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IRELAND IN 1921

BY

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CHAPTER I.

To the student of Irish affairs, the year 1921 offers a most fascinating field for investigation. It was essentially a year of contrast; the first six months of it witnessed the culmination of the guerrilla warfare proclaimed against the British forces by the Irish Republicans, the last six months saw a treaty negotiated between the contending parties. Men who in the earlier part of the year were murderers hiding from justice with a price upon their heads were later received as the chosen leaders of the Irish people; their followers, once rebels whose extermination was the objective of sixty thousand British troops, became officers of the Irish Government forces, and co-operated with those who had hunted them in the maintenance of law and order. It was a year of contrasts and contradictions, of grave political errors and of brilliant feats of statesmanship, of unexpected unity and still more unexpected dissension. And of this *annus mirabilis* the present book will endeavour to give a brief account.

It will first be necessary to recall the state of Irish affairs at the opening of the year. The

Government of Ireland Act, which provided for the establishment of two separate Parliaments for Northern and Southern Ireland, had become law on December 23rd, 1920. In Ireland, the Act had few if any friends. The North, limited by it to six counties, contemptuously styled "Carsonia" by the Southern Nationalists, had accepted it without enthusiasm as the only alternative to inclusion in an all-Ireland Parliament with its seat in Dublin. Lord Carson, then the recognised leader of Ulster opinion, had publicly stated the intention of his followers to co-operate loyally in carrying out its provisions, while at the same time voicing their preference for the long established Union. The South, on the other hand, unanimous in this as in nothing else, condemned it root and branch. The extreme Sinn Fein party refused to consider it; to their mind it sought to impose upon them a form of British domination, differing from that imposed by the Union in form only and not in degree. The Nationalists, in which term may for convenience be included the remainder of the Southern population, terrorised into sympathy with the extremists, but longing for any measure which would restore peace to their distracted country, hated the partition of Ireland into North and South, and saw in the Act no promise of finality or of the welding of Ireland into one nation as the result of its provisions. The Southern Loyalists, who had throughout pinned their faith on securing protection from the strong arm of British law, enforced by British authority, felt their cause abandoned and their position in the country rendered untenable.

But at the beginning of the year the Act was

nothing more than a name. It had received the force of law, but from its very intention it was obvious that before its enforcement could even be begun some time must elapse. The whole machinery of government and administration of a country cannot be divided and transferred to other powers in a week, especially when one of those powers is non-existent and the people of the territory it is to represent are in open rebellion against the transfer. Since the Union, the whole of the services of government had been concentrated in Dublin Castle, rightly or wrongly a byword in Ireland as the very birth-place of circumlocution and 'red tape.' This administrative web had to be unravelled, and its various threads split between Dublin and Belfast. It must be remembered that the proportion of British officials in the Irish Government has always been infinitesimal. Viceroy, Chief Secretary, and Under Secretary have usually been of British birth, and these were the officials who directed the main lines of policy. But the men who carried out this policy were practically Irish to a man, and in this fact lay a difficulty. It was obvious that the policies of the Governments of Northern and Southern Ireland would be widely divergent, yet that men must be found from the existing services to staff the offices in Dublin and Belfast. This was merely an example of the difficulties underlying the preliminaries of the Act. Even when the administrative services had been prepared for the use of the new Governments, the setting up of one of those Governments, at least, was a task of superhuman effort.

The state of Southern Ireland was actually, though the fact was never acknowledged in so many

words, one of open rebellion against British authority. The Extremist leaders, who had opened a campaign of ambush against the police in January, 1919, had, during the two intervening years, developed that campaign into a moderately successful guerrilla warfare against the British forces in general. The only effective reply to such warfare, from the purely military point of view, is a sharp punitive campaign which must necessarily involve the whole population of the country. Such a campaign the military authorities were quite prepared for, their plans were drawn up and their dispositions laid. But the politicians would not sanction it. The cause of Ireland looked too much like the cause of other small nations striving for that strange new birth of the Great War, self-determination, and they feared that declared and open war would blacken the face of England before the world. Apart from this was the question of expense. A campaign on a scale large enough to stamp out rebellion throughout the South of Ireland was an undertaking whose limits no man might foresee, and although the estimates of its cost given at the time by men whose interest it was to dissuade the British public from demanding war were excessive, England, recovering from the effects of the greatest war in history was in no position to embark upon fresh military expeditions.

A compromise was therefore in operation, which displayed to perfection all the disadvantages of repression by force of arms with none of the advantages of success. To the ambushes and shootings of the Republicans were opposed a policy of reprisal, official and unofficial, and of the

internment of men against whom rebellious tendencies could be proved. Reprisal is an impossible policy, it has none of the forms of law, and lays itself open to attack by even the dullest propagandists. But, as affairs stood, it was the only safety-valve. Men composing a military force, however well disciplined they may be, will not stand by and see their comrades and their officers brutally murdered without being allowed to lift a hand in revenge. In proclaimed warfare vengeance is afforded in the opportunities of engagement with an open enemy. In Ireland there was no definite enemy, there being no war, and consequently the opportunity for engagements with him were limited to the occasions on which he took the offensive, and could be identified with arms in his hands. Reprisals though ineffective were unavoidable, and as a matter of fact were inspired by rough and ready justice. The men who carried them out, whether acting under the orders of the authorities or upon their own responsibility, almost invariably knew the victims they selected, knew that they were guilty although their knowledge would not convict in a court of justice.

If reprisals were ineffective and harmful to the British cause, internment was almost equally so. In the internment camps were gradually collected the most extreme of the republicans, the majority of whom had never known such luxury in their lives. Freed from the necessity of earning their own living, they set themselves to educating one another in the Republican code of ethics, and the camps became the finest schools of the Irish Republican Army. That this statement is no exaggeration can be proved by

reference to letters written by internees, of which an enormous number passed through the hands of the authorities. Such phrases as "our drill is improving every day, we shall be a crack company when we get out" and "tell mother we get plenty of spuds to our dinner and plenty of beef too, so we don't want anything except an odd cake for supper as we only get three meals a day" occur throughout these letters, and their general tenor is one of thankfulness, tempered with some fear lest their comrades at large should eventually accuse them of getting arrested on purpose to avoid the discomforts of the field. There is also evidence that the agitation started by the Republicans for the purpose of calling attention to the "horrors of the prison camps" had no support from the internees themselves.

But at the beginning of 1921 it was evident that these measures alone would never restore order to Ireland. In December, 1920, four counties of the South had been proclaimed as being subject to martial law, namely, Cork, Tipperary, Kerry and Limerick, and to these were added on January 4th Clare, Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny. Thus the whole south-west was brought under the orders of Military Governors, whose power was theoretically absolute. But in practice these powers were rarely exercised, and conditions were no different in the Martial Law Area than they were in other disturbed counties. The Government still withheld the executive hand from the imposition of decisive measures, and the instructions to the Military Governors strictly limited their powers. The programme of ambush and assassination continued, and was countered as before by a defensive

policy and the half-hearted offensive of reprisals. The outrage statistics for the first few months of the year will give some idea of the state of the country.

		POLICE.			SOLDIERS.		
		Killed	Wounded	Fired at	Killed	Wounded	Fired at
January	...	25	67	44	2	19	12
February	...	34	42	28	7	15	17
March	...	25	40	37	35	50	20
April	...	27	79	48	4	29	23
May	...	56	70	60	16	24	23
June	...	32	79	72	19	48	28
July	...	24	51	37	11	25	17

Murders became so frequent that it would be practically impossible to enumerate them all, and in the course of this book reference will only be made to such as have a particular significance. But the condition of the country is best described by the statement that the horrors of the past year were being repeated daily upon an ever increasing scale, and were at their height when the conclusion of the truce imposed a sudden reduction upon them.

The delay in the enforcement of the Government of Ireland Act and in the concerting of effective military measures to deal with the situation becomes still further explicable in the light of an event practically unnoticed at the time, but, as it proved, of supreme importance. During the night of December 30th-31st, 1920, Mr. de Valera landed in Ireland, and the possibilities of securing peace in Ireland by negotiation became more tangible. Not that de Valera himself had arrived for the purpose of making advances. His mission to the United States was over, and he returned to the country of which he was self-styled ' president ' in the natural course of affairs. His first letter, dated January 1st, is worth quoting. It is addressed to Harry

Boland, the representative whom he had left behind in America, and is as follows:—

“ Arrived safe after a little excitement. Am setting to work to establish an Irish White Cross; this name will avoid international complications, an American Branch can be established and we can look later to have it recognised by Geneva as a Red Cross.”

The letter continues to enumerate by name the people to be approached in the matter, “ as well as prominent people in the Society of Friends, etc., so as to tone down the strong political color that our own names will give.” The letter concludes:—

“ Don’t let the peace talk influence you in any of your statements. Deal with it as a trick of Ll. G. to mislead the people here and elsewhere. The people will not be fooled. He talks of peace whilst secretly he plots to murder, destroy the lives and property of the Irish people. . . .”

The whole story of the negotiations between the British authorities and the leaders of Sinn Fein will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. It is only necessary to draw attention to the effect of de Valera’s landing upon the situation in the country at large. From the evidence available, it appears that this influence was very small. During his absence abler hands than his had built up the various departments of the Republican system of government, and although these departments could only carry out the outlines of administration in the face of British suppression, the event proved that their

duties were already allocated, and that the President could do little more than issue general instructions to them. He seems to have confined himself to evolving fresh schemes for the liberation of the Republic, schemes which met with varying degrees of approval among his colleagues. Even at this early date there are signs of disagreement between the various Sinn Fein leaders, and of a lack of co-ordination among them. De Valera seems to have been living in a world of dreams, and to have taken no heed of the warnings of those who were in touch with the realities of the situation. His first words addressed to the men with whom he came in contact on his return were in the form of encouragements to continue the struggle for the establishment of the Republic. The reason for this blindness seems to have been that during his stay in America he had never been in touch with the true spirit of that nation. Surrounded only by those who, for their own purposes, desired the success of his policy and who flattered him with tales of the vast and increasing volume of sympathy that the Irish cause was inspiring, he would listen to no advice, even from those whose ideals of Irish Republicanism were as fervid as his own, and their experience of the trend of opinion in the United States far riper. Such men as John Devoy and Judge Cohalan had pointed out to him the most promising means of securing support in America, but he, impatient of advice and restraint, had disagreed with them and precipitated a split in the ranks of the Irish-Americans which promised disaster to the cause. De Valera, fresh from the plaudits of the sycophants, returned to Ireland a dreamer and a

visionary, enthusiastically followed by those whose Celtic imagination outran their sense of possibilities, and causing grave concern to the men who in his absence had learnt that the continuation of the struggle against England was hopeless, should England at last determine to put forth her strength.

The mass of the people were heartily sick of the state into which Ireland had been thrust. Apart altogether from the danger to life and limb, the operations of the contending forces interfered in every way with the prosperity of the country. It is probable that the majority of the country people would have welcomed any solution which would have freed them from the presence of the Irish Republican Army, whose operations brought nothing but disaster to them. Their produce was levied to support the Republican troops, their houses must be available to shelter them when "on the run," their barns and outhouses were impressed as hiding-places for illicit arms. It was becoming abundantly clear to them that they were suffering far more from the Irish forces than from "the enemy," as the Republicans styled the British throughout.

De Valera's 'Presidential Message to the Farmers of Ireland' sets out to combat the feeling of weariness which was already finding expression in mutterings of discontent :—

"You are suffering with dignity and patience the most appalling persecution, the most atrocious infamies, at the hands of a barbarous and uncivilized enemy. . . . Your homesteads have been burnt, your crops and stock destroyed, your sons and daughters flung into prison . . . and many of them cruelly and callously murdered. Everything that demons incarnate could do has been done to make you forsake your principles and surrender to the forces of

unrighteousness. . . . England will be remembered only by the crimes and atrocities of her licensed and State-protected freebooters.

“The policy of England is to destroy for ever the Irish Nation. She hopes by the systematic burnings of farms and farm produce, by the destruction of mills, factories, and creameries, by the levelling of great centres of industry and by the robbery of public monies for compensating the malicious injuries caused by her minions to create a state of unemployment so general and so grave that the vigorous youth of the nation, whom she so much dreads, must leave in thousands the Land of their Fathers. . . .”

And so on. But even de Valera himself does not venture to hold out to these men the hope that if they continue the struggle they will drive the hated English into the sea. England has always been the market for Irish produce, and it was very largely the fear of the loss of this market which made the Irish farmer mistrustful of the policy of the extremists.

For the Sinn Fein leaders had already made dangerous experiments in the direction of tampering with the natural flow of commerce. Ulster was loyal to the Union, and therefore Ulster was in alliance with the enemy. Further than this Ulster was a very awkward object lesson on the Republican flank. The world was apt to ask why, if one section of Ireland was content to live and prosper under British rule, another section should not do likewise? As neither entreaty nor the shooting of innocent citizens in the streets of Belfast seemed capable of persuading Ulster that her true interest lay in throwing in her lot with the Republicans of the South, the latter determined upon a more subtle method of argument. Ulster is an industrial district, the South is almost entirely agricultural.

It follows that there is a constant stream of manufactured goods flowing from North to South, and this stream is unbalanced by a counter current of agricultural produce from South to North, the agricultural districts of Ulster being able to supply the demand of her cities. These circumstances seemed to offer an admirable opportunity for striking a blow at Ulster. A boycott was proclaimed, under which it was forbidden to the Southern people to purchase Ulster goods or to expose them for sale in their shops. In pursuance of this boycott, raids were made upon stores and trains, and Ulster goods destroyed in stock and in transit. Ulster banks were entered and robbed at the point of the revolver, and those suspected of dealing in any way with the proscribed Province were ill-treated and in some cases murdered.

The net result was to intensify the feeling of bitterness between the two sections of the country, and so to perpetuate the hated partition. The damage done to Ulster's trade was inconsiderable, the loss, as might have been expected, fell mostly upon the small shop-keepers of the South, who were debarred from selling their goods, and were unable to replace those of Northern manufacture by others produced elsewhere, owing to the lack of facilities for their purchase. Undeterred by this experience, the Republicans proceeded to extend the scope of their experiment. By a series of decrees, Dail Eireann, the Parliament of the Republic, imposed a similar ban on goods manufactured in Great Britain, beginning with articles such as soap and tobacco which are produced in the South. Again the effect was felt more by the Irish consumer than by the

English producer, and the ban, though widely advertised, was never seriously enforced.

Another weapon brought into action by the Republicans to intimidate England was incendiarism. Certain of the extremists professed to believe that if Englishmen were attacked in their own country they would be the more willing to concede the demands of Ireland. An epidemic of farm and factory fires broke out throughout the country, the work of agents of the Irish malcontents. None of these fires had any very serious results; the tactics of the incendiaries being to select the scene of their operations with the primary regard for safety for their own flight rather than for the value of the damage they were likely to inflict. In some cases definite objectives were attacked, as when attempts were made to discover the addresses of the relatives of men serving in the Crown Forces in Ireland. In a few cases attacks were made upon the persons or property of such relatives. As might have been expected, the net result was to intensify the growing feeling in England that sterner measures must be taken by the Government to deal with the rebels.

When Parliament opened on February 16th, the Prime Minister took the opportunity of making a statement on the condition of Irish affairs, which reflected the policy of the Government at the time. He dealt with the negotiations of the previous year, carried on through the mediation of Archbishop Clune of Perth, Western Australia, and explained that these negotiations had proved abortive owing to the insistence of the Government that no truce could be concluded with the rebels until the latter had laid down their arms, as had the truce failed to result in

a final settlement, the rebels would have been able to utilise the intervening period for the purpose of perfecting their organisation. It is interesting to compare this official statement of Government policy with the events of five months later. The Prime Minister continued by expressing his opinion that the rebels had not yet abandoned the hope of winning independence by force of arms, but eulogised the efforts of the Crown Forces during the past few months. He stated that the boycott was at an end, that Sinn Fein Courts and police patrols were at an end, that resignations from the R.I.C. had been stopped and recruiting for this Force resumed in Ireland, and that nearly everyone in Ireland was now anxious for the break up of the reign of terror. As events proved, this statement was too optimistic, but it was based upon the reports of those Government officials in Ireland whose business it was to keep the Chief Secretary informed of the state of affairs in the country.

Meanwhile Ulster was loyally preparing to carry out the provisions of the Act, and, indeed, showing some impatience at the delay in bringing it into force. Ulster felt that the passing of the Act had destroyed the Union and that the sooner the new regime was inaugurated, the sooner could she take the necessary measures for her protection from the Republican agents who were endeavouring to stir up dissension in her capital and elsewhere. From the first she realised that her task would be no easy one. The Ulster of the Act had been reduced to six counties, in two of which the Protestant and Catholic populations were approximately equally balanced. The ancient boundaries of the counties

had been determined by the limits of the baronies, which for the most part depended upon no definite physical features, but merely upon the extent of the land owned by the large proprietors. As a result of this, the frontier of Northern Ireland was an impossible one, from the standpoint of either politics or strategy. It meandered from Carlingford Lough, dividing the counties of Louth and Down, in the East, to Lough Melvin, dividing the counties of Leitrim and Fermanagh, in the West. Then, in order to include Donegal in Southern Ireland, it turned back once more in a north-easterly direction and after many windings reached Lough Foyle in the North. Even within this boundary there were many sources of discontent. The Nationalists of Tyrone, whose active sympathy was with the Republicans of the South, were isolated in the centre of a preponderatingly Unionist population; a considerable district of Unionist Fermanagh was completely cut off from the remainder of Northern Ireland by the natural obstacle formed by the river and lake of Erne.

Any attempt to close such a frontier against the incursion of Republican marauders was of course impossible. The border Unionists were perpetually liable to attacks, in the course of which their farms were burnt and their families ill-treated. In Belfast and Derry, the sedition which in the previous year had broken out in open rioting was by no means overcome. The old religious problem had merged itself into the political quarrel. As a rule, the Protestant was a Unionist, a term which survived the passing of the Act destroying the Union and came to be synonymous with Loyalist, as defining a

man faithful to the British Crown and opposed to the aims of the Sinn Feiners. The Catholic, on the other hand, was usually a Nationalist, closely allied with Sinn Fein, the Ancient Order of Hibernians having, by one means or another, become identified with Sinn Fein. Where the two parties lived in close proximity, as in Belfast, trouble was bound to arise, usually on a scale which defied the efforts of the police, and called for military intervention.

Hence the eagerness of the Northern Unionists to set the Act in operation. During the interim they had no Government of their own with which to deal with disorder, and were entirely dependent upon the British authorities, whom they shrewdly suspected of being willing to sacrifice the interests of Ulster in the attempt to find a solution for the problems of chaos in the South. The men of the North fully realised that so long as the provisions of the Act remained unfulfilled, the danger remained of some bargain being struck with the rebels above their heads which would nullify the safeguards of the Act. They had accepted the Act, under protest, but as a sincere contribution to the peace of the country. But they were not prepared for the British Government to trade upon this acceptance to extort from them further concessions.

Their first step was to choose a leader under whose guidance they could embark upon the stormy political voyage which lay before them. Sir Edward Carson, as he then was, had already expressed his decision not to accept the post should it be offered to him, on the score of age. The Standing Committee of the Ulster Unionist Council met at the Constitutional Club in London on January 26th, under the

presidency of Sir Edward, and passed a unanimous resolution inviting Sir James Craig, M.P., at that time Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, to submit himself for appointment to the position. On February 4th the full Council met in Belfast, and Sir James was unanimously elected. Sir Edward Carson's words on this occasion are worthy of record. "Ulster may be won by argument," he said, referring to the attempts then being made by the Republicans to coerce the North, "Ulster may be won by a sincere profession of the same ideals of loyalty and attachment to the Throne and Constitution, and Ulster may be won by a pride in Empire and an acceptance of the glorious principles which have made our country great throughout the world. But Ulster will never be coerced." It was at a subsequent luncheon that Sir James Craig made the first suggestion of a royal opening of the first Northern Parliament. He assured His Majesty the King or in his stead the Prince of Wales of a hearty welcome from the people of Ulster should he come to Belfast for such a purpose.

The first move in the direction of putting the Act into operation was at a meeting of the Privy Council on March 24th, when an Order was made fixing 'appointed days' for the purpose. The term 'appointed day' has always been rather loosely used in this connection. The original Act was drawn up when Ireland was in a state of rebellion, and it was impossible to foresee when it would be feasible to enforce any particular provision of the Act. Again, the Act was of so revolutionary a nature, changing as it did the whole constitution of Ireland, that it could not take effect as a whole upon

any given date, but must be introduced gradually as the process of transfer proceeded. Hence the Act was drawn up in such a way that it empowered the Privy Council to make Orders bringing successive provisions into operation as convenient. The dates appointed under these Orders in Council were known as 'appointed days,' and were necessarily numerous. But so far none of the administrative provisions of the Act were in operation. It was therefore necessary to appoint a day upon which the clause giving power to issue Orders in Council should take effect. April 19th was chosen as this date. A further date, May 3rd, was appointed for bringing the general provisions of the Act into operation, but it was explained that there were still several matters upon which the new Governments of Northern and Southern Ireland would have to be consulted as soon as they were set up, which matters were excluded and for which other 'appointed days' would be fixed. One important provision which became operative on April 19th concerned the office of Lord Lieutenant. In the past this office had been a political one, and its holder was debarred from professing the Roman Catholic faith. From this date the religious disqualification was removed, and the office became non-political, its tenure being fixed at six years, irrespective of change of Ministry.

From the time of the first symptom that the Government really intended to persevere with the Act, the Unionists of the South had brought every available means of pressure to bear upon it to delay the holding of elections in the South. They represented that with the country in the state it then was, it would be more than a man's life would be worth

to vote for any other than an official Sinn Fein candidate. An election held under these conditions, they argued, would result in the return of a Southern Parliament unanimously rebellious, and the resulting state of affairs would be no better than the present. The Government refused to listen. In the House of Commons on April 28th both the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary reiterated their determination. They would be parties to no surrender to the argument of murder, and they intended to put the Act into operation at once, both in the North and in the South of Ireland.

On May 4th the Lord Lieutenant issued the Proclamations summoning the Parliaments of Northern and Southern Ireland, and on the 13th of the month the nominations for candidates of both Parliaments took place. The course of events in the North will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. In the South, events fell out as the Southern Unionists had predicted. Out of 128 seats in the Southern Parliament, 124 were uncontested, neither the old Parliamentary Party, as the Nationalists of the South began to be called some years before, nor the Unionists, venturing to put forward candidates to oppose the Sinn Fein nominees. The remaining four seats were also uncontested. They were those of Dublin University, which constituency had nominated four candidates, none of whom was a Sinn Feiner, and all of whom were nominated on the score of the interests of the University rather than on political grounds.

Among those elected to the new Parliament were Mr. de Valera, for his old constituency, County Clare, Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith. The

remaining members were practically those who had been elected to the Imperial Parliament in 1918, with the addition of 53 Sinn Feiners owing to the increased number of constituencies. In fact the new Southern Parliament was merely an enlarged version of the old Dail Eireann. As this fact became of importance later, it may be as well to point out the essential differences in the constitutions of the Dail and of the Southern Parliament respectively. The Republicans regarded the elections to the Southern Parliament as Dail elections, with the exception that as the University members did not take the oath of allegiance to the Republic, their constituency was unrepresented in the Dail. Further, the Republicans refused to recognise the existence of Northern Ireland as apart from the South. Any Sinn Feiners elected to Northern Constituencies were therefore free to sit in the Dail on taking the requisite oath. As a matter of fact, of the Sinn Feiners elected in the North, only one did not already represent a Southern Constituency in the Dail. The net result was that four members of the Southern Parliament could not sit in the Dail, and one member of the Dail could not sit in the Southern Parliament.

Mention has already been made of the fact that the Act altered the conditions surrounding the appointment of Lord Lieutenant. At the end of April it was announced that Lord French was about to retire, and that Lord Edmund Talbot would succeed him. Lord Edmund Talbot was by birth a Howard, and therefore a member of the premier Roman Catholic family of England. This concession to Catholic feeling in Ireland met with a

somewhat grudging reception. The Nationalist newspapers took pains to draw attention to the fact that English and Irish Catholics differed widely in political views, despite their common faith, and set to work to attack him with the impartiality with which they attacked every Englishman connected with Irish politics. Lord Edmund Talbot was elevated to the rank of Viscount Fitzalan, and proceeded to make preparations for the enforcement of the various stages of the Act.

As though the Appointed Day had been the signal, the fury of the Republicans burst out with renewed vigour during the months of April and May. The City of Dublin itself became the battle ground for some of their most extraordinary exploits. On April 11th at 8 o'clock in the morning, when the dock labourers were going to their work, a large party of armed civilians, mingling with the crowd, made their way along the North Wall, the range of quays running along the North side of the harbour. The London and North-Western Railway owned a hotel on the quayside, opposite the berth at which their steamers loaded. This hotel had recently been taken over by the company of Auxiliary Cadets engaged in the duty of searching vessels entering the port. The armed civilians collected gradually round the hotel, and at a given signal attacked it with revolvers and bombs. The fight was short and sharp. Despite the fact that the fire of the Auxiliaries was restricted owing to the quayside being thronged with innocent labourers, they contrived to drive off their attackers and to save the hotel, the woodwork of which had been assailed with incendiary compounds. One

Auxiliary was wounded and one of the attackers killed. The incident had no great result, but it showed that the Republican forces were prepared to take the offensive even in Dublin, the seat of the British power.

But the most sensational outrage in the City took place shortly after noon on May 25th. The Dublin Customs House stood at the City end of the harbour, and was used for housing the Local Government Board and the offices of the Inland Revenue, Income Tax, and other branches of the administration. When the staffs of these offices were mostly away at lunch, a large party of I.R.A. arrived, and made their way into the building, holding up those inside. Other men proceeded to the Fire Station and prevented the brigade from leaving it. The men who had taken possession of the building proceeded to pour petrol and other inflammable substances over everything that would burn, and then to set fire to the premises at many points simultaneously. Meanwhile a company of Auxiliaries received warning that the Customs House had been raided, and rushed direct to the place in their cars. They were met by a fierce fire from pickets placed to guard the approaches, but engaged them and succeeded in dislodging them without much trouble. They then rushed into the burning building, where they met with further resistance. By this time they had been reinforced, and the building was surrounded. Such members of the office staffs who happened to have remained in the building were escorted to safety, and a large number of civilians whose presence in the place could not be explained were taken into custody. The Fire

Brigade had been released, and came into action an hour or so after the building had started to burn, too late to save it. Only the shell remained of one of the finest buildings of a city whose architectural beauties were never at any time conspicuous. The object of the outrage was the destruction of records and the hampering of the business of government. In this it was certainly successful, for many valuable records were irretrievably lost. But the principal loss inevitably fell upon the country whose cause the incendiaries professed to uphold. The responsibility for this outrage is determined upon the authority of the *Irish Bulletin*, the organ of the Propaganda Department of Dail Eireann. In its issue of May 27th, the *Bulletin* announced that "in accordance with a decision arrived at after due deliberation by the Ministry of Dail Eireann, a detachment of the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Army was ordered to carry out the destruction of the Dublin Customs House."

Nor were outrages confined to Ireland. The raids and burnings in England to which reference has already been made reached a climax on the night of May 14th-15th. The following account of the events of that night in the London district is taken from the *Daily Telegraph* of May 16th.

At 9-45 p.m. on the 14th five men called at 33, Stowe Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, and asked for Mr. Birthwright, a former member of the R.I.C. Upon being informed that he was not at home, they produced a card purporting to be a warrant for his arrest, and forced their way into the front passage. Here they were stopped by a visitor to the house, and while covering him with a revolver

they smashed a bottle of paraffin on the floor, set it alight, and decamped. The fire was easily extinguished, and little damage was done.

Another outrage occurred in the same neighbourhood at 10-15 p.m. when four men called at 42, Bloemfontein Road, Shepherd's Bush, and asked for Mr. Charles Corms, of the R.I.C., who was at the time in Ireland. His father-in-law, the occupier of the house, endeavoured to persuade the men to leave, but they shot him in the abdomen before they made their escape. A revolver and two bottles of paraffin were afterwards found outside the house. The perpetrators of this outrage are believed to be four of those who were engaged in the affair at Stowe Road.

A house at 44, Coverton Road, Tooting, was visited by three men at 9-45 p.m. The house was occupied by Mr. William Dawner, whose son was in the R.I.C., and he was held up at the point of the revolver while the men entered the house, threw petrol about various rooms, and set them on fire. They then decamped. The Fire Brigade had to be called before the flames were extinguished, but the damage was not very serious.

Similar tactics were employed by a gang of eight men who called at 3, Fairholme Road, West Kensington, about 9-50 p.m. Here they inquired for Captain Wood, pushed their way into the house, produced a revolver, and searched the place under threats. After they had gone the bedding and furniture in two rooms were found to have been saturated with petrol and ignited, and considerable damage was done.

At eleven p.m., four men, wearing light over-

coats, were seen to be acting suspiciously in Halstow Road, East Greenwich. Two of them, wearing masks, called at the house of a constable of the R.I.C. Alarmed by the screams of the constable's wife, they slammed the door and made off, leaving behind a loaded revolver and a bottle of petrol.

Masks were also worn by three men who knocked at the door of 141, Wellmeadow Road, Catford, about 10 p.m. The occupiers of the house are Mr. and Mrs. Duffield, whose respective ages are 61 and 56. Upon opening the door in response to the knock, they were immediately shot at. Mr. Duffield was wounded in the thighs and his wife in the wrist, but not dangerously. The men rode away on bicycles, and later a bottle containing petrol was found outside the house, and close by a pistol with two chambers discharged.

At 12-10 a.m. a fire was discovered at the premises of Messrs. Launderers and Nucoline, margarine manufacturers, North Woolwich. The damage, however, was not extensive. A 'life-preserver,' bottles of paraffin, cotton-waste, and paper soaked in petrol were found.

Another attempt at incendiarism, at Battersea, was nullified by the lack of forethought of the perpetrators. A visit was paid to a house in Belleville Road, Battersea, and a bottle of petrol placed carefully inside the front door. The bottle was wrapped in an Irish newspaper, laid on its side, and the paper set alight. The cork, however, could not have been withdrawn, for the heat burst the bottle and the explosion that resulted alarmed the occupier. He immediately rushed to the door and, discovering what had occurred, was able in a very

short time to defeat the attempt to set his house on fire.

On the same night numerous raids were made in Liverpool by groups of armed and masked men upon houses where resided friends and relatives of men in the R.I.C. and Auxiliaries in Ireland. Some desperate encounters took place between the raiders and the occupants of the houses, but no one was injured, although in certain cases considerable damage was done to the houses, which were set on fire. The raids were carried out simultaneously in six different districts of the city, one and a half hours before midnight.

In every instance the method adopted by the raiders was identical. Appearing in gangs of six to as many as fifteen, they were all masked and all carried revolvers. The usual ruse for getting the door opened was the announcement of a desire to deliver a very important message. The next move was to overpower the person who opened the door and cover with revolvers anybody who came to the rescue. Then paraffin was produced and carpets, clothing, and curtains were saturated with the inflammable liquid; but the plan did not always materialise, although in two cases much damage was done by fire before the brigade arrived on the scene. In other instances desperate resistance was made, and on the alarm being given the raiders fled. There were two striking instances of remarkable valour.

At a house in Clifton Road, a residential district of Anfield, a Mr. and Mrs. Owen, an elderly couple, were visited by raiders, who forced their way into the house, and Mr. Owen, in spite of his age of 60 odd and a row of revolvers pointed at his head,

seized a poker and made an onslaught on the intruders. He was, however, overpowered, gagged, his hands tied behind his back, and shut in the house, which was left on fire. Mrs. Owen managed to open the door after the raiders had gone, and Mr. Owen, in his night attire and still gagged and bound, ran to the police station. In the other instance a retired Scottish farmer, Mr. David Wilson, over 70 years of age, immediately accepted the challenge of the revolvers and threw himself upon the man who threatened his life. A desperate struggle ensued, which was only ended when another revolver was pointed at his temple with the demand "Let the man go, or out go your brains." In this house an Airedale dog came to the rescue and bit several of the raiders, by whom it was shot. Whilst bleeding and dying, the animal drove the raiders from the house before they could light the paraffin-soaked carpet, and when daylight came its body was found 400 yards away from the house, where its desperate fight had come to an end. At another house the "hands up" demand was met by an ex-naval man, who had lost a leg at Zeebrugge, with a sewing machine, which he threw at the armed raiders.

Such were the events of a single night, and these show the determination of the Republicans to carry the war into British territory. With these examples of terrorism on either side of the Irish Channel, some idea may be formed of the state of Irish affairs at the opening of the year 1921.

CHAPTER II.

Despite the optimistic tone of Ministerial pronouncements, the condition of Irish affairs was daily becoming more serious during the early months of the year. Slowly but surely the Government were being driven towards the point when it would be necessary for them to adopt a firm policy towards the rebels. Everything had now been tried save giving the military leaders a free hand. But still the Government hesitated, with the result that troops and police, restrained from open measures of attack upon the men who laid in wait for them and murdered them, were driven to illegal and indefensible acts, perforce condoned by their leaders and by the Government. This policy, or lack of policy, was responsible for practically all of the criticism levelled at the Government's management of Irish affairs. The members of the Crown Forces themselves naturally failed to understand it. They were fighting men, presumably sent to Ireland for the purpose of crushing rebellion. But between them and their objective they seemed to see a hand stretched out, the hand of the politician restraining the arm of the soldier, and naturally they became mistrustful.

Nor were the actions of the Government calculated to restore confidence among either their servants or their critics. They seemed to display a hesitancy which provided their enemies with unlimited ammunition with which to bombard them in Parliament and elsewhere. The most striking example of such hesitancy was the case of the burning of the City of Cork on December 12th, 1920. The whole facts of this matter have never been made clear, but the incident and the attitude of the Government towards it were the subject of much discussion throughout the early months of 1921.

On December 12th, 1920, following an ambush of Auxiliaries on the previous day, a number of incendiary fires were started in Cork, which resulted in the destruction of a large part of the city. There can be very little doubt that the fires were started by one section of the Crown Forces as a reprisal for the many incidents of attack upon them which were frequently made in the streets of the city. General Strickland, who commanded the district, had himself been attacked not long previously, and there is ample evidence that only the strictest discipline had restrained both military and police from avenging themselves on the citizens for this and other attacks. The ambush of the Auxiliaries applied the match to this inflammable spirit. Whatever agency actually started the fires, there is ample evidence from eye-witnesses that both military and police were involved in the scenes of destruction which followed. The Government, pressed by its critics, ordered a military inquiry, at which General Strickland presided. Although no definite promise to that effect was ever made, it was

understood that the findings of this report should be made public. But the Cabinet, having seen the report, decided that it was better that the findings should remain a secret. Now, whatever these findings may have been, it would have been wiser to have published them. Their suppression gave a handle to the critics of which they were not slow to take advantage. It was naturally assumed that the findings of the report contained matter which would reflect upon the policy pursued by the Government. As a matter of fact, it is probable that the findings of a military court laid an unfair stress upon the responsibility of the Auxiliaries for the outbreak, and contained criticism of their actions which would greatly have heartened the rebels had it been published at the time.

Mr. Asquith, speaking on February 19th, referred particularly to this incident, and his words may be taken as typical of the attacks made upon this score. He said that the infamies of Irish administration were kept, as far as they could be, from public view, behind locked doors of so-called military tribunals, and any demand for the publication of their reports, still more for the evidence upon which those reports were founded, was refused on the insolent pretext, insolent because in all these cases the Government was on its trial, that their production would not be in what was called the public interest.

It will be as well to examine the general lines of criticism indulged in by those who disapproved of the policy of the Government, for the critics represented a large body of English opinion, which in the main disliked the somewhat mysterious matter

of reprisals, sometimes 'official,' sometimes not, avowed and disavowed, winked at and never satisfactorily put down. Mr. Asquith returned to the charge in the House of Commons on February 21st :

" The real vindication, or attempted vindication of the policy so unhappily pursued during the last six months is that it has succeeded, or has good prospects of success. The Prime Minister gave us an almost glowing, at any rate, an exuberant description, of the advance which had been made in the direction of pacification and the suppression of crime. What are the facts? At the very moment that the Prime Minister was speaking an hon. friend sitting beside me put in my hands a telegram which had come from Ireland that day describing how within a few miles of the City of Cork two trains were ambushed and a number of soldiers and civilians lost their lives. If you look in the newspaper to-day you will see that within the last ten days in the City of Cork, not in the hills, not in the outlying regions, five citizens were shot dead. Only yesterday there was an open fight in the town of Midleton, in which thirteen people, I believe the number has since been added to, were killed. This is a deplorable commentary on the allegation that the policy of reprisals has been a success. Only this afternoon the Chief Secretary himself told us that civilian judges could not safely be entrusted with the duty of adjudicating in criminal cases, and that witnesses dare not come forward and give evidence for fear of their lives."

Mr. Asquith proceeded to give instances of reprisals, and concluded :

" The first point I want to make is that it is the duty of this House to demand that the Government shall grant such an inquiry, and promptly, without delay. The next is to reinforce as strongly as I can, and I believe with the sympathy and consent, I will venture to say, of the vast majority of this House, the need for putting an end to this ghastly state of affairs in Ireland by a truce, a truce which means not merely the suspension of this terrible day by day intensification of passion and multiplication of crime; a truce which may form and ought to form the avenue to a permanent settlement. I hoped very much just before we separated in December, when the Prime Minister then said

there was a prospect of a settlement, and we knew that steps were taken and negotiations entered into which, for a time at any rate, seemed to have a hopeful prospect. They broke down, and if the account which has been given to us is the correct one, they broke down as they were bound to break down in the conditions. I would not impose conditions which no one is in a position authoritatively to fulfil, but I would have an unreserved truce, binding on both sides, without qualifications or reservations. If that could be brought about, dark in many ways as the prospect is, darker even than it was six or even three months ago, I am still not without hope that we might find ourselves on the road to permanent peace."

Perhaps the best defence of reprisals was contained in a letter written by Lord Carson to a correspondent who addressed him on the subject early in March. The letter is worth reproducing.

" Sir,—Whilst I entirely understand your anxieties about what are called 'reprisals' in Ireland, with the possibilities that innocent people may be sometimes the victims, I do not think you sufficiently bear in mind the horrible and savage methods which are being adopted by the organisers and perpetrators of the murder campaign which is being carried out against the executive officers and our soldiers who are serving the Government in their efforts to restore order in Ireland. Open and cowardly assassination of innocent men by the use of dum-dum bullets, frequent inhuman torture and injury to wounded and dying men is the daily routine which the officers of the law may anticipate at any moment. Any man in the employ of the Government carries his life in his hands, and may be at any moment summoned before his Creator without a moment's warning. To expect human nature to be impassive under such circumstances is to attribute to these officers a power of self-control which is not given to mortals.

" Always remember that interference by the Government forces can be brought to an end by the abstention from such horrors as I have described. The solution lies with the murder organisation, and we cannot for a moment imagine that the Government would not be the very first to desire that the forces of the Crown should be no longer necessary to carry out a service which cannot but be distasteful and distressing to all concerned.

