simple for a member, say of some secret society in Ireland, if some such society exists, or any Sinn Feiner, if he feels exasperated—it provides opportunity for the murders that have occurred. Many of us have felt that it was a very unfortunate method for the distribution of the troops in Ireland."

No political opponent of the Irish Republic is alleged to have suffered in person for his opinions. The organisation seemingly exists for punitive and deterrent assassinations; and would appear to consist necessarily of Irish

citizens. Miss MacSweeney and other witnesses have testified to the efforts made by Irish leaders to constrain Irish citizens to endure in patience and of the success of these efforts for three years in spite of increasing terrorism. We have evidence also of the difficulties under which the Irish Republic functions, so that it cannot perfectly protect its own citizens or conduct its proper business. It is therefore hard to determine the degree to which the Irish Republican Government is responsible for the policy of assassinations or "executions." The arrest and imprisonment of General Lucas, who ordered the shooting of Sinn Feiners summarily with machine guns, the rescue of Teeling, and the justification of the Dublin killings by a responsible Republican leader would, however, seem to us to indicate that the official disclaimer of Irish Republican responsibility must rest on a technicality. And the punitive and deterrent assassinations which we have noted would seem to be an organised part of the defence of the Irish Republic and a function of its army, or of some special branch of it. In this opinion we are strengthened by the placing in evidence of an attested copy of the *Manchester Guardian* of December 13, 1920, containing a proclamation alleged to have been issued by the Officer Commanding the forces of the Irish Republic in the County of Monaghan, and dated Headquarters, December 3, 1920:

"Whereas in several districts in my command armed gangs of men patrol the public roads at night and open fire, with murderous intent, on people pursuing their ordinary avocation, and

"Whereas one of such gangs has perpetrated a most odious and brutal murder, and several others have attempted murder, the public must at once realise that Ireland is in a state of war with the forces of the British Crown, and, while we extend the hand of friendship to all Irishmen, armed murder gangs aggressive to the I.R.A., also guides and informers for the enemy forces, shall be summarily dealt with as opportunity offers;

"Further, be it known that the recent raids for arms by the I.R.A. were carried out in compliance with an all-Ireland Order to collect all arms, without distinction of the owners' creed or class, in anticipation of a general collection by the British Government forces;

"The licence to collect only extended for a period of twenty-four hours in each brigade, no more force was used than was necessary, a receipt will be given for all arms taken, and these will be returned when circumstances permit;

"This was made clear at the time to all parties concerned. Consequently, no section of the people (other than those referred to above) need entertain any fear of interference with person or property; on the contrary, the I.R.A. recognises it as a part of its duty to offer protection to all. By order, O.C., Co. Monaghan.

"Headquarters, December 3, 1920."

Trial Before Assassination.—It has been testified before us that these assassinations are executions by Irish Republican agents of justice, implying legal condemnation delivered after trial; and that such members of the Imperial British forces as are executed in this manner are informers and spies, provocateurs and murderers. While evidence of murder of Irish women and children has been submitted to us, no transcript of such alleged trials of the perpetrators has been offered to justify any of the killings noted by us of British officers; and except in the case of Smyth and to some extent in the cases of Swanzy, Angliss, and his fellow-officers, and Penstraw, the evidence placed before us is too meagre to permit generalisation as to the character or duties of the particular persons slain.

Regrettable Circumstances of Assassinations.—The absence of the accused, with perhaps the exception of Captain Lendrum, from such trials would appear to us as regrettable as it is usual, and necessarily to condemn the procedure as unjust; and even if we admit the presumption of guilt, we would still the more earnestly deprecate these "executions." Their power as a deterrent to evil seems to us insignificant when compared with the weakness inherent in their haphazard nature. In the Dublin assassinations some of the British officers seem to have been identified merely by the occupancy of rooms.

It would seem that assassination in the presence of relatives occurred certainly in the case of one of the British officers in Dublin. The testimony of the Misses

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