“ It is a very cheap form of criticism to attempt to put the blame upon the executive officers in their difficult and dangerous task without any regard to the realities of the situation, but I cannot for a moment imagine that the vast bulk of our countrymen will be led away by political propaganda and false sentimentality from supporting and sympathising with our brave police and soldiers serving in Ireland.—Yours faithfully, EDWARD CARSON.”

But the official defence is contained in a letter addressed by the Prime Minister to the Bishop of Chelmsford, in reply to one forwarded by the Bishop and signed by a number of prominent members of the Protestant Churches. This letter is of the first importance, as it may be regarded as the official answer to the many charges made in various quarters against the Government, and was intended as a justification before the world as well as an answer to the points raised in the Bishop's letter. Although long, it is therefore quoted in full.

April 19th, 1921.

“ My Lord Bishop,—I have received the letter dated April 3rd, signed by yourself and nineteen other leaders of various Protestant religious denominations in Great Britain, and I have given it the serious and earnest attention to which it is rightly entitled, both on account of the responsibility and public influence of the signatories and the urgent importance of the subject with which it deals.

“ With the general motive of your resolution, that of helping to bring about peace with a contented Ireland, I am in the heartiest sympathy. And it is because I feel that it is essential that there should be a full comprehension of the Government's view as to how this can alone be done that I propose to deal with your arguments in some detail.

“ First of all, as to your protest ‘ against the deplorable practice of indiscriminate and unauthorised reprisals by the irregular forces of the Crown.’ There are no ‘ irregular forces ’ of the Crown. The Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary, to which no doubt you refer, is a regular force. It numbers slightly under 1,500 men, divided into fifteen companies. Seven of these companies

are stationed in the martial law area, three in Cork County, one each in Kerry, Clare, Tipperary, and Kilkenny, where they are subject to the control and direction of the Military Governor of the area in regard to all operations and also for discipline. Of the remaining eight companies, three are stationed in Dublin City, where they form part of the forces working under the command of the military officer commanding the Dublin district, and the other five, stationed respectively in Galway, Meath, Roscommon, Sligo, and Longford, co-operate with the military and ordinary police forces, and for purposes of operations are under the control of the county inspectors and divisional commissioners, who are high officers of the permanent constabulary. I set forth these facts because the words 'irregular forces' convey the impression, which seems to be widely held, that the Auxiliary Division is an irresponsible, self-contained unit operating without proper check and control by the civil and military heads of the Irish administration, an impression which is quite unfounded.

"Why was the Auxiliary Division constituted? Authority for the formation of the Auxiliary Division, which is composed entirely of ex-officers of the Navy, Army, and Air Force, was given on July 10th, 1920, after fifty-six policemen, four soldiers, and seventeen civilians had been brutally assassinated, and it did not come into really effective operation until over 100 policemen had been murdered in cold blood. For all these murders no murderer was executed, for no witnesses to enable conviction were forthcoming, largely because of intimidation, although many of these murders were committed in the open street in the presence of non-participatory if unprotesting passers-by. Can it be contended that when a rebel organisation, which is based on the repudiation of constitutional action in favour of violence, sets to work to achieve its ends by the deliberate and calculated murder of the members of a police force, 99 per cent. of whom were Irish and 82 per cent. of whom were Roman Catholic, which had always held an extraordinarily high reputation for tolerance and good will to the population it served, that the Government do stand idly by? It seems to me that all liberal minded and law-respecting citizens must recognise that any and every Government must take prompt and decisive steps to protect the police and to bring to justice those who invoke the weapon of assassination. Hence the creation of the Auxiliary Division. Further, it would seem to be not less clear that where, owing to intimidation

and murder, the ordinary judicial processes employed in a peaceful and civilised community have failed, the police, if they are to vindicate the law and bring murderers to justice, must be armed with exceptional powers akin to those entrusted to soldiers in the field. But that there has been any authorisation or condonation of a policy of meeting murder by giving rein to unchecked violence on the other side is utterly untrue.

“ That there have been deplorable excesses I will not attempt to deny. Individuals, working under conditions of extraordinary personal danger and strain, where they are in uniform and their adversaries mingle unrecognisable among the ordinary civilian population, have undoubtedly been guilty of unjustifiable acts. A certain number of undesirables have got into the corps, and in the earlier days discipline in the novel and exacting conditions took some time to establish. But the Government has never ceased to press upon the Irish administration and the military and police heads the paramount importance they attached to the enforcement of the sternest discipline. With your plea for discipline, therefore, I am in the most complete sympathy. No one is more anxious from tradition and position to ensure discipline in the forces than their official chiefs, if only because indiscipline means inefficiency. As some evidence of what the Chief Secretary and his colleagues are doing, I may state that during the last three months twenty-eight members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and fifteen members of the Auxiliary Division have been removed from the force as the result of prosecutions, while 208 members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and fifty-nine members of the Auxiliary Division have been dismissed on the grounds of their being unsuitable as members of the police force. In addition, twenty-four members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and Auxiliary Division have been sentenced by court-martial. There is no question that, despite all difficulties, discipline is improving, the force is consolidating, and that the acts of indiscipline, despite ambushes, assassinations and outrages, often designed to provoke retaliation for the purposes of propaganda, are becoming increasingly infrequent. I venture to believe that when the history of the past nine months in Ireland comes to be written, and the authentic acts of misconduct can be disentangled from the vastly greater mass of reckless and lying accusations, the general record of patience and forbearance displayed by the sorely-tried police, by the auxiliaries as well as by the

ordinary constabulary, will command not the condemnation, but the admiration of posterity.

“ I turn now to the second point on your resolution. I must say that I read with surprise and regret the statement that because of a ‘ long-cherished and deep-seated sense of political grievance ’ which has not been satisfied by the present Home Rule Act, ‘ we cannot regard the cruel and detestable outrages which have given rise to the whole reprisals policy, authorised and unauthorised alike, as a mere outbreak of wanton criminality in the ordinary sense.’ Your resolution is emphatic when condemning the Government, in its statement of ‘ the absolute unlawfulness of the attempt to overcome wrong, however flagrant and provocative, by means of further and equally indefensible wrong.’ Yet practically in the next sentence it condones the adoption by Sinn Fein of the weapon of wholesale murder on the ground that the end justifies the means. It seems to me that this part of your resolution is subversive alike of order and good government, morality, and the Christian religion.

“ Let us see what it means. I do not wish to minimise in the least Great Britain’s share of responsibility for the present state of the Irish question. But at long last all parties in Great Britain had united, in the General Election of 1918, in asking and securing from the electorate a mandate to give to Ireland the Home Rule which had been pleaded for by Gladstone and asked for by all the leaders of Irish nationalism since Isaac Butt, including Parnell, Dillon, and Redmond. The only unsettled question was the treatment of Ulster, and as to that, both the Liberal party had recognised in 1914, and the Irish Nationalists in 1916, that if there was to be a peaceful settlement, Ulster must have separate treatment.

“ Sinn Fein rejected Home Rule and demanded in its place an Irish republic for the whole of Ireland. Sinn Fein went farther. It deliberately set to work to destroy conciliation and constitutional methods, because it recognised that violence was the only method by which it could realise a republic. The rebellion of 1916 was its first blow to conciliation and reason. Its refusal to take part in the Convention was the second. Its proclamation of a republic by the Dail Eireann, and abstention from Westminster was the third. Its inauguration of the policy of murder and assassination, in order to defeat Home Rule, rather than to discuss the Home Rule Bill in Parliament, or enter upon direct conference outside, was the fourth.

I do not think that anybody can doubt that the principal reason why the war did not bring a peaceful settlement, and why Ireland is more deeply divided to-day than it has ever been, has been the determination of Sinn Fein to prevent such a settlement and to fight for a republic instead. I do not contest Sinn Fein's right to its opinions and aspirations, and I have never done so. But what amazes me is that a body of responsible men, eminent leaders of the Church, should state publicly that Sinn Fein has some kind of justification for murdering innocent men in cold blood, because its novel and extravagant political ideals have been denied.

"Where does the doctrine end? There is a small but vigorous Communist party in these islands, which bitterly and with the most intense conviction believes that it ought to overthrow democratic institutions and seize power by force and violence, because of the manner in which they consider that the ruling classes of the past, the aristocracy and the owners of capital, oppressed and exploited the poor. Are the Communists, because of the sufferings and grievances of the working classes and the sincerity of their own industrial ideals, to be justified in employing murder and assassination to achieve these ends?

"I write thus plainly because I believe that in this vital question—a question which, as you truly say, affects public opinion not only in the British Isles, but in the Empire and in foreign lands—it is essential to look at the fundamental facts unaffected by political prejudice or the sympathetic emotions inevitably aroused by present events. I should like to repeat that I fully recognise how action and inaction by British Governments and political parties have contributed to produce the present situation. But do not let us therefore blind ourselves to the fact that the other element in the present situation, and I think the larger element, is that Sinn Fein deliberately threw over constitutional action at the moment when that course of action was achieving success, and entered upon a campaign of violence in its most savage form in order to separate Ireland from the Empire.

"But there is another aspect of the question to which I must allude. Sinn Fein does not confine its activities to attacks on servants of the Crown. It has inaugurated a reign of terror in Ireland which is certainly equal to anything in Irish history. Its hold on the country is due partly no doubt to the fanatical enthusiasm it invokes, but partly it is due to terrorism of the most extreme kind. Its

opponents in Ireland are murdered ruthlessly, usually without any form of trial, with no chance of pleading their case, simply because the Sinn Fein leaders think them better out of the way.

“ The case of the murder of Sir Arthur Vicars is fresh in everybody’s mind. I can pass no better comment upon it than that contained in the *Manchester Guardian* of April 16th, which describes it as

‘ one of the most horrible in the black recent records of crime and counter-crime in Ireland. For a crowd of armed men to attack an unarmed man in a lonely house, take him out of bed and jointly murder him, they must have debauched their minds with the base casuistry of a “ state of war ” to an extent which makes them a curse to any cause they pretend to honour. Nothing honourable in public affairs can spring from anyone’s personal dishonour, and anyone, be he Sinn Feiner or anti-Sinn Feiner, who takes a part in one of these dastard “ executions ” writes himself down a leper for whom no brave and pure cause has a place in its service. There is nothing as yet that a court would call proof of the authorship of this particular abomination. A tag attached to the corpse is said to boast it for the “ Irish Republican Army. ” It may be a genuine brag; it is a loathsome one, if so; or it may be the trick of some enemy of the alleged braggarts. We cannot know; in either case the crime, like all its kind, is an act of the foulest treason to any cause to which those guilty of it profess loyalty.’

“ The case of Sir Arthur Vicars has excited horror because it is the murder of a well-known man. But it is only typical of what is going on all over the country. I may mention two other instances. In the first, William P. Kennedy, a Nationalist Irishman of the school of Dillon, refused to close his premises at Borris, county Carlow, on the occasion of the death of Lord Mayor McSweeney of Cork. He was boycotted, and thereupon took an action for damages against a number of his enemies, Michael O’Dempsey being his solicitor. A short while after, both Kennedy and O’Dempsey were shot from behind a wall in front of Kennedy’s house. In the second case, William Good, an ex-captain in the Army, who had resumed his studies at Trinity College, Dublin, after being demobilised, returned home to attend the funeral of his father, who had

been murdered at his own door a few days before. He drove in to Bandon on marketing business. On his return he was waylaid by armed and masked men, carried some way and done to death, the following notice being found: "Tried, convicted, and executed; spies and informers beware." The last two cases seem even worse. The first was the atrocious case recorded in the newspapers of April 8th, where an unarmed, defenceless, and war-crippled ex-soldier was murdered with revolting brutality in the presence of his mother and sister, who were spattered with his blood. The second is in the papers this morning, where a poor woman named Kitty Carroll, the sole support of her aged father and mother and invalid brother, was dragged from her house by a party of masked men, who murdered her, and attached to her body the legend: "Spies and informers beware! Tried, convicted, and executed by I.R.A."

"I cite these cases because I think it is essential that people should realise the character of the Sinn Fein policy, the principles upon which it acts, and the nature of its campaign. Sinn Fein has never issued any condemnation of murder. Assassination and outrage are the weapons which it has deliberately chosen as the means by which it is to gain its ends. I should like to repeat that it was not until over 100 of their comrades had been cruelly assassinated that the police began to strike a blow in self-defence. Perhaps the most terrible aspect of the Irish situation to-day is the indifference which has grown up there to the crime of murder since Sinn Fein entered upon its campaign, though I cannot help feeling that in their hearts the Irish people are as shocked by it as we are. It has been a matter of surprise and regret to me that during the long agony no organised protest has been made by the religious bodies who have now addressed the Government to the leaders of Sinn Fein.

"I would therefore most earnestly urge those who are responsible for the guiding of the Christian conscience not to obscure the moral issue involved. I cordially sympathise with them in their anxiety that the conduct of the Forces of the Crown should be above reproach, and I welcome the pressure which they put upon the Government to secure that end. But when they couple with this a condonation of the policy of employing crime of the most atrocious kind to serve an end with which they sympathise they are not only prolonging the strife in Ireland, but, in my judgment, they are striking at the very principles upon which the life,

the liberties, the prosperity, and the honour of civilised peoples depend.

“ I come now to the final point. The resolution pleads for the adoption of a different line of policy, and especially for a truce with a view to a deliberate effort after an agreed solution. If I thought there was a different policy which would lead to the solution of our difficulties, I should not hesitate to adopt it, however different it were from that which the Government is now pursuing. The present state of affairs is due to one cause, and one cause only—that there is still an irreconcilable difference between the two sides. The one side—or rather the group which controls it—stands for an independent Irish Republic; the other stands for maintenance in fundamentals of the Union, together with the completest self-government for Ireland within the Empire which is compatible with conceding to Ulster the same right of self-determination within Ireland as Nationalist Ireland has claimed within the Union. Towards the solution of this problem—the real problem—the resolution makes no contribution, except the proposal for a truce. But a truce in itself will not bridge the gulf, though it might be useful if there were any doubt on either side as to where the other stands, or a basis for discussion were in sight. What really matters if we are to attain to peace is that a basis for a permanent settlement should be reached.

“ I fully admit, and I have always admitted, that the declared policy of Sinn Féin and the policy of his Majesty's Government are irreconcilable. I believe that the policy of establishing an Irish Republic is impossible, for two reasons: First, because it is incompatible with the security of Great Britain and with the existence of the British Commonwealth; and second, because if it were conceded it would mean civil war in Ireland—for Ulster would certainly resist incorporation in an Irish Republic by force—and in this war hundreds of thousands of people, not only from Great Britain, but from all over the world, would hasten to take part. On the other hand, I believe that the policy of the Government—the maintenance in fundamentals of the unity of the Kingdom coupled with the immediate establishment of two Parliaments in Ireland, with full powers to unite on any terms upon which they can agree upon themselves, is not only the sole practical solution, but one which is both just and wise in itself. I further believe that the present Home Rule Act is a sensible and workmanlike method of carrying this

policy into effect. It confers on Ireland wider powers than either Gladstone's bills or the Act of 1914. It bases the financial relations of the two countries on relative taxable capacity, and leaves to Irishmen themselves the task of achieving unity within their own land.

"But the present struggle is not about the Home Rule Act at all. Fundamentally, the issue is the same as that in the war of North and South in the United States—it is an issue between secession and union. At the outbreak of the great American struggle, nearly everybody in these Islands sympathised with the South, and were against the North. Even Gladstone took this view. Only John Bright never wavered in his adherence to Lincoln's cause. That war lasted four years. It cost a million lives and much devastation and ruin. There was more destruction of property in a single Confederate county than in all the so-called "reprisals" throughout the whole of Ireland. Lincoln always rejected alike truce and compromise. As he often said, he was fighting for the Union, and meant to save it even if he could only do so at the price of retaining slavery in the South. Is there a man or a woman to-day who does not admit that the North was right, and does not see the calamitous results which would have followed the break-up of the American Union? I doubt if there is a responsible man in the Southern States to-day, however much he may admire the great figures like Stonewall Jackson and Lee, who is not glad that the Union was preserved even at that terrible cost.

"Is not our policy exactly the same? It is by reason of the contiguity of the two islands and their strategic and economic interdependence to fight secession and to maintain the fundamental unity of our ancient kingdom of many nations from Flamborough Head to Cape Clear, and from Cape Wrath to Land's End. I believe that our ideal of combining unity with Home Rule is a finer and a nobler ideal than that excessive nationalism which will take nothing less than isolation, which is Sinn Féin's creed to-day, and which if it had full play would Balkanise the world. I believe that once the struggle is over and its bitterness forgotten and unity has been preserved, all classes will agree, including a majority in Ireland itself, that in fundamentals the Government were right and Sinn Féin were wrong.

"I do not see, therefore, how we can pursue a different line of policy. It has never been our policy to refuse compromise about anything but union itself, and the non-

coercion of Ulster. Throughout the whole of last year when the Home Rule Bill was before Parliament, I invited negotiations with the elected representatives of Ireland, stating that the only points I could not discuss were the secession of Ireland and the forcing of Ulster into an Irish Parliament against its will. I also added that in my judgment justice required that Ireland should carry its share of the war debt, as Irishmen in all other parts of the world have to do, and not throw an increased burden on those who are already carrying the largest share of the loss and cost of the war. To these overtures there was never a reply. And there has never been a reply, for the good reason that the real Sinn Fein organisation is not yet ready to abandon its ideal of an independent Irish Republic, including Ulster. That there are many Sinn Feiners who recognise the folly and impossibility of this attitude is certain. But I regret that it is no less certain that up to the present the directing minds of the Sinn Fein movement, who control the Irish Republican Army—the real obstacle of peace—believe that they can ultimately win a republic by continuing to fight as they fight to-day, and are resolutely opposed to compromise. I wish it were otherwise, but I think that if the signatories of the resolution would approach not moderate Irishmen, but those who control the Irish Republican Army, they would find that what I say is correct. Only a few days ago Mr. Michael Collins gave an interview to the "Philadelphia Public Ledger," and declared uncompromisingly for an independent Irish Republic, and added that, in his judgment, "the same effort which would get us Dominion Home Rule would get us a republic."

"So long as the leaders of Sinn Fein stand in this position, and receive the support of their countrymen, settlement is, in my judgment, impossible. The Government of which I am the head will never give way upon the fundamental question of secession. Nor do I believe that any alternative Government could do so either. I need not now speak for Ulster, for its people will shortly have a Parliament through which they can express their views as to incorporation in a Dublin Parliament for themselves. I am willing and indeed anxious to discuss any and every road which promises to lead to a reconciliation of the parties to the present struggle. I recognise, as fully as any man, that force is itself no remedy and that reason and goodwill alone can lead us to the final goal. But to abandon the use of force to-day

would be to surrender alike to violence, crime, and separatism, and that I am not prepared to do. So long, therefore, as Sinn Fein Ireland demands a republic and refuses to accept loyally membership of the British Commonwealth, coupled with the fullest Home Rule which is compatible with conceding to Ulster the same rights as it claims for itself, the present evils will continue. I do not wish anybody to be under any misunderstanding on that point.

“In conclusion, I should like respectfully to suggest that the signatories of the resolution should make their own position clear to the people of Ireland. I have replied to their address with complete frankness. I venture to believe that the majority of them are in agreement with the fundamental position set forth in this letter. If they desire to bring about peace, as they surely do, I believe that nothing would more rapidly promote it than that they and those who think like them, whatever they may think about some aspects of the policy of the present Government, should make it clear to Irish opinion that they can never attain their ends by resort to crime, that secession is impossible, and that, if they are to have peace, they must be willing to concede to Ulstermen the same rights as they claim for themselves. Those are the fundamental facts. To leave any doubt in the minds of Irishmen on these points is to prolong and not to shorten the present strife. Once they are grasped by Irishmen, I have faith that the end will be in sight, and I believe that nothing is more calculated to bring them home to Ireland than that those who are seeking to promote peace and concord with Ireland, should make this clear.—Ever sincerely,

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford, &c.”

The reply to this letter was despatched on May 4th, and was as follows:—

“Dear Prime Minister,—We have to thank you for the very full reply which you have been good enough to send to the communication recently addressed to yourself and Sir Hamar Greenwood on the Irish situation. We have neither the right nor the desire to engage you, amid your numberless responsibilities, in further correspondence. But, on the other hand, that we may not seem discourteous to yourself, and in order to avoid misunderstanding, permit us the following brief observations.

“ With regard to ‘ reprisals,’ more especially unauthorised reprisals, we are not forgetful of the intense provocation offered. Also we note the assurances given of the Government’s anxiety to prevent or to punish them condignly. But we venture to impress upon the Government anew the distress occasioned by the continued recurrence of such events. Crime perpetrated by those responsible for the maintenance of order and right stands in a category by itself, and the facts stated in your letter as to the disciplinary measures which it has been found necessary to take, are of themselves evidence that it has not been infrequent. The refusal to hold public inquiry into serious allegations made by responsible persons against the conduct of the Crown forces, and also the withholding of the result of inquiries which have taken place, have deepened the grave disquiet felt by many minds. Reasons, we recognise, may be offered for the course thus pursued by the Government, but, as you must be aware, the impression it is apt to leave, both at home and abroad, is a very painful one.

“ We greatly regret that you should be under any misapprehension as to the view taken by us of ‘ the cruel and detestable outrages ’ by which the Sinn Fein extremists have befouled their cause. That we should ourselves have thus described them ought to have protected us from the charge of “ practically condoning the adoption by Sinn Fein of the weapon of wholesale murder on the ground that the ‘ end justifies the means.’ ” With emphasis we submit that the language we used can bear no such interpretation. To explain or even partially explain is by no means to excuse. We are impressed by what seems to us unimpeachable evidence that the policy of the Government in Ireland has succeeded only in inflaming the wound it was meant to heal. We have looked anxiously but in vain for any ameliorative results produced by it. On the contrary, active hostility continues unabated, moderate opinion is more and more alienated, and the cause of law and order fails everywhere of the support which is its due. It is this terrible reaction of the existing situation upon the Irish national mind and conscience which most of all weighs upon us, this and the fading hope of reaching along present lines any such agreed and happy resettlement as all must long to see. Hence our intense desire to see a new beginning made, to which at least all the better and more reasonable elements in the Irish people might rally.

You challenge us to make clear, to the Irish people especially, what is our position with regard to certain conditions of settlement you lay down, and to that challenge we respond. Hitherto we have only referred to excesses for which the authorities might be held responsible, inasmuch as in that responsibility the Government and we ourselves seemed to be involved. But if our voice could carry so far, we would, and hereby do, urge the Sinn Féin leaders with all the earnestness in our power to desist from, and to secure the total suppression of, vile deeds which are an offence to God and man, and can only bring lasting disgrace upon their movement and alienate sympathy which might be felt for it.

“On the fundamental question of secession, we are, as we believe, along with the great majority of our countrymen, at one with the Government. An independent Irish Republic we hold to be impracticable; and it is, we take it, agreed that Ulster is not to be coerced. At the same time it is for consideration how far conference and negotiations should be restricted by limiting conditions beforehand, while even within these limits we are of opinion that an agreed solution is not unattainable. The Irish are a generous people. It is too much to be asked to believe that the forces of reason among them are dead; and even yet, in our judgment, statesmanship and goodwill might achieve an accommodation. The grievous and humiliating character of the situation must be the excuse for the insistence we have shown. But we repeat that, until such an attempt has been deliberately and patiently tried and has failed, many throughout the land will be unable to acquiesce in any alternative policy or course of action.

This correspondence has been quoted at length, not only because it includes the detailed reply of the Prime Minister to the critics of the Government's policy, but also because it contains the main points of such criticism. In the month of May it was becoming obvious that, despite optimistic forecasts, the line of action pursued by the Government was failing to produce adequate results. As has already been shown, the Republican forces were becoming more daring in their operations, and,

despite frequent reverses in which they suffered considerable loss, their activities were taking an ever-increasing toll of the Crown forces. Negotiation seemed for the moment to have failed; the insistence on a laying down of arms as a preliminary to a truce would not be considered by the Republican leaders. The history of negotiations during this period will be recounted in a subsequent chapter. For the present it is enough to say that there seemed little prospect of terminating the conflict by agreement.

The only alternative remaining was the untrammelled employment of force. Hitherto, as has been already explained, the military operations were subservient to the political situation. The fiction was maintained that Ireland as a whole was opposed to the methods of the Sinn Fein extremists, and that, if the people could be rescued from the terrorism of the gunmen, they would prove docile and obedient. As, therefore, the country was held to be friendly, and only appeared hostile through fear, military operations on an extensive scale, which would necessarily have involved considerable inconvenience to the populace, could not be undertaken. But at last, at the end of May, the Cabinet made up its mind that military measures could no longer be delayed. The Prime Minister announced that it was proposed to strengthen the Forces of the Crown in Ireland, and the General Staff prepared themselves for a campaign which everyone knew would be difficult and unsatisfactory. That Sinn Fein could be crushed if the full power of England were exerted, nobody denied. But equally certain was it that the process would be long and costly.

The plan of campaign must necessarily be to declare martial law over the whole of the twenty-six counties of the South, which meant in effect the complete domination of the civil power by the military. The Commander-in-Chief would become the sole representative of British authority, acting at the head of his armies in a hostile country. The people of Ireland would suffer all the restrictions which military necessity imposes on the inhabitants of a zone of battle. There could be no reasonable doubt that the I.R.A. would receive an accession of strength on this ground alone. Finally, the only hope of a rapid and successful issue to the campaign would be to concentrate the Crown Forces upon selected bases, and from them to conduct a sweep of the whole country. This would have the effect of leaving a large number of loyal inhabitants at the mercy of the insurgents, and the experience of recent months was a sufficient warning of what their fate would be in such circumstances.

There were other serious disadvantages in such a policy. Despite the fact that Mr. de Valera had performed a signal service to the British cause during his residence in America the previous year, by splitting the Irish-American supporters of Sinn Fein into two bitterly hostile camps, the disorder in Ireland was definitely undermining the friendship between the United States and England. It was not so much that any large party in America supported the Republicans in their demand for independence, as the fact that the sympathy of any nation of Anglo-Saxon origin is bound to incline towards the cause of a smaller nation struggling against the resources of a powerful State. The sympathy of

England with the Confederates during the Civil War had been a similar instance. In addition, the feelings of many people were outraged by the distorted stories of reprisals put into circulation by the Sinn Fein emissaries. The Republican propaganda department circulated such documents as Count Plunkett's *Dignified Statement to the Nations of the World* from which a few typical passages may be quoted :

“ The only serious disorder in the country is caused by the conversion of the police force into a military body of political anti-Irish agents empowered to commit outrages against the people in general with a guarantee of immunity of punishment from the English Cabinet. . . . Terrible crimes at the hands of the English are of frequent occurrence, the murder of priests, of women with child, and the deliberate drowning of unarmed men, the shooting of many unarmed and unarrested persons under the pretence that they were attempting to escape, the killing of untried and unarmed prisoners. . . . The English Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary and all the Government officials justify all excesses committed by their agents. . . . The whole people is driven into a defensive war through the hypocrisy and savage brutality of a powerful nation that is striving to extinguish the nationality of Ireland in blood.”

This kind of thing was naturally damaging to the British cause when read by people who had no comprehensive grasp of the situation. There is no doubt that the continuance of the trouble in Ireland, and more especially its aggravation into a state of openly declared warfare, would have considerably weakened the voice of England in the councils of the world.

But, notwithstanding the weight of these considerations, the decision of the Government to augment the strength of the Crown Forces in Ireland, with all that such a move entailed, was

received with approval by the great bulk of the British nation. It was realised on all sides that the policy of half measures must be put an end to at all costs. Reprisal and counter-reprisal were leading to increased bloodshed, and it was extremely uncertain how long it would take to wear down the resistance of the rebels by such methods of attrition. There were only two alternatives, to come to terms with Sinn Fein, or to exterminate its armed forces. The former seemed at the moment impossible, the latter must be undertaken. At the very time when a Home Rule Act, having at last received the approval of the British Parliament, was about to be put into operation, it must be demonstrated to be unacceptable to the Irish people, and only to be imposed upon them by force of arms. To such an extent had Irish demands grown since the days of Parnell.

CHAPTER III.

Before proceeding further with the consideration of affairs in Ireland generally, it will be as well to deal with the situation in Northern Ireland, and the events which led up to the formation of the Northern Government under the Act.

The Six Counties of Northern Ireland are predominantly Unionist and Protestant in their population, but they contain centres inhabited by Catholics, both Nationalist and Sinn Fein, and in the presence of Unionist majorities Nationalists and Sinn Feiners show a natural tendency to coalesce. This fact accounts for the perpetual outbreak of party feeling, leading to rioting and murder, which forms a turbulent background to the history of Ulster during the period under review.

It must be remembered that there was nothing new in the existence of this intense party feeling. Despite the contentions of Sinn Fein and Nationalism that Ireland is an homogenous nation, it is obvious that the men of Ulster are of entirely different race and ideals from the men of the South. Without unduly labouring this point, it may be indicated that the whole history of Ulster and more particularly its borders is one of faction fighting and rivalry. The capture of Sinn Fein by the Irish

Republican Brotherhood and the consequent transformation of a comparatively peaceful movement into an actively militant one merely intensified the mutual hatred of the factions. But an event of even greater importance was the introduction of the pistol and its development into a lethal weapon capable of being carried in the pocket or otherwise concealed about the person. In the old days, when a body of men marched about the country brandishing cudgels or carrying guns, their purpose was evident, and their plans could be circumvented by an alert police force. But now, when a party of men, indistinguishable except by process of search from the remainder of the population, can carry with them arms and ammunition sufficient for manslaughter on an extended scale, the task of circumventing them has become vastly more difficult. Further, it is in the nature of things that if one faction sees itself menaced by gunmen (to apply the generally accepted Americanism to the men who carry loaded revolvers for the purpose of using them upon unarmed citizens) it will take steps to arm itself similarly in its own protection. The eventual result is that armed men abound on both sides, and the slightest pretext is sufficient to precipitate a conflict between them which is almost certain to have fatal results.

At the end of 1920 the Royal Irish Constabulary in Ulster had been reinforced by a body of 'special constables' raised from among the Unionist population. Despite careful selection of these men, and their grouping under experienced officers, there was an undoubted tendency for them to abuse their official position. Seeing opposed to them

Republicans who did not hesitate to use their weapons upon unarmed Unionists, the special constables in their turn were apt to forget the limitations imposed upon them as a branch of the forces of law and order, and to indulge in vendettas on their own account against such Republicans as they knew. An example of this occurred towards the end of January. On the 22nd of the month, two constables of the R.I.C. were found dead on the public road near Monaghan. It appears that the two men had gone out for a walk, and that on their way back to barracks they were ambushed by a party of Republicans and murdered. On the following night, a body of special constables, about fifteen in number, set out from Newtownbutler, in County Fermanagh, just within the borders of the Six Counties and close to the scene of the murder. They made their way to Clones, in Southern territory, and arrived in the small hours of the morning at a public house owned by a man of the name of O'Reilly. Here, it is alleged, they called upon the occupants of the house to come down, but O'Reilly and another man made their escape by a back way, and ran to the R.I.C. barracks for assistance. A party of about a dozen regular R.I.C. immediately set out for the scene, and when they arrived found the Newtownbutler party engaged in looting the premises. They called on these men to surrender, but were answered by a volley. A fight ensued, in the course of which one of the raiders was killed and a second seriously injured. The R.I.C. finally succeeded in arresting the whole party. The Commissioner for Ulster at once took the strongest measures to deal with such incidents. Two platoons

of special constabulary were immediately disbanded, the Newtownbutler platoon being one of them, and the participants in the affray were tried by court-martial.

Another example of rapid reprisal took place in Belfast itself on the night of the 26th-27th. On the 26th three regular constables of the R.I.C. arrived in Belfast from Dublin, in connection with certain investigations then proceeding. They put up at a small hotel close to the barracks, where they were accommodated in a room having two beds. At closing time, a group of men who had been drinking at the bar made as though to leave the premises, but suddenly made a dash up the staircase and into the room where the constables were sleeping. Shots were heard, and a few seconds later the men returned, flourishing their revolvers, and compelled the barman to let them out of a side door, through which they escaped into the darkness outside. The alarm was raised, and the police on their arrival found two of their comrades dead and the third so seriously wounded that he died shortly after admission to hospital.

Some hours later, three men visited a house a considerable distance from the scene of the first tragedy, in which a man of the name of Garvey, a chemist's assistant and a reputed Sinn Feiner, was known to lodge. They opened the door of the house with a latchkey, an action which caused no suspicion in the mind of the lodging-house keeper, who knew that one of the lodgers had not yet returned to the house. Making their way to Garvey's room, they shot him dead as he slept, and escaped before they could be detained.

Towards the middle of February, signs of danger began to evince themselves in Belfast. On the 18th of the month an attack was made by Republicans on the Protestant shipyard workers as they returned from work. As they left the yards, they were met with volleys of stones flung from the side streets of the Sinn Fein quarter which they were compelled to traverse. Not unnaturally, they replied with similar missiles, and a regular skirmish was soon in progress. The authorities brought an armoured car on to the scene, and order was soon restored, but not before considerable damage had been done. Owing to the vigilance of the police, no further outbreaks developed from this incident, but it was evident that the trouble was merely simmering below the surface.

On March 11th, while a group of constables of the R.I.C. were standing outside the Empire Theatre in Belfast, they were suddenly fired upon, and two of their number killed and a third wounded. A Protestant shipyard worker who was standing close by was seriously wounded and died some days later. It was believed that the assailants were not local men, but had been imported by the Republicans to stir up strife in the city, which had been comparatively peaceful for some weeks. The death of the shipyard worker was responsible for a demonstration in the part of the city in which he lived, rival mobs coming into conflict and causing some damage before they could be dispersed by the police.

On the 16th occurred an incident which showed how strong the current of party feeling was running. Works had been started by the Belfast Corporation for the relief of the unemployed, and several

hundred men were engaged upon them. At a pre-arranged signal, the Catholic members of this party, who happened to be in the majority, produced revolvers and drove the Protestants from the scene. During the following days disturbances of varying degrees of seriousness occurred throughout the city and its environs. At the same time evidence was forthcoming that the Republicans were determined to leave no stone unturned to enforce the Ulster boycott. During the early morning of the 17th, a party of raiders descended upon Richhill Station, on the Great North of Ireland Railway between Portadown and Armagh. Their first action was to isolate the station by cutting the telegraph wires, and they then proceeded to soak the premises with petrol and set fire to them, devoting the greater part of their efforts to the goods shed, which happened to be well filled. They then turned their attention to the sidings, in which lay a number of laden wagons. These they destroyed in a similar manner. The raiders rounded off their exploit by holding up an incoming train and purloining the mails, after which they decamped as suddenly as they had arrived.

Some days later came news of the murder of Loyalists in the country districts of Ulster. On the 21st, a concerted attack was made upon the farms and houses of Unionists living on the Fermanagh-Monaghan border. Two of these were murdered while defending their property, and much damage was done. It subsequently transpired that the object of this raid was to intimidate members of the special constabulary, and to discourage others from enlisting in the ranks of the force, lest their homes

should be raided in their absence. The outrage caused considerable excitement in Belfast, and the smouldering enmity between the factions broke out into open rioting. The funeral cortège of a Unionist victim was fired upon as it passed a Nationalist quarter of the city, and firing ensued on both sides, resulting in several injuries being inflicted. The Unionist faction were continually embittered by the news of the murder of their co-religionists in the country districts, where the campaign against them continued. In County Monaghan especially murders became frequent and in more than one case were distinguished by circumstances of exceptional brutality.

Late on the night of April 1st, a determined attack was made on the military and police protecting the city of Londonderry. Simultaneous firing was indulged in by Sinn Fein bands, working obviously on a pre-determined scheme, at the barracks and the protection posts throughout the city. A police sergeant was killed, and several persons wounded, but through the promptitude of the authorities, who immediately put the city in a state of defence, no further casualties were incurred, although sniping took place for some days further.

On the 4th of the month an attempt was made to destroy the Ulster Club in Belfast. Two bombs were flung at the building, but no damage was done, and the attackers made off before they could be identified.

It had been known for some weeks past that the Republicans had organised a certain portion of the Irish Republican Army in the form of 'Flying Columns,' or bodies of men equipped for operations

in districts other than those to which they belonged. These Flying Columns were particularly active on the Ulster border, where they made the members of the special constabulary their chief objective. On the night of April 5th-6th, a wide area in County Tyrone was the scene of their operations. Police barracks were attacked, and patrols of police engaged in carrying out their ordinary duties were ambushed. On the following night a party of armed and masked men visited a number of houses in Dromore, where a special constable had been wounded in the original affray. Three young men belonging to the village and suspected of Sinn Fein sympathies were taken from their homes, and their dead bodies subsequently found lying on the main road a short distance from the village.

Throughout April and May a similar state of affairs continued, but meanwhile the interest in the elections for the first Ulster Parliament, and the events connected therewith diverted public attention from other matters. The selection of Sir James Craig as leader of the Ulster Unionists has already been mentioned, and it was about him that the hopes of the Province now revolved. But the campaign actually opened before he accepted the post of leader, and the speeches of Sir Edward Carson, as he then was, struck the key-note of the Ulster Unionist position. Speaking at Torquay on January 31st, he said :—

“ I do not believe in any policy of what is called Home Rule for Ireland. But the Government have passed a Bill into law, and they have given a Parliament to the North and a Parliament to the South. I have undertaken, as the only alternative left, to do my best to see that the Ulster people shall welcome that Parliament, for the benefit of

the United Kingdom and the benefit of the Empire. And I believe they will. But there are people going about who want to upset that. I appeal to them to give us a chance, to stand by us. Let the Government know that we do not want to associate with a gang of murderers called Sinn Fein, with their sham Parliament and a sham cry, all of which have had their basis in hostility to this country. Tell the British Government that you believe in supporting your friends and fighting your enemies, and not sacrificing your friends for the sake of conciliating your enemies. I hope to go on in the same course that I have always gone on. I believe the day will come when Ireland itself will come crawling to Great Britain and say 'For God's sake restore us to the position we had formerly in the United Parliament of the two countries.' There is no one in the world who would be more pleased to see an absolute unity in Ireland than I would, and it could be purchased to-morrow, at what does not seem to be a very great price. If the South and West of Ireland came forward to-morrow to Ulster and said 'Look here, we have to run our old island, and we have to run her together, and we will give up all this everlasting teaching of hatred of England, we will shake hands with you, and you and we together within the Empire doing our best for ourselves and the United Kingdom and for all his Majesty's Dominions will join together,' I will undertake to say that Ulster would accept the handshake and would do it for the sake of this country, our own sake, and the sake of the whole Empire."

A few days later, addressing his constituents in Belfast, he explained his reasons for advising Ulster to accept and work the terms of the Act. He admitted that he himself and those in Ulster had never asked for, never wanted, and never believed in Home Rule in any shape or form. In the old form in which Mr. Asquith had put it upon the Statute Book they had been prepared to fight against it because it not only deprived them of their position in the United Kingdom, but it claimed the power to put them under the Sinn Fein Parliament in Dublin. That, they said, no Government on earth had the right to do, could do, or would try to do. The

situation under the present Act was different. They were not put under the Sinn Fein Parliament. They had been told that they could govern themselves. Nobody was ever mad enough to fight against somebody telling them to govern themselves, therefore he advised the people of North-East Ulster, and he never felt any doubt of the advice he gave, that as they had been offered the right to govern themselves it was their duty to accept that offer. While that closed one chapter in the history of Ulster, and if it closed it not with absolute victory for Ulster, it closed it, at all events, with this declaration on behalf of Great Britain, and, he believed, on behalf of the whole Empire, that the services of Ulster in the past had been such, and her loyalty and her progress had been such, that no Government for political or other purposes would have the right to take away her independence and place her under a government which she would abhor and detest. Ulster, therefore, remained as she always had been, unconquered and unconquerable.

Early in March Mr. de Valera gave an interview to the representative of the Associated Press of America, in the course of which he said :—

“ The Partition Act is an Act of a foreign and hostile assembly. The Irish people as a whole will never accept it. The people even of the Six Counties were never consulted about it in any recognised way. It was designed to perpetuate division and sectional rancour amongst Irishmen. . . . When the elections come, they will prove that industrial Ulster is not so blind to its own interests as to court being severed from its great market in the agricultural areas in the rest of the island. The boycott of Belfast goods which is now operating is but the opening stage of what will become a complete and absolute exclusion of Belfast goods if the Partition Act is put into effect.”

The enormity of Mr. de Valera's error and

the futility of his threat were shortly to be demonstrated.

On April 25th Sir James Craig issued a Manifesto to the Loyalist Electors of Northern Ireland, in the course of which he said :—

“ Those for whom I venture to speak place in the forefront of their ideals and aspirations devotion to the Throne, close union with Great Britain, pride in the British Empire, and an earnest desire for peace throughout Ireland. . . . The first Parliament will be faced with problems gravely affecting the future. The best way to extend our resources, expand trade, stabilise agriculture and other industries, remodel education, amend the licensing laws, and ensure a brighter future for the great masses of workers in our midst is to begin by concentrating on the supreme issue of securing a strong working majority without which the Government could not be carried on, and without which disaster must inevitably follow. Upon that majority will rest the responsibility of nominating the Northern quota in the Council of Ireland, where our representatives will be charged with the important duty of protecting our interests and of guarding the rights and privileges of the Six Counties against encroachment by the Southern Parliament. To put it plainly, failure to secure an effective working majority would mean immediate submergment in a Dublin Parliament. . . . The fate of the Six Counties hangs in the balance, and with the Six Counties the interests of Loyalists in other parts of Ireland. The eyes, both of friends throughout the Empire, who wish us success, and of enemies who desire our failure, will be watching our first proceedings. It is our duty, therefore, not only to lay aside minor issues and, if need be, to sacrifice personal interests, but to work with whole-hearted energy and goodwill between now and the day of the poll in order to secure the election of those candidates alone who can be trusted worthily to represent the great cause which we all have at heart. We have overcome many a crisis, weathered many a storm. Let us together win yet another victory and lay the foundation of a model Parliament of our own.”

Sir James Craig was not the man to restrict his efforts to the issue of manifestoes or to incur the reproach of irreconcilability from the wavering

section of his electors. The accusation might at any time be levelled against Ulster that she alone stood in the way of Irish peace, and that a conciliatory gesture on her part, which might have reconciled the South to the Act, had never been made. Sir James determined that such a gesture should be made in the most impressive circumstances possible, with little hope that it would bear fruit, indeed, but in the knowledge that the very fact of his having made it would strengthen his position at the polls and demonstrate to the world that it was not the fault of Ulster if Irish unity should be as remote as ever.

The first hint of such a move was made by him at Banbridge on May 2nd. He declared that he himself would accept membership of the Council of Ireland, and that if de Valera's party became supreme in the South as the result of the elections, it was for de Valera himself to take a similar step, in order that mutual discussion might take place on all matters affecting the welfare of Ireland as a whole. On the following day at Bangor he put the matter yet more plainly. If it were considered necessary to hold meetings between Mr. de Valera and himself, he said, he was perfectly prepared to meet Mr. de Valera. But the Act provided for such meetings. The first duty laid down by the Act was to found the Council of Ireland. The first duty of his colleagues and himself would be to select a band of men to go down or wait in Ulster for the others to come up and meet them on the Council of Ireland. He proposed, with the approval of his colleagues, to go into that Council himself, and it was for Mr. de Valera and his colleagues to meet him there, if they were supreme in the South and West, and to

discuss all matters which were considered to be for the benefit of Ireland as a whole.

That Mr. de Valera would not accept Sir James Craig's challenge to meet him in the lists of the Council was already evident. Not more than a couple of days earlier the Dail had issued a proclamation to the effect that although that body, as the Representative Assembly of the Irish Republic, had consented to recognise the popular elections under the Act, "in order that the will of the people may once more be demonstrated," they forbade the electoral bodies specified in the Act to take any steps in the election of candidates to the Senate of Southern Ireland. It was hardly likely that the Dail would be inclined to recognise the Council any more than the Senate. But the gauntlet had been flung, and the challenger had reason to know that it would not be allowed to remain unheeded. On May 4th Sir James left Belfast hurriedly at the request of Lord Fitzalan, and proceeded to Dublin to meet the new Viceroy. In Dublin came the answer to the challenge, in the form of an invitation from Mr. de Valera to meet him at a rendezvous close by. Sir James accepted, and an informal conference between the two leaders took place.

The incident caused a considerable sensation at the time, and in England, at least, high hopes were entertained that the meeting might be repeated and that a more formal conference might ensue between representatives of North and South, which would result in a compromise over the working of the Act. It was suggested that the British Government had arranged the meeting, that it was part of the secret

“ peace moves ” then supposed to be proceeding. As a matter of fact, it was nothing more than the answer to Sir James Craig’s challenge, and it displayed a high degree of courage and statesmanship on the part of the Ulster leader that the meeting took place. Although nothing further came of it, although Sir James must from the first have regarded it as a forlorn hope, the position of the Unionists and their programme were immensely strengthened both in Ulster and in the eyes of the world. The challenge had emanated from them, no longer could it be said that the obstinacy of Ulster blocked the way to peace.

Speaking at Holywood on his return, Sir James made able apology for his action. Could he, as the leader of the men and women of Ulster, refuse the invitation of Mr. de Valera to meet him and to do what he could to bring peace to the land, to discuss the whole future of the country and to do what he could to try to come to some understanding whereby the foul campaign of murder could be mitigated? So the incident terminated, and the eyes of Ulster were once more centred upon the elections.

The nominations took place on May 13th. The Act had established fifty-two seats in the Northern Parliament, and for these the Unionists put forward forty candidates, the Nationalists twelve, Labour five, and Sinn Fein twenty. Mr. de Valera was nominated for County Down, and Mr. Michael Collins for Armagh. The unpopularity of the Labour candidates was displayed from the outset. On the 17th, a band of Unionist shipyard workers took possession of the Ulster Hall in order to prevent its use by a Labour demonstration. On the arrival

of the Labour candidates they were invited to lay their views before the gathering, but this, probably wisely, they declined to do. The invaders proceeded to hold a meeting of their own, and their temper was shown by the fact that an interrupter was severely handled and had to be removed to hospital. On the same day armed and masked men attacked Mr. Robert Moore, a prominent Belfast Labour leader, in his office, fortunately without fatal results.

Despite all the signs of the superior strength of their party in Ulster, the Unionists were extremely nervous lest they should fail to secure the overwhelming majority necessary to justify in the eyes of the world their insistence on partition. The usual danger of over-confidence seemed to offer a possibility of the overthrow of their hopes. The mass of the Unionist electors were so certain that all men must subscribe to the policy they themselves had held since childhood, that it seemed to them unnecessary to go to the trouble of recording their opinions at the poll. This spirit gave hope to the Nationalist-Sinn-Fein combination. The election was to be conducted under the system of proportional representation, and it was argued, rightly or wrongly, that in the event of a small poll the minority parties obtained more than their fair share of the members elected. The Nationalist leaders were determined to bring into the field every ounce of their strength. Their voters were told that under the system of proportional representation there was a probability, almost amounting to a certainty, of killing partition if all the people who dreaded and abhorred it asserted and exercised their right to vote. Sir James Craig even allowed a note

of anxiety to creep into his public utterances. His opponents made capital out of his remark to the effect that if Ulstermen could not stand together they must fall together rather than pay tribute to the terrorists of the country.

On May 23rd, the eve of the poll, Sir James issued his final message.

“The cause is sacred and worthy of every personal sacrifice. . . . The Union Jack must sweep the polls. . . . The eyes of our friends throughout the Empire are upon us. Let them see that we are as determined as they to uphold the cause of loyalty.”

This was supplemented by a message received from Sir Edward Carson.

“I rely upon every loyalist man and woman in Ulster to rally round you to-morrow in your great fight for civil and religious liberty. Ulster must be saved from the tyranny of the assassin vote.”

Sinn Fein agencies published a rival message from Mr. de Valera.

“Men and women of North-East Ulster, politicians and statesmen declare the Irish problem to be insoluble, but you plain people can solve it in a few hours to-morrow in the quiet and privacy of the polling booth. Vote to-morrow against war with your fellow countrymen. Vote that brother’s hand may not have to be raised against brother’s. Vote so that there may be an end to boycott and retaliation, to partition, disunion, and ruin. Orange and Green together can command the future. Ireland one is Ireland peaceful, prosperous, and happy. Vote for it.”

In Belfast itself the Unionists seemed to be full of confidence. Throughout the city triumphal arches were erected, and in some places Unionist enthusiasts painted the pavements in stripes of red white and blue. The supply of Union Jacks ran out at an early stage of the proceedings, and a stranger would hardly have imagined that there could be any doubt as to the result. But the Sinn

Fein preparations were as earnest if less demonstrative. Unionist voters were inundated with leaflets, and the walls plastered with posters, containing the wildest prognostics of the fearful things that would happen if partition should be perpetuated. More practical steps to secure a majority were taken by them in the outlying districts. Bridges over which Unionist communities would have to pass in order to reach the polling stations were destroyed, nails were scattered on the roads to make them impassable for motorists. The influence of the Roman Catholic Church was brought to bear to ensure that all Catholic voters supported the Nationalist or Sinn Fein candidates, the particular brand of non-Unionism being left to the voter's personal preference. The Labour candidates were disregarded, the coming fight at the polls was to be a straight one between Partition and Non-Partition.

May 24th, Empire Day, opened in a blaze of colour and excitement. The polling booths were thronged long before their hours of opening by constituents anxious to record their votes. Early in the day more than half the electors had polled, and it was estimated by evening that ninety per cent., an unprecedented proportion, of the electors in the Province had voted. A certain amount of rioting and disorder took place, as might have been expected, considering the height to which party spirit had been raised by the prospects of the election and all that hung upon it. The most elaborate precautions were taken by the authorities to prevent serious outbreaks and to protect the ballot-boxes. Military and police patrolled the city of Belfast and mounted guard at the polling stations; in the

country districts they were reinforced by the special constables. As a result of these precautions the election passed off without serious incident.

On the 26th the returns began to be made public. The Act had allotted sixteen seats to the city of Belfast, and for these sixteen vacancies fifteen Unionist candidates had stood. Against them had been arrayed five Nationalists and five Sinn Feiners. The whole of the fifteen Unionists were returned, and of their opponents one Nationalist only, Mr. Devlin, in the West Division of the city. The total defeat of the Sinn Fein element caused widespread rejoicing throughout the city, except in the Nationalist quarters, where some slight rioting took place. During the following days, the results in the provincial constituencies came in. Queen's University returned four Unionists; County Antrim, out of its seven allotted seats, returned five Unionists, one Nationalist, and one Sinn Feiner; County Armagh, out of four seats, returned two Unionists, one Nationalist, and one Sinn Feiner; the combined counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone, out of eight seats, returned four Unionists, one Nationalist, and three Sinn Feiners; Derry City and County, out of five seats, returned four Unionists and one Nationalist; and County Down, after a series of recounts and final allotments necessitated by the system, six Unionists, of whom Sir James Craig headed the poll, one Sinn Feiner, Mr. de Valera, and one Nationalist. Mr. Devlin, already returned for West Belfast, was again returned as the Nationalist member for County Antrim. The Sinn Fein members returned included Messrs. Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith. Of the total

of forty Unionist candidates nominated, not one failed to secure election. This fact in itself is a striking demonstration of the antipathy of Ulster to the policy and methods of Sinn Fein, and of the determination of the Province to resist to the utmost any attempt to incorporate it in an united Ireland, so long as the South adhered to the domination of Sinn Fein. In Tyrone and Fermanagh alone was there any doubt as to the issue. Here the Unionists and the Nationalist-Sinn Fein group had shared the honours, an omen of the dissension and warfare which were to arise later.

All was now ready for the first meeting of the first Northern Parliament, except the possession of a suitable building. The Belfast Corporation was approached for the loan of the City Hall, pending the provision of other premises, and the request was readily granted. The preliminary meeting was fixed for June 7th, and the formal opening for the 21st of the same month. An unpleasant reminder that the irreconcilable element were unlikely to abide peacefully by the result of the elections came on May 31st. A determined effort was made to destroy the premises of the firm who supplied the transport for the removal of the ballot-boxes after the election. A number of raiders held up the caretaker on the premises and poured paraffin over the offices and set them on fire. The fire was fortunately extinguished before any great damage was done.

On June 4th Sir James Craig had a magnificent reception on the occasion of his addressing the Ulster Unionist Association for the first time since the election. In his speech he thanked the people of Ulster for securing such a decisive result, and

continued by appealing to the South to follow their example, and instead of standing aloof from the Act, to grapple with the machinery which lay to their hand, and so work out the salvation of the country. If that were done he would guarantee that the men of the South and West would find the men of the North rejoicing with them, and not jealous of their success. They in the North would be only too delighted to see the harbours of Cork and elsewhere turned into great engines of industry, the same as they had in the North of Ireland. But having said so much, let it be clear that there was to be no tampering whatever with the rights Ulster had been granted under the Act. There were persons who were continually attempting to fritter away those rights, but the position he had been placed in was an impregnable position, because, instead of dealing with those who in the past had ever been ready to give away the rights of Ulster, their enemies would now have to deal with a man who would go down into the grave sooner than betray by one single inch the rights of Ulstermen as British citizens.

The first Northern Parliament was assembled in the City Hall at Belfast on June 7th for the purpose of transacting preliminary business, in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant. The Nationalist and Sinn Fein members did not attend, and the proceedings were purely formal. But at a luncheon held subsequently, Sir James Craig announced the event which he had previously foreshadowed, namely, that the King had consented to open the Parliament of Northern Ireland on June 22nd.

The announcement was greeted with the wildest

enthusiasm throughout loyal Ulster. Preparations were at once begun to give the Royal party a reception such as had never before been witnessed in Ireland. It was evident that the great majority of the people meant to utilise the occasion as an opportunity of displaying the traditional affection of Ulster for the Throne, as well as their individual loyalty to its occupant. At the same time the leaders of Sinn Fein determined to do everything in their power to mar the demonstration of unanimity which it was the desire of the Unionists to present.

Their opportunity soon came. On the night of Saturday, the 11th, a quarrel between a group of men in one of the areas of the city in which Unionists and Nationalists lived in close proximity developed with extraordinary rapidity into a battle in which revolvers and stones were freely used. Some twenty people were injured, and it was not until some hours had elapsed that the police were able to restore order. The incident in itself was of no particular significance in the long and unhappy list of such affrays which disfigures the history of Belfast in recent years, but it led to a series of murders which necessarily embittered the feeling between the factions. In the early hours of the morning a motor-van drove up to the door of residents in the northern part of the city, three of whom were dragged from their beds and murdered in cold blood. On the following night the rioting was renewed, and in the course of it four persons were killed, including a special constable of the name of Sturdy. On the 13th matters looked very serious. At the time when the workers were making their way to the shipyards, they were held up by a gang of Sinn

Fein gunmen, who had taken up a position commanding their line of approach to their work. The gang were not dislodged until several men had been wounded. On the same date the funeral cortège of Special Constable Sturdy was molested as it passed a Sinn Fein quarter, and in the fracas which ensued several people were injured. News was also received of an attack upon the source of the city's water supply in the Mourne Mountains, in the course of which considerable damage was done. For some days the rioting continued. At the height of the trouble the gunmen actually entrenched themselves in the smaller streets, firing upon all who passed, and necessitating a regular assault by the Crown Forces to dislodge them. It was obviously the intention of the Sinn Feiners to reduce the city to such a state of disorder that the visit of the King, and possibly the opening of Parliament itself, would have to be postponed. However, by means of a concentration of troops and police, the authorities managed to avert such a calamity, and the ferment gradually died down.

In the meanwhile the business of election of the Northern Senate had been completed. The Act provided that twenty-four senators were to be elected on the system of proportional representation by the members of the Northern House of Commons. On this principle, the parties would have been entitled to representation in the Senate to the extent of eighteen Unionist members, three Nationalist members, and three Sinn Fein members. No nominations were received from either the Sinn Fein or Nationalist members of the Commons, and finally the required number of senators were nominated

unopposed from the ranks of the Unionist party. The Senate held its first session on June 20th.

On the 23rd the King opened the Northern Parliament in state, amid scenes of the greatest enthusiasm. The enthusiasm was in the first place for the King, who had by his action in opening Parliament in person paid the highest possible compliment to the new State of Northern Ireland. No doubt many of those who cheered the Royal route through the city had had misgivings as to the success which should ultimately attend the great experiment of Home Rule and partition. But in the main the city, and with it the whole of Ulster, realised the significance of the event which was responsible for the visit of the King, and acclaimed it as the charter which would guarantee them from all further danger of aggression. The mind of Ulster was made up. Rightly or wrongly she regarded all attempts to induce her to co-operate with the South except on her own terms as aggression, and rightly or wrongly she believed that the powers given her under the Act defended her from the irritation of English inducements to alter her position. In her eyes the pomp attending the opening of her first Parliament was the bright robe adorning the fair form of the new-born Ulster Liberty, liberty to continue her glorious resistance against the powers of evil, or, as her enemies had it, to continue in her path of obstinacy and bigotry.

But, as events proved, the historical importance of the King's visit was due not so much to its effect upon Ulster, but to its effect upon the rest of Ireland. The King's Speech contained the first hint of the altering circumstances which ended in the signing

of the London Treaty of December. From the moment of its delivery, a change took place in the relations between Britain and the South, a hope arose that in negotiation rather than by force of arms peace would be attained. The passages containing this hint were as follows:—

“ Full partnership in the United Kingdom and religious freedom Ireland has long enjoyed. She now has conferred upon her the duty of dealing with all the essential tasks of domestic legislation and government; and I feel no misgiving as to the spirit in which you who stand here to-day will carry out the all-important functions entrusted to your care.

“ My hope is broader still. The eyes of the whole Empire are on Ireland to-day. . . . I speak from a full heart when I pray that my coming to Ireland to-day may prove to be the first step towards an end of strife amongst her people, whatever their race or creed. In that hope I appeal to all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and to forget, and to join in making for the land which they love a new era of peace, contentment, and good-will. It is my earnest desire that in Southern Ireland too there may ere long take place a parallel to what is now passing in this hall; that there a similar occasion may present itself and a similar ceremony be performed.

“ For this the Parliament of the United Kingdom has in the fullest measure provided the powers; for this the Parliament of Ulster is pointing the way. The future lies in the hands of my Irish people themselves. May this historic gathering be the prelude of a day in which the Irish people, North and South, under one Parliament or two, as those Parliaments may themselves decide, shall work together in common love for Ireland upon the sure foundation of mutual justice and respect.”

The visit of the King passed off without untoward incident, and Ulster set to work to govern herself according to her lights.

CHAPTER IV.

In order that we may fully realise the magnitude of the change in the Irish situation during the following month, it will be necessary to examine in some detail the events of the month of June. We have already dealt with the course of events in the North, and have seen the birth of the new State created by the Government of Ireland Act. It is now time to survey the very different conditions which obtained in the South.

It must be repeated that the passing of the Act and the elections held under it in the South had no influence on the state of the country. Sinn Fein had, as already mentioned, sanctioned the elections, and the members so elected regarded themselves as members of the Dail to which they were entitled to entry on taking the oath of allegiance to the Republic. But Sinn Fein refused to allow elections to take place for the Senate of Southern Ireland, or to carry out any of the provisions of the Act. The Act provided that unless at least half of the members of the Southern Parliament took the oath within a fortnight of the summoning of Parliament, the Lord Lieutenant had power to dissolve that Parliament, and to take steps to govern the South with the assistance of a legislative assembly, a process which would have been tantamount to a

continuance of British rule. This was the prospect facing the South throughout the month, for it soon became obvious that Sinn Fein had no intention of allowing the Southern Parliament to function. Both sides knew that a crisis was inevitable, that the failure of the Act and open and declared war were inseparable. The only hope of averting the catastrophe lay in negotiation, and the prospects of success by this means seemed too slender to hang the smallest hope upon.

Meanwhile the Republicans proceeded with an ever intensified campaign of outrage, to which the Crown Forces replied by a policy of burning the houses of those suspected to be in collusion with the rebels. This policy failed as it was bound to do. The rebels merely imitated it on a larger scale, and for every house burnt by the Crown Forces, they destroyed the mansion of some well-known loyalist. It was merely a matter of time before the country must become uninhabitable from lack of housing. Public opinion in England had no patience with such methods. It was obvious that the burning of houses could have little or no deterrent effect upon the operations of the I.R.A., and it was far too late to suppose that the people as a whole were in a position to refuse aid to the rebels even though the penalty were the destruction of their homes.

In the course of a debate in the House of Commons on June 1st the objections to the Government's policy were voiced from all quarters of the House, and the futility of the proceedings was displayed. General Seely, in opening the debate, prefaced his criticism by the statement that no blame attached to the troops themselves, who acted strictly

in accordance with their orders. He raised the issue that the Government had failed to issue orders in accordance with the general principles laid down by the Chief Secretary, namely, that there should be no destructions except on purely military grounds, for instance, that the premises had been used as cover for an ambush, or that the occupants were known to have participated in operations against the Crown Forces. He alleged that people's homes were destroyed as reprisal pure and simple, in the absence of incriminating reasons. He cited an instance of the destruction, under orders of the Competent Military Authority, of a house in which were residing two women of known loyalist sympathies. The question was, who ordered the reprisals? There were two authorities in Ireland, and there was a divergence of policy between them. One man commanded the troops, and another commanded the police, and there was no proper co-ordination between them. To end the trouble the authority must be put in the hands of one man.

In the latter part of his speech General Seely approached the source of the trouble very nearly, but failed to put his finger on the exact spot. The difficulty was, not that one man commanded the troops and another the police, but that there were two authorities in Ireland, the civil and the military, and that their opinions frequently clashed. Indeed, the cleavage began even higher. In the Cabinet itself there was no unanimity as to the measures to be taken to meet the conditions in Ireland, and as a result the policy of the Cabinet itself fluctuated, leaning alternately to coercion and conciliation. This vacillation was naturally

reflected in the ranks of those in whose hands lay the administration of the country. Dublin Castle, the seat of the civil power, was staffed almost entirely by men who had never seen active service, and whose ideas of the conditions under which the Crown Forces served was academic in the extreme. The police forces were under the command of men with distinguished military records, controlling a comparatively small force split up into small detachments scattered all over the country. The Army in Ireland was naturally part of the military forces of the Crown, and received the instructions of the Cabinet through the Secretary of State for War. Further, in Ireland generally the civil power was naturally supreme, as in the case of all countries nominally at peace. But the South-West had been proclaimed under martial law. If martial law means anything, it means the supersession of the civil power by the military, and the release of the Commander in the field from all restraint. The remedy of the civil government, should the Commander act in contradiction to the general policy laid down for his guidance, is to replace him or to terminate the state of martial law and resume the reins of government. But in Ireland martial law became little more than a name. The Commander was perpetually hampered in his actions by the agents of the civil power; the Courts were permitted to question and suspend the sentences imposed by Courts Martial convened by him. Division of authority caused friction and mutual suspicion between the administrators on the civil and military sides respectively. The police were normally controlled by the Chief Secretary's department, but

in the martial law area they acted under the orders of the Competent Military Authority. With such division of control, there was naturally deviation of policy. And the position was further complicated by the fact that the Chief Secretary was answerable to Parliament for events which took place throughout Ireland, although a large part of the country was under martial law, and therefore technically beyond his jurisdiction. His position was unenviable, and a weaker man might well have been overwhelmed by the unequal burden.

But to return to the debate, which abounded in competent criticism of this strange policy. Colonel Guinness maintained that it was contrary to British justice that anyone should be punished unheard. He quoted evidence to show that the policy of official reprisal was costing more to the friends of England than to her enemies. The military authorities burned down a house whose value was some hundreds of pounds, whereupon the rebels retaliated by destroying the property of some unfortunate loyalist to the value of tens of thousands. This policy was driving the few friends of England left in Ireland into the arms of Sinn Fein. Further, it was not fair to put this work upon the troops. There was nothing more repugnant to their nature than the destruction of houses in cold blood.

Lord Winterton held that if there must be military action in Ireland it should be short, sharp, and decisive. A continuance of guerilla warfare was intolerable, and was producing no good effect. The leader of the Labour Party appealed to the Chief Secretary to reverse his disastrous policy.

The Chief Secretary, in his reply, endeavoured

to deal with this criticism. He declared that in the martial law area there was absolute unity of command. This was only possible under martial law, and it might be necessary to extend that system of Government. He still hoped that the Southern Parliament would meet and assume responsibility for good government. If it did not, the Government would have a new situation to deal with. Official reprisals were treated as most serious and abnormal acts. In that part of the country where martial law had not been proclaimed there had never been official reprisals. He admitted that it was an open question whether reprisals were satisfactory in the long run. He was prepared to discuss the question with the Commander-in-Chief, and to bring before him the points raised in the debate.

Meanwhile the Republican campaign against the Forces of the Crown was becoming ever more intense. During the first days of the month, the casualties of the R.I.C. reached the appalling figure of fourteen killed, including two District Inspectors, and twelve wounded, all incurred in three ambushes within two days. On the last day of May a mine was exploded beneath a road by which the Hampshire Regiment were marching to musketry practice at Youghal, in County Cork. Six soldiers were killed and twenty-one wounded. Throughout Ireland the number of outrages increased. Nor were the activities of the rebels confined to their own country. On the night of the 7th, roving gangs of Sinn Fein sympathisers conceived the idea of venting their spite on England by the wholesale cutting of telegraph and telephone

wires, both in the metropolitan district and round Liverpool. The culminating point of the outrage campaign was the mining and derailment of a train in which a portion of the troops which had formed the King's escort during the opening of the Northern Parliament were returning to their stations in the South. The outrage took place on the 24th, at a spot where the railway passes through hilly and uninhabited country on the border between North and South. Four troopers of the 10th Royal Hussars were killed and twenty wounded, and in addition eighty horses were killed or had to be destroyed. It was evident that, from a military point of view at least, the Government's policy in Ireland had failed, and that it was no longer capable of protecting its servants from the increasing danger of assassination.

Even the Ministers who had initiated the policy were now prepared to admit its failure. In the House of Lords the Lord Chancellor replied on the 21st to a debate on Lord Donoughmore's motion "That this House is of the opinion that the situation in Ireland urgently requires that his Majesty's Government should determine forthwith what amendments they are prepared to propose, and authorise negotiations to be opened on such terms as they think calculated to terminate the present deadlock." His speech was a careful exposition of the attitude of the Government at that time, and the gist of it is as follows :—

"I cannot see that in any way the breakdown of our proposals in relation to the South would aggravate very seriously the situation. . . . If this Bill had never become an Act we should have seen the same system of government continued in force. It is a system to which

no Englishman can look with satisfaction. . . . How can it be worse if for the moment our proposals are not accepted in the South? Not only did we anticipate that this failure would take place, but I was at pains during the second reading of the Bill to make it plain that the Government seriously entertained the apprehension of what has taken place.

“ The noble Marquis asks how we shall deal with that situation. The Viceroy in the South of Ireland will be in the position of a constitutional monarch. He will be assisted by ministers who are described in the Act itself. They will be servants of the Crown, and it would be more correct if they were described as members of a council advising the Viceroy and holding office at the pleasure of the Crown. The machinery by which they will carry on the government of the country will not differ very considerably from the machinery by which it has been attempted to carry out the government of the country under the circumstances which exist to-day. . . .

“ It cannot be said, and ought not to be said, that the Act has failed because it has not in itself ameliorated the conditions of Irish life. The mischiefs which it found in Ireland were mischiefs little likely to be corrected by Act of Parliament. . . .

“ In Ireland—in the words of an illustrious predecessor of mine—there is no longer ‘ a kind of war ’; it is a small war that is going on there. Week by week and month by month its true character has developed, and if I must speak frankly I think that the history of the last three months has been the history of the failure of our military methods to keep pace with and to overcome the military methods which have been taken by our opponents. This leads quite clearly to the conclusion that whatever efforts may be required to deal with the situation in Ireland will be forthcoming, whatever degree of sacrifice it involves to the inhabitants of this country. . . . If I am right in saying that this is a war in which those who direct it will be content with nothing less than that which they have repeatedly avowed they require, namely, open independence and a Republic for Ireland, if that be true then it is at least equally certain that these are claims which it has never been possible for this country to concede, and which it never will be possible for this country to concede, and which, however long the struggle lasts, this country never will concede.”

The Parliament of Southern Ireland had been summoned to meet on June 28th, and despite the change which had come over the face of affairs on the eve of this meeting, a change to be described in a subsequent chapter, it was not considered advisable to alter one of the 'appointed days' under the Act. The Council Room of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction was chosen for the purpose, and the whole ceremony occupied but a few minutes. The only persons who obeyed the summons were, in the Upper House, the senators nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, and in the Lower House, the four members for Dublin University. The Lord Chief Justice addressed those present as follows :—

" Senators and members of the House of Commons of Southern Ireland,—I have it in command from his Majesty to let you know that as soon as senators and a sufficient number of members of the House of Commons have been sworn, the causes of his Majesty calling this Parliament of Southern Ireland will be declared to you.

" Members of the House of Commons,—You will be sensible that the co-operation of a larger number of members of your House than are present here to-day is to be desired for the election of a person to whom the office of Speaker should be entrusted. You will, however, choose one of your number to act as your chairman for the time being, and it will fall to the person so chosen to direct the times and manner in which the oath may be taken in your House. I am charged to remind you that by law the continuance of this Parliament is not assured unless the oath is taken by one-half at least of the total number of members of your House within fourteen days from to-day.

" Members of the Senate,—Your presence here to-day testifies to the willingness of considerable and influential sections of the population of Southern Ireland to accept the powers and responsibilities of self-government. You will doubtless wish to ratify this acceptance and confirm your position as senators without delay, and the necessary arrangements will be made for the purpose."

The Lord Chief Justice then retired from the House, followed by the four members of the House of Commons. The senators were then sworn, and Parliament adjourned until July 13th. The event excited no interest whatever in the city or in the South of Ireland.

We must now turn to an event which, while of no particular significance in itself, was important from the point of view of the results which followed it. One of the first acts of the authorities as soon as the extent of the Sinn Fein campaign became manifest, was the establishment of an Intelligence Service. A large part of the duties of this service was to secure information which would lead to the capture of the rebel leaders, or at all events to the discovery of their plans. Considering the extreme difficulty of operating in such a country as Ireland, where every man's hand is against the police under any circumstances, and where no man dare be even suspected of giving information, this service performed brilliant work. Although it never succeeded in laying its hands upon any spectacular individual, the amount of useful information secured by it was extraordinary, and it is not too much to say that by the middle of the year there was very little of the organisation or objectives of the rebels which was unknown to the authorities. Indeed, had the authorities acted more frequently upon the information supplied to them by the Intelligence Service, many of the tragedies of the war period might have been avoided. Be this as it may, the Intelligence Service had been ordered not to employ their information to secure the arrest of certain individuals, amongst whom was Mr. de Valera. It

was considered better that he should remain at large, in order that the authorities might have the head of the Sinn Fein organisation with whom to treat should occasion arise. This order was loyally obeyed, despite the difficulty of trying not to see him. But it proved impossible to secure so distinguished a person from accidents. On the evening of the 22nd, a party of the Worcestershire Regiment engaged in searching houses at Blackrock, near Dublin, stumbled upon a suspicious individual who, upon further investigation, proved to possess some incriminating documents. He was therefore arrested, and the party took him to the military barracks. Here he was for the first time recognised as the "President," and detained until further orders. He was released next day, upon the orders of the civil authorities, but the papers found in his possession were retained.

From them may be gleaned a very good idea of the state of affairs as seen through Sinn Fein eyes during the first six months of the year. The position in which Mr. de Valera found himself upon his return from America has already been suggested, and the documents to be quoted below must be read in that light.

Dealing first with the I.R.A. Throughout the whole warlike period the status of the I.R.A. had been a disputed point. Its operations were not carried out in uniform, and there was no means of distinguishing its members from the remainder of the civilian population. Further, the Dail had always been very chary of accepting responsibility for the campaign of outrage. But it was evident that this attitude could not be continued with the

intensification of the I.R.A. campaign, even if this did not result in open war with the British troops. Mr. Erskine Childers examined the matter, and produced as a result a thesis of some twenty pages on the advisability or otherwise of assuming the belligerent status, in the course of which he came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained by avoiding the responsibility of the Dail for the actions of the I.R.A. This suggestion appears to have been favourably received, for on June 22nd Mr. de Valera wrote as follows to the Minister of Defence, Mr. Cathal Brugha, or Burgess :—

“ To counter the faction move in America, which, as you notice, is being brought to affect even Labour, and to make the position of the Army clear for the Bishops and others, I think that something like the enclosed draft should be signed by you and the two General Officers and published in conjunction with the Cabinet statement.”

The draft enclosed runs as follows :—

“ As an attempt is being made by British Propagandists and others to misrepresent the Position of the Army of the Republic, we, the undersigned Officers-in-Chief, declare that the Army of the Republic has but one allegiance, namely, to the elected Government of the Republic whose regular military arm it is, by whose authority we and all subordinate officers hold our Commissions, and whose orders we have sworn to obey.

(Signed) T.D. Minister of Defence.
 T.D. Chief of General Staff H.Q.
 T.D. Adjutant General.”

The initials ‘ T.D.’ stand for the Erse form of “ Members of the Dail.” The ‘ faction move ’ referred to by Mr. de Valera in his covering letter was the quarrel instituted by himself between the various organisations of Irish-Americans, in which John Devoy, the old Fenian, was his chief opponent. Mr. de Valera’s draft for the “ Cabinet statement ”

in conjunction with which the military statement was to be published is as follows:—

“ In order to contradict in the most explicit manner possible the British suggestion that there is, or has been, a split, division or difference of opinion as regards method or policy between the President of the Republic and any members of the Cabinet, we, the entire MEMBERSHIP OF THE MINISTRY OF DAIL EIREANN, individually declare that the Republican policy as set forth by the President is our policy, and that we have not, nor have we had at any time, either individually or collectively, any difference with the President, who speaks authoritatively for all of us in these matters.

“ In witness whereof we append our signatures, and trust that this will be accepted as final by everybody, and that no one who professes to be our friend, whether in the United States or elsewhere, will continue to give comfort to the enemy by propagating false suggestions of rivalry and division.

(Signed) MEMBERS OF THE CABINET.”

There is a certain pleasing finality about this document, which is somehow lacking in the contemporary pronouncements of the British Cabinet when faced with similar accusations of disagreement.

The complicity of the “ President ” in the outrage campaign is proved beyond question by the fact that reports of operations by the I.R.A. were regularly forwarded to Mr. de Valera by the Minister of Defence. One of these concerns the ambush of a troop train at Drumcondra, on the outskirts of Dublin, on June 16th, in the course of which three soldiers were wounded, one seriously.

The report is minuted “ to President from M/D ” (M/D is Minister of Defence) and was obviously made out by the I.R.A. officer in charge of the ambushing party for the information of his superiors. It is as follows:—

“ In accordance with orders received the troop train was attacked this morning at 8-30 a.m. at a point half way between Drumcondra Road and Botanic Road. The Ambushing Party consisted of the O/C and 11 men, 2 Thompson Gunners, 8 bombers, one motor car driver.

“ The bombers were extended from 150 yards on the north side of the railway; from St. Joseph’s Avenue to Upper St. Columba’s Road.

“ The attack was opened by bombers, two of them put two large grenades into two separate carriages. I cannot say how successful the remainder of the bombers were as I could not see them all from my position. The bombers had a very good position and should have done good work as the train was moving at a slow rate, approx. 12 miles an hour, and they bombed at 15 yards’ range.

“ Of the two machine guns that were engaged, one failed to come into action. The reason being that the original gunner turned up late, and the substitute man never handled a gun before and he perhaps made some mistake. The second Thompson gun checked when four bursts had been fired. The 50 or 60 rounds that were fired appeared to take good effect. I know for a fact that the enemy had casualties in four carriages. We suffered no casualties and all our men and guns returned safely.

(Signed) O/C Guard.

“ NOTE.—I went to Kingsbridge after the attack, three enemy ambulances arrived after 9 a.m. There was a lot of enemy activity so I retired.

(Signed) O/C Guard.

12-30 (mid-day)
16th June, 1921.”

We may now turn from the President’s connection with the I.R.A. to the part played by him in the elections to the Parliament of Northern Ireland. On June 14th Mr. Austin Stack wrote to the President :—

“ Memo 45 to hand.

North Fermanagh,
Mid Armagh.

We cannot win either
of these seats.”

To which Mr. de Valera adds the note :—

“ N.F. and Mid. A. The only justification of contest short of victory would be the consideration of *all* the

Nationalist vote as definitely Republican. If victory altogether out of the question I do not think a contest advisable."

Previous to this, during the end of April and the beginning of May, Mr. de Valera had been in communication with Mr. Devlin on the subject of the alliance between the Nationalists and Sinn Fein. Mr. de Valera complains that the Nationalists are making no effort to secure the second preference votes (under the proportional representation system) for the Sinn Fein candidates at the forthcoming Northern elections. Mr. Devlin replies to this complaint with an assurance that the greatest possible efforts have been made to bring home to the people the necessity of giving their second preference votes to the Sinn Fein candidates. There was also an amusing correspondence between Messrs. de Valera, Devlin, Dillon, and Cosgrave, concerning the disposition of the balance of the Anti-Conscription Fund (a fund raised by collection during the war to fight any attempt of the British Government to introduce conscription into Ireland). It is suggested that it might well be used in the Northern Elections, and that for this purpose it should be divided equally between the Nationalist and the Sinn Fein parties. Unfortunately it was impossible to discover the amount of this balance, until the correspondents resigned themselves to the fact that the only man who knew anything about it was the Lord Mayor of Dublin, who was absent in America.

Shortly before the date of the elections the President wrote to his Director of Publicity as follows :—

" I have been told that you intended on the eve of the

election to publish a report of a supposed meeting between L.G., Craig, and myself so as to mislead the electors on polling day. I wonder would the Independent and Fr. (?Freeman) publish something like this.

“ There is a strange rumour afloat that an effort is to be made by the British Government and its supporters to mislead the electors on polling day by representing to them that a meeting between President de V., L.G. and Sir J. Craig has just taken place.”

Two days later the President made the next move in this tortuous and complicated policy. He wrote suggesting that if the paragraph had not already been published the Publicity Department might amend it by transforming it into an official contradiction, which might run : “ The suggestion emanating from Belfast that President de Valera and Premier Lloyd George are in direct negotiation is without any foundation whatever. For some time we have known that a rumour was afloat to the effect that an effort was to be made by the British Government and its supporters to mislead the constituents on polling day by representing to them, when it would be too late for contradiction, that a meeting had actually taken place between President de Valera, Premier Lloyd George and Sir James Craig.”

We may agree that the method suggested by the President of misleading the electors was at least more subtle than the original suggestion of his Director of Publicity. The election over, the latter gentleman was once more brought into action. He received a note from the President instructing him to issue a statement on the Northern elections, with an analysis of the voting, which should prove how the objects of proportional representation had been defeated by the tactics of the Unionists. He should

also draw attention to the intimidation practised by the latter party, and he must declare that the agreement between the Nationalists and Sinn Fein was entirely one-sided, that it entailed no compromise whatever of their principles on the part of Sinn Fein, while the consent of the Nationalists to ignore the Act was a distinct advance by them in the direction of Republicanism. Meanwhile it was suggested that a certain expert in proportional representation should be approached in order that he might analyse the results of the election with a view to showing how Sinn Fein might have improved its position. As the President justly says, this might be useful for the future. Finally we learn that the estimated cost of propaganda, in the shape of posters and pamphlets, incurred by the Sinn Fein party in the Northern elections was only just under six thousand pounds.

A matter upon which Mr. de Valera placed great importance was the publicity obtained for the Sinn Fein cause by the interviews which he gave from time to time to representatives of the press. Sometimes the words he employed became distorted, and then trouble arose, especially when the distortion took place in the Dublin papers. He writes to that hard worked official the Director of Publicity :—

“ I think we should inform the Independent and Fr. that interviews which I give are *always* obtainable in the exact form in which I give them and that therefore when they propose to reproduce any of these interviews they should secure the copies from us in order that I may be quoted exactly. It ought to be made clear to them that the aim of the British is to put us in the wrong position before the world's opinion; that the questions which I have to answer are purposely defined to put us in that wrong position if possible. And that it is so plain that if they

quote any at all to quote me accurately. I would like to have a personal interview sometime with the editors of those newspapers."

Later he writes, in answer to a note received from his faithful henchman :—

" I cannot promise to give notice of matter that I wish put in the evening press. While the Publicity Department is one of the most important of all there are urgent matters from several of the other departments to be dealt with daily by me. . . . I should be glad if you arrange for that interview with the editors of Freeman and Independent early next week. The general tone of these papers is not at all what it should be."

But interesting as are the relations between the President and his Director of Publicity, there are, to quote the President himself, urgent matters from several of the other departments. One of these matters was common to them all, and that was the danger of being raided by the Crown Forces. The disaster which overtook the Publicity Department* caused the issue of a circular letter to all departments, headed "*Instructions in view of raids on Offices.*"

" 1. No documents which lead directly to the capture of other offices or individuals to be filed. Lists of important persons in our organisation, and their addresses, obviously come under this head.

" Officials should be addressed by their title in their departments rather than by personal name.

" Documents coming from Army Departments to Civil Departments in particular must not be filed in the latter's offices. When communications from an Army Department reaches a Civil Office it should receive priority as regards attention, and be destroyed immediately when dealt with.

" 2. Files should be reduced to a minimum, only such documents as are absolutely necessary for reference should be kept. Even in the case of these, a summary in

* See note A in Appendix.

rough code would do as well as the original documents and would of course be much safer.

“ 3. Documents which it would be difficult to replace should be duplicated and the originals put away in special places of safety. In the case of documents vital for proof and evidence, it may be necessary to have photographic duplicates made.

“ 4. In the event of an office being raided and material captured which would affect any other office, the head of the raided office is responsible for communicating at once full details of the capture so as to enable the offices affected to take counter measures.

“ In addition to the above precautions the head of each department is responsible for devising such schemes as would prevent the enemy from obtaining important information from the accidental capture of his offices.

“ Carelessness in this matter must be regarded as a very definite neglect of duty.”

The same danger of being raided made the meetings of the Dail somewhat difficult things to arrange. Mr. Collins wrote to the President on June 2nd :—

“ I mentioned in a note to you the other day that I had written you a memo about Dail meetings. This was captured by the enemy, but of course this does not affect the scheme. Supposing there are 100 members available for meetings we could, I think, accommodate numbers up to 51, this is one more than half, or a majority of the entire assembly. Then at that meeting a sufficient number of people would be asked to volunteer to stay away from the next meeting. If a sufficient number of volunteers were not forthcoming, then draw lots.”

Mr. O'Higgins, of the Department of Local Government, had another suggestion, which was that one-third of the members should be summoned in rotation. If any contentious matter arose, the Secretary could send out a précis of the discussion to all members and ask for their views.

Complaints between various departments seem to have been not infrequent. Mr. Collins, as

Minister of Finance, complains to the President of the way the Minister of Labour conducts his business :—

“ It seems that the department works in continuous fear of a raid. Nobody ever seems to be there, and generally speaking, the Accountant General finds it impossible to get his work done in ordinary time. Yesterday he wrote me the following note :—

“ ‘ I was at the Dept. of Labour to-day. Dick was not there—he was due in a quarter of an hour—I waited half an hour and he did not turn up. On the past three occasions I was there Dick was there once. The Minister is never there. I think it would be well if you wrote him and asked him to define the duties of the different members of the staff. If the Minister cannot attend at the office his chief clerk ought to be there and he should not leave cheques to be signed by Dick.’ I am not at all satisfied with the way this department is being worked.”

The Minister of Labour appeared to find more congenial occupation in devising new methods of propaganda. On the 20th he wrote a long memorandum to the already sorely-tasked Director of Publicity containing a long list of suggestions. Pillar stones should be erected in suitable positions in New York, Paris, and Rome, upon which should be inscribed from day to day the names of convicted rebels executed by the British. A great deal of propaganda could be done from Moscow in collaboration with the Turks, Egyptians, Indians, Persians and Russians. An anti-Ulster linen boycott should be started in America. It is pointed out that Belfast travellers go through the States for their yearly orders in July, and that 70% of the Ulster linen trade is done with that country. A film censorship, ostensibly under the auspices of the Dublin Corporation, but actually controlled by the Publicity Department, should be started to prevent

the showing of films of "English tendencies" in Ireland. Any evasion of this censorship to be met by the destruction of operating machines. "One blow of a hammer will do this and damage to the extent of at least £100." At the same time cinema propaganda should be started in America, supported by the production of plays showing up English methods. Finally, "an effort should be made to definitely harness country newspapers to our side." The tendency to destruction is visible even in the split infinitive. On receipt of this memorandum the Director of Publicity must have felt what all who have been engaged in publicity have so often felt, namely, that everybody else seemed to know his job better than he did himself.

The Department of Agriculture, which proclaims the policy of the Dail on the land question as being directed towards "removing the incubus of landlordism" and "putting the non-possessing class or the landless men in effective possession of the large untenanted ranches," was, pending the execution of this policy, sorely disturbed over the question of giving tribute to Cæsar. On the 14th, the President writes a note to the Minister, enclosing a letter he has received from Miss Barton, who suggests that efforts should be made to get farmers to refuse to pay Income Tax, and who anticipates the possibility of trouble in the near future owing to the fall in prices of agricultural produce. The Minister's reply is interesting.

"Re Income Tax. This is a matter which in its general application is within the province of the Minister of Finance. I quite agree with Miss Barton that if a general movement could be set going amongst the farmers not to pay Income Tax, that we would hit the British in a

tender spot, and possibly might be able to attract people towards us who otherwise would not be sympathetic. It, however, would need a great deal of organisation, as something should be done to allay the fears of the farmers who think they could be sold out of house and home in order to recover the tax. And, secondly, arrangements should be made by us to collect a portion of it at least.

“As regards point one I do not think there would be any danger of excessive seizures of stock, etc., under judgments for non-payment, so that a guarantee of indemnity against seizure or second payment would be an attractive proposition.

“As regards the second point I find it hard to venture an opinion. I believe if the Minister of Finance had the Warrant Books on which the existing collections are made that the organisation of the collection would be an easier matter than the 1919 loan.

“There is one point on which on calm consideration I disagree with Miss B., although I have done it myself, that is when she says the Demand Note should be just put in a drawer. I think every farmer should pretend that he intended to pay, and fill up and return his income, etc., so as to have his assessment brought down to as low a figure as possible by abatement, and then when he gets the final Demand Note to pay, after putting them to all the trouble possible, he could proceed to light his pipe with the application and pay on the assessment to our Government. This procedure would not merely save the individual if by any chance his goods were seized later, but it would lessen the set-off in the balance sheet against any Government which will ultimately be allowed to function freely here. I will look more fully into the matter and bring it up at the next Ministry Meeting.

“Farmers and Labour. I am afraid we are in for a good deal of friction in the farming world soon. However, I think we can head it off if we bring into being as soon as possible the Economic Council which we proposed to set up last year and which was dropped for some unaccountable reason. I am keeping closely in touch with the Farmers' Union so as to be ready for all dangers, and I will get in touch with the Ministry of Labour too.”

One wonders whether the Minister realised the difficulties surrounding the fulfilment of the undertaking contained in his last sentence.

Another of the difficulties under which the Government of the Dail laboured was that of communications. Perpetual complaints were made by the departments that their instructions took far too long to reach their destinations. A scheme of communications was therefore drawn up to meet the case. Three girl couriers were to be appointed, and seven circular routes made out, six centred upon Dublin and the seventh upon Cork. The couriers between them would make each circular journey twice a week, and would be met at various stations on their route by "distributors" who would convey their despatches to their destinations. To avoid suspicion, the couriers would be constantly changed. The cost of such a service is estimated at £156 per week, and the scheme which is dated June 13th concludes with the words "in view of the tightening up which will follow the general application of Martial Law some such scheme is urgent."

During this period the relations of Sinn Fein with the Catholic Bishops is interesting. The President's correspondence gives some side-lights upon this subject which are worth reproducing. From the beginning of the year, ever since his arrival in Ireland, in fact, he had been doing his utmost to induce the Church to recognise the Republic. On February 2nd he wrote to the Archbishop of New York, who was then in Rome, begging him to use his influence to prevent the Pope from making a pronouncement which would be detrimental to the Republican cause.

A little later the Ministers of the Government drafted an appeal to "the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh, the Archbishop of Dublin, and all the

Most Reverend and Venerable Prelates of Ireland," setting forth the claims of the Republic and asking them not to denounce crimes until they had heard an explanation from the Republican Government. The Minister of Home Affairs, under whose control such matters came, was always nervous lest the bishops should make some declaration which would tend to alienate their flocks from the Republic. On May 20th he sends the President an article advising a meeting between the Bishops and the Dail Cabinet in order to bring about a clearer understanding between the heads of Church and State, explaining that the article has been written by "a learned Jesuit who is very fearful of the Bishops saying something next month which may be hurtful to us." Four days later he calls attention to a newspaper cutting in which is a report of the denunciation of the murder of policemen by Dr. Hoare. Next day arrives a typed letter for the President's signature, addressed to Cardinal Logue and the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, asking for a campaign of prayer—a National Novena. The explanation accompanies it. "A Father Cahill asked me to forward this document to you. Although he was not clear on the subject he suggested the Ministry should sign it. I am certain that if such a document went to the Bishops it would be taken as an indication of weakness on our part, and I am sure you will agree with this view."

The President became more optimistic later. On June 19th he writes to the Publicity Department:—

"I am working hard to get the Bishops to give straight out recognition to the Republic in their pronouncement on Tuesday. If any statement of theirs can at all

be construed as recognition, you should be ready on Tuesday to see that the newspaper headlines are:—

THE IRISH BISHOPS RECOGNISE THE REPUBLIC.

“ Do not move in this matter until the last moment. A step too soon might spoil everything.”

Typical of the President's efforts to induce the Bishops to recognise the Republic is his letter of the same date to the Most Reverend Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, urging that the Bishops should make a “ straight out recognition ” of the facts concerning Ireland's cause in order to startle the world into a consciousness of the real issue, to hearten the people to continue the struggle, and to nullify the propaganda “ which is almost as much Britain's right arm against us as her military forces.” He goes on to say that such a pronouncement, if the present struggle goes on, will prevent it from degenerating to a squalid civil riot, and maintain it at its proper level in the eyes of the world in its true character as a “ national war of liberation.”

A few words must be said as to the relations between Mr. de Valera and the men who represented Sinn Fein in America. On his return to Ireland, the President had charged Harry Boland, who had acted as his secretary during his visit to the States, to remain and represent him more or less unofficially. The representative appointed by Dail Eireann was Dr. McCartan, and there seems to have been a certain amount of ambiguity, for Boland writes to the President on January 13th:—

“ I have not officially announced that I am here as representative, and think it advisable not to do so. . . . I have lodged three protests with the State Department and Embassies in the name of Pat McCartan, and will continue to do so.”

The chief concern of Sinn Fein in keeping in touch with America was the provision of funds. On March 1st the President asks Mr. James O'Mara, of the American Commission on Irish Independence for his "views about the possibility of raising a further loan." On March 30th, Boland writes his views on the subject: "I am confident that if the Dail authorises another loan, we can put it across here big." On April 8th the President writes to O'Mara:—

"You are to be the keystone of the new Arch if you accept the post of Representative of the Republic in the U.S.A. which I hereby offer formally to you."

On the same day he writes to Boland:—

"We have to cut down considerably our American establishment and expenditure. . . . We cannot afford even as a maximum an outlay of more than 100,000 dollars for the maintenance of diplomatic and political side of U.S. service during the coming year."

But O'Mara was not to be caught with the chaff of office. On April 25th he writes angrily to the President, finding fault with a cable sent by the latter to the Convention of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, asking for a guarantee of 1,000,000 dollars yearly.

"Your appeal now makes impossible any attempt later this year to raise the 20,000,000 loan which was contemplated. . . . I would advise you to promptly send to this country someone who has your confidence, if such a person exists; and having done so, don't constantly interfere with his work."

On the 30th he follows this up with another letter in which he says:—

"Your despatches indicate your final decision to force through your policy which last December received the almost unanimous condemnation of the Irish Mission

here. . . . I tender my resignation as the most emphatic protest that I can make against what must be the utter disruption and destruction of organised American aid."

We have no space in which to follow the progress of the quarrel between O'Mara and the President, entertaining as the details are. But amongst the President's papers was found a copy of a cable :—

"Dad once expressed a wish to be fired by cable this is it Kahn."

It must be explained that Dad and Kahn were the code names of O'Mara and de Valera respectively.

The President's private views upon the subject of spending money in America are revealed in a private letter to Boland, in which he says, with startling candour :—

"If official recognition by the U.S. Government could be secured I would consider any money spent in informing the American people of the justice of our cause and converting them to our side money well spent, but I do not believe that, except in a crisis in which America's own interests are involved and when it might be convenient to hit England through us, is there any chance of securing recognition."

This is confirmed by a sentence in a letter written by the President to Miss Mary MacSwiney during her visit to America.

"I for one am yet to be convinced that any effort which we could put forward or any money we could spend upon it would actually secure Governmental recognition for us."

CHAPTER V.

Throughout the first half of the year both the British authorities and the leaders of Sinn Fein were skirmishing on the extreme edge of negotiation, if such a phrase may be employed. Despite their assertions to the contrary, both parties were pessimistic as to the results to be obtained by a continuance of hostilities. It was perfectly obvious that in the end the British must succeed in crushing the rebels, that without outside intervention Ireland had no chance of withstanding much longer the forces which could be arrayed against her. Sinn Fein was faced by a constant depletion of the I.R.A. as a result of casualties sustained and of internment. The intensification of the outrage campaign in May and June was in reality a last desperate effort. Every day the problem of organisation and supply was becoming more difficult, and with the threatened extension of Martial Law to the whole country the end of armed resistance was in sight. Protracted guerilla warfare might ensue, but the ultimate defeat of the I.R.A. in that warfare was a foregone conclusion. Even the rank and file had begun to suspect this fact; the leaders had recognised it by the beginning of the year.

On the other hand, the British Government was equally averse to the continuance of strife. A settlement reached by force of arms would be temporary only, and would leave behind it a legacy of bitterness which would flame up into rebellion once more upon the first favourable opportunity. Apart from this, the expense of a war in Ireland would be far greater than the country should rightly be called upon to bear. Moreover, the suppression of rebellion is synonymous with coercion, and coercion is an ugly word at a time when the phrase of the moment is the right of small nations to self-determination. The enemies of England had already done their best to use the Irish situation as a means of blackening the face of the nation; it was more than probable that the sympathy of America and Europe would be given to the cause of Sinn Fein should open war be declared. Finally, the past had already given some indication of the terrible bloodshed that such a course would entail.

The attitude of the British Government was simple and frequently expressed. The Prime Minister was prepared to meet any one who could speak on behalf of the majority of the Irish nation, in fact with the leaders of Sinn Fein. But at the same time whoever accepted this invitation must realise that there could be no discussion on the lines of the establishment of an Irish Republic. The Government of Ireland Act had failed to find a solution, so much was tacitly admitted. It remained to find an alternative which would be acceptable to the majority in Ireland and at the same time would be compatible with the duties of the Government towards the Crown, the Empire, and Ulster.

The attitude of Sinn Fein was not so clear. The leaders of that party had not yet abandoned the hope that somehow the Republic might be retained. To the word Republic they were pledged; their supporters throughout the world looked to them to establish the Republic in fact as well as in theory. The actual form of this Republic they might be prepared to compromise upon. They dallied with Erskine Childers' "Neutral Irish Republic within the Empire," de Valera himself had brought much criticism about his head while still in America by discussing "Cuban Independence." Their efforts, therefore, were at first devoted to securing some intervention which should induce the British Government to abandon its declared attitude and to enter into negotiation upon some scheme of which the completion would exhibit Ireland to the world in some form which Sinn Fein could plausibly declare to be Republican.

These are the general principles which underlay the "peace moves" of the early months of the year. At first sight the gulf between the two parties seemed insurmountable. Before any advance could be made, some intermediary between the Government and Sinn Fein must be found who should make himself familiar with the limits of concession fixed by either side and who should then set to work to stretch those limits until they met at some one point upon which a meeting between representatives could be founded. The first essential to a settlement by agreement was such a meeting; the difficulty was to induce either side to agree to a meeting under conditions which the other would accept.

Many men, both of English and Irish descent,

earnestly desiring to end the struggle between the two countries, offered themselves in the role of intermediary, but all found themselves unable to reconcile the divergent aspirations of the two parties. But it must not be supposed that either the Government or the Republicans relied only upon the chance of independent men hitting upon some means of "building a bridge," to use the Prime Minister's simile. Both sides from time to time flew their own kites, into the higher or lower regions of the atmosphere as the tendency of the moment seemed to warrant. But all the time there was a subtler influence at work, and one which in the end achieved the desired result.

From the time of his first appointment, in the early days of Sir Hamar Greenwood's Chief Secretaryship, the Assistant Under Secretary, Mr. A. W. Cope, had believed in the possibility of peace by negotiation, and had set himself to achieve this end. Mr. Cope was a Civil Servant who had proved his ability in the Customs and Excise and as Second Secretary to the Ministry of Pensions. Whatever criticism may have been directed against him during his tenure of office at Dublin Castle, there can be no doubt that he threw himself with his whole heart and soul into the task of bringing peace to Ireland, and persisted in his efforts, even at the risk of jeopardising his career, at a time when things seemed hopeless and the opinion of his superiors was against him. Such mistakes as he made were the mistakes of a strong character, and were due to his concentration upon a single end, making it difficult for him to appreciate the points of view of other people. This tendency undoubtedly caused

friction between him and the other authorities existing in Ireland at the time, which might perhaps have been avoided by a man of greater tact. As a consequence, he was accused of favouring the cause of Sinn Fein to the detriment of the interests of the Crown Forces and of Ulster. But whatever opinion may be held as to the details of the Truce of July, a Truce which it may safely be said would never have been reached but for his efforts, there can be no denial of the fact that Mr. Cope's success in establishing relations with the leaders of Sinn Fein at a time when the Government which he represented was engaged in a policy of repression of that party was a diplomatic feat of a very high order.*

Mr. Cope's method was to get into personal relation, very often at considerable risk to himself, with such of the leading men of the Sinn Fein movement as might show any signs of listening to reason. Throughout the whole of the year, this link, frail as it might seem, and often on the point of breaking under the stress of passion aroused by events in England or Ireland, existed between the Government and its opponents. And it was the existence of this link, with the influence which could be exerted through such a means of communication, that decided the Cabinet, at the very time when the methods of combating Sinn Fein by a concentration of force were under discussion, to make one last effort in the direction of negotiation.

But before the final negotiations are discussed, it will be useful to give a short account of the attempts made from time to time to find some basis of discussion through the efforts of an intermediary.

* Note B in Appendix.

The transactions entered into by Father O'Flanagan and Archbishop Clune belong to the previous year, and the Prime Minister's explanation of their failure has been already stated. But this failure was no deterrent to others who believed that the problem was not incapable of solution. On January 3rd, two motions in favour of a truce were placed upon the agenda paper of the Dublin Corporation by Unionist members of that body. They were defeated by the Sinn Fein majority, who refused to allow discussion upon the point. Some days later, it was believed that the Dail showed a tendency towards willingness to institute negotiations towards a truce, but if this tendency ever existed, which is extremely doubtful at that time, it bore no fruit. The Government on its part once again made it clear that it was willing and anxious to treat with anybody who could, in the phrase of the moment, "deliver the goods," by which was meant anyone who could guarantee that any agreement reached by him would be observed by the Sinn Fein leaders. The only conditions laid down were that the Government's limits of concession, which stopped short of independence, must be accepted as a condition precedent to a conference. Further than that, the Government undertook to give safe conducts to any accredited negotiators who had not placed themselves beyond the pale by criminal action, and if necessary to give notice in advance of such names as were included in this prohibition.

In reply to this, Mr. de Valera issued an inspired statement through the medium of the *Freeman's Journal*, in which he maintained that any peace move must have for its basis the recognition by the

Government that Ireland was an independent nation, and that when the representatives of the English nation were prepared to meet the representatives of the Irish nation on an equal footing, peace talk would be possible. He denied that Sinn Fein was making any overtures for peace, but stated on behalf of the movement that he would not turn a deaf ear to proposals from the British Government if they had as their basis these conditions.

For the next three months little more was heard of peace. Various organisations and individuals made strenuous efforts to cause one party or the other to modify its standpoint, or to induce the Dail to allow a referendum of the people to be held upon the subject. At the end of March Cardinal Logue was approached by a deputation of Southern Unionists with a view to his using his influence to open negotiations between the Cabinet and the Dail. A fortnight later Mr. James Brady, a member of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, made an attempt to approach the problem from the point of view of the business men of Ireland, whose interest in securing peace was naturally greater than that of any other section of the community. He prepared a requisition to the President of the Chamber in the following terms :—

“ Sir,—We, the undersigned members of the Chamber, hereby request you to summon a special meeting of the Chamber to consider and do, or cause or direct all necessary acts to be done upon or in relation to the following resolution: That in the best interests of Ireland and the lives and fortunes of her people it is necessary for those who control the agricultural, industrial, and trading interests to assist and co-operate in endeavouring to terminate the existing industrial and political turmoil, and take an active part in reference to future methods of

Irish government and Irish legislation; that with this object the Council of this Chamber be requested forthwith to convene a conference consisting of delegates from the various Chambers of Commerce in Ireland, the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, and the elected representatives of all Irish political parties, with a view to formulating an agreed scheme of Irish self-government suitable to the dignity and aspirations of the nation."

Unfortunately nothing came of this scheme; the power of Sinn Fein was more than sufficient to crush it at its birth.

But towards the end of April was published the most sensational story of negotiation which had hitherto appeared. On the 21st of the month Lord Derby left England for Ireland, stayed one day there, and returned to London that night. On his return he paid a visit to the Prime Minister, who was then staying at Lympne. These events were sufficient to cause a strong impression that he had been sent on a special peace mission by the Government, and that negotiations were actually in progress. As a matter of fact, the proposed visit was unknown to the majority of the Cabinet, although it was probably communicated to some at least of the Sinn Fein leaders. A note was found later in Mr. de Valera's handwriting: "If Mr. ——— comes over I will see him. As he stays at the Gres. we can make arrangements." Considerations of date and place make it possible that this note refers to Lord Derby, and that "the Gres." means the Gresham Hotel in Sackville Street, where Lord Derby did actually stay. But the most straightforward account of his visit was given by Lord Derby himself, in a speech delivered at Liverpool on the 25th. He said that a mountain had

been made out of a molehill, and that he proposed to reduce the mountain to its proper proportion of a molehill. It was said that he went incognito as 'Mr. Edwards.' That was perfectly correct. If he had gone in his own name he would never have been free from the ubiquitous reporters, and he had wanted to go and see for himself in Ireland and learn everything he could with regard to the position in that country. But the ubiquitous reporter would have prevented him. It was also said that he was disguised, and was supposed to have worn spectacles to hide his identity. Unfortunately, advancing years had added to them the faculty of not being able to read without glasses. (At this stage Lord Derby put on the glasses which he had worn in Ireland, with the remark that "even Dr. Watson would probably have discovered one without any great strain on his imagination.") Continuing, he said that to say whom he saw, or repeat what was told him, would be an absolute breach of confidence. But he might say, with the permission of those he saw, that he had given the gist of the information he had gathered to the Prime Minister. Lord Derby then explained the origin of his visit.

"Let me do away with a mystery caused by my visit to Lympne on Saturday afternoon. I want you clearly to understand I had no mission from the Government. Some month or six weeks ago I told the Prime Minister I thought I would go to Ireland to try to see and learn for myself the conditions, and he approved of it and said: 'When you come back, will you tell me what you think?' There is the extent of my mission. I want to say one thing also in justice to those whom I saw. I want it to be emphasised that there was not one single interview I had that was not at my own request. I asked for the interviews. Nobody asked to see me. I want to make that clear, for fear that anyone should take it that overtures were being made to me

to come there and act as mediator. Nothing of the kind. It was purely a private visit. It was undertaken for one reason, and one reason only, that when one sees the lamentable state of affairs in Ireland one feels one is justified in speaking of it only if one has taken every possible step one can to really make himself conversant with the subject, and to know the views of both sides and all sides—with that intention alone I went to Ireland. . . . I tell you perfectly candidly it may not be the last of the visits I shall pay, but I equally tell you, none of those visits will be taken except on my own initiative. They will not be a mission from the Government or at the invitation of anyone on the other side who might wish me to act as mediator.”

Meanwhile the Irish Dominion League, a society formed under the distinguished presidentship of Sir Horace Plunkett, a man whose constructive work for Ireland has brought her greater benefit than she has ever gained from her political leaders, had drawn up a memorial for submission to the Prime Minister. This memorial contained a scheme of which the principal points were as follows: The Government should make a firm offer of Dominion status for Ireland. Ulstermen should then be asked, without abandoning the powers and privileges secured to them under the Government of Ireland Act, to join with their fellow-countrymen in an assembly with the aim of keeping Ireland contentedly in the Empire. On the other hand, those entitled to speak for the majority of the Irish people, in other words the Sinn Fein leaders, should be asked to abandon separation for the sake of securing Irish unity. The offer of the Government should be subject to only two conditions, that an agreement should be reached between Great Britain and Ireland in regard to Defence and Foreign relations, and that Ulster should not be compelled

to accept such form of government should she prefer the position given her by the Act.

The scheme provided that if the two parties agreed to meet, the Government should facilitate the meeting of the present elected representatives from the South, in other words the Dail, so that they could appoint delegates to meet the Government and arrange a cessation of hostilities. The elections which were to take place under the Act should then take place on the understanding that the members elected for North and South should immediately meet as a Constituent Assembly, without the necessity of taking their seats in either Parliament. It would be open to the Northern members at any time to declare by a majority that they preferred to abide by the Act, in which event the Southern members might adopt or reject Dominion status for the South.

The Constituent Assembly scheme, as it was called, attracted considerable attention at the time, and was favourably received by the majority of Englishmen. The opinion of the Sinn Fein leaders is best shown by the fact that it was considered in the Dail, which agreed to consent to it on the following conditions:—

“ 1. That the members of the proposed assembly be chosen by the Irish electorate in an open and free election, in which all political opinions might be advocated.

2. That there be no limitations or restrictions, such as inclusion within the British Empire, etc., to the settlement that might be proposed.

3. That all members before election and on entering the assembly pledge themselves and those they represent to accept and support unreservedly whatever decision is arrived at by a majority vote.

4. That the British Parliament should by Act

in advance, and in anticipation, make this decision automatically legal and binding on Britain."

It need hardly be pointed out that an Assembly meeting under these conditions would have established a Republic for the whole of Ireland at its first session.

During May the Prime Minister met a distinguished American citizen, Mr. Martin Glynn, ex-Governor of the State of New York, and in the course of conversation explained the position of the Government, so frequently reiterated, regarding the willingness of the Prime Minister to meet and discuss the Irish situation with anyone who could speak with authority. Mr. Glynn conveyed the essence of this conversation to Mr. de Valera, through the London correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who in the course of an interview with Mr. de Valera obtained the following reply :—

" If Mr. Lloyd George makes this statement in public I shall give him a public reply. The fundamental question at issue between the two countries is the question of Ireland's right to choose freely and independently her own government and political institutions at home and her relationships with foreign nations as well. This independent right may as well be acknowledged first as last, for there can never be a settlement as long as it is denied. Any particular proposition put forward by Britain affecting the welfare of the peoples of the two islands will then be a fit subject for consideration and discussion between the representatives of the respective peoples. We have never denied that we have certain interests in common, but we must be free and independent judges of what our own interests are, and not compelled simply by Britain's superior brute force to enter into engagements which we may deem to be detrimental to us."

Towards the end of May the Pope, in sending a donation to Cardinal Logue towards the relief of

distress in Ireland, included a letter in which he dealt with the state of the country. This letter concluded :—

“ We think it would be opportune if effect were given to the plan recently suggested by distinguished men as well as skilled politicians, that is to say, that the question at issue should be referred for discussion to some body of men selected by the whole Irish nation. And when this conference has published its findings let the more influential among both parties meet together, and having put forward and discussed the views and conclusions arrived at on both sides, let them determine by common consent on some means of settling the question in a sincere spirit of peace and reconciliation.”

We may now turn to a more detailed examination of the efforts to secure such intervention as would induce the Government to open negotiations on the basis of the establishment of an Irish Republic. That some intervention of the kind was becoming urgent is obvious from Mr. de Valera's attitude as early as February. At that time his supporters were taking the line that the Dail could not consider negotiation with the British Government on any other basis but the immediate proclamation of a Republic, owing to the fact that the Irish people had at the last elections given it a mandate to secure a Republic or die in the attempt. Mr. de Valera was sufficiently awake to political realities to see the danger of this argument. On February 28th he wrote to Harry Boland in America :—

“ There is no use in saying that Dail Eireann cannot negotiate on account of the mandate which is given it, that simply means that Lloyd George will be put in a position of being able to force an Irish party into existence to oppose us at the next elections on the platform of freedom to negotiate.”

This is a most instructive admission. It

shows that Mr. de Valera, at least, still feared the resurrection of the old Nationalist or "Parliamentary" Party which had apparently been overwhelmed for ever at the elections of 1918. It was well known to him even then, despite his public declarations that Ireland unanimously supported Sinn Fein, that there was a very large section of the country which was sick of bloodshed and was longing for the large measures of Home Rule conferred by the Government of Ireland Act. Once the menace of the I.R.A. was removed, an election fought upon the issue of resistance or negotiation would spell the downfall of Sinn Fein. As it happened, the issue at the elections of 1921 was never so put, and the vigilance of the I.R.A. was sufficient to avert the danger of opposition.

Some weeks later, Mr. de Valera complained of the methods used by certain would-be intermediaries. He writes :—

"As he was leaving for the country Father O'Flanagan sent me a note to the effect that a British official wished to find out from me whether if certain propositions were submitted in writing we would accept them. I am refusing to deal with the matter in this way. I want to see definitely in writing what they propose before I commit myself to any answer. The disadvantages to us of the mode they are trying to proceed on are obvious."

Early in the year, the leaders of Sinn Fein had decided that some small hope of securing the intervention upon which they had set their hearts lay in an appeal to the Dominion Premiers about to assemble for the Imperial Conference. Of these Premiers, General Smuts seemed the most likely to lend a favourable ear to their proposals, despite the reports they received from their agents in South

Africa. The general tone of these reports was that Sinn Fein had little to hope for from Smuts, who, although not unsympathetic, had already turned his back on Republicanism in his own country, and was therefore unlikely to advocate it for Ireland. Despite this extremely sane warning, the President determined to concentrate his efforts on winning Smuts over to his own peculiar views, and left no stone unturned to that end. But at the same time the question arose as to the best way of influencing the Premiers in a body. The first suggestion was that a letter should be despatched to each individual, setting forth the justice of Ireland's demands. This letter, which, although never despatched, is interesting, was drafted as follows:—

To the Premier of ———

As one profoundly convinced that much of man's inhumanity to man has its origin in misunderstanding and ignorance on the one hand and the pride that suspends the steps to dispel it on the other I address myself to you. I feel it easier to do so believing that though a war is being waged upon our nation by the British Government in the name of the whole British Empire it is being waged in defiance of rather than by the desire of the people whom you represent.

Nowhere has the repudiation of embarrassing external control been more strenuous and persistent than among the nations within the British Empire. To the point of rebellion and open war all such control has been contested and all attempts to exercise it have long ceased. The British Dominions have won the acknowledgment of their claims as equal sister states with Great Britain in an association founded on common interest and common sentiment, on confidence, not on compulsion. It would be indescribably selfish and altogether unworthy of any of them, at variance with their own traditions and the principles which they protested if they were to desire to deny to Ireland that right to freedom upon which alone the ordered and peaceful development of peoples can rest.

I do not therefore suppose such a desire, but the fact is that in your name an attitude is adopted and a cruel war is in progress in a flagrant infraction of that principle which is the foundation of your own progress, security and happiness. Here in Ireland the principle of resistance to tyranny is enshrined in the Republican Army which I have the honour to represent. Our Parliament and Government derive their validity from free popular choice expressed by overwhelming majorities in three national plebiscites within the space of two years, wherein in spite of penalties and supervision which grew constantly heavier the great mass of our people gave that authority their allegiance.

Our chosen institutions are valid by every function which you claim for yourself. What we are defending with our life's blood is the same freedom that your people would defend with theirs. Irrespective of their births and race your fellow countrymen would resist a British tyranny with as much spirit and tenacity as a foreign conquest. We expect that you apply to us the same sentiments you would choose in your own case, and that you remember that we are not a modern but an ancient nation with a distinct origin, history and culture, clearly defined by nature to bring up its own civilisation and shape its own destiny in freedom from the perpetual thwarting and coercing of alien rule.

For the continuance of this rule sustained solely by superior military force no justification is put forward save that the strategical safety of Great Britain demands it.

On second thoughts this draft was too much even for Mr. de Valera. Instead of circularising the Premiers, he decided to give an interview which should set out the same ideas and would probably achieve at least an equal publicity.

An alternative method of approach to the Premiers was afforded by a suggestion put forward by the Women's International League that they should send a deputation. Mr. de Valera took up the suggestion with avidity. His note on the subject is as follows:—

“ The Women's International League would like to

send three or four of their members on a deputation to the Colonial Premiers with regard to the present British regime in Ireland, but would need to have their expenses franked. I think the publicity they would secure would be worth it."

The matter having been approved, the President lost no time in issuing the necessary instructions. On June 13th he wrote to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Collins:—

"The Secretary of the Ministry has probably sent you a circular letter on the proposal of the Women's International League to interview the British Colonial Premiers. They cannot go unless we frank their expenses. I have a note from Mrs. Skeffington that it would probably be £20 each person. I think we should put £100 at their disposal. It could really be regarded as money on propaganda. As they wish to leave on Wednesday they will need the money at once. Mrs. Skeffington as Chairman could be put in charge and she can be reached through the Secretary of Sinn Fein, or better at the Irish Women's Franchise League, Westmorland Chambers."

Mr. Collins, in his reply to this note, gave a hint of that saner outlook on affairs in which he differed so markedly from the President. In acknowledging the receipt of these instructions, he says:—

"I sent an order immediately to have the £100 placed at Mrs. Skeffington's disposal. It will properly be charged, I think, as Foreign Affairs (Propaganda). It could scarcely be called Home Affairs Propaganda, but that is a mere detail. If I had time to send you a note about the thing I would not have favoured this expenditure, although I think we should take every opportunity of striking at the Premiers from the English Colonies. I am not sure, however, that we shall get value in this particular instance, nor indeed that the case will be presented effectively."

Mr. Collins was right. The Dominion Premiers formally refused to receive the deputation, although individual members of the Conference held conversations with Mrs. Skeffington and her satellites. The

deputation sent each Premier a report with a covering letter, to which General Smuts replied as follows :—

“ The Dominion Premiers will, no doubt, when an opportunity presents itself, tender such advice to his Majesty’s Government as they think fit, and in view of this I do not propose to meet any associations connected with the present political affairs in Ireland to discuss the matter. My views are well known, and I do not think that any advantage will be gained by the reception of a deputation at the present time.”

For some time prior to this, however, the Sinn Fein leaders had been laying their plans for approaching General Smuts. On June 4th Mr. Art O’Brien, the President of the Irish Self-determination League, which acted as the emissaries of Sinn Fein in London and elsewhere, wrote to the President as follows :—

“ I have been intending for some days past to write you on the subject of Smuts and the Imperial Conference. Smuts is due here next Saturday. Tom Casement (a brother of Roger) is a very intimate friend of Smuts; it would be possible therefore for him to introduce anyone in a quite friendly way to Smuts. . . .”

The letter concludes with directions how to get in touch with Tom Casement. The further correspondence between Mr. de Valera and Mr. Art O’Brien is interesting. On the 14th, the President writes :—

“ *Imperial Conference.* I think the best statement to give the Press is something like this, that you are not aware of any intention of the representatives of the Irish people to approach the Premiers of the self-governing Dominions, but that these Premiers have clearly a duty to perform to their peoples inasmuch as the British Government are making war on Ireland in the name of the whole British Empire.

Others. Erskine Childers will strive to have an opportunity of meeting Smuts informally.

Note particularly. We are taking no direct or official action. The British are trying to get in touch through intermediaries of course, to learn whether we would accept the following. They intend using Smuts in the matter:—

1. Fiscal autonomy for the whole of Ireland.
2. Senate of Southern Parliament to be elected.
3. Belfast Parliament to retain its present powers unless by mutual agreement with the rest of Ireland.
4. Free trade between England and Ireland.
5. No Reserved Services.
6. Portion of the National Debt (the amount to be ascertained by a Commission) to be taken over.

The best line to pursue is to indicate that they are going on the wrong track, that the right way is to propose a treaty with Ireland regarded as a separate state. Irish representatives would then be willing to consider making certain concessions to England's fears and England's interests, that there is no other way. . . . As regards yourself, if you see Smuts it would be in your capacity as President of the Self-determination League. . . ."

This letter was followed by another two days later. In it occurs the passage "I think I told you of the Women's deputation going to protest about atrocities. The only value will be the publicity it receives. . . . If you see Mrs. Skeffington, impress this upon her. The line that should be taken is, that the Premiers . . . must share the responsibility for the acts of the British Government in Ireland."

Mr. Art O'Brien replied to these letters on the 18th in the following words:—

"The last paragraph in your letter was what I was most anxious to hear. When I wrote you first suggesting that Tom Casement should come over for the purpose of putting me in touch with Smuts I had in mind that I should meet him informally as the representative of the Irish Republic here. I note now that if I do see Smuts, you wish me to see him in my capacity as an officer of the Irish Self-determination League here. I note that you are

not taking any direct or official action, but that endeavours are being made by the English Cabinet to try and get in touch through intermediaries. I also note the way in which they intend using Smuts. . . . I note that Erskine Childers also will strive for an opportunity of meeting Smuts. . . .

“Tom Casement has already seen Smuts a couple of times. He (Tom Casement) is very enthusiastic with the result of these chats. . . . He says Smuts speaks most feelingly and genuinely with regard to Ireland, and, according to T.C. says that he is determined to get the matter settled.”

This particular correspondence closes with a note of panic on the part of Mr. O'Brien. The British police were fully aware of the activities of the Self-determination League—or, as certain wits called it from its habit of suddenly closing its offices and disappearing in alarm, the Self-extermination League—and had no intention of leaving it in peace. On the 20th its President writes to Mr. de Valera :

“It may not be possible for me to attend to any business for a day or two. My host and hostess have during the past week become very alarmed over an incident. . . . My work has in consequence been considerably upset. To-day they request me to make a move at once. I am therefore making a temporary move to some place where I may be safe for the moment, and I must then endeavour to make plans for a more permanent base. . . . I shall advise you directly I have something permanently fixed.”

Meanwhile an agent of the British Government had issued a solemn warning in a quarter where he knew its gravity would be appreciated. On the 16th Mr. Collins writes to the President as follows :—

“Yesterday my man interviewed ———. He is very gloomy about the situation. His story more or less is as follows: Southern Parliament to be summoned on the 28th June. Fourteen days later the Viceroy will be officially aware that it has not answered—will then immediately issue the order for its dissolution. That order is already

in print. Martial Law will then be proclaimed for the 26 Counties and that proclamation is also in print. It is to be of the most vigorous, and will put the Civil Courts entirely out of commission. It will be supported by three times the present military strength who will operate on a scheme of intense investment of areas, search and internment. All means of transport from push bicycles up will be commandeered, and allowed only on permit. He is in a veritable panic to avert the awful times. He wants to see you as man to man. It is quite possible that this is part of the peace move, although I don't accuse him of being aware of it. Cope I should say would be aware of it. Of course, a measure of Martial Law for the whole of the 26 Counties is not unlikely."

The reference to Mr. Cope in this note shows how successful he had been in establishing a channel of communication between himself and the Sinn Fein leaders.

There is no doubt that public opinion, both in England and Ireland, was by now far more in favour of negotiation than it had been at any period since the outbreak of the rebellion. In Ireland it was realised by the majority of those who knew the real facts of the situation that the attainment of the Republic by resistance to the forces of Great Britain was impossible. The long hoped for intervention was no nearer than before; the resources of Sinn Fein were bound to disappear before the threatened intensification of military repression. The Republicans were not yet beaten, but their defeat was certain and could not long be delayed. It was hardly to be hoped that, once defeated, Sinn Fein would be offered better terms than those contained in the Act. On the other hand, were negotiations to be set on foot while Sinn Fein, in the shape of the Irish Republican Army, was still in the field, it was practically certain that any terms

could be secured, provided Ireland remained within the Empire, and Ulster were allowed to stand apart if she so desired. Allegiance and Ulster's right to Partition, these were the two points to which the Government must and did always cling. To the extremists it seemed that surrender on these points meant surrender of all those principles for which Sinn Fein stood. To the more moderate men, who remembered the aims of the movement before its alliance with the Irish Republican Brotherhood, it appeared that the establishment of a practically independent Ireland within the Empire was a sufficient realisation of their ambitions for the present.

It must not be inferred that as yet there was any grave dissension in the Sinn Fein ranks. Differences of opinion there were and always had been, but under the pressure of coercion the Sinn Fein leaders had been moulded into an homogeneous whole. Each could be trusted loyally to carry out the policy decided upon by the majority; it was not until the Truce had removed the immediate menace of danger that internal differences revealed themselves in public dissension.

Similarly a distinct change had come over the English attitude towards the Irish problem. The actions of Sinn Fein throughout the War and the rebellion of 1916 had alienated the sympathy of the majority of English people. Had the Government succeeded in crushing the rebels in a short, sharp campaign in 1919, there is no doubt that the country would have supported it. Home Rule in any form would once more have been relegated to the background, and Sinn Fein would have been forgotten

as the Fenian movement had been forgotten before. But the long drawn out struggle, with its hesitating policy and the reproaches such a policy brought in its train, wearied the nation, which urgently required peaceful conditions in which to recover from the exhausting effort of the War. If, as it appeared, coercion was impotent to end a struggle which to the majority of Englishmen seemed utterly purposeless, then by all means give the Irish their own country to govern. But let it be clearly understood that such an experiment must involve no disruption of the Empire, nor must Ulster be made to suffer for the sins of the South.

For the aspirations of Sinn Fein, Englishmen as a whole had little sympathy. The argument that Ireland was a separate nation some hundreds of years ago and had therefore a right to revert to that status carried no weight. The same might be said of many other tracts of territory now forming parts of a great nation. The establishment of a republic would be secession, and the rights and wrongs of secession had already been decided. Nobody now believes that the secession of the Southern States of America would have benefited the American nation, however much they may admire the magnificent resistance those States made to a superior force. Nor is it held that the Federal States were guilty of an act of tyranny in reasserting the allegiance of the South by force of arms, whatever criticism may be made of the methods employed during the first years of the peace that followed. The words of Professor Paxson which refer to the American Civil War may well be applied to the struggle for the establishment of the Irish Republic. "Only the calm judgment

of posterity can determine which side was wrong. . . . Yet, after all, one side was right and one was wrong. Though advocates of either were frequently mistaken in their application of historic facts, though partisans of both were always more honest than informed, one side of the quarrel harmonised generally with the trend of human experience and the laws of economic and political evolution; the other was reactionary and as such condemned by time."

From bitter controversy about the Home Rule of the latter part of the nineteenth century, which was a measure of parochialism compared with the Home Rule of the December Treaty, British opinion in 1921 had approached acceptance of the principles of Dominion Home Rule. It seemed incredible that Dominion status should not satisfy the aspirations of all Irishmen who desired the end of the Union. So many races and nationalities had accepted this status, and had proceeded to evolve for themselves out of it a scheme of existence which suited the particular needs of development of each. Why could not Ireland do the same? What could she hope to gain as a Republic that she could not secure with greater ease and with the powerful assistance of the whole Empire as a Dominion of that Empire? Her aspirations, or rather the aspirations of the Republicans, seemed to the English mind reactionary and tending towards the decline of her prosperity. Which was the more likely to favour the development of the commerce and industries of a country whose greatest and most important market had always been, and in the nature of things must always be, Great Britain—her establishment as a

petty and unimportant state, which could be ruined at any moment by a change in the tariff laws of a country in whose affairs she would no longer have any voice, or her inclusion in membership of Empire with that country? So Englishmen, and probably the world at large, reasoned. From every point of view the republican status was unsound.

Indeed, as events proved later, the majority of Sinn Fein preferred a Dominion to the maintenance of the struggle for a Republic. Mr. de Valera's oft repeated claim that his party held a mandate from the electors for the establishment of the Irish Republic was utterly false. As late as June, 1921, he claimed this mandate as having been given him by the whole of Ireland, not the South alone. "Dail Eireann, the body for which I speak directly," he wrote, in reply to enquiries by a Press representative, "is the constitutionally elected Parliament of the Irish nation. This Parliament was set up as the result of a direct vote of the people at the general election of 1918 when the establishment of the Republic was approved by an overwhelming majority, barely twenty per cent. of the popular vote of that election favouring connection with England. At these elections the Republicans secured a total of 72 out of 101 members, whilst at the local government elections held later the percentage reached 77 in the case of the city and urban councils, 88.14 in the case of the rural district councils. At the elections just now held, despite geremandering and brazen intimidation, of the 168 members elected on the popular franchise, that is excluding the privilege and duplicate vote, 126 were pledged Republicans or

exactly 75 per cent. of the representation, while the Connectionists secured only 36, or slightly over 21 per cent."

The influence of the Truce in the modification of this claim is interesting to trace.

CHAPTER VI.

The King's speech at Belfast, already quoted, carried the first promise of one last attempt to be made to end the Irish trouble by negotiation before the ultimate pressure was applied. The Prime Minister, in a message sent to their Majesties on their return from Ireland, took the matter a step further. This message was as follows:—

“ I am confident that I can speak not only for the Government of the United Kingdom, but for the whole Empire, in offering your Majesty and the Queen the hearty congratulations of all your loyal subjects on the success of your visit to Belfast. We have been deeply moved by the devotion and enthusiasm with which you were greeted, and our faith in the future is strengthened by the reception given to your Majesty's words in inaugurating the Parliament of Northern Ireland.

“ None but the King could have made the personal appeal; none but the King could have evoked so instantaneous a response. No effort shall be lacking on the part of your Ministers to bring Northern and Southern Ireland together in recognition of a common Irish responsibility, and I trust that from now onwards a new spirit of forbearance and accommodation may breathe upon the troubled waters of the Irish question. Your Majesty may rest assured of the deep gratitude of your peoples for this new act of Royal service to their ideals and interests.”

The King's speech had been made at a most

critical moment. The Cabinet was engaged in considering the measures to be taken to meet the certain refusal of Sinn Fein to work the Act, and no one doubted that this refusal meant the application to the South of a far sterner policy than had yet been put into force. Mr. de Valera had just been submitted to the indignity of arrest, and although the civil authorities promptly disavowed the action of the military, into whose hands he had fallen, the incident was not likely to produce in him a more conciliatory frame of mind than before. But Dublin Castle, inspired by Mr. Cope, still insisted that if only one more concession were made, if only a conference could be proposed without restrictions, there was still hope of peace. One side or the other must modify its conditions; either Sinn Fein must abandon the principles it had so widely proclaimed, or the British Government must waive certain of their stipulations. Sinn Fein remained unyielding, but the Government believed that the prospect of obtaining peace in Ireland justified a reversal of its policy. If Paris was worth a Mass, Dublin was worth a recantation. On the very day following the King's return, the Prime Minister addressed the following letter to Mr. de Valera and Sir James Craig:—

“ Sir,—The British Government are deeply anxious that, so far as they can assure it, the King's appeal for reconciliation in Ireland shall not have been made in vain. Rather than let another opportunity of settlement in Ireland to be cast aside, they feel it incumbent upon them to make a final appeal, in the spirit of the King's words, for a conference between themselves and the representatives of Southern and Northern Ireland.

“ I write, therefore, to convey the following invitation to you as the chosen leader of the great majority in

Southern Ireland, and to Sir James Craig, the Premier of Northern Ireland:—

1. That you should attend a conference here in London in company with Sir James Craig to explore to the utmost the possibility of a settlement.
2. That you should bring with you for the purpose any colleagues whom you may select.

The Government will, of course, give a safe conduct to all who may be chosen to participate in the conference.

We make this invitation with a fervent desire to end the ruinous conflict which has for centuries divided Ireland and embittered the relations of the peoples of these two islands, who ought to live in neighbourly harmony with each other, and whose co-operation would mean so much not only to the Empire but to humanity. We wish that no endeavour should be lacking on our part to realise the King's prayer, and we ask you to meet us, as we will meet you, in the spirit of conciliation for which his Majesty appealed.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

D. LLOYD GEORGE."

This was the letter to Mr. de Valera; that addressed to Sir James Craig was couched in precisely similar terms.

The publication of this letter caused a profound sensation throughout the world, and much speculation was indulged in as to the reception it would receive from the Sinn Fein leaders. Much had been conceded to them. There was no longer any question of a 'black list' of men who had been engaged in criminal enterprises, and who would consequently not be granted safe conducts. *Any* colleague of Mr. de Valera was to be admitted to conference with the British Government on equal terms. The old designation of murderers could no longer be applied to them. This was indeed recognition, in a form peculiarly acceptable to the extreme party among Mr. de Valera's followers. But, of far more importance even than this, there was no mention of the elimination of any subject of discussion at the

proposed conference. It was not postulated, as hitherto, that the retention of Ireland within the Empire must be conceded before discussion could take place. The Sinn Fein leaders knew well enough that if they insisted upon secession, the conference must come to nothing, but for the moment that was not the point. On the letter of the invitation, they were not violating any of their pledges to their followers or to Dail Eireann if they accepted. Against their acceptance there was only one argument. It must once more be repeated that the whole aim of Sinn Fein was the establishment not of a Republic merely, but of a Republic of the whole of Ireland. In the eyes of Sinn Fein the divisions of Northern and Southern Ireland did not exist, having been imposed by the British Government, whose authority it did not recognise. But acceptance of the terms of the Prime Minister's letter meant the tacit recognition of Sir James Craig as Premier of Northern Ireland. Would the advantages of acceptance outweigh the disadvantages, or, in other words, how far was Sinn Fein prepared to advance from its position in order to secure peace?

There could be no doubt that the issue of peace or war depended upon Mr. de Valera's reply to this letter. Nor was there any doubt that a refusal to attend the conference would destroy any lingering chance of Sinn Fein being able to secure outside intervention. Almost without exception the Press of the world acclaimed the action of the Prime Minister; even in quarters sympathetic towards the Sinn Fein point of view it was held that this was more than the Southern Irish leaders could have dared to hope for. Refusal of the offer would have

meant the alienation of more friends than Sinn Fein could afford to lose.

These were some of the considerations which faced Mr. de Valera and his colleagues. Meanwhile Sir James Craig had replied to the letter immediately upon its receipt in the following terms:—

“ My Dear Prime Minister,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 24th inst, conveying an invitation to a conference in London at an early date, and I avail myself of the services of your courier to intimate that I am summoning a meeting of my Cabinet for Tuesday, when I hope to be able to secure the presence of all the members. You may rest assured no time will be lost in conveying the result of our deliberations.—Yours sincerely,

JAMES CRAIG.

Following this promised meeting of the Northern Cabinet, a telegram was sent to Mr. Lloyd George by Sir James Craig containing the words “ In view of the appeal conveyed to us by his Majesty in his gracious message on the opening of the Northern Parliament for peace throughout Ireland, we cannot refuse to accept your invitation to a conference to discuss how best this can be accomplished.”

This acceptance, even couched in the above terms, did not meet with unqualified approval in Ulster. The more bitter opponents of Sinn Fein saw no reason why they should be called upon to “ shake hands with murderers ” in a conference which had for its object the attainment of peace in Ireland. Their argument was that Ulster had done all that could be expected of her by accepting the terms of the Act, and that the North of Ireland had no hand in the rebellion which was responsible for the lack of peace. It was no affair of theirs that Sinn Fein was prosecuting a campaign of violence; the affairs

of the North had been settled by the establishment of the Northern Government, peace in Ireland was capable of attainment by similar action in the South, with which area they had no longer anything in common. They eyed the terms of the invitation with suspicion; why should they be called upon to join these negotiations, unless the British Government contemplated asking them to make concessions in order to placate Sinn Fein? The majority of Ulstermen were agreed upon one point at least beyond dispute—a determination to concede nothing of the position Ulster had won.

Meanwhile the British authorities had removed every bar to free consultation between Mr. de Valera and his colleagues, many of whom were at that time in gaol or engaged in evading the attentions of the police. Orders were given that police surveillance should cease, and facilities were given to Mr. de Valera to visit Mr. Griffith in Mountjoy prison.

The first endeavour of the Sinn Fein leaders was to alter the nature of the conference in the direction of removing the difficulty of Ulster's recognition. If Mr. de Valera could appear in London as the representative of the Irish people, with Sir James Craig apparently one of his colleagues, the position would be entirely altered and the necessity for acknowledging partition averted.

In pursuance of this policy, Mr. de Valera determined upon a preliminary conference in Dublin. On the 28th he sent the following telegram to Mr. Lloyd George:—

“Sir,—I have received your letter, and am in consultation with such of the principal representatives of

our nation as are available. We most earnestly desire to help in bringing about a lasting peace between the peoples of these two islands, but see no avenue by which it can be reached if you deny Ireland essential unity and set aside the principle of national self-determination. Before replying more fully to your letter, I am seeking a conference with certain representatives of the political minority in this country."

At the same time Mr. de Valera wrote to certain prominent Southern Unionists, including Sir James Craig—a member for Dublin University in the Southern Parliament and not to be confused with Sir James Craig the Ulster Premier—the Earl of Midleton, Sir Maurice Dockrell, Sir Robert Woods, and Mr. Andrew Jameson. His letter was as follows :—

"The reply which I, as spokesman for the Irish nation, shall make to Mr. Lloyd George will affect the lives and fortunes of the political minority in this island no less than those of the majority. Before sending that reply, therefore, I would like to confer with you and to learn from you at first hand the views of a certain section of our people of whom you are representative.

"I am confident that you will not refuse this service to Ireland, and I shall await you at the Mansion House, Dublin, at eleven a.m. on Monday next, in the hope that you will find it possible to attend."

Mr. de Valera also sent a telegram to Sir James Craig, the Ulster Premier, which did not reveal his intentions quite so openly. It ran :—

"Can you come Dublin Monday next, eleven a.m.? On receipt of your reply will write you."

It was an astute move, but Mr. de Valera could not have cherished any great hope that the Northern Premier would fall into the trap. By inviting the Unionists of both North and South to a conference, he classed them as a single minority party in an undivided Ireland. Had the Ulster Premier

accepted his invitation, he could hardly have appeared at a subsequent conference in London as the representative of a State independent of the South. Of this fact he was fully aware, as his reply indicates:—

“Impossible for me to arrange any meeting. I have already accepted the Prime Minister’s invitation to London Conference.”

But Mr. de Valera was not to be driven from his attitude. The world at large should have no doubt that he considered himself as the leader of a deputation representing Ireland as a whole. In a further telegram to the Ulster Premier he defined the point more fully:—

“I greatly regret you cannot come to conference here Monday. Mr. Lloyd George’s proposal, because of its complications, impossible of acceptance in its present form. Irish political differences ought to be adjusted, and can, I believe, be adjusted, on Irish soil. But it is obvious that, in negotiating peace with Great Britain, the Irish delegation ought not to be divided, but should act as unit on some common principle.”

The Southern Unionists accepted the invitation, Lord Midleton stating that he had done so “after consultation with his Irish colleagues and *under pressure from other quarters*,” and the meeting duly took place. In the absence of the Northern Premier it attracted comparatively little attention, despite the fact that it was made to appear something of a Sinn Fein triumph. The Southern Unionists were treated as subjects of the Republic owning allegiance to the Dail, rather than as equals in a conference between the representatives of two different political ideals. The terms of the report, issued by the ‘Publicity Department of Dail Eireann’ sufficiently indicate this: “The informal

conference called by President de Valera was held this morning at the Mansion House. . . . The President was accompanied by Mr. A. Griffith, T.D. Views were exchanged upon the situation created by the British Prime Minister's proposals. . . ."

It will be observed that the British authorities had carried their policy of conciliation to the extent of releasing from gaol certain of the leaders of Sinn Fein who were in their custody, including Mr. Griffith.

As a matter of fact, Mr. de Valera's invitation had caused considerable discontent among a section of the Irish people who had recently given valuable support to Sinn Fein. The Nationalists of the North felt that they represented quite as large a section of opinion as the Southern Unionists invited to the conference, a view which was probably correct, and that therefore they too should have been invited. Opinion in Ulster as a whole inclined to the belief that the Dublin conference had been adjourned for the purpose of giving time for another attempt to be made to induce the Northern Premier to attend. The Right Hon. John Andrews, the Ulster Minister for Home Affairs, put the Ulster position with characteristic bluntness. "If de Valera and his people want to give Ireland peace, let them give her peace," he said. "It is up to them, not to us. In the interests of peace we have taken a Parliament we never wanted. We have functioned that Parliament. We intend to work it, and we intend that blessings shall flow from it for the benefit of the whole community under our control. If they want peace, why don't they do the same? Why don't they function their Parlia-

ment and bring it into being, and legislate with the same spirit of determination and loyalty and temperance as we propose to do? Why don't they bury the hatchet, and let us go forward constitutionally according to the law of the land, and make Ireland the happy, prosperous country it should be? They forget that the Council of Ireland is there for the express purpose of bringing Irishmen of all opinions into one body, and I cannot for the life of me see what good can come of this conference in Dublin. I tell them to-night that Ulster has nothing more to give, and that Ulster is going to give nothing more."

As a matter of fact, the conference had had a certain result. Lord Midleton expressed his views in the words: "I am not unhopeful. The door is open, that is the great thing. There would have been no chance if we had not had the conference. There is an universal desire for peace in Ireland, and I was much struck by the enthusiasm of the Dublin crowd outside the Mansion House on Monday."

The influence of the Southern Unionists had been enlisted in favour of an abatement of the activities of the Crown Forces. So far the Irish Republican Army had given no signs of improving the peace atmosphere by a cessation of the outrage campaign. The casualty lists of the early days of July were fully as severe as those of the preceding weeks. But in spite of this the Sinn Fein leaders were using every influence which could be brought to bear to induce the British authorities to suspend the counter measures of the military and police. It was essential to their purpose that the members of the

I.R.A. should believe that any truce which might be arranged was the result of their efforts in the field. Not that the Sinn Fein leaders used this argument in their suggestions directed to the British authorities. Their contention was that a relaxation of the activities of the Crown Forces would make it easier for them to induce their followers to listen to those who were to preach peace to them. The attitude of the Irish Republican Army they could not guarantee. It might take some little time before its patriotic fervour could be curbed, but every endeavour would be made to limit their operations as much as possible. The *Irish Bulletin*, the organ of the Propaganda Department of Dail Eireann, commented on the Dublin conference in the following terms:—

“ Whatever the ultimate issue of the present movement for peace, the conference held at the Mansion House yesterday has remarkable interest and significance. It is the first to be held between the national leaders of Ireland and representatives of minority sections within Ireland since the war of independence began. The fact that the conference was adjourned to next Friday after an interchange of views is a proof that Irishmen of hitherto widely divergent opinions can continue to deliberate upon the best means of showing an united front to England at this crisis.”

The *Bulletin* also referred to “ the unvarying spirit of tolerance extended in Republican Ireland to minorities of whatever class or creed.” The idea of tolerance conceived by the editor of the *Bulletin* appears to have been a peculiar one. The destruction of Loyalists’ property was at that time at its height in the South of Ireland. On the very day of the conference, the house of a Deputy Lieutenant for County Clare was burnt to the ground while its occupants were held up by armed

men, and such outrages were of daily occurrence.

On the resumption of the Dublin Conference on July 8th, Lord Midleton read a letter which he had received from the Prime Minister during the visit to London which he had paid between the sittings of the conference. This letter was as follows:—

“ Dear Lord Midleton,—In reference to the conversation I had with you this morning, the Government fully realise that it would be impossible to conduct negotiations with any hope of achieving satisfactory results if there is bloodshed and violence in Ireland. It would disturb the atmosphere and make the attainment of peace difficult.

“ As soon as we hear that Mr. de Valera is prepared to enter into conference with the British Government and to give instructions to those under his control to cease from all acts of violence, we should give instructions to the troops and to the police to suspend active operations against those who are engaged in this unfortunate conflict.—Yours sincerely, D. LLOYD GEORGE.”

General Macready, the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, had already been warned of this development of policy. He was admitted to the Mansion House during the second meeting of the conference, and joined in the deliberations. As a result, the following communiqué was issued by the Sinn Féin leaders at the close of the conference:—

“ President de Valera informed the conference of the terms in which he proposed to reply to the British Prime Minister’s invitation. At its previous session the conference had expressed the view that it would be impossible to conduct negotiations with any hope of achieving satisfactory results unless there was a cessation of bloodshed in Ireland. A letter to Lord Midleton from Mr. Lloyd George was read, concurring in this view, and indicating the willingness of the British Government to assent to a suspension of active operations on both sides. It is expected that an announcement of a truce, to take effect from Monday next, will be made early to-morrow.”

The terms of Mr. de Valera’s reply were as follows:—

“ Sir,—The desire you express on the part of the British Government to end the centuries of conflict between the peoples of these two islands and to establish relations of neighbourly harmony is the genuine desire of the people of Ireland. I have consulted with my colleagues and secured the views of representatives of the minority of our nation in regard to the invitation you have sent me. In reply I desire to say that I am ready to meet and discuss with you on what basis such a conference as that proposed can reasonably hope to achieve the object desired.—I am, Sir, faithfully yours, EAMON DE VALERA.”

The terms of the truce were finally settled at the British Military Headquarters at three o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday, July 9th. The negotiating parties were General Macready, Colonel Brind, and Mr. Cope on the British side, and ‘ Commandants ’ Barton and Duggan of the I.R.A. on the Sinn Fein side. By some curious oversight the terms of the truce do not appear to have been signed, and the versions issued by the British authorities and Sinn Fein differed slightly, a fact which caused some argument at a later date. The version issued by British G.H.Q. at the time was as follows:—

“ Mr. de Valera, having decided to accept the Prime Minister’s invitation to confer with him in London, has issued instructions to his supporters: (a) To cease all attacks on Crown Forces and civilians, (b) to prohibit the use of arms, (c) to cease military manœuvres of all kinds, (d) to abstain from interference with public or private property, (e) to discountenance and prevent action likely to cause disturbance of the peace which might necessitate military interference.

In order to co-operate in providing an atmosphere in which peaceful discussions may be possible, the Government has directed (a) all raids and searches by military or police shall cease, (b) military activity shall be restricted to the support of the police in their normal civil duties, (c) curfew restrictions shall be removed, (d) the despatch of reinforcements shall be suspended, (e) the police functions in

Dublin to be carried on by the Dublin Metropolitan Police.

In order to give the necessary time for these instructions to reach all concerned, the date from which they shall come into force has been fixed at twelve noon, July 11th."

The Sinn Fein official version expressed the terms as follows:—

"On behalf of the British Army it was agreed as follows:—

1. No incoming troops, R.I.C., and Auxiliary Police and munitions except maintenance drafts.
2. No provocative display of troops, armed or unarmed.
3. It is understood that all provisions of this truce apply to the martial law area equally with the rest of Ireland.
4. No pursuit of Irish officers or men, or war materials or military stores.
5. No secret agents noting descriptions or movements, and no interference with the movement of Irish persons, military or civil, and no attempts to discover the haunts or habits of Irish officers and men. NOTE.—This supposes the abandonment of curfew restrictions.
6. No pursuit or observance of lines of communication or connection.

On behalf of the Irish Army it is agreed:—

- (a) Attacks on Crown Forces and civilians to cease.
- (b) No provocative displays of forces, armed or unarmed.
- (c) No interference with Government or private property.
- (d) To discountenance and prevent any action likely to cause disturbance of the peace which might necessitate military interference."

In a proclamation to his followers Mr. de Valera said:—

"In the negotiations now initiated your representatives will do their utmost to secure a just and peaceful termination of this struggle, but history, particularly our own history, and the character of the issue to be decided, are a warning against undue confidence. An unbending determination to endure all that may still be necessary,

and fortitude such as you have shown in all your recent sufferings may be required. These alone will lead you to the peace you desire. Should force be resumed against our nation, you must be ready on your part once more to resist. Thus alone will you secure the final abandonment of force and the acceptance of justice and reason as arbiter."

We must now return to an event of great significance which occurred on the previous Tuesday, July 5th. General Smuts, upon whose mediation the Sinn Fein leaders had placed so many hopes, arrived in Dublin at their invitation. Matters in political circles in the city were already somewhat easier. The Dublin Castle authorities were now in open communication with Sinn Fein, and there was no need for secrecy of the 'Mr. Edwards' type. General Smuts went openly to the Mansion House, which had now become to all intents and purposes the headquarters of Mr. de Valera, and here he met the Sinn Fein leaders. He also met Mr. Cope and other representatives of the British power. That night he returned to London, and on the following morning made a report to the Prime Minister, who immediately called a conference of Ministers to discuss the views he had put forward in this report. General Smuts' advice was all in favour of a truce, perceiving as he did that the only chance of improving the bitter feeling which had arisen as a consequence of the outrage campaign was a cessation of hostilities. The proclamation of a truce would be a great point gained. Once fighting had ceased, there was reason to hope that the good sense of the Irish people could be trusted to ensure that it would not break out again on the initiative of the I.R.A., and the desire of the British Government for a settlement was sufficient guarantee that the Crown

Forces would not be put into motion again in the absence of fresh provocation.

The views of General Smuts on the prospects of an eventual settlement were expressed in a speech he made to the South African community in London on his return from Dublin. "I looked for a moment at that problem," he said, "a problem which is engaging the attention not only of this country, but very largely of the British Empire. I am not going to speak to-night on that problem except to say this, that, in my opinion, it is a soluble problem. In itself it is soluble. If there were a better atmosphere, if we all helped to create that better atmosphere, if we were all actuated less by ancient feeling and antipathies and more by human goodwill and the determination to wipe out what is really a stain on the record of the Empire, then we would be sure to succeed. Therefore, though not over sanguine, I am hopeful."

The influence of the Government's advisers had induced them to agree to a truce, but it cannot be denied that it was a truce of such a nature as to lead the rank and file of the I.R.A. to believe that it was their prowess and successful arms which had led to the cessation of hostilities. The truce tacitly acknowledged the belligerent status of the Irish Republican Army as a disciplined force entitled to recognition. The Sinn Fein version of the agreement was accepted as the official one, even to the extent of being quoted in the *Weekly Summary*, a journal published by the police authorities for the benefit of the force, as the authentic text. This document assumes the existence of the Irish Army as a belligerent force in the field, and refers to it as

such. It speaks of " Irish officers and men " and of " lines of communication." The whole argument of the British authorities in the past had been that their opponents were rebellious civilians, who could not be entitled to belligerent status. This argument had now been abandoned for good. In the event of a failure of negotiations and a resumption of hostilities, there could no longer be any question of the suppression of gangs of armed rebels. The British military authorities would have had to face the prospect of open and declared war with an army which they had themselves recognised, with all the disadvantages which such a state of warfare entailed. That such was the case was very soon apparent. In order to settle disputes as to the proper observance of the truce, a liason system was evolved, by which officers of the British and Irish forces met on equal terms as arbiters. The people of England as a whole were too relieved at the prospect of the termination of an unhappy situation to pay much attention to the methods by which such a result had been achieved, although a minority saw in the proceedings a blow at the prestige of the British Empire. The change of policy of the Government had been apparently so sudden that it could not but appear as a surrender to the forces of misrule. Malcontent minorities in the Empire could hardly fail to profit from the lesson which Sinn Fein had taught them, a lesson which the leaders of that party lost no time in proclaiming to the world. Within a fortnight of the proclamation of the truce Mr. de Valera, addressing the people of Ireland, said: " We have learned one magnificent lesson in Ireland in the last couple of years, and that

is that it is by acts and not by talk that a nation will achieve its freedom." The remark was perfectly true. Ireland, under leaders who advocated and organised an armed rebellion, had secured far more than she had ever dreamed of obtaining under leaders who confined themselves to obsolete constitutional methods. It was for the first time definitely established that force could wrest from the British Empire concessions that years of peaceful advocacy had failed to win. The god of expediency had won, the statesmanship of England had proclaimed the wisdom of settling the difficulties of the moment by compromise, regardless of the precedent set up by such an action or of its effect upon the future. That Sinn Fein regarded the truce as the first step towards a Republic, nobody doubted at the time and nobody has found cause to doubt since. But for the moment the truce was hailed with relief in England, the *Morning Post*, almost alone among the British Press, pointing out the dangers involved in it. But in Ulster, nearer to the heart of things, profound apprehensions were aroused. The *Belfast News-letter* expressed these apprehensions as follows: "There are implications in the truce communication which are disquieting to all loyal subjects of the King and repulsive to all honourable men. The public will feel that even if a permanent peace were to result from this agreement it would be dearly purchased by the sacrifice of honour—not merely the honour of Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues, but the honour of the British nation."

Whatever may be the verdict of history upon the wisdom of the change of policy, the Government

had embarked upon it, and, rather than incur the reproach of further indecision, it was their duty to make the utmost endeavours to transform the truce into a permanent peace. These efforts will be described in subsequent chapters. For the moment we may confine ourselves to the effect of the truce upon the internal situation in Southern Ireland.

In the first place it may be stated that the letter of the truce was at first obeyed with commendable strictness on both sides. The Crown Forces, accustomed to discipline, continued this observance throughout, despite the annoyance caused by the policy of provocation indulged in by some of their late enemies. The I.R.A., on the other hand, probably owing to the fact that their discipline had never been developed beyond the most elementary stages, gradually became more careless in their interpretation of their undertakings. The following statement, prepared by the British Military Authorities, provides an excellent picture of the situation as it had become towards the end of September :—

“ Ever since the agreement which came into force on July 11th, the Sinn Fein authorities have acted in a manner entirely contrary to the spirit of that agreement.

“ They have encouraged and allowed military training camps to be formed throughout the country. These were in the first instance for the training of officers of the I.R.A., who, when their training was completed, returned to their units and imparted instruction to them.

“ In the 5th and 6th Division and Dublin District areas no fewer than 81 such camps have

been located; and bombing, engineering, signal and musketry schools have also been formed. There is a military college for officers at Galtee Castle, a signalling school at Dromore Castle, an engineering training camp at Castle Magner, a school of musketry at Grotta, and a machine gun course has been held at Kinsale. Musketry practice has also been carried out at Ardsullagh and elsewhere.

“ These are just a few instances, and many others have been reported. Drilling and manœuvring are being carried out all over the country. In the aforementioned areas, 139 cases of drilling have been observed, in which a total estimated number of over 17,000 men took part.

“ Attempts to improve recruiting continue. In Dunmanway, Co. Cork, both the loyal and the rebel population were ordered to undergo a week's training with the I.R.A. or submit an excuse in writing. The numbers which are actually seen drilling or manœuvring are now very considerable, and as many as 800 men have been seen together on more than one occasion.

“ Apart from the military effect of this training and organisation, which have been carried out for more than two months, the moral effect on the I.R.A. and on the people of the country is considerable. The I.R.A. are firmly convinced that they have ‘ won the war.’ Statements to this effect are constantly reported in the Press as having been made at Sinn Fein meetings all over Ireland; and in several instances in Galway, farmers have commiserated with the police and troops on account of being beaten in spite of their plucky fight against the ‘ Boys of the I.R.A.’ Patrick O’Keefe, T.D.,

speaking in Cork, said "Practically alone, the County of Cork beat the British Army," and he referred to his colleague Sean Moylan "whose fame and bravery excelled those of the best generals in Europe." *An T'Oglac* (the official publication of the I.R.A.), dated August 26th, stated: "It is the courage, zeal and efficiency of the Irish Republican Army that has caused the enemy to abandon, at least temporarily, his campaign of aggression; and that courage, zeal and efficiency will not be found wanting in the future, if and whenever it is required." The same paper in its issue of September 9th stated: "The work of training and organisation is being carried out with all the vigour at our disposal, and should the necessity arise immediately for a fresh campaign the benefit of this improved training should be made manifest in action." As a matter of fact the I.R.A. were in a very uncomfortable military situation at the time of the commencement of the truce; operations in which concerted action was required, such as ambushes, had almost wholly ceased, having been replaced by mean and contemptible acts, described in *An T'Oglac* as 'small jobs,' in performing which no risk was run, the victims being for the most part individuals and unarmed. The Crown Forces on the other hand had recently been reinforced and were steadily improving in their methods of dealing with a difficult and elusive enemy.

"Actual proof exists that arms have been landed in Ireland, reliable reports having been received in fifteen separate cases of the landing of arms, including Thompson sub-machine guns. *An T'Oglac* of July 22nd openly referred to the Thompson sub-

machine gun " of which a large number are now in the hands of the I.R.A." It is known that arms were landed at Arklow, Co. Wicklow, on August 21st, and also at Liscannor Bay (Co. Clare), from fishing smacks; while on September 5th and 6th arms were landed at Bantry. In an unofficial Sinn Fein estimate, the number of Thompson sub-machine guns landed in Ireland during the month of September was 2,250. A consignment of Thompson sub-machine guns arrived at Donnemara on September 5th, in a boat belonging to the Congested Districts Board.

" Another marked phase of Sinn Fein activity during the truce has been the incessant collection of money throughout Ireland in order to finance the I.R.A. Much of this collection has been accompanied by threats and intimidation. The following are examples of many similar incidents which have been reported :—

£1,000 were collected in Ennis on August 5th and 6th, the average assessment being 2/- in the £.

July 21st at Castlecomer the rebels attempted to collect subscriptions by threats.

July 27th. A levy of 1/- in the £ was imposed on all residents in Co. Wexford.

At Kilnaleck the Rev. Father Meehan of Ballinarry compelled his parishioners to supply money and provisions to the I.R.A. in camps. He also levied a rate of 1/- in the £ for the White Cross.

July 27th. The *Cork Examiner* admitted rebel levies for funds.

July 21. A family in Boyle was asked to pay

£5 by members of the I.R.A. They paid in fear.

The following notice was posted in Killaloe on September 18th: "To the people of County Clare. . . . A levy according to what we think each can afford will be taken from all people and will be collected in due course. (Signed) LIDDY, Commandant."

In the 5th and 6th Division areas and in Dublin District 23 definite cases were reported of money having been collected by force.

"In addition to these purely military activities the civil department of the Sinn Fein Government has been very busy instituting Courts all over the country. Before July 11th the people were beginning once again to bring their cases to the ordinary Courts, but, since that date, by open or secret intimidation they have been compelled to take them to the Sinn Fein Courts. In a village in Co. Cavan the following notice was posted: "Any person attending English Courts as plaintiffs, defendants or witnesses will be treated as spies and informers. Competent Military Authority," and in a Dail Eireann Local Government Board circular dated 9/9/21, "Any attempt to obtain payment of these claims (in English Courts) will be resisted and punished by the elected Government of the people." In the 5th and 6th Division areas and in Dublin District, from July 11th to the end of September, 45 Sinn Fein Courts are known to have assembled, and in some cases the proceedings have been reported in the daily Press; while many of the leading barristers in Dublin now practice in the Republican Courts. The *Freeman's Journal* dated

12/10/21 reported a Republican Court which opened in Dublin at the same time as the Peace Conference in Downing Street. When the magistrates had taken their seats the Registrar said: "I now declare this Court open in the name of the Irish Republic."

"Several cases have occurred of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and Military Foot Police having been assaulted and kidnapped by the I.R.A. while attempting to carry out their duties.

"Owing to these activities the people are becoming convinced that Sinn Fein is the *de facto* governing power and that the I.R.A. is what counts in the country rather than the Crown Forces; in many districts the former have established a reign of terror to which Loyalists, Protestants and ex-soldiers submit in silence, in the hope that an agreement of some sort will be reached which will afford them adequate protection. They have no safety in the present state of affairs, and in the event of the renewal of hostilities neither their lives nor their property would be secure.

"Cases of provocative action towards the Crown Forces have been numerous and range from the open carrying of arms and wearing of uniform to spitting at the sentries of the Crown Forces; 20 cases have been reported of attacks on police and soldiers. The police have been especially singled out for insults of this sort, but their discipline has been beyond all praise. At the same time the strain on their patience and temper has been almost unendurable, and the policy that nothing must be done to risk a breakdown of the agreement has compelled them to inactivity. This has made it exceedingly difficult for them to carry out their proper police functions,

and their seemingly supine attitude has led the I.R.A. to more and more flagrant breaches of the spirit of the "truce," which, indeed, has been kept only in the fact that members of the Crown Forces have not been murdered or ambushes carried out.

"The following are some of the attacks on the Crown Forces that have occurred:—

September 28th. Unarmed R.I.C. and Military Police were fired on in Tipperary, one military policeman being dangerously wounded and one R.I.C. stabbed with a knife.

September 10th. R.I.C. constable knocked down and kicked about the head by rebels in Cork.

July 17th. District Inspector and three R.I.C. constables fired on between Lahinch and Miltown Malbay.

August 30th. Unarmed soldiers assaulted and beaten in Clonakilty.

August 24th. Two unarmed R.I.C. constables kidnapped at Bandon.

September 12th. Two constables kidnapped at Roskerry.

September 15th. Two constables kidnapped at Bandon.

September 21st. Two unarmed soldiers of the Gloucesters cycling near North Cork were fired on by rebels with rifles and revolvers.

September 26th. Attempted murder of Constable Cassidy, R.I.C., at Limerick.

"As an example of the provocation offered to the Crown Forces during the truce, the case occurred at Bandon on July 24th of a hundred rebels in lorries and cars stopping outside the police barracks singing

rebel songs and spitting on the sentry. In short the truce has been taken full advantage of by the I.R.A., and, to quote part of a letter from a Sinn Feiner, "Taking the truce as a whole it has been a decided gain for our side. It has given the Army time to breathe, it has taken some, its bravest officers, from the prison and almost from the grave, and it has allowed Dail Eireann to meet in public and show the world that they are capable of governing, not this little country of ours, but the greatest nations of the world."

"A large proportion of the youth of Ireland is indeed utterly demoralised. They are drunk with the heady wine of revolt and they have now reached a stage when they have persuaded themselves to believe that they have brought England to her knees. There is no sign that there is any recognition by this class that the terms offered by the Government are generous, and they are insanely confident that a renewal of hostilities would lead to further and greater concessions. That this is not a mere matter of opinion is proved by extracts of letters written to and by men in internment camps.

1. "The boys are mad for fighting and are full of spirits. They think they are too long at home. For every one man before they will have six now, and they think of nothing now only fighting. The truce only gave them an opportunity to get more men, more arms and ammunition. Machine guns will soon be as plentiful as pianos in Ireland."

2. "I had a great time on the run, plenty of everything and in much better health than I am now."

3. "The I.R.A. are now encamped all over the country and it would make your heart glad to see them. I was down Ballinamore way last week and I met about three dozen lorries of them in full uniform. They are especially concentrating in evacuated districts such as Cliffony where all the R.I.C. were wiped out. . . . The police courts are functioning all over now, and the new police force is the best and most effective for one thousand years. . . . Peace conversations are going extremely well, the enemy will evacuate any day and the Irish people are in ship-shape for taking over the country."

4. "I never saw Dublin in such a happy state. You need not think that the opinion of Dublin is different from yours. Dublin, with the rest of Ireland, will accept nothing but a Republic, and if we do not get that we are willing to fight on for another few years."

5. "All the boys without exception are in the I.R.A. (in Co. Carlow), and quite prepared for anything, in fact they will be disappointed very much if there is no more fighting to be done."

"In the third extract the "three dozen lorries" referred to must have been commercial vehicles, commandeered or stolen. Many cases of this have been reported. For instance:—

July 17. Country carts were commandeered at Newmarket by the rebels.

July 23rd. Motor cars seized with threats of violence at Cashel by John Lowney, in full rebel uniform.

August 18th. Two unarmed R.I.C. were held up and their car taken at Bandon.

July 11th (4-30 p.m.). Motor car belonging to William Slattery, of Bandon, was seized at Bishopstown and 35/- in money also taken.

Altogether at least 16 cases of the commandeering of transport have been known to have occurred.

“ While making every allowance for the fact that these letters were written by Sinn Feiners to interned Sinn Feiners to keep up their spirits, and are therefore couched in somewhat extravagant and exaggerated terms, it is clear that there are many among the younger generation who imagine that by continuing the methods of the past and by physical force they will obtain from H.M. Government practically any concession and even a recognition of Ireland’s claim to independence. This is mainly due to the national temperament, which interprets the conciliatory attitude of H.M. Government as a sign of weakness. It should always be remembered that the Irish in some respects have a curiously oriental outlook, and that conciliatory methods, if it is not clearly understood that there is strength and determination behind them, may produce most unsatisfactory results.

“ But it must also be borne in mind that there are many who are in favour of acceptance of the present terms and are against the attitude of extreme and militant Sinn Fein, but who dare not say so openly. Occasionally, however, a letter to an internee reveals this. The following are examples :—

1. “ The offer far exceeded any measure of Home Rule, and in my humble opinion

should be accepted. It will be the last chance Ireland will have to get control over her own affairs. How it hurts me to see this one chance being lost, but it will be. I have ever stood my ground as a fervent Home Ruler and would die with you for it, but I cannot support anything that would imperil my country, so, if this entire separation is insisted on, I shall have to stand apart from you."

2. "I cannot understand why they won't make peace at once and finish the business. They have too good a time here and, if I don't make a big mistake, when some of the boys get back from Spike (internment camp) there will be some trouble and rightly too, as the ring we have here don't want any prisoners to be released."

"Even though the present Dail Eireann was elected when the Sinn Fein policy was one of violence, hatred and physical force, and its members are therefore almost all extremists, there are indications that there are two parties in it. One in favour of peace, some form of Dominion Home Rule and alliance with the Roman Catholic Church, and the other in favour of a continuance of hostilities unless and until all their demands for an independent Republic are granted. The opinions held by these two parties are to a certain extent reflected in the letters of their supporters, and it is quite possible that the struggle between them would become intense were it not for the fact that they must hold together in the face of the growing danger which Irish Labour presents.

"At the Irish Trades Union Congress on

August 2nd, Mr. Cathal O'Shannon declared that "labour was not tied to the tail of Dail Eireann, or to the tail of the Irish Republican Army, because they might at any moment have to fight them and get as clear of them as they had of the British Army." This independent attitude was exhibited a month ago when 150 members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, employed by the Cork Harbour Board, went on strike. These men, many of them members of the I.R.A., formed a Soviet and took over control of the port, defying the Dail or the I.R.A. to interfere. This strike ended on September 7th. A similar occurrence was reported from Bruree, Co. Limerick, on August 30th, where the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union took possession of Cleeves' Creamery Incorporated Stores in opposition to the Dail, and hoisted the red flag on it. The danger from the extreme wing of the Irish Labour Party is a very real one and cannot have escaped the attention of the Sinn Fein leaders. On one occasion at the end of September a man with a red flag was addressing a crowd at Bartlemy on Bolshevism, when a well-dressed stranger produced a revolver and informed the speaker that he was acting under orders from Dublin and that he must hand over his flag and be clear of the town in five minutes under penalty of being shot."

So ends this report, which was never intended for publication in the form in which it stands. It has been given in its original words, as thereby a truer insight into the conditions in Ireland at the time and the military attitude towards them may be gained. Without expending any more space upon

the subject, it may be said that the position of affairs from the point of view of the maintenance of law and order grew worse rather than better towards the close of the year. By December the casualty list of the Crown Forces had again begun to grow, in that month two policemen being murdered and six wounded, while two soldiers were also wounded. The spirit of the truce was fast losing its hold upon the members of the I.R.A.

CHAPTER VII.

The reply of Mr. de Valera to the Prime Minister's invitation to a conference has already been quoted. But the last and most significant sentence must be repeated if a clear idea is to be obtained of the complicated negotiations which followed it. This sentence is as follows:—"In reply I desire to say that I am ready to meet and discuss with you on what basis such a conference as that proposed can reasonably hope to achieve the object desired." It will be observed that Mr. de Valera did not accept the invitation to the conference as originally proposed, but merely expressed his willingness to meet the Prime Minister in order to discuss the preliminaries for such a conference. This being the case, there could be no question of the attendance of representatives of Ulster at the meeting between the Prime Minister and Mr. de Valera until the preliminaries of the conference had been settled.

This point is most important. It must have been obvious to both sides that the main question, which was the matter of the retention of Ireland within the Empire, was the only obstacle to the holding of a conference, and that if some understanding on this

matter, sufficient to allow the conference to be held, were reached in the preliminary discussions, the result of the conference itself would be a foregone conclusion. Whether or not the Ulster representatives attended at this stage would be immaterial. The main question would have been settled, and the conference would be merely a committee sitting for the purpose of arranging details. Mr. de Valera's contention would have been justified, and he would be in the position of having met the Prime Minister and negotiated with him as the sole representative of the whole of Ireland.

As a matter of fact, events took place very much on these lines. The conference to which the Prime Minister invited both Sir James Craig and Mr. de Valera never took place, and it was natural that the Ulster leaders should have displayed uneasiness at the manner in which the " preliminary " conference between the Prime Minister and Mr. de Valera was allowed to usurp its place. They felt, what was indeed the truth, that Mr. de Valera had so manœuvred as to exclude them from the most important stage in the negotiations.

But the Government had embarked upon its perilous enterprise, and no considerations of strict honesty could be allowed to override those of expediency. The Prime Minister skilfully passed over the qualified acceptance of Mr. de Valera, and replied to him as though this acceptance had been unconditional. " I have received your letter of acceptance," he telegraphed, " and shall be happy to see you and any colleagues whom you wish to bring with you at Downing Street any day this week. Please wire date of your arrival in London."

To which Mr. de Valera replied: "Telegram received. I will be in London for conference on Thursday next." The fact that this conference was not the one originally proposed had already been lost sight of. To those who ventured to remind them of it, the Government replied in fair words. Of course both sides realised that this was only a preliminary, it was far better that the two main parties to the dispute should meet in private before the main question was put before a formal conference. No definite step would be taken in the absence of the Northern delegates.

The first meeting between the Prime Minister and Mr. de Valera took place on July 14th, and lasted two and a half hours. The official communiqué issued at its close was as follows:—

"Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. de Valera met as arranged at 4-30 p.m. this afternoon at 10, Downing Street. They were alone, and the conversation lasted until 7 p.m. A free exchange of views took place, and relative positions were defined. The conversation will be resumed at 11-30 a.m. to-morrow."

As a result of this meeting, the Prime Minister telegraphed to Sir James Craig inviting him to London to confer with him. No mention of the assembly of the original conference was made in this telegram.

It was obvious that the meeting of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. de Valera had resulted in the expression by the latter of a point of view which necessitated consultation between the Prime Minister and the Ulster leader, and that this point of view prohibited this consultation taking place at a full conference. As a matter of fact, the expression of Mr. de Valera's views made it

perfectly plain that he would not consent to such a conference. If an offer were to come from England, that offer must be addressed to him alone, in order that he, as president of the Dail, might refer it to that body for consideration. The fiction could then be maintained that the offer had been made to Ireland as to a state independent and undivided, and Sinn Fein could consider it without abandoning the position they had taken up. The Prime Minister, that very evening, referred to the meeting in words which showed the effects of inoculation with Mr. de Valera's pretensions. "Mr. de Valera, the chieftain of the vast majority of the Irish race," he said, "has been in conference for very nearly three hours with the Prime Minister of this country, discussing the various methods and suggestions which have been put forward for a settlement of the long, long controversy between the Irish and the British people."

A second meeting between Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. de Valera took place on the 15th, and was occupied mainly in skirting round the difficult problem of the unity of Ireland. In the afternoon of the same day, Sir James Craig, who had arrived in London in response to the Prime Minister's telegram, called at Downing Street, and as a result of the conversation he had with Mr. Lloyd George, summoned the members of his Cabinet to London. The utmost reticence was observed by all the parties to this triangular duel. Each felt that his supporters were more than anxious as to the influences which might be brought to bear upon him, and this nervousness was reflected in such brief utterances as were made by each. Mr. de Valera

was the first to declare his adherence to principle. On the 16th he issued a statement as follows :—

“ The Press gives the impression that I have been making certain compromise demands. I have made no demand but one—the only one I am entitled to make—that the self-determination of the Irish nation be recognised.”

On the same day a message from Sir James Craig was read at a Unionist meeting in Ulster. This message was as follows :—

“ You may all rest assured that I will see to it that the Empire in whose cause our heroes so nobly laid down their lives is not weakened by any action of mine. They trusted us to give nothing away, and their trust will never be betrayed.”

On the 18th the Prime Minister again met the representatives of the North and of the South, in separate interviews. Subsequent to the former interview, Sir James Craig issued the following statement, which disposed finally of any hope of a full conference taking place in the immediate future :—

“ I am returning home well satisfied with the efforts being made towards peace. Mr. de Valera has broken silence and cleared the ground by his statement to this morning's press that he proposes to found his claim upon the recognition of the right of ‘ self-determination.’ By an overwhelming majority at our recent election—the constitutional method of expressing ‘ self-determination ’—the people of Northern Ireland have ‘ determined ’ their own Parliament, which was opened by his Most Gracious Majesty in person. Mr. de Valera and his colleagues have already admitted the right of such ‘ self-determination ’ on the part of Northern Ireland by the fact that they themselves stood as candidates for the Northern Parliament and submitted their policy of ‘ No Partition.’ This was the only issue placed before the electorate, and ‘ No Partition ’ was rejected by the largest majority which, as far as I am aware, has ever been secured at a General Election in any part of the world.

“ Such being the true facts, it now merely remains for Mr. de Valera and the British people to come to terms

regarding the area outside of that of which I am Prime Minister. The people of Northern Ireland, on behalf of whom I speak, while claiming in the most absolute way possible—as has been done—to ‘determine’ their own fate, do not make any claim whatever to ‘determine’ the terms of settlement which Great Britain shall make with Southern Ireland.

“When this is accomplished I can promise cordial co-operation on equal terms with Southern Ireland in any matters affecting our common interest. Having reached the present stage, I go back to Ireland to carry on the practical work of government. I feel that our interests are ably represented in the Imperial Parliament, and, of course, our services are available at any moment.”

With this valedictory message, Sir James Craig and his Cabinet left London.

It is almost unnecessary to point out that the assumption contained in the first paragraph of this message was not likely to be accepted for a moment by Sinn Fein. In claiming the right of self-determination for Ireland as a whole, and not for its divisions, which divisions he did not recognise, Mr. de Valera had made no advance upon his utterances. Further, Sinn Fein had participated in the elections in the North under exactly the same conditions as it had participated in those of the South. Dail Eireann had agreed to the elections held under the provisions of the Act for the purpose of the formation of a new Dail. The elections had been, in the eyes of Sinn Fein, elections to the Republican Parliament of the whole of Ireland, and had resulted in a large majority for Republicanism, with a small local minority, whose members refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Republic, in the six counties in the North-East. By this argument, Ireland had expressed its determination for a Republic.

The Publicity Department of Dail Eireann, whose head, Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald, had joined Mr. de Valera's staff in London, did not hesitate to reply in these terms to Sir James Craig's message. It also took the opportunity of declaring that the conference as originally suggested had not taken place. There had been discussions between the representatives of the British and Irish nations, that was all. The Sinn Fein official statement had better be quoted in full.

"There has been no conference yet. What has happened is merely this: there have been discussions at Downing Street between Mr. Lloyd George and President de Valera on the possibility of discovering a basis for a conference. The basis of such a conference must be that Ireland is an independent nation, and as such may have an agreement with the British Government. It is not a question of Belfast being subservient to Dublin, as Sir James Craig has suggested, or of Dublin being subservient to Belfast. What it means is that both Dublin and Belfast must be subservient to the Irish nation.

"The whole basis of the claim of the Irish nation is the fourteen points of ex-president Wilson, and the right of small nations to self-determination. The Ulster Cabinet represents a very small minority of the Irish people, and we claim that that small minority has been systematically, wilfully, and fundamentally misled by a foreign Power. It has been led to believe that its actions would be supported by a strong foreign Power, and, in fact, it always has been supported by that foreign Power—England. There may, or may not, be a conference, but if a conference takes place it must be on the basis of an independent Irish nation.

"I cannot emphasise too strongly that there has been no conference yet. There have been merely discussions between the two sides—between President de Valera as the representative of the Irish nation and Mr. Lloyd George as the head of the foreign Power.

"We have no comment to make on Sir James Craig's statement. Sir James Craig is in the same position as were the Southern States in America in 1861."

On the 20th a prolonged meeting of the British Cabinet was held, at which Mr. Lloyd George secured approval of the offer he was about to make to Mr. de Valera on the following day. This offer, which was not made public for some weeks, was contained in the following document, which was entitled *Proposals of the British Government for an Irish Settlement, July 20th, 1921*:—

“ The British Government are actuated by an earnest desire to end the unhappy divisions between Great Britain and Ireland, which have produced so many conflicts in the past, and which have once more shattered the peace and well-being of Ireland at the present time. They long, with his Majesty the King, in the words of his gracious speech in Ireland last month, for a satisfactory solution of ‘ those age-long Irish problems which for generations embarrassed our forefathers, as they now weigh heavily upon us ’; and they wish to do their utmost to secure that ‘ every man of Irish birth, whatever be his creed and wherever be his home, should work in loyal co-operation with the free communities on which the British Empire is based.’

“ They are convinced that the Irish people may find as worthy and as complete an expression of their political and spiritual ideals within the Empire as any of the numerous and varied nations united in allegiance to his Majesty’s Throne; and they desire such a consummation, not only for the welfare of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Empire as a whole, but also for the cause of peace and harmony throughout the world. There is no part of the world where Irishmen have made their home but suffers from our ancient feuds; no part of it but looks to this meeting between the British Government and the Irish leaders to resolve these feuds in a new understanding honourable and satisfactory to all the peoples involved.

“ The free nations which compose the British Empire are drawn from many races, with different histories, traditions, and ideals. In the Dominion of Canada British and French have long forgotten the bitter conflicts which divided their ancestors. In South Africa the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State have joined with two British Colonies to make a great self-governing Union under his Majesty’s sway. The British people cannot believe that where Canada and South Africa,

with equal or even greater difficulties, have so signally succeeded, Ireland will fail; and they are determined that, so far as they themselves can assure it, nothing shall hinder Irish statesmen from joining together to build up an Irish State in free and willing co-operation with the other peoples of the Empire.

“ Moved by these considerations, the British Government invite Ireland to take her place in the great association of free nations over which his Majesty reigns. As earnest of their desire to obliterate old quarrels and to enable Ireland to face the future with her own strength and hope, they propose that Ireland shall assume forthwith the status of a Dominion, with all the powers and privileges set forth in this document. By the adoption of Dominion status it is understood that Ireland shall enjoy complete autonomy in taxation and finance; that she shall maintain her own courts of law and judges; that she shall maintain her own military forces for home defence, her own constabulary and her own police; that she shall take over the Irish postal services and all matters relating thereto, education, land, agriculture, mines and minerals, forestry, housing, labour, unemployment, transport, trade, public health, health insurance, and the liquor traffic; and in sum, that she shall exercise all those powers and privileges upon which the autonomy of the self-governing Dominions is based, subject only to the considerations set out in the ensuing paragraphs. Guaranteed in these liberties, which no foreign people can challenge without challenging the Empire as a whole, the Dominions hold each and severally by virtue of their British fellowship a standing amongst the nations equivalent, not merely to their individual strength, but to the combined power and influence of all the nations of the Commonwealth. That guarantee, that fellowship, that freedom the whole Empire looks to Ireland to accept.

“ To this settlement the British Government are prepared to give immediate effect upon the following conditions, which are, in their opinion, vital to the welfare and safety of both Great Britain and Ireland, forming as they do the heart of the Commonwealth:—

“ 1. The common concern of Great Britain and Ireland in the defence of their interests by land and sea shall be mutually recognised. Great Britain lives by sea-borne food; her communications depend upon the freedom of the great sea routes. Ireland lies at Britain's side across the sea-ways North and South that link her with

the sister nations of the Empire, the markets of the world, and the vital sources of her food supply. In recognition of this fact, which nature has imposed and no statesmanship can change, it is essential that the Royal Navy alone should control the seas around Ireland and Great Britain, and that such rights and liberties should be accorded to it by the Irish State as are essential for naval purposes in the Irish harbours and on the Irish coasts.

“ 2. In order that the movement towards the limitation of armaments which is now making progress in the world should in no way be hampered, it is stipulated that the Irish Territorial Force shall, within reasonable limits, conform in respect of numbers to the military establishments of the other parts of these islands.

“ 3. The position of Ireland is also of great importance for the air services, both military and civil. The Royal Air Force will need facilities for all purposes that it serves; and Ireland will form an essential link in the development of air routes between the British Isles and the North American continent. It is, therefore, stipulated that Great Britain shall have all necessary facilities for the development of defence and of communications by air.

“ 4. Great Britain hopes that Ireland will in due course, and of her own free will, contribute in proportion to her wealth to the regular naval, military, and air forces of the Empire. It is further assumed that voluntary recruitment for these forces will be permitted throughout Ireland, particularly for those famous Irish regiments which have so long and so gallantly served his Majesty in all parts of the world.

“ 5. While the Irish people shall enjoy complete autonomy in taxation and finance, it is essential to prevent a recurrence of ancient differences between the two islands, and in particular to avert the possibility of ruinous trade wars. With this object in view, the British and Irish Governments shall agree to impose no protective duties or other restrictions upon the flow of transport, trade, and commerce between all parts of these islands.

“ 6. The Irish people shall agree to assume responsibility for a share of the present debt of the United Kingdom and of the liability for pensions arising out of the Great War, the share, in default of agreement between the Governments concerned, to be determined by an independent arbitrator appointed from within his Majesty's Dominions.

“ In accordance with these principles, the British Government propose that the conditions of settlement between Great Britain and Ireland shall be embodied in the form of a treaty, to which effect shall in due course be given by the British and Irish Parliaments. They look to such an instrument to obliterate old conflicts forthwith, to clear the way for a detailed settlement in full accordance with Irish conditions and needs, and thus to establish a new and happier relation between Irish patriotism and that wider community of aims and interests by which the unity of the whole Empire is freely sustained.

“ The form in which the settlement is to take effect will depend upon Ireland herself. It must allow for full recognition of the existing powers and privileges of the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland, which cannot be abrogated except by their own consent. For their part, the British Government entertain an earnest hope that the necessity of harmonious co-operation amongst Irishmen of all classes and creeds will be recognised throughout Ireland, and they will welcome the day when, by these means, unity is achieved. But no such common action can be secured by force. Union came in Canada by the free consent of the Provinces. So in Australia; so in South Africa. It will come in Ireland by no other way than consent. There can, in fact, be no settlement on terms involving, on the one side or the other, that bitter appeal to bloodshed and violence which all men of goodwill are longing to terminate. The British Government will undertake to give effect, so far as that depends on them, to any terms in this respect on which all Ireland unites. But in no conditions can they consent to any proposals which would kindle civil war in Ireland. Such a war would not touch Ireland alone, for partisans would flock to either side from Great Britain, the Empire, and elsewhere, with consequences more devastating to the welfare both of Ireland and the Empire than the conflict to which a truce has been called this month. Throughout the Empire there is a deep desire that the day of violence should pass, and that a solution should be found consonant with the highest ideals and interests of all parts of Ireland, which will enable her to co-operate as a willing partner in the British Commonwealth.

“ The British Government will therefore leave Irishmen themselves to determine by negotiations between them whether the new powers which the pact defines shall be taken over by Ireland as a whole and administered by a

single Irish body or taken over separately by Northern and Southern Ireland, with or without a joint authority to harmonise their common interests. They will willingly assist in the negotiation of such a settlement, if Irishmen should so desire.

“By these proposals the British Government sincerely believe that they will have shattered the foundations of that ancient hatred and distrust which have disfigured our common history for centuries past. The future of Ireland within the Commonwealth is for the Irish people to shape.

“In the foregoing proposals the British Government have attempted no more than the broad outline of a settlement. The details they leave for discussion when the Irish people have signified their acceptance of the principle of this pact.”

Armed with this portentous document, Mr. de Valera returned to Ireland, there to confer with his colleagues. Despite official declarations to the contrary, there is no doubt both from internal evidence and from a study of subsequent events, that the offer of the British Government was far more liberal than the Sinn Fein leaders had anticipated. The Home Rule of the Government of Ireland Act had been enlarged almost beyond recognition, and this enlargement was a measure of the British weariness of Irish strife and desire for peace. Denunciations of murder and threats of condign punishment were replaced by words which were practically an entreaty to the Irish leaders to behave themselves and to assume the silken cord which should bind them to the Empire. By the great inarticulate mass of educated Irish opinion, the terms of the offer were hailed with rapture modified by concern that such men as the leaders of Sinn Fein should be invited to form a Dominion Government. Had Sinn Fein accepted the offer then and there, and by so doing abandoned the Republican standpoint from which they professed to view the relations between

England and Ireland, there was not one of their true supporters who would have reproached them with abandoning their ideals or betraying their faith. A certain section of their followers would, no doubt, have done their best to secure a renewal of the strife which had been so advantageous to them; an unimportant body of opinion, represented by the Clan na Gael and anti-British societies abroad, would have railed at them for their abandonment of a cause. But the world at large would have applauded them as men who had the statesmanlike wisdom to abandon the unattainable in favour of a reality which their own efforts had brought about.

The very generosity of the offer, however, militated against its acceptance. To the more extreme Republicans, it seemed that it only just fell short of their demands, that so much had been gained by a policy of violence and disorder that a continuance of such a policy could not fail to succeed in bringing them the acceptance of their demands in their entirety. They argued that Great Britain must have yielded so much because she felt herself unable to resist the demands made upon her; that the terms of the offer were signs of weakness rather than of generosity. Mr. de Valera said as much on the very day he returned to Ireland. "This is not a time for talk," he said. "We have learned one magnificent lesson in Ireland in the last couple of years, and that is that it is by acts and not by talk that a nation will achieve its freedom. I do not want, therefore, to begin a bad example by starting speech-making. If we act in the future as we have acted for the last couple of years we will never have to talk about

freedom, for we will have it.” The *Irish Bulletin* of July 25th contained the following words:—

“ During the last ten days the London Press, in its comments upon the negotiations now in progress, has displayed almost unanimously a total inability to understand Ireland, her ambitions, or the determination of her people to realise them. All the important London journals represent the British Cabinet as about to offer ‘ liberal,’ ‘ generous,’ ‘ almost prodigal ’ terms to the Irish people, and then explain that the terms in question ‘ concede ’ to Ireland ‘ Dominion Home Rule, with modifications.’ It is more accurately described as a denial of justice and a negation of the right of self-determination which British statesmen during the Great War considered essential to world peace. This is, indeed, understood by some of the British newspapers, which actually threaten the Irish people with a revival of the military terror if we do not gratefully accept what is being offered to us. Ireland understands what a refusal of so-called ‘ reasonable ’ offers would mean, but the Irish people have their own views of what offers are reasonable, and, threats of a new terror notwithstanding, they will agree to nothing which denies the ancient unity of Ireland or seeks to impose upon the nation alien domination of any kind.

“ The British Press should have learned by this time that menaces carry little weight in Ireland. Our country is now inured to force. Moreover, threats are silly weapons to use if there is any sincerity behind the British professions of a desire for peace in Ireland. England may or may not want an understanding between the two peoples, but

there is no doubt that England has force enough to continue indefinitely the torture of Ireland. Nevertheless, the people of Ireland have their minds made up. They will accept a peace which is just and does not betray the dead and the living. They will return to the wilderness of hardship, suffering, and death before they compromise in the slightest degree the national honour.

“ Since it is Ireland’s right to be free, it is Ireland’s right to control her own finances. But the primary demand, inclusive of all others, is that Ireland should be free. Nothing can satisfy that demand but full national independence. The Irish question dates back to far beyond the times when English kings extracted tribute from our people. Were the taxation of the Irish people by the British Government henceforth to cease the Irish question would remain and the Irish people would fight as resolutely as before.”

Mr. de Valera’s first step in consulting his colleagues was to call a meeting of the Ministry of Dail Eireann, which took place on July 27th. Further meetings between the Sinn Fein leaders resulted in a decision to call together the members of Dail Eireann for a full consideration of the Government’s terms. This meeting was called for Tuesday, August 16th, and the announcement caused considerable interest in Dublin, if only for the reason that an open meeting of the Dail, which, until the truce, had been an illegal assembly, was a tangible sign of peace. Further, it was known that the Sinn Fein leaders had the assurance that everything would be done to facilitate the meeting, even to the extent of releasing from gaol the members

then in custody, of whom thirty-six were at that time either in prison or interned.

The actual order for the release of these men was made on August 6th, and provided yet another opportunity for the Government to perform one of those acts of crass stupidity which have done more to embitter the Irish question than resolute enforcement of the most unpopular policy. The order was as follows:—

“ In keeping with the public undertaking given by the Prime Minister that his Majesty’s Government would facilitate in every practicable way the steps now being taken to promote peace in Ireland, it has been decided to release forthwith and without conditions all members of Dail Eireann who are at present interned or who are undergoing sentences of penal servitude or imprisonment to enable them to attend the meeting of Dail Eireann which has been summoned for August 16th. His Majesty’s Government has decided that one member, Mr. J. J. McKeown, who has been convicted of murder, cannot be released.”

Now McKeown was at this time one of the popular heroes of the rebels. He was a man with a fanatical belief in the justice of the Republican cause, and one of the few I.R.A. leaders who took up arms from stern conviction. Subsequent to an ambush of Auxiliaries at Ballinalee on February 2nd, in which he had played the part of leader and had behaved with marked chivalry to the wounded cadets, he was surrounded in a house, and in the course of his capture had shot a District Inspector. For this he had been tried by Court Martial and condemned to death, although the sentence had not been confirmed. The point lay not in the justice of his exclusion from the act of pardon, but in its expediency. Although McKeown happened to be the only member of the Dail actually under sentence

for murder, there was no reasonable doubt that others were equally guilty individually, even if the collective guilt of the Dail as the body to whom the I.R.A. was responsible was not sufficient. At all events, the exception once made should have been adhered to. Sinn Fein, however, made representations to the Government through the Dublin Castle authorities that if the exception were not cancelled they would give notice of the termination of the truce. Before this threat the Government gave way, and McKeown was released on the morning of the 8th. The net result of the incident was to render the Sinn Fein leaders more suspicious than ever of the Government's intentions, and to afford them one more reason to believe that by adopting a high hand they could extort what terms they pleased.

On August 11th Mr. de Valera's reply to the Government's offer was delivered at No. 10, Downing Street, and the Prime Minister being in Paris, it was forwarded to him there. The fact that the reply had been made before the meeting of the Dail occasioned some surprise. But it must be remembered that the Dail was not, and never had been, a deliberative assembly, and that its members were unaccustomed to the discussion of high politics, as they proved before the year was out. The rank and file of the Dail had been nominated by the Sinn Fein leaders, and at this stage were quite prepared to leave the decision upon matters of policy to them. The Dail Cabinet had some days previously drawn up their reply, and although Mr. de Valera took the opportunity of consulting some of the Dail members who were released by the British authorities, there could be no doubt that a reply

drawn up by him and his ministers would be acceptable to the Dail at its full meeting. The reply was dated from the "Office of the President, Mansion House, Dublin," and bore the caution "Official Translation," which may have implied that it was originally drawn up in the language of diplomacy, or else in Erse, both unlikely suppositions, owing to the ignorance of the majority of the Dail Cabinet of these languages. It was addressed to Mr. Lloyd George, and ran as follows:—

"Sir,—On the occasion of our last interview I gave it as my judgment that Dail Eireann could not, and that the Irish people would not, accept the proposals of your Government as set forth in the draft of July 20th which you had presented to me. Having consulted my colleagues, and with them given these proposals the most earnest consideration, I now confirm that judgment.

"The outline given in the draft is self-contradictory, and "the principle of the pact" not easy to determine. To the extent that it implies a recognition of Ireland's separate nationhood and her right to self-determination we appreciate and accept it. But in the stipulations and express conditions concerning the matters that are vital the principle is strangely set aside, and a claim advanced by your Government to an interference in our affairs, and to a control which we cannot admit.

"Ireland's right to choose for herself the path she shall take to realise her own destiny must be accepted as indefeasible. It is a right that has been maintained through centuries of oppression and at the cost of unparalleled sacrifice and untold suffering, and it will not be surrendered. We cannot propose to abrogate or impair it, nor can Britain or any other foreign State or group of States legitimately claim to interfere with its exercise in order to serve their own special interests.

"The Irish people's belief is that the national destiny can best be realised in political detachment, free from Imperialistic entanglements, which they feel will involve enterprises out of harmony with the national character, prove destructive of their ideals, and be fruitful only of ruinous wars, crushing burdens, social discontent, and

general unrest and unhappiness. Like the small States of Europe, they are prepared to hazard their independence on the basis of moral right, confident that as they would threaten no nation or people, they would in turn be free from aggression themselves. This is the policy they have declared for in plebiscite after plebiscite, and the degree to which any other line of policy deviates from it must be taken as a measure of the extent to which external pressure is operative and violence is being done to the wishes of the majority.

“As for myself and my colleagues, it is our deep conviction that true friendship with England, which military coercion has frustrated for centuries, can be obtained most readily now through amicable but absolute separation. The fear, groundless though we believe it to be, that Irish territory may be used as the basis for an attack upon England's liberties can be met by reasonable guarantees not inconsistent with Irish sovereignty.

“‘Dominion status’ for Ireland everyone who understands the conditions knows to be illusory. The freedom which the British Dominions enjoy is not so much the result of legal enactments or of treaties, as of the immense distances which separate them from Britain and have made interference by her impracticable. The most explicit guarantees, including the Dominions’ acknowledged right to secede, would be necessary to secure for Ireland an equal degree of freedom. There is no suggestion, however, in the proposals made of such guarantees. Instead, the natural position is reversed; our geographical situation with respect to Britain is made the basis of denials and restrictions unheard of in the case of the Dominions; the smaller island must give military safeguards and guarantees to the larger, and suffer itself to be reduced to the position of a helpless dependency.

“It should be obvious that we could not urge the acceptance of such proposals upon our people. A certain treaty of free association with the British Commonwealth group, as with a partial league of nations, we would have been ready to recommend, and as a Government to negotiate and take responsibility for, had we an assurance that the entry of the nation as a whole into such association would secure for it the allegiance of the present dissenting minority, to meet whose sentiment alone this step could be contemplated.

“Treaties dealing with the proposals for free inter-

trade and mutual limitation of armaments we are ready at any time to negotiate. Mutual agreement for facilitating air communications, as well as railway and other communications, can, we feel certain, also be effected. No obstacle of any kind will be placed by us in the way of that smooth commercial intercourse which is essential in the life of both islands, each the best customer and the best market of the other. It must, of course, be understood that all treaties and agreements would have to be submitted for ratification to the national legislature in the first instance, and subsequently to the Irish people as a whole, under circumstances which would make it evident that their decision would be a free decision, and that every element of military compulsion was absent.

“ The question of Ireland’s liability “ for a share of the present debt of the United Kingdom ” we are prepared to leave to be determined by a board of arbitrators, one appointed by Ireland, one by Great Britain, and a third to be chosen by agreement, or, in default, to be nominated, say, by the President of the United States of America, if the President would consent.

“ As regards the question at issue between the political minority and the great majority of the Irish people, that must remain a question for the Irish people themselves to settle. We cannot admit the right of the British Government to mutilate our country, either in its own interest or at the call of any section of our population. We do not contemplate the use of force. If your Government stands aside, we can effect a complete reconciliation. We agree with you “ that no common action can be secured by force.” Our regret is that this wise and true principle which your Government prescribes to us for the settlement of our local problem it seems unwilling to apply consistently to the fundamental problem of the relations between our island and yours. The principle we rely on in the one case we are ready to apply in the other, but should this principle not yield an immediate settlement, we are willing that this question, too, be submitted to external arbitration.

“ Thus we are ready to meet you in all that is reasonable and just. The responsibility for initiating and effecting an honourable peace rests primarily, not with our Government, but with yours. We have no conditions to impose, no claims to advance but the one, that we be freed from aggression. We reciprocate with a sincerity to be measured only by the terrible sufferings our people have

undergone the desire you express for mutual and lasting friendship. The sole cause of the "ancient feuds" which you deplore has been, as we know, and as history proves, the attacks of English rulers upon Irish liberties. These attacks can cease forthwith, if your Government has the will. The road to peace and understanding lies open.—I am, Sir, faithfully yours, EAMONN DE VALERA."

The Government's offer of July 20th and Mr. de Valera's reply of August 10th were published in the newspapers of August 15th, the day before the meeting of the Dail. Despite the unfavourable nature of the reply, it was certain that something had been gained. Both sides were manœuvring for position; were, nominally at least, endeavouring to find a basis for a conference. The lines of approach to this conference were now defined. The Government offered Dominion status, Sinn Fein held out hopes of close alliance with the Empire provided that the question of allegiance was not raised and that British protection of Ulster was withdrawn.

To Mr. de Valera's letter the Prime Minister replied as follows, on August 13th. This letter was published at the same time as the previous correspondence:—

"Sir,—The earlier part of your letter is so much opposed to our fundamental position that we feel bound to leave you in no doubt of our meaning. You state that after consulting your colleagues you confirm your declaration that our proposals are such as Dail Eireann could not, and the Irish people would not, accept. You add that the outline given in our draft is self-contradictory, and the principle of the pact offered to you not easy to determine. We desire, therefore, to make our position absolutely clear.

"In our opinion, nothing is to be gained by prolonging a theoretical discussion of the national status which you may be willing to accept as compared with that of the great self-governing Dominions of the British Commonwealth, but we must direct your attention to one point upon which

you lay some emphasis, and upon which no British Government can compromise, namely, the claim that we should acknowledge the right of Ireland to secede from her allegiance to the King. No such right can ever be acknowledged by us. The geographical propinquity of Ireland to the British Isles is a fundamental fact. The history of the two islands for many centuries, however it is read, is sufficient proof that their destinies are indissolubly linked. Ireland has sent members to the British Parliament for more than a hundred years. Many thousands of her people during all that time have enlisted freely and served gallantly in the Forces of the Crown. Great numbers, in all the Irish provinces, are profoundly attached to the Throne. These facts permit of one answer, and one only, to the claim that Britain should negotiate with Ireland as a separate and foreign power.

“ When you, as the chosen representative of Irish national ideals, came to speak with me, I made one condition only, of which our proposals plainly stated the effect—that Ireland should recognise the force of geographical and historical facts. It is those facts which govern the problem of British and Irish relations. If they did not exist, there would be no problem to discuss.

“ I pass, therefore, to the conditions which are imposed by these facts. We set them out clearly in six clauses in our former proposals, and need not re-state them here, except to say that the British Government cannot consent to the reference of any such questions, which concern Great Britain and Ireland alone, to the arbitration of a foreign Power.

“ We are profoundly glad to have your agreement that Northern Ireland cannot be coerced. This point is of great importance, because the resolve of our people to resist with their full power any attempt at secession by one part of Ireland carries with it of necessity an equal resolve to resist any effort to coerce another part of Ireland to abandon its allegiance to the Crown. We gladly give you the assurance that we will concur in any settlement which Southern and Northern Ireland may make for Irish unity within the six conditions already laid down, which apply to Southern and Northern Ireland alike; but we cannot agree to refer the question of your relations with Northern Ireland to foreign arbitration.

“ The conditions of the proposed settlement do not arise from any desire to force our will upon people of another

race, but from facts which are as vital to Ireland's welfare as to our own. They contain no derogation from Ireland's status as a Dominion, no desire for British ascendancy over Ireland, and no impairment of Ireland's national ideals.

"Our proposals present to the Irish people an opportunity such as has never dawned in their history before. We have made them in the sincere desire to achieve peace; but beyond them we cannot go. We trust that you will be able to accept them in principle. I shall be ready to discuss their application in detail whenever your acceptance in principle is communicated to me.—I am, yours faithfully, D. LLOYD GEORGE."

In order to complete the documents relating to the Government's offer, a fourth letter must be added. This letter was written by General Smuts to Mr. de Valera on August 4th, and a copy of it had been given by General Smuts to Mr. Lloyd George, with permission to publish it. The text of the letter was issued to the public at the same time as the three already quoted, that is to say, the day before the meeting of the Dail.

General Smuts' letter was written from the Savoy Hotel, London, and dated August 4th. It was as follows :—

"My dear de Valera,—Lane* duly reported to me the substance of his conversations with you and handed me your letter of July 31st. He told me of your anxiety to meet and discuss the situation with Ulster representatives. Since then I have, as I wired you yesterday, done my best to bring about such a meeting, but Sir James Craig, while willing to meet you in a conference with Mr. Lloyd George, still remains unwilling to meet you in his absence, and nothing that I have been able to do or say has moved him from that attitude. If you were to request a meeting with him he would reply setting forth his position, and saying that Ulster will not be moved from the constitutional position which she occupies under the existing legislation; she is satisfied with her present status and will on no account agree to any change.

* General Smuts' private secretary.

“ On the other hand, both in your conversation with Lane and in your letter you insist on Ulster coming into a United Ireland Constitution, and unless that is done you say that no further progress can be made. There is, therefore, an impasse which I do not at present know how to get over. Both you and Craig are equally immovable. Force as a solution of the problem is out of the question both on your and his premises. The process of arriving at an agreement will therefore take time.

“ The result is that at this stage I can be of no further use in this matter, and I have therefore decided to adhere to my plan of sailing for South Africa to-morrow. This I regret most deeply, as my desire to help in pushing the Irish settlement one stage further has been very great. But I must bow to the inevitable.

“ I should like to add a word in reference to the situation as I have come to view it. I have discussed it very fully with you and your colleagues. I have also probed as deeply as I could into the Ulster position. My conviction is that for the present no solution based on Ulster coming into the Irish State will succeed. Ulster will not agree, she cannot be forced, and any solution on those lines is at present foredoomed to failure.

“ I believe that it is in the interest of Ulster to come in, and that the force of community of interests will over a period of years prove so great and compelling that Ulster will herself decide to join the Irish State. But at present an Irish settlement is only possible if the hard facts are calmly faced and Ulster is left alone. Not only will she not consent to come in, but even if she does the Irish State will, I fear, start under such a handicap of internal friction and discordance that the result may well be failure once more.

“ My strong advice to you is to leave Ulster alone for the present as the only line along which a solution is practicable; to concentrate on a free Constitution for the remaining twenty-six counties, and through a successful running of the Irish State and the pull of economic and other peaceful forces, eventually to bring Ulster into that State. I know how repugnant such a solution must be to all Irish patriots, who look upon Irish unity as a *sine qua non* of any Irish settlement. But the wise man, while fighting for his ideal to the uttermost, learns also to bow to the inevitable. And a humble acceptance of the facts is often the only way of finally overcoming them. It

proved so in South Africa, where ultimate unity was only realised through several stages and a process of years; and where the Republican ideal, for which we had made unheard-of sacrifices, had ultimately to give way to another form of freedom.

“ My belief is that Ireland is travelling the same painful road as South Africa, and that with wisdom and moderation in her leadership she is destined to achieve no less success. As I said to you before, I do not consider one single clean-cut solution of the Irish question possible at present. You will have to pass through several stages, of which a free Constitution for Southern Ireland is the first, and the inclusion of Ulster and the full recognition of Irish unity will be the last. Only the first stage will render the last possible, as cause generates effect. To reverse the process and begin with Irish unity as the first step is to imperil the whole settlement. Irish unity should be the ideal to which the whole process should be directed.

“ I do not ask you to give up your ideal, but only to realise it in the only way which seems to me at present practicable. Freedom will lead inevitably to unity; therefore begin with freedom—with a free Constitution for the twenty-six counties—as the first and most important step in the whole settlement.

“ As to the form of that freedom, here, too, you are called to choose between two alternatives. To you, as you say, the Republic is the true expression of national self-determination. But it is not the only expression; and it is an expression which means your final and irrevocable severance from the British League. And to this, as you know, the Parliament and people of this country will not agree.

“ The British Prime Minister has made you an offer of the other form of freedom—of Dominion status—which is working with complete success in all parts of the British League. Important British Ministers have described Dominion status in terms which must satisfy all you could legitimately wish for. Mr. Lloyd George in his historic reply to General Hertzog at Paris, Mr. Bonar Law in a celebrated declaration in the House of Commons; Lord Milner, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, have stated their views, and they coincide with the highest claims which Dominion statesmen have ever put forward on behalf of their free nations.

“ What is good enough for these nations ought surely to be good enough for Ireland, too. For Irishmen to say

to the world that they will not be satisfied with the status of the great British Dominions would be to alienate all that sympathy which has so far been the main support of the Irish cause.

“ The British Prime Minister offers complete Dominion status to the twenty-six counties, subject to certain strategic safeguards which you are asked to agree to voluntarily as a free Dominion, and which we South Africans agreed to as a free nation in the Union of South Africa. To my mind, such an offer by a British Prime Minister, who—unlike his predecessors—is in a position to deliver the goods, is an event of unique importance.

“ You are no longer offered a Home Rule scheme of the Gladstone or Asquith type, with its limited powers, and reservations of a fundamental character. Full Dominion status with all it is and implies is yours—if you will but take it. It is far more than was offered to the Transvaal and Free State, who fought for freedom one of the greatest wars in the history of Great Britain, and one which reduced their own countries to ashes and their little people to ruins.

“ They accepted the far less generous offer that was made to them; from that foothold they then proceeded to improve their position, until to-day South Africa is a happy, contented, united, and completely free country. What they have finally achieved after years of warfare and political evolution is now offered you—not in doles or instalments, but at once and completely. If, as I hope, you accept, you will become a sister Dominion in a great circle of equal States, who will stand beside you and shield you and protect your new rights as if these were their own rights; who will view an invasion of your rights or a violation of your status as if it was an invasion and a violation of their own, and who will thus give you the most effective guarantee possible against any possible arbitrary interference by the British Government with your rights and position. In fact, the British Government will have no further basis of interference with your affairs, as your relations with Great Britain will be a concern not of the British Government but of the Imperial Conference, of which Great Britain will be only one of seven members. Any questions in issue between you and the British Government will be for the Imperial Conference to decide. You will be a free member of a great League, of which most of the other members will be in the same position as yourself;

and the Conference will be the forum for thrashing out any questions which may arise between members. This is the nature and the constitutional practice of Dominion freedom.

"The difficulty in Ireland is no longer a constitutional difficulty. I am satisfied that, from the constitutional point of view, a fair settlement of the Irish question is now possible and practicable. It is the human difficulty which remains. The Irish question is no longer a constitutional, but mostly a human problem.

"A history such as yours must breed a temper, an outlook, passions, suspicions, which it is most difficult to deal with. On both sides sympathy is called for, generosity, and a real largeness of soul. I am sure that both the English and Irish peoples are ripe for a fresh start. The tragic horror of recent events, followed so suddenly by a truce and fraternising all along the line, has set flowing deep fountains of emotion in both peoples, and created a new political situation.

"It would be the gravest reflection on our statesmanship if this auspicious moment was allowed to pass. You and your friends have now a unique opportunity—such as Parnell and his predecessors and successors never had—to secure an honourable and lasting peace for your people. I pray to God that you may be wisely guided, and that peace may now be concluded, before tempers again change and perhaps another generation of strife ensues.—Ever yours sincerely, J. C. SMUTS."

With these letters before them and before the eyes of the world that watched them, the members of Dail Eireann proceeded to their first unhindered session.

CHAPTER VIII.*

The first full meeting of Dail Eireann was necessarily an event of powerful appeal to the Irish imagination. Hitherto, the Dail had never assembled as a whole; the nearest approach to deliberation had been the hurried and restricted meetings mentioned in a previous chapter. The members of the Dail themselves had been elected upon one qualification, and one only, that they had proved themselves ardent supporters of the I.R.A. That such an assembly, composed of such persons, should not only be permitted to meet, but should indeed be encouraged to do so by the British Government, was proof positive to the people that England had made up her mind to recognise the Dail as the *de facto* Government of Ireland. And it must be remembered that the Dail was pledged to the Republic, to which every member had taken an oath of allegiance. The inference was obvious to the rank and file of Sinn Fein.

It was also unlikely, in the nature of things, that

* See Note C in Appendix.

the Dail would content itself with meeting and proceeding at once to consider the political situation without further preamble. The 'back benchers,' if we may so term them, of the Dail were certainly prepared to vote blindly and from a spirit of discipline and allegiance to the cause for anything that their leaders might propose. But those leaders themselves, the Ministers of Dail Eireann, were more than anxious to give an account of their stewardship, to demonstrate the work they had accomplished in building up the skeleton of Government during the months of oppression. If the Dail were to meet, and forthwith to issue a message of defiance to the British Government, there was every likelihood of its forcible dispersion. Prudence suggested that if it wished to remain in session, it should waste as much time as possible in the examination of the events of the past.

The traditions of Sinn Fein were illustrated at the opening of the Dail, which met in the Round Room of the Dublin Mansion House. All members elected to the Southern or Northern Parliaments were summoned to sign the roll, thus demonstrating the contention that these elections were regarded by Sinn Fein as elections to the Dail of an undivided Ireland. Those who replied to this summons, or practically all the Sinn Fein members for North and South, then recited the oath of allegiance to the Republic, which was as follows:—

“ I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I do not, and 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 Dail Eireann, against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation of purpose of evasion. So help me God."

The first business of the meeting was the election of a Speaker. Mr. Sean O'Kelly, who had been Speaker of the previous Dail, pleaded that he could no longer duplicate this office with that of Representative of the Republic in France, and Professor MacNeill was elected in his place. Then Mr. de Valera addressed the assembly. He said that he would deal with the general course of negotiations at a future time, and announced that the reply to be sent by the Irish nation to the British Prime Minister and his Government would be discussed by the Dail in private. "You all understand," he said, "that it is intended by the British Government to make that reply an issue of peace or war with this nation, hence it is that we have to discuss that matter first in private. Later on, when the reply is sanctioned and ready for despatch, there will be another public session." In the course of his speech he made an interesting reference to the doctrine of Republicanism. He said:—

"In the General Election of two and a half years ago, which was in effect a plebiscite, the question was put to the Irish people what form of government they wanted, how they wished to live, so that they might have an opportunity of working out for themselves their own national life in their own way, and the answer that the people gave was unmistakable. I do not say that the answer was for a form of government so much—because we are not Republican doctrinaires—but it was for Irish

freedom and Irish independence, and it was obvious to everyone who considered the question that Irish independence could not be realised at the present time in any other way so suitably as through a Republic. . . . The first duty, therefore, of the Ministry was to set about making that *de jure* Republic a *de facto* Republic."

This is the first hint from any Sinn Fein leader, since the adherence of that party to the principles of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, that the Republican form was only chosen because it offered the only suitable means of securing Irish freedom and independence. It was, in effect, if not in intention, an admission that if the British Government could offer equivalent freedom and independence under some other form than that of the Republic, this offer might conceivably be made to fit in with the aims of the movement. To some extent these words of Mr. de Valera explain the course he took in the negotiations which led up to the Conference. Mr. de Valera has been freely accused of inconsistency, but as a matter of fact his adherence to his expressed policy was, on the whole, closer than that of any of the other personalities involved, British or Irish, except the Ulster leaders.

On the following day, Mr. de Valera turned from the first of the objections standing in the way of acceptance of the British Government's offer, that of allegiance, to the second, that of partition. He dealt with the offer in the form in which it then stood in one sentence: "We cannot, and we will not, on behalf of this nation, accept these terms." Then, after dealing with some points in the offer and demonstrating the impossibility of their acceptance, he made an appeal to Ulster to abandon her demand for partition.

“ The North of Ireland can recognise themselves, if they want to, as we recognise ourselves, and if negotiations can only begin when we give up the right to live our own life in our own way there can be no negotiations with the North or anywhere. The people of the North are free to regard this from their own point of view. In coming into negotiations with us they have not to give up that point of view. As far as I am concerned I would be willing to suggest to the Irish people to give up a good deal in order to have an Ireland that could look to the future without anticipating distracting international problems. That is what these negotiations have been, as far as I am concerned, directed towards all the time—to get into touch with the people of the North of Ireland, and to tell them that towards them we have no enmity, because they are Irishmen living in Ireland, and that we would make sacrifices for them we would never think of making for Britain. We have not been able to secure that, because, unfortunately, the major problem between Ireland and Britain has engendered another problem in a section of our own people.

“ England’s solution of that has been to suggest that there should be an arrangement by which the minority of the island might have their interests safeguarded. And we would be able to give them every safeguard which any reasonable person could say they were entitled to. As I have said, we are ready to leave this question to external arbitration, because we are basing our claims only on right, and because we know perfectly well that pleaded before an impartial tribunal there could only be a verdict in one direction.

“ England’s claims in Ireland are unreasonable. The claims of the minority are unreasonable, but even so unreasonable claims we will be ready to consider. And I for one would be ready to go a long way to give way to them, particularly to their sentiments, if we could get them to come with us and to consider the necessities of their own country, and not be allying themselves with the foreigner.”

The sentiments of this speech met with no sympathetic response in Ulster, where it was obvious that not only the Ulster leaders, but their followers throughout the Province, had finally made up their minds to have nothing to do with any negotiations between the British Government and Sinn Fein.

The Dail went into secret session, not so much to discuss negotiations, but to consider the detailed reports of the Ministers, which had been given in general terms in public. Meanwhile the *Irish Bulletin* was at pains to prove, through the medium of long and involved argument, that the offer made to Ireland was not that of true Dominion status, but differed from it in many important particulars. Among the people of Ireland, opinion of the offer had not yet crystalised into any definite movement for or against. The only feeling of the country was one of relief that outrage and reprisal had ceased, and of determination that by hook or by crook some means must be found to prevent their renewal. Anxiety on this score was felt as the Dail continued to make no sign. It was remembered what manner of men its members were, and how little they represented the men who had a stake in the country. Those who owned the land, from the great landlords to the smallest peasant proprietors; business men, from the largest down to the village shopkeepers; labour itself, as representing any group of organised workers; all felt that their opinions would carry no weight in the discussions of the Dail, which would be swayed by the dictates of men who had made, during recent years at least, a trade of resistance to authority. These men might or might not have the theory of Irish independence at heart. What was almost certain was that they would fail to give adequate weight to the importance of Ireland's peace and prosperity.

On the 19th Parliament adjourned, the Prime Minister utilising the occasion to emphasise the fact that the British Government had made an offer

which reached the limits of concession, and must not be regarded as the first step in a bargain, to be extended to meet the demands of the other side. The outline of the terms could not be changed, nor their basis altered. Details alone could be the subject of negotiation.

The decision of the Dail was delivered at Downing Street on the 25th, in the form of a letter from Mr. de Valera to the Prime Minister, which was as follows :—

“ Sir,—The anticipatory judgment I gave in my reply of August 10th has been confirmed. I laid the proposals of your Government before Dail Eireann and, by an unanimous vote, it has rejected them.

“ From your letter of August 13th it was clear that the principle we were asked to accept was that the ‘geographical propinquity’ of Ireland to Britain imposed the condition of the subordination of Ireland’s right to Britain’s strategic interests as she conceives them, and that the very length and persistence of the efforts made in the past to compel Ireland’s acquiescence in a foreign domination imposed the condition of acceptance of that domination now.

“ We cannot believe that your Government intended to commit itself to a principle of sheer militarism destructive of international morality and fatal to the world’s peace. If a small nation’s right to independence is forfeit when a more powerful neighbour covets its territory for the military or other advantages it is supposed to confer, there is an end to liberty. No longer can any small nation claim a right to a separate sovereign existence. Holland and Denmark can be made subservient to Germany, Belgium to Germany or to France, Portugal to Spain. If nations that have been forcibly annexed to empires lose thereby their title to independence, there can be for them no re-birth to freedom. In Ireland’s case, to speak of her seceding from a partnership she has not accepted, or from an allegiance which she has not undertaken to render, is fundamentally false, just as the claim to subordinate her independence to British strategy is fundamentally unjust.

To neither can we, as representatives of the nation, lend countenance.

“ If our refusal to betray our nation’s honour and the trust that has been reposed in us is to be made an issue of war by Great Britain, we deplore it. We are as conscious of our responsibilities to the living as we are mindful of the principle, or of our obligations to the heroic dead. We have not sought war, nor do we seek war, but if war be made upon us we must defend ourselves, and shall do so, confident that, whether our defence be successful or unsuccessful, no body of representative Irishmen or Irishwomen will ever propose to the nation the surrender of its birthright.

“ We long to end the conflict between Britain and Ireland. If your Government be determined to impose its will upon us by force and, antecedent to negotiation, to insist upon conditions that involve a surrender of our whole national position, and make negotiations a mockery, the responsibility for the continuance of the conflict rests upon you.

“ On the basis of the broad guiding principle of government by consent of the governed, peace can be secured—a peace that will be just and honourable to all, and fruitful of concord and enduring amity. To negotiate such a peace Dail Eireann is ready to appoint its representatives, and, if your Government accepts the principle proposed, to invest them with plenary powers to meet and arrange with you for its application in detail.—I am, Sir, faithfully yours, EAMONN DE VALERA.”

The Dail met in open session once more on the 26th. The first business in which it indulged was the election of a new Ministry, in conformity with the principle that the present assembly was a new Dail. Mr. de Valera, proposed by Mr. McKeown and seconded by Mr. Mulcahy, both prominent I.R.A. leaders, was unanimously re-elected President. His speech in acknowledging this re-election was devoted mainly to emphasising the unity which existed in the ranks of the Sinn Fein leaders. A single extract from this speech will suffice. “ The very night that the British arrested me in Black-

rock," said the newly re-elected President, "they found something which will have taught them that there are no differences of opinion amongst us, and they know it. They found a statement which had been drawn up in order to contradict the statements which were being issued in America and elsewhere. They found a statement signed by every one of the Ministry of Dail Eireann, by all the Ministers who could be got into communication with, and the Ministers who were acting at the time. Every one of them had signed a statement saying that never at any time during the whole period of their office had there been any difference of opinion between me and them as regards policy and method."* Then, at twelve noon, the agreed time, he read the Dail's reply to the British proposals, first in Erse, then in English. It was remarked at the time that the passage which secured most applause was that in which the Dail signified its willingness to appoint representatives to negotiate peace.

Mr. Lloyd George's reply was dated August 26th, and was considered by the Dail in secret session on the next day. I forbear to quote it in full, as it has already been published in Command Paper No. 1502, but the following passages are important :

"The proposals which I made to you . . . were based upon full and sympathetic consideration of the views which you expressed. As I have already said, they were not made in any haggling spirit. On the contrary, my colleagues and I went to the

* For this document see page 86.

very limit of our powers in endeavouring to reconcile British and Irish interests.

“ Our proposals have gone far beyond all precedent, and have been approved as liberal by the whole civilised world. Even in quarters which have shown a sympathy with the most extreme of Irish claims they are regarded as the utmost which the Empire can reasonably offer or Ireland reasonably expect. . . . We consider that these proposals completely fulfil your wish that the principle of “ government by consent of the governed ” should be the broad, guiding principle of the settlement which your plenipotentiaries are to negotiate.”

The Prime Minister went on to refute the Sinn Fein claim that Ireland had a right to be treated as a separate sovereign Power, and in support of his refutation quoted the Irish leaders of the past, from Grattan's famous “ the ocean protests against separation, and the sea against union,” to Daniel O'Connell and Thomas Davis. He pointed out that Ireland was now offered more than these had ever demanded, and showed the futility of the new claim to separate nationality. “ It is playing with phrases to suggest that the principle of government by consent of the governed compels a recognition of that demand (for separate nationality) on our part, or that in repudiating it we are straining geographical and historical considerations to justify a claim to ascendancy over the Irish race. There is no political principle, however clear, that can be applied without regard to limitations imposed by physical and historical facts. Those limitations are as necessary as the very principle itself to the structure of every free nation; to deny them would

involve the dissolution of all democratic States.”

Towards the end of his letter the Prime Minister adopted a sterner tone. “ We are reluctant to precipitate the issue, but we must point out that a prolongation of the present state of affairs is dangerous. Action is being taken in various directions which, if continued, would prejudice the truce and must ultimately lead to its termination. This would indeed be deplorable. Whilst, therefore, prepared to make every allowance as to time which will advance the cause of peace, we cannot prolong a mere exchange of notes. It is essential that some definite and immediate progress should be made towards a basis upon which further negotiations can usefully proceed. Your letter seems to us, unfortunately, to show no such progress.

“ In this and my previous letters I have set forth the considerations which must govern the attitude of his Majesty’s Government in any negotiations which they undertake. If you are prepared to examine how far these considerations can be reconciled with the aspirations which you represent, I shall be happy to meet you and your colleagues.”

It was becoming obvious that Mr. de Valera, in invoking the genius of self-determination, was raising an argument which might easily lead him out of his depth into a political morass so deep that no man has yet succeeded in plumbing it. For if the principle of self-determination be admitted, what restriction is to be placed upon those who claim to exercise it? Ireland itself, in subsequent months, formed a perfect illustration of this difficulty, which must infallibly hamper any attempt to put the

theory into practice. Pursuing Mr. de Valera's line of argument, Ireland as a whole might be admitted to be a small nation which, by a majority, centred in the South and West, had determined upon separation from Great Britain. But the minority, centred in the North-East, and forming a community distinguishable by birth, dialect, and pursuits from the majority, had equally conclusively determined for union with Great Britain, involving partition from the majority in the South and West. How far was the principle of self-determination to extend? If Ireland had a right to secede from her union with Great Britain, surely Ulster had a right to secede from the rest of Ireland? Mr. de Valera implied that self-determination must be limited to nations; that Ulster's claim had no validity because she formed part of the same nation as the rest of Ireland. Apart from the fact that it is extremely difficult to find any evidence in Irish history that Ireland as a whole was ever united as a nation to an extent sufficient to justify this assumption, Mr. de Valera disregarded the limit he had himself set when the principle involved still further subdivision of his country. During the latter months of the year, various local bodies in the six counties proclaimed their allegiance to Sinn Fein, and on the strength of this allegiance petitioned the Dail for inclusion in the twenty-six counties of the South. Mr. de Valera was the first to support these petitions, and to demand that a Boundary Commission should be set up in order to determine the inclusion of the areas represented by these local bodies in Southern Ireland. But, in their turn, certain parishes in the dissentient areas protested against such a course,

and, to go a step further, individual Sinn Feiners within these parishes evinced a disposition to determine themselves in opposition to their neighbours.

Once again, where was the line to be drawn across this chain of self-determination? If the right to secede were granted to Ireland, it would appear logically that the right to secede must be granted to the individual, and with it leave to disregard the laws and ordinances in force in his parish. This is, of course, a *reductio ad absurdum*, but it admirably illustrates the difficulties into which Mr. de Valera was plunging. The whole crux of the phrase 'self-determination for small nations' lies in the definition of the word 'nation.' Mr. Lloyd George, speaking at Barnsley on the 27th, touched upon this very point.

"If Ireland has the right to separation, so has Scotland, so has Wales. I belong to a small nationality of these islands. There is a larger number of people in that small country conversing in the native language of the race than you have got in Ireland talking their language. . . . It is an emphatic nationality, it is a distinguished nationality, it is a proud nationality, and if that is claimed for us to set up an independent republic we have got a greater claim than anybody in the whole British Empire to do so."

Mr. Lloyd George continued to speak of the nationality of the great Dominions: "They have got sense of nations, they have got the sense of being a separate and distinct people. All the same they have got the great sense of pride of belonging to this, the greatest family of nations in the world, known as the British Empire." Between the individual and the family of nations, there is an almost limitless range. At what point within it

can we determine the unit of community, the indivisible atom of self-determination, in which the minority can claim no right to separation, but must perforce bow to the will of the majority?

We may take advantage of the short pause in negotiation which followed the despatch of the Prime Minister's letter of August 26th to review the sequence of events in Ulster since the opening of the first Northern Parliament by the King on June 22nd.

The peaceful establishment of Northern Ireland was from the first a source of profound irritation to the whole body of Sinn Fein, which saw in it the negation of all its arguments against partition. The North, working the Act in peace and prosperity, formed an awkward contrast to the South, where chaos reigned as a result of the policy of the Dail. Mr. de Valera expressed himself as averse to the coercion of Ulster, but it is doubtful what he included within that term. Certain it is that throughout the year, the truce notwithstanding, the efforts of the I.R.A. were directed towards making the position of Ulster untenable. The boycott of Ulster goods, which was continually lapsing owing to the damage it wrought to the Southern shopkeepers, was as frequently enforced by armed bands. Throughout the Six Counties roving bands of I.R.A. made it their business to molest Protestants and Unionists and destroy their property. In the city of Belfast itself, the Sinn Fein faction left no stone unturned to stir up that faction rioting for which the city is unhappily so notorious. These tactics were all designed to one end, which was to demonstrate to the people of the North that

insistence on partition would result in such constant aggression from the South as would end in the ruin of Ulster.

This campaign, which had been kept in check during the King's visit by the vigilance of the military and police authorities, began again with the dispersal of the Crown Forces. Newry, on the borders of Armagh and Down, was the scene of the first outrage. Here, during the early hours of the morning of July 6th, an armed gang took four young Unionists from their beds and shot them by the roadside. At about the same time, another band, operating from the Clogher Valley, a Sinn Fein district of County Tyrone, raided a mail and goods train on the main Great Northern of Ireland line between Belfast and Londonderry. Having secured the mails, they set the train on fire, and succeeded in destroying a very large quantity of Belfast goods. Two days later an organised attack was made on Post Offices in Belfast for the purpose of securing cash. The attack was only partially successful. Indeed, the announcement of the impending truce seemed to act as an added incentive to murder. The military authorities proclaimed the raising of the curfew in the three Northern towns where it was in operation, Belfast, Newry, and Derry, from the 11th. But on the 9th and 10th the situation became extremely grave. In the provinces isolated Unionists were murdered, and in the city of Belfast an attack upon a police patrol while they were passing through a Sinn Fein area developed into an outbreak of rioting in which the death roll had reached fourteen by the evening of the 10th.

The period about the twelfth of July has always

been apt to breed trouble between the factions in Ulster, and it was unfortunate that in this year it coincided with the announcement of the truce, which the Northern Sinn Feiners were determined should not interfere with their campaign. Despite the fact that on the 11th the Special Constabulary were disarmed and left with only their truncheons, in recognition of the existence of the truce, at a hurried meeting of the civil and military authorities it was decided to cancel the order raising the curfew, a measure very necessary in view of the fact that the rioting which had begun the day before had spread over the city, resulting in the destruction of over a hundred houses in the Sinn Fein quarter by the infuriated Unionists. Throughout the following week the state of Belfast resembled that of a city in a state of siege, the streets being infested with snipers, who were constantly driven by the police and military from their positions and who as regularly found new ones from which to pick off those who ventured into the disturbed areas.

Meanwhile strong protests had been made by the Dublin Castle authorities to Mr. de Valera on the way the truce was being observed in Ulster, and as a result Mr. Eoin O'Duffy was appointed Sinn Fein liaison officer for Ulster, a post which made him the channel of communication between the I.R.A. and the Crown Forces. On the 16th he announced that sniping on the part of the Roman Catholic population of Belfast would cease, except when undertaken in defence of their property. He also protested that the Catholics were not the aggressors, but were acting purely on the defensive, pointing out that trouble only arose in those areas where Catholics

were in the minority. The trouble died down, and for a time all was quiet.

The outlook of the Northern Government on the negotiations between Mr. de Valera and the British Prime Minister caused considerable speculation at this time. Sir James Craig, in the course of a speech made in London on August 3rd, said :—

“ We who are in the midst of difficult times, and are quite open to take a leading part in them, would be indeed foolish if we were to say a single word that would interfere with the realisation of peace throughout Ireland. We are all asking for peace in our own ways, but in regard to that I believe it would be the height of wisdom on the part of individuals, leaders, and of the Press especially, to say nothing in the meantime, because even a slip, even a guess, sometimes creates much more mischief than the originator of it has any idea.”

This policy of silence was well observed by the Northern leaders. They were, of course, aware of the offer that had been made to Sinn Fein, and they were equally aware that upon the publication of this offer there would be a certain resentment in Ulster. The Unionists of the North were bound to feel that to some extent they had been unworthily treated by the British Government. They had accepted the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, and had loyally put them into operation. Sinn Fein, which had rejected the Act and made war upon the Crown, had, by its rebellious actions, extorted more favourable terms than had been given to Ulster. There was already a suspicion that if the North were to ask for a status similar to that offered to the South, she would be told that this could be obtained by abandonment of partition, and by this means alone. Extreme Orange men had no doubt whatever that the British Government would

willingly sacrifice Ulster in the cause of an Irish settlement, not perhaps by active coercion, but by offering the South such advantages that Ulster would be faced by the alternatives of ruin or surrender to her enemies.

On August 6th an ominous incident took place in Belfast. A police constable challenged two men whom he suspected of acting suspiciously. They replied that they were soldiers of the I.R.A. On attempting to arrest them, the constable was fired at and wounded. The noise of the shot brought out a crowd, who succeeded in capturing the men. Mr. Eoin O'Duffy came to the rescue. He said that the men were on regular patrol, in the interests of law and order, and under the protection of the truce, but that they should not have been carrying arms. The suggestion that Belfast was being regularly patrolled by the I.R.A. was hardly calculated to reassure the loyal population.

On the 15th the observations of the Northern Cabinet on the Government offer to Mr. de Valera, in the form of a letter from Sir James Craig to Mr. Lloyd George, became known :—

“ My dear Prime Minister,—Your proposals for an Irish settlement have now been exhaustively examined by my Cabinet and myself. We realise that the preamble is specially addressed to Mr. de Valera and his followers, and observe that it implies that difficulties have long existed throughout the Empire and America attributable to persons of Irish extraction. In fairness to the Ulster people, I must point out that they have always aimed at the retention of their citizenship in the United Kingdom and Empire of which they are proud to form part, and that there are not to be found in any quarter of the world more loyal citizens than those of Ulster descent. They hold fast to cherished traditions, and deeply resent any infringement of their

rights and privileges, which belong equally to them and to the other citizens within the Empire.

"In order that you may correctly understand the attitude we propose to adopt it is necessary that I should call to your mind the sacrifices we have so recently made in agreeing to self-government and consenting to the establishment of a Parliament of Northern Ireland. Much against our wish, but in the interests of peace, we accepted this as a final settlement of the long-outstanding difficulty with which Great Britain had been confronted. We are now busily engaged in ratifying our part of this solemn bargain, while Irishmen outside the Northern area, who in the past struggled for Home Rule, have chosen to repudiate the Government of Ireland Act and to press Great Britain for wider power. To join in such pressure is repugnant to the people of Northern Ireland.

"In the further interest of peace we therefore respectfully decline to determine or interfere with the terms of settlement between Great Britain and Southern Ireland. It cannot, then, be said that "Ulster blocks the way." Similarly, if there exists an equal desire for peace on the part of Sinn Fein, they will respect the *status quo* in Ulster and will refrain from any interference with our Parliament and rights, which under no circumstances can we permit. In adopting this course we rely on the British people, who charged us with the responsibility of undertaking our parliamentary institutions, to safeguard the ties that bind us to Great Britain and the Empire, to ensure that we are not prejudiced by any terms entered into between them and Mr. de Valera, and to maintain the just equality exhibited throughout the Government of Ireland Act.

"Our acceptance of your original invitation to meet in conference still holds good, and if at any time our assistance is again desired we are available, but I feel bound to acquaint you that no meeting is possible between Mr. de Valera and myself until he recognises that Northern Ireland will not submit to any authority other than his Majesty the King and the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and admits the sanctity of the existing powers and privileges of the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland. In conclusion let me assure you that peace is as earnestly desired by my Government and myself as by you and yours, and that although we have nothing left to us to give away, we are prepared, when you and Mr. de Valera arrive at a satisfactory settlement, to

co-operate with Southern Ireland on equal terms for the future welfare of our common country. In order to avoid any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of our views I intend to publish this letter when your proposals are made public.—Yours sincerely, JAMES CRAIG.”

The publication of the Government's offer caused considerable surprise in Ulster. It was stated that the terms were far too generous, and that they must express the very last inch of concession. It was felt, however, that the matter did not concern Ulster, and that the progress of the negotiations must be left to the British Government. But great annoyance was caused by the fact that the Sinn Fein boycott of Ulster was being redoubled at the very time when Mr. de Valera was appealing to her to abandon her attitude upon partition. On the 17th the Sinn Fein Minister of Labour stated in the Dail that as a direct result of the boycott more bankruptcies had taken place in Belfast than had ever been recorded previously. This statement was indignantly refuted by appeal to the statistics of the Courts, but that it should have been made at such a time was an indication of the hatred of Sinn Fein, and a strange commentary on Mr. de Valera's words of conciliation.

Throughout the exchange of notes which followed Mr. de Valera's reply to the Prime Minister, Sir James Craig and his Government remained firm in their determination to treat with Sinn Fein only through the medium of the conference to which Mr. Lloyd George had invited both. In reply to a letter from a correspondent who urged upon him “a tentative offer on the part of Ulster to sit in deliberation with the rest of Ireland,” Sir James said :—

“ This is provided for in a practical form in the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, Section 2 (1), creating a Council of Ireland to which the Parliament of Northern Ireland has duly elected its quota of twenty representatives, I myself being one of the number. We reluctantly accepted the Act in the interests of peace and as a final settlement of the long-outstanding difficulty with which Great Britain has been confronted, and now having made that sacrifice, we are busily engaged in ratifying our part of the solemn bargain. Your fears of ‘ future isolation between fellow-Irishmen ’ are unfounded so far as we are concerned, and to the extent that we can control future events. Equally unfounded is your inference that ‘ the domestic link with England will be severed.’ We have always aimed at the closest possible connection with Great Britain and the retention of our citizenship in the British Empire, of which we are proud to form a part.”

On August 29th fresh rioting broke out in Belfast between the rival factions, despite the utmost efforts of police and military to keep them apart. Two people were killed and twelve wounded, and the city immediately displayed signs that this was only the prelude to another period of strife. It is practically impossible to allocate the blame for these continued outbreaks. In a city where two bitterly opposed factions live in such close proximity, the smallest incident is sufficient to start stone throwing, which must rapidly develop into an interchange of revolver shots and the hurling of bombs. Both sides have always declared that the other is to blame; the rival partisans are ready to declare that the provocation came from their adversaries. The tendency was for the Northern Government to be criticised for the bloodshed in the streets of their capital, but it must be remembered that at this time the provisions of the Act handing over to them the responsibility for law and order had not yet come into force. The police were still reserved to the

British Government, the troops could only be brought into action on the authority of their commanding officer.

On this particular occasion, whichever party may have been to blame originally, the Sinn Fein element took the offensive into their hands on the second day. Their snipers took up positions from which they could overlook the Protestant workers as they went to their work, and from these positions they poured a heavy fire into their enemies. During the day the authorities did their best to dislodge them, but as soon as they were driven out of one position they took up another. As the workmen returned home they were again subjected to a rain of fire, of which they had to run the gauntlet, with the result that six were killed and some fifty injured.

The morning of the third day, August 31st, opened under exactly the same conditions. The snipers were to all intents and purposes in occupation of the city, and no Protestant could reach his place of employment without serious risk of being shot. It was evident that far more drastic steps would have to be taken to suppress the snipers if any sort of order was to be restored to the city. But the British officials were reluctant to take any steps which might endanger the truce. Already bitter comment had been made on the fact that though plenty of troops were available in the neighbourhood, very few had been drafted into Belfast. The Ulstermen, always suspicious, were ready to declare that the British Government cared nothing for the lives of the citizens of Belfast so long as the susceptibilities of Sinn Fein were not offended by any action on their part which might be construed

as a breach of the truce. To some extent they were right, and the condition of the city was another example of the evils of hesitation which a firm policy might have checked at the start. The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Sir William Coates, called on the officer commanding the 15th Infantry Brigade, who was the Competent Military Authority for the district, and also on the City Police Commissioner, in order to appeal for more vigorous measures to be taken. In the evening a conference was held between the Cabinet of Northern Ireland and the Lord Mayor on the one hand, and Mr. Cope, who had come from Dublin for the purpose, and the military and police chiefs on the other. As a result of this conference the troops in the city were reinforced, and sterner preventive measures were immediately taken. The unrest died down at once, and conditions in the city resumed their normal aspect. Strong pickets of soldiers lined the principal streets, and the workers were enabled to go to and from their employment with safety. But considerable indignation was expressed at the delay which had occurred before these measures were taken. The Lord Mayor, at a meeting of the Corporation on September 1st, made a reference to the general opinion of the loyalist section of the city, which was heartily applauded. He said that a very regrettable occurrence had disgraced the city during the past few days, and that the feeling on all sides was that the police did not take adequate steps to secure the safety of the population until the previous day. There could be no doubt that the Lord Mayor was correct in his statement. As soon as an adequate military force was posted in the city the disturbances

ceased, and it is hardly to the credit of the British authorities that these necessary steps were not taken until the riot had lasted three days and the casualty list had reached the appalling total of eighteen killed and over a hundred wounded.

An interesting light was thrown upon the responsibility for the rioting by Mr. Eoin O'Duffy, who on the conclusion of the outbreak made an official statement in his capacity of Liaison Officer for Northern Ireland. He said that after the refusal of the military and police to act, the situation on the morning of the 31st was such that he ordered the I.R.A. to take action for the protection of Catholics, as it was quite patent to everyone that the police authorities were conniving with the Orange mob. I.R.A. sentries were placed at vantage points in the city, and in a few hours made their presence felt. On the 1st, as the result of representations made to him, he ordered his troops to cease firing. This statement was not unnaturally taken as an admission of guilt on the part of the I.R.A., and a demand was immediately made that action should be taken against Mr. O'Duffy. But he was protected by the truce, his arrest would have been regarded by Sinn Fein as a breach of its terms, and once more the British authorities were helpless in face of the agreement they had made. Mr. O'Duffy remained at liberty, to make an even more surprising statement, which will be referred to later.

CHAPTER IX.

On September 1st Mr. Lloyd George, who was spending a holiday in Scotland, arrived at Gairloch in Invernesshire. Owing to this fact, and to the likelihood that the state of the Irish negotiations would require further meetings on the part of Ministers, the majority of the Cabinet had also elected to take their holidays in Scotland, in order to be within call. On the very day of his arrival, Messrs. Barton and McGarth reached Scotland as the bearers of a message from the Dail to Mr. Lloyd George. This message, which was dated August 30th, and was in the form of a letter from Mr. de Valera, contained a reiteration of the contention that the Prime Minister had not offered Ireland true Dominion status, but something greatly inferior. The last paragraph, however, suggested a meeting of plenipotentiaries.

“The respective plenipotentiaries must meet untrammelled by any conditions save the facts themselves, and must be prepared to reconcile their subsequent differences not by appeals to force, covert or open, but by reference to some guiding principle on which there is common agreement. We have proposed the principle of

Government by consent of the governed, and do not mean it as a mere phrase. . . . That you claim it as a peculiarly British principle, instituted by Britain, and "now the very life of the British Commonwealth" should make it peculiarly acceptable to you. On this basis, and this only, we see a hope of reconciling 'the considerations which must govern the attitude' of Britain's representatives with the considerations which must govern the attitude of Ireland's representatives, and on this basis we are ready at once to appoint plenipotentiaries."

On receipt of this message, the Prime Minister summoned a meeting of the Cabinet at Inverness on September 7th. At this meeting it was resolved to ask for a definite reply from Mr. de Valera as to whether or not he was prepared to appoint representatives to discuss with the British Government the offer originally made, and, if the reply should be in the affirmative, to appoint a time and place for such discussions. The message conveying these resolutions is worth quoting in full.

"His Majesty's Government have considered your letter of August 30th, and have to make the following observations upon it:—

"The principle of government by consent of the governed is the foundation of British constitutional development, but we cannot accept as a basis of practical conference an interpretation of that principle which would commit us to any demands which you might present, even to the extent of setting up a Republic and repudiating the Crown. You must be aware that conference on such a basis is impossible. So applied, the principle of government by consent of the governed would undermine the fabric of every democratic state and drive the civilised world back into tribalism.

"On the other hand, we have invited you to discuss our proposals on their merits, in order that you may have no doubt as to the scope and sincerity of our intentions. It would be open to you in such a conference to raise the subject of guarantees on any points in which you may consider Irish freedom prejudiced by these proposals.

“ His Majesty’s Government are loath to believe that you will insist upon rejecting their proposals without examining them in conference. To decline to discuss a settlement which would bestow upon the Irish people the fullest freedom of national development within the Empire can only mean that you repudiate all allegiance to the Crown and all membership of the British Commonwealth. If we were to draw this inference from your letter, then further discussion between us could serve no useful purpose and all conference would be vain. If, however, we are mistaken in this inference, as we still hope, and if your real objection to our proposals is that they offer Ireland less than the liberty which we have described, that objection can be explored at a conference.

“ You will agree that this correspondence has lasted long enough. His Majesty’s Government must, therefore, ask for a definite reply as to whether you are prepared to enter a conference to ascertain how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire can best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations. If, as we hope, your answer is in the affirmative, I suggest that the conference should meet at Inverness on the 20th inst.”

This was, in effect an ultimatum in a mild form. It was natural that British opinion should be becoming impatient at the circumlocution of Mr. de Valera and the Dail, but there were good reasons why a stronger line should not be taken with them. In the first place, many people, including the Chief Secretary, had always been of the opinion that the first step in Ireland towards ultimate peace must be directed towards securing a cessation of the murder of members of the Crown Forces rather than towards securing any permanent political agreement. The murders had ceased with the truce, but it was certain that they would break out again at the first symptom of this truce being threatened. The longer the truce endured, the more likely it was that the good sense of the country would organise to prevent hostilities

again. Therefore, for this reason, a prolongation of negotiations was not an unfavourable circumstance. On the other hand, the truce was only intended as the device of a moment, and it was very necessary that it should be replaced as soon as possible by some more precise arrangement. As matters stood in Ireland, no form of government was in practical operation. The Crown Forces were restrained by the uncertainty of their position under the truce, and by the knowledge that the Government would fail to support them in any action, however proper and justifiable, which would result in a threat by Sinn Fein to break off negotiations. The longer Ireland remained an administrative no - man's - land, in which every individual was free to interpret the law as he pleased, without much fear of punishment, the more difficult it would be to enforce order for any permanent Government which might eventually secure the reins.

There was another consideration which weighed very heavily with the Government. The eyes of the world, and especially those of America, were upon the conduct of the negotiations. Both sides were to a large extent 'playing to the gallery.' If, as many people believed at the time, the negotiations must fail and war ensue, blame for their failure would fall upon the side that took the initiative in bringing the negotiations to a conclusion. The Prime Minister had at all times been peculiarly sensitive to American opinion; at this moment, with the Disarmament Conference looming in the future, he was doubly so. The net result was that the Government were prepared to endure a certain

measure of the humiliation which must attach to the continuance of the battle of words and phrases with Mr. de Valera, as an alternative to the risk attending a firm intimation that he must consent to a conference or take the consequences.

Before dealing with the reception of the Inverness Cabinet's letter by the Dail, it will be as well to deal with the attitude of the Sinn Fein leaders subsequent to Mr. de Valera's letter of August 30th. Mr. Collins, who, having secured one of the seats for County Armagh in the elections for the Northern Parliament, described himself as the member for County Armagh in the Dail, addressed his constituents on September 4th at the town of Armagh, where, as it happened, most of the Sinn Feiners in the constituency lived. His speech naturally dealt with the two essential difficulties, allegiance and partition. In regard to the first he said :—

“ You will have read of the English offer. You will have read all the correspondence which passed between the two Governments with regard to the terms themselves. I have little to add to what has been said in our letters to the British Government. These terms are not acceptable to us. They do not give us the substance of freedom.”

In regard to the second, he warned Ulster that the South would shortly achieve its freedom, and pointed out what this freedom would involve.

“ It is obvious that an artificial excuse is being made of the existence of the Northern Parliament to keep Ireland asunder. There, again, is England using the Orangemen for her own interests, and the interests of the Orangemen have never been the same as those of England. The Orangemen have been used as a tool in preventing up to the present what is now inevitable. The moment is near when they will no longer be of use as a tool—when they will, in fact, stand in the way of an agreement with

Ireland, which has now become essential to British interests. Then they will be thrown aside, and they will find their eyes turned to an England which no longer wants them. I say freedom is coming, and nobody can stop it. With this freedom Ireland is on the verge of an era of prosperity and development. We see ahead growing industries, improved agriculture, increasing wealth. Are those counties really going to deprive themselves of the benefit of economic association with the new Ireland? Sir James Craig has said that he is responsible for peace in Northern Ireland. In Ireland to-day there is peace everywhere except in the domain of his Parliament. Our proposal is, as I have said, that they should come in. We can afford to give them even more than justice. We can afford to be generous. That is our message to the North, and it is meant for those who are opposed to us rather than for those who are with us. But to those who are with us I can say that no matter what happens, no matter what the future may bring, we shall not desert them. The Parliament, in its doomed building, does not, or cannot, control its unruly element, and already that doomed building is shaking."

It is interesting to compare Mr. Collins' speech with certain statements made by Mr. de Valera in reply to the question whether or not he had a 'will to peace.' Mr. Collins was to some extent prophetic, and his predictions of the future were practical and largely justified by the events. Mr. de Valera, though consistent, was as usual utterly unpractical, and invoked the shade of circumstance rather than circumstance itself. A single extract from a long statement will suffice as illustration.

"Peace will never be founded on make-believe. Let us tear aside the camouflage, and put away the hypocrisy. If England is issuing an ultimatum, let it be an ultimatum. Brute force, naked and unabashed, has been used against small nations before. Our nation has known it for long. The present generation, even our little children, have experienced it, and no pretence will hide a threat of force from being recognised for what it is. England has no basis in right for a single one of the demands she is making

upon Ireland. She would not dare to make them to a Power even nearly as strong as herself. They are made to us simply because it is felt that Britain is strong enough to enforce them, and that Ireland is too weak to resist successfully. This is the naked truth, and it is useless attempting to hide it, for a peace secured in these circumstances would have no one's slightest respect. Certainly no Irishman would feel bound by any arrangement thus arrived at. With this background of force war, not peace, would surely be the outcome."

But the most astonishing pronouncement on the situation was that of Mr. Eoin O'Duffy, who spoke of Mr. Collins' meeting at Armagh. This gentleman, who, it will be remembered, held the post of liaison officer for the I.R.A. in Ulster, made a violent attack upon the Unionists of the North:—

"These people are standing as a bridgehead for the British Government in this country. So far as these people are concerned they should have an opportunity very soon of declaring whether they are for Ireland or the British Empire. If they are for Ireland we will extend the hand of welcome as we have done in the past. If they decide that they are against Ireland and against their fellow-countrymen we will have to take suitable action. We will have to put on the screw. The boycott of Belfast—we will tighten that screw, and, if necessary, we will have to use the lead against them."

These words, coming from the man who was responsible for the whole policy of the I.R.A. in Ulster, caused great indignation in the North, and were considered inadvisable even by the more ardent of the Sinn Fein leaders. Mr. O'Duffy was removed from his post in Ulster and received an appointment in Cork, where his speeches would not be so likely to bring retribution upon his supporters.

An incident, instructive not because it was the first or the last of similar occurrences, but because it throws a light upon the attitude of that section

of Irishmen who followed the teaching of Mr. Cathal O'Shannon occurred about this time. This incident has already been referred to (page 156), but a slightly fuller account may not be out of place. On September 2nd the employees of the Cork Harbour Board struck work on the refusal of the Board to grant them a certain minimum wage. On the 6th they proclaimed a Soviet, and took over the management of the port. They began collecting dues, and expressed the intention of carrying on as before, paying themselves the wage they demanded out of the monies they collected. Unfortunately for their intentions, trade completely deserted the port, and ships used competing harbours, such as Waterford. In the end the strikers were glad to abide by the arbitration of the Dail Ministry of Labour.

The Dail Cabinet was undoubtedly influenced in its answer to the Prime Minister's last note by the almost universal desire expressed in Ireland that a conference should be held. Without outside influence, there is no doubt that at this particular stage the extremist party would have carried the day, and a defiant answer, leaving no alternative to war, would have been sent. All reports received by British Ministers pointed to this, and there was no doubt that Sinn Fein as a party would stand by whatever message the Dail sent. The days when a split in the Dail was possible were not yet. But, reinforced by the universal demand of the Irish Press and nation, the moderate party was the stronger. Even such a paper as the *Independent* had said "Nomenclature does not now count so much as a scheme which in substance and reality gives Ireland control of all her own affairs. We

trust the conference will be held.” The Dail’s methods were therefore based on caution. They sent Messrs. Boland and McGrath to Gairloch with their letter, and instructions to inform Mr. Lloyd George of the substance of its contents and secure his opinion upon them. These envoys arrived at Gairloch on the 13th, and after an interview with the Prime Minister returned to Dublin, leaving the letter with Mr. Lloyd George, who agreed to disregard it should the Dail so desire after the return of their envoys. But on the 15th Mr. de Valera decided to publish the letter in the original form. An extract from it will be sufficient to make its purport clear.

“ We have no hesitation in declaring our willingness to enter a conference to ascertain how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire can best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations. . . . We have accordingly summoned Dail Eireann that we may submit to it for ratification the names of the representatives it is our intention to propose. We hope that these representatives will find it possible to be at Inverness on the date you suggest, September 20th.”

So far so good, and had the note concluded with this consent without further qualification, the conference could have met. But the Dail Cabinet, fearful of the extremists’ warning that upon the meeting of the Dail they would declare that Ireland had been betrayed, and that the representatives would be accredited to a conference at which Ireland’s rights had been surrendered beforehand, dared not refrain from once more stating its position. The note continued :—

“ In this final note we deem it our duty to reaffirm that our position is, and only can be, as we have defined it throughout this correspondence. Our nation has formally

declared its independence, and recognises itself as a sovereign State. It is only as the representatives of that State, and as its chosen guardians, that we have any authority or powers to act on behalf of our people."

Here Mr. de Valera, against his better judgment, perhaps, was led into the trap which he himself had been the first to point out in a letter to one of the very men who carried the note to Gairloch (see page 217). It was already practically certain that if the power of the Dail to negotiate on the British Government's terms were challenged, and a new Dail elected on the issue of negotiation or war, the result would be the defeat of the Republican party, if anything like a free election could be secured. The Dail Cabinet also made itself look somewhat ridiculous by the assertion that Ireland "recognised herself" as a Sovereign State, emphasising the fact that no other nation did so. Mr. Lloyd George replied by telegram to the publication of this letter, expressing surprise that the objectionable paragraph, of which he had warned the envoys, had not been removed. His telegram continued:—

"I must accordingly cancel the arrangements for conference next week at Inverness, and must consult my colleagues on the course of action which this new situation necessitates. I will communicate this to you as soon as possible, but as I am for the moment laid up here, a few days' delay is inevitable."

To this Mr. de Valera replied, also by telegram, in a spirit of injured astonishment that Mr. Lloyd George did not realise that if Ireland entered the conference without previously defining her position, her right would thereby be "irreparably prejudiced." A wave of consternation swept over both England and Ireland at this seeming deadlock.

It appeared for the moment that negotiations had definitely broken down. But during the next few days an intense telegraphic bombardment on both sides did something to restore confidence. So long as views continued to be exchanged there were grounds for hope.

On the 17th Mr. Lloyd George telegraphed to Mr. de Valera, pointing out the impossibility of a conference between the British Government and the representatives of a Sovereign State, as this in itself would be an admission of Ireland's severance from the Empire, and reasserting that insistence upon this point would make conference impossible.

On the same day Mr. de Valera replied to the effect that Mr. Lloyd George was inconsistent.

"I have already had conference with you, and in these conferences and in my written communications I have never ceased to recognise myself for what I was, and am. If this involves recognition on your part, then you have already recognised us. . . . Believe me to have but one object at heart, the setting of the conference on such a basis of truth and reality as would make it possible to secure through it the result which the people of these two islands so ardently desire."

To this Mr. Lloyd George replied on the 18th, pointing out that he had met Mr. de Valera as "the chosen leader of the great majority in Southern Ireland." "I am prepared to meet your delegates as I met you in July, in the capacity of 'chosen spokesmen' for your people to discuss the association of Ireland with the British Commonwealth."

On the next day, Mr. de Valera replied in a telegram which was the result of a meeting of the Dail Cabinet, in which the more moderate party succeeded in demonstrating the danger of going too

far. They had been warned that insistence upon recognition of the Irish delegates as representatives of a Sovereign State must result in the breaking off of negotiations and a resumption of hostilities. The secret liaison system between them and the British Government viâ Dublin Castle was now complete, and a virtual ultimatum could be conveyed to them without the observance of official forms. The Dail Cabinet, faced with this knowledge that further obstinacy meant war, decided to take a more temperate line. The telegram was as follows:—

“ We have had no thought at any time of asking you to accept any conditions precedent to a conference. We have thought it as unreasonable to expect you, as a preliminary, to recognise the Irish Republic, formally or informally, as that you should expect us, formally or informally, to surrender our national position.

“ It is precisely because neither side accepts the position of the other that there is a dispute at all, and that a conference is necessary to search for and to discuss such adjustments as might compose it. A treaty of accommodation and association properly concluded between the peoples of these two islands, and between Ireland and the group of States in the British Commonwealth, would, we believe, end the dispute for ever and enable the two nations to settle down in peace, each pursuing its own individual development and contributing its own quota to civilisation, but working together in free and friendly co-operation in affairs of agreed common concern.

“ To negotiate such a treaty the respective representatives of the two nations must meet. If you seek to impose preliminary conditions which we must regard as involving a surrender of our whole position they cannot meet. Your last telegram makes it clear that misunderstandings are more likely to increase than to diminish and the cause of peace more likely to be retarded than advanced by a continuance of the present correspondence.

“ We request you, therefore, to state whether your letter of September 7th is intended to be a demand for a surrender on our part or an invitation to a conference free on both sides and without prejudice should an agreement

not be reached. If the latter, we readily confirm our acceptance of the invitation, and our appointed delegates will meet your Government's representatives at any time in the immediate future that you designate."

To this telegram Mr. Lloyd George did not reply at once, wisely deciding to let its more pacific tone produce its effect in Ireland. Although the Cabinet as a whole did not perhaps trouble much about the details of Irish affairs, and concerned itself mainly with broad outlines, it was dimly aware that two schools of thought were evolving among the leaders of Sinn Fein, who had hitherto sunk their differences in furtherance of a common policy. English officials had often classed individuals in the Sinn Fein movement as more or less advanced in their views, a useless and usually incorrect classification while hostilities lasted. But this unity, which had stood the strain of war, could not stand the strain of peace. Although the members of the Dail Cabinet remained on perfectly friendly terms with one another, and had between them private understandings which were not apparent in their official relations, they now began to be divided on the question whether or not it was desirable to force a fight to a finish on the technical issue of a Republic. Mr. de Valera, supported by such men as Cathal Brugha, the Minister of Defence, in the Cabinet, and by the fanatical element in the country, was bitterly opposed to any retraction from the Republican attitude. He himself was sincerely convinced that anything less would be merely a decently veiled form of the English domination of Ireland; his followers were possibly not quite so disinterested in their outlook. On the other

hand, Mr. Griffith, the founder of the original Sinn Fein party, was by now convinced that the republican ideal was not possible of achievement through the present negotiations. Mr. Collins, and with him the older men of the I.R.A., knew that if it came to war, the final victory must necessarily rest with the British troops. These men were inclined to accept the British offer, and to endeavour to extend it until they had secured the very utmost that England was prepared to concede. The peace party, as we may call them, had no idea of regarding any settlement upon these lines as a permanent one. But they were beginning to realise that from the Union to a Republic was a far political journey, and that Dominion status was a long step in the desired direction. And the peace party, which had already secured the selection of a majority of delegates to a conference, should such be held, employed their utmost efforts to produce a demand for the holding of the conference among the Press and people of Ireland.

Mr. Griffith himself, in the course of an interview on the 24th, declared that at no time had the Sinn Fein leaders asked the British Government to recognise the Sovereign State claim as a preliminary to conference. He understood a conference to be an occasion for an exchange of views, and that the only thing that mattered was the final agreement. On the same day, Mr. Churchill, speaking at Dundee, said: "No mere pedantry or hair-splitting, no quibbling about words and phrases, will be allowed by us to stand in the way of practical steps to peace."

It was not until the 29th that Mr. Lloyd George

resumed the correspondence. On that date he telegraphed to Mr. de Valera as follows :—

“ Sir,—His Majesty’s Government have given close and earnest consideration to the correspondence which has passed between us since their invitation to you to send delegates to a conference at Inverness.

“ In spite of their sincere desire for peace, and in spite of the more conciliatory tone of your last communication, they cannot enter a conference upon the basis of this correspondence. Notwithstanding your personal assurance to the contrary, which they much appreciate, it might be argued in future that the acceptance of a conference on this basis had involved them in a recognition which no British Government can accord.

“ On this point they must guard themselves against any possible doubt. There is no purpose to be served by any further interchange of explanatory and argumentative communications upon this subject. The position taken up by his Majesty’s Government is fundamental to the existence of the British Empire, and they cannot alter it.

“ My colleagues and I remain, however, keenly anxious to make, in co-operation with your delegates, another determined effort to explore every possibility of settlement by personal discussion. The proposals which we have already made have been taken by the whole world as proof that our endeavours for reconciliation and settlement are no empty form; and we feel that conference, not correspondence, is the most practical and hopeful way to an understanding such as we ardently desire to achieve.

“ We therefore send herewith a fresh invitation to a conference in London on October 11th, where we can meet your delegates, as spokesmen of the people whom you represent, with a view to ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire may best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations.”

The last paragraph of this note contains the final definition of the British Government of the purpose of the conference and the status of the delegates who should attend it. This definition left no loophole for any pretence on the part of the Sinn Fein leaders that the issue of the conference

could be a Republic, or that their representatives were those of a Sovereign State. But the peace party in Dublin had gained sufficient ground to enable them to insist on an acceptance by the Dail Cabinet of the British Government's invitation, without a reaffirmation of the Republican position which would render this acceptance tantamount to a refusal. Mr. de Valera replied as follows:—

“ Sir,—We have received your letter of invitation to a conference in London on October 11th with a view to ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire may best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations.

“ Our respective positions have been stated and are understood, and we agree that conference, not correspondence, is the most practical and hopeful way to an understanding. We accept the invitation, and our delegates will meet you in London on the date mentioned to explore every possibility of settlement by personal discussion.”

Mr. de Valera had satisfied himself with the phrase “ our respective positions have been stated and are understood,” which was capable of diverse interpretation according to whether the word ‘ understood ’ was applied severally or mutually. The British Government was content to accept it in the former sense, and the way lay open to a conference. But, during the period of correspondence, the basis of the conference had insensibly altered. The Prime Minister's original invitation had been addressed to both Mr. de Valera and Sir James Craig, and had been to a joint conference to explore to the uttermost the possibilities of a settlement in Ireland. This invitation had been accepted by Sir James Craig but refused by Mr. de Valera, whose position as representative of the great majority of the Irish

people would have been compromised by meeting Mr. Lloyd George on equal terms with Sir James.

The original invitation had now been allowed to lapse, and a conference was about to open between the British Government and the Sinn Fein delegates in which Ulster was to have no part. If the conference were to be strictly confined to securing a settlement between Great Britain and Southern Ireland as defined by the Government of Ireland Act, this was in every way right and proper, and had the approval of Ulster, whose leaders had already declared their intention of standing aside from such a settlement. But should the conference agree to any measure which would in any way affect the position of Ulster as defined by the Act, this would be a breach of faith with the Northern Government which no consideration of expediency could palliate or excuse. The Northern Government derived its jurisdiction and its powers from an Act of Parliament which had duly become law, and this jurisdiction could not be curtailed, nor these powers limited, without the consent of Ulster, and under no circumstances by simple agreement between delegates from Southern Ireland and the British Government respectively, even though such agreement should subsequently be ratified by Parliament.

Ulster was already becoming impatient at the delay caused by the negotiations. The provisions of the Act could not be put into force until some settlement was come to in the South. During the negotiations the Act was suspended in the air. The old regime was practically, if not in theory, at an end. The Southern Parliament could not show the necessary number of members who were prepared to

take the oath, but the Lord Lieutenant could not take the necessary steps to dissolve it and appoint a legislative Assembly in its stead, as such an act would have immediately terminated the negotiations.

In the meanwhile, the Dail was functioning openly and governing the country by its edicts: a situation which the Act had never contemplated. It was not possible to apply the Act in Ulster and repeal it in the South. The result was that the Northern Government found itself in a position of ineffectiveness through no fault of its own. Ulster, much against her will, had consented to the breaking of the Union. Her reward was to find herself in an impossible and ambiguous position, neither a part of Great Britain nor free to develop along the lines which the Act had foreshadowed. The liberty she had been promised as the reward of her acquiescence, and whose coming birth had been so loudly proclaimed by British politicians, was still-born, and the heart of Ulster was bitter accordingly.

The Northern Parliament met on September 20th, at a time when the negotiations were in suspense and the British Cabinet were considering the form which their final offer to the Sinn Fein leaders should take. The Sinn Fein and Nationalist members had boycotted the Parliament, to use their own expression, and the House of Commons contained only Unionist members, who were obviously deeply concerned at the position of affairs while anxious to say nothing which might compromise the position of the Six Counties. In a statement on the situation Sir James Craig said that at the time of the adjournment of the House

in June he expected that when they reassembled the full machinery of government would be in their hands. The invitation to a conference issued by Mr. Lloyd George to the representatives of Sinn Fein and to himself was as great a surprise to him as to any member of the House. They thought that, failing the functioning of the Southern Parliament, Crown Colony government would be established within a reasonable time, which he interpreted to mean weeks, and not months. With the advice of his Ministers he had concluded to accept Mr. Lloyd George's invitation. By refusing they would have risked a settlement behind their backs. Further, Sinn Fein might have taken a refusal by Ulster as a model for their own answer. But the supreme consideration which had determined him to accept was that Ulster had nothing of which to be ashamed, and a good cause which she was prepared to discuss at any time. The Northern Parliament could not modify its position, nor did it wish to enlarge upon the terms it had laid down. Ulster had determined to stand aside while the British Government and the representatives of Sinn Fein endeavoured to reach some settlement, and they had adhered loyally to that determination. He believed that their action had been fully justified, and that feeling across the Channel in favour of the people of Ulster was better than at any time in the political history of the country. Everything pointed to the fact that Sinn Fein was better understood than ever before, and that the Imperial attitude of Ulster had penetrated even to the densest brains. In years past the invariable criticism was that Ulster blocked the way to peace. Now Ulster stood aside, and the

British Government had to come face to face with the republicans and rebels and bear upon its shoulders the Imperial responsibility. Ulster by her sacrifice in accepting the Government of Ireland Act had gone to the very furthest limit in meeting the difficulties with which Great Britain was faced. How the situation would work out no man could say, for with such conflicting interests it was impossible to forecast even for one day the progress of the negotiations. But there should be no further delay in bringing the last Orders in Council into force so that Ulster could grip the reins of government and get on with the business.

Some members referred to the activities of the gunmen, and in reply to a question as to whose was the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order, Sir James said that the duty rested entirely on the British authorities under the Government of Ireland Act. The control of the police would be transferred to the Northern Parliament within three years. Members of the Cabinet had met the Lord Mayor and the military and police authorities in an advisory capacity, and their united efforts would be continued.

One member made a bitter complaint of the inactivity of the British Government. He said that the average Sinn Féiner imagined that he had beaten the British Government to its knees. But that Government had in reality never started to operate. The Irish people should realise that, patient and tolerant as Great Britain always was, there was a limit to tolerance, and that the time might come when the British people would take in hand the restoration of order in Ireland, and would carry it

out as effectively as they had always carried out any serious undertaking in the past. The Sinn Feiners were playing on the tolerance of the British Government, and on the tolerance of the people of Ulster as well. The moment the truce had been announced, there had been an intensified campaign in Ulster. Gunmen had been imported during July and August, together with large quantities of arms and ammunition. At the time he spoke there were large Sinn Fein camps over the Six Counties, where all kinds of military exercises, including bomb-throwing, were indulged in. Was there any other Government save the Government in Dublin Castle that would tolerate that sort of thing?

These facts were not exaggerated, and were hardly in dispute. During the very week that the above speech was made the military authorities reported "Camps are being formed in Ulster, at Seaforde, Castlewellan, and Torr Head. The object of these camps is probably twofold. Firstly to extend the influence of Sinn Fein and secondly to provoke Ulster as much as possible." In the following week the same authority reported "The I.R.A. camps all over Ulster are causing general irritation, unrest, and a sense of insecurity." But stringent orders were issued by the Government of Dublin Castle that no measures were to be taken to disperse these camps. The "general irritation, unrest, and sense of insecurity" of Ulster could not be allowed to interfere with the policy of smoothing for Sinn Fein the path which led to the conference table.

This is not the place to discuss the merits or demerits of such a policy, we need only notice the

effects it produced, which were, in Ulster, a profound distrust of the intentions of the British Government, and among the Forces of the Crown a settled conviction that a "hidden hand" was deliberately frustrating their efforts to keep order and to protect the loyalist population. A single instance of the existence of this feeling among the military authorities will suffice. During the first week in October the Officer in Command of a district in County Cork received a letter giving particulars of the persecution of the loyalists in the neighbourhood by the I.R.A. The letter concluded "Why not visit the place and see? What are the R.I.C. doing? In God's name come and do something!" The officer referred this letter to headquarters, with the following covering note: "I attach hereto a copy of an anonymous letter received on the 1st October. This letter has been shown to the local D.I. (District Inspector), R.I.C., but apparently no action has resulted beyond the making of a report to higher police authority. As far as I can gather the police in this district have practically ceased to function, apparently on the orders of a Mr. Cope of Dublin."

Before dealing with the sittings of the Conference in London, it will be necessary to make brief reference to the delegates appointed to attend it. The Dail Cabinet had chosen its delegates at a very early stage in the negotiations, and this choice was ratified at a Dail meeting on September 14th. In the words of the Sinn Fein official announcement: "In view of a possible conference with representatives of the British Government, the following delegation of plenipotentiaries was unanimously

ratified." This wording is important, for reasons which will appear later. The delegation consisted of Messrs. Arthur Griffith (Chairman), Michael Collins, R. C. Barton, E. J. Duggan, and George Gavan Duffy. Of these, Mr. Griffith was the founder of Sinn Fein, and was universally considered to be the brain of the movement. He had been elected " Vice-President of the Republic " in 1917 through the efforts of the moderate section of Sinn Fein, who desired a counterpoise to the more extreme de Valera. He occupied the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Dail Cabinet. Mr. Michael Collins, who had already shown signs of capacity for leadership in difficult situations, had for some time past duplicated the posts of Minister of Finance in the Dail Cabinet, and Adjutant General of the I.R.A. Mr. Barton was Minister of Economic Affairs and a Commandant of the I.R.A. Mr. Duggan held no office in the ministry, but was one of the members for the constituency of Meath and Louth in the Dail. Since the truce he had been appointed chief liaison officer, in which capacity he represented the I.R.A. in their dealings with the British authorities. Mr. Gavan Duffy was one of the members for Dublin County in the Dail, and Sinn Fein Envoy at Rome. His chief claim to fame was that he had defended Casement in 1916.

Some surprise was evinced at the time that Mr. de Valera was not included in the delegation. The reason for his exclusion is to be found in his own correspondence with the Prime Minister. He " recognised himself," in his own words, as President of the Irish Republic, and from his point

of view it was impossible that the President of a Republic should attend a conference where the very existence of that Republic would be in question. There is no doubt that even at this stage the constitution of the delegation caused him some uneasiness. Messrs. Griffith and Collins were known to favour the abandonment of the Republic if sufficiently favourable terms could be secured. The extent to which the three remaining members might be influenced in conference with trained politicians was doubtful. Among the entourage of the delegation accompanying them to London the only man he could count upon with absolute certainty was Erskine Childers, an Englishman who had adopted Sinn Fein as a hobby. Mr. de Valera felt that his wisest course was to remain in Ireland in order to counteract any lukewarmness towards the Republican ideal which might result from national delight at the improved prospects of peace.

The British delegation consisted of the Prime Minister, Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Lord Privy Seal), Viscount Birkenhead (Lord Chancellor, who as Mr. F. E. Smith had been prominent in Irish affairs in 1914), Mr. Churchill (Secretary for the Colonies), Sir Laming Worthington-Evans (Secretary for War), and Sir Hamar Greenwood (Chief Secretary for Ireland). Sir Gordon Hewart, the Attorney General, would, it was announced, be a member of the conference when Constitutional questions were under discussion.

CHAPTER X.

From the moment of Mr. de Valera's acceptance of the Prime Minister's invitation to a conference, one thing at least was certain, that success or failure depended upon two points, and two points only—allegiance and partition. No doubt existed that the conference would find means of adjusting such matters as the financial arrangements between the two countries, or the arrangements for the defence and policing of Ireland. There was no vital disagreement upon these matters, and nothing that hindered compromise upon them. But the attitudes of the two parties upon allegiance and partition were diametrically opposed, and failure to agree upon either meant failure of the whole conference and in all probability a renewal of hostilities.

The Irish delegates had not only taken the oath of allegiance to the Republic, but they had subscribed to the Constitution of Sinn Fein,* which contains the statement "Sinn Fein aims at securing the International recognition of Ireland as an Independent Irish Republic." This statement was re-affirmed at a meeting of Ard Fheis (the supreme council of Sinn Fein) during the actual period of

* See Note D in Appendix.

negotiation. The whole tradition of the Sinn Fein movement since 1916 had been the establishment of a Republic of the whole of Ireland, and at this very time the Dail Ministry "recognised themselves" as governing such a Republic. It was obvious that any recession from this standpoint would be hailed as a betrayal by the extreme body of Sinn Fein and by the members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who had sworn an additional oath to the heads of their own organisation, and who would not feel themselves bound by any surrender on the part of delegates not appointed by that organisation.

That the delegates themselves hoped to secure any such terms as could be construed into independence and unity is not likely. As a whole they represented that section of Irish opinion which desired peace beyond all things, either for the development of Ireland's prosperity or because they knew that success was not to be attained by recourse to arms. It is probable that from the first they intended to accept a settlement which would entail their acceptance of allegiance and partition, although such an intention had never been revealed in the most secret session of the Dail Cabinet. But, at the same time, they meant to make this surrender as easy as possible for themselves, and to bring back to their supporters in Ireland such fruits of freedom as would sweeten the draught of their disappointment. According to the letter of their oath and of the Constitution, they would have betrayed Sinn Fein. But they knew that a large section of the party and of the Dail had at last learned to look beyond the narrow circle of idealism and make-believe towards the larger horizon of practical

politics. The success of their endeavour depended upon the strength of this section, which could be relied upon to support any settlement which would bring peace and self-government to the South. The argument that this settlement was only intended as a step towards the eventual establishment of the Republic could then be thrown as a sop to the irreconcilables. The rigid Republicans might denounce them, but there was no doubt that the country would support them if it were given the chance.

It must not be supposed that the Irish delegates entered the Conference with this intention as a cut-and-dried programme, or that it had been openly discussed among them. It was rather an intention which the only two delegates who really mattered—Messrs. Collins and Griffith—held more or less secretly, and from rather different motives. Mr. Griffith had seen the Sinn Fein ship, which, under his guidance, had been steadily sailing a predetermined course towards a distant but not unattainable port, boarded by the far less experienced navigators of the I.R.B. and the Transport Workers, and steered by dead-reckoning for a harbour not marked upon the chart of possibility. He knew that the only method of getting the ship back upon her true course was the acceptance of a settlement, which would eventually result in the helm being entrusted once more to himself or to those who would submit to his pilotage.

Mr. Collins' outlook was somewhat different. As Adjutant General of the I.R.A. he knew very well that in a declared war the I.R.A. had no chance of defeating the British Forces, and that, after a

period of truce, the country, upon which his troops had hitherto lived, would refuse to support them if the inhabitants were assured of adequate protection against their revenge. Surrender would be inevitable sooner or later, and surrender in the guise of the acceptance of a settlement promised more favourable terms than could be obtained by surrender subsequent to defeat in the field. The rank and file might believe that they had defeated the British Army already and could do so again, and might therefore be opposed to a settlement which denied them the objects for which they had fought. But Mr. Collins was aware that their leaders knew the truth as well as he did himself, and he relied on their influence to retain the loyalty of the majority, at least.

But it was essential, if the majority of the Sinn Fein party were to be won to acceptance of the only status for Ireland that the conference could confer, that the delegates should fight tooth and nail for every concession which would give the appearance of victory on every other point but those of allegiance and partition. The conference must be a long struggle, with the threat of war ever hanging over the failure that must seem inevitable from day to day. The delegates must return to those who sent them with the words "This is the best we could do, the only alternative to its acceptance is war." There was also another consideration which made it in the interests of Sinn Fein to prolong the conference. It was known that the Prime Minister was anxious to attend the Disarmament Conference in Washington, and Sinn Fein was openly alarmed at the effect his personality

might have upon Irish propaganda and sympathy in the United States. That Mr. Lloyd George would not leave England while the Irish negotiations were in the balance was certain; if these negotiations could be prolonged until it was too late for him to go to America the menace to the Sinn Fein cause would be averted.

In addition to the representatives, two secretaries were appointed to the Irish delegation, Messrs. Erskine Childers and John Chartres. The appointment of the former has already been referred to. Mr. Chartres had performed valuable service in the Ministry of Munitions during the war, but at its close had drifted into rebellion. He was one of the few men of real practical experience of affairs on the Sinn Fein side, and as such was highly valued by them. There had been a proposal in Sinn Fein circles earlier in the year to send him as representative to Berlin, but he was considered too useful in Ireland, and was employed in an advisory capacity to the departments of Propaganda and Foreign Affairs. If Mr. Childers was the appointment of the extreme Republicans, Mr. Chartres was the counterpoise added by Mr. Griffith and his moderates.

It is not proposed to chronicle the proceedings of the Conference from day to day, but the leading events during its sitting must be mentioned and their reaction upon the many issues at stake studied.

The Conference met for the first time on October 11th, and its first business was to appoint a committee to deal with complaints of breaches of the truce, which were becoming more numerous every day. To these complaints the Irish delegates

replied with counter charges as to the treatment of the prisoners in the internment camps. These preliminary matters were disposed of during the first week, and resulted in the organisation of further liaison arrangements. A lull in the proceedings followed, due ostensibly to the pressure of other business to which the British delegates were obliged to attend, but largely to the necessity for approaching the real purpose of the conference with the utmost delicacy. But circumstances and Mr. de Valera brought the question of allegiance to an immediate issue. On October 19th the Pope sent the following message to the King :—

“ We rejoice at the resumption of the Anglo-Irish negotiations, and pray to the Lord with all our heart that He may bless them and grant to your Majesty the great joy and imperishable glory of bringing to an end the age-long dissension.”

To which the King replied :—

“ I have received the message of your Holiness with much pleasure, and with all my heart I join in your prayer that the Conference now sitting in London may achieve a permanent settlement of the troubles in Ireland and may initiate a new era of peace and happiness for my people.”

Upon publication of these messages, Mr. de Valera telegraphed to the Pope as follows :—

“ The people of Ireland have read the message sent by your Holiness to the King of Great Britain, and appreciate the kindly interest in their welfare and the paternal regard which suggested it. I tender to your Holiness their gratitude. They are confident that the ambiguities in the reply sent in the name of King George will not mislead you, as it may the uninformed, into believing that the troubles are ‘ in ’ Ireland or that the people of Ireland owe allegiance to the British King. The independence of Ireland has been formally proclaimed by the regularly elected representatives of Ireland and ratified by subsequent plebiscites.

“ The trouble is between Ireland and Britain, and its source is that the rulers of Britain have sought to impose their will upon Ireland and by British force have endeavoured to rob her people of the liberty which is their natural right and their ancient heritage. We long to be at peace and in friendship with the people of Britain, as with other peoples, but the same constancy through persecution and martyrdom that has proved the reality of our people’s attachment to the faith of their fathers proves the reality of their attachment to their national freedom, and no consideration will ever induce them to abandon it.”

Mr. de Valera’s message, on the eve of the discussion in the Conference on the question of allegiance, could hardly be regarded in any other light than as a positive declaration; and during a short meeting on the day following its publication, the issue was put to the Irish delegates directly, and they were asked whether or not this message was a true interpretation of their own standpoint. The Government’s attitude was made clear by the Prime Minister in reply to a question in the House of Commons: “ I have read the telegram referred to ” (Mr. de Valera’s message to the Pope), he said, “ and its publication, especially in the middle of peace negotiations, constitutes a grave challenge. The position of the Government on the question involved in that telegram has been made abundantly clear. We do not propose to recede from it, and the Conference cannot proceed on any other basis.”

This incident might in itself have been sufficient to wreck the Conference had it been pushed to its logical issue. Of the two main points, allegiance and partition, deadlock appeared to have ensued upon the first. It appeared to those few Unionists who disapproved of the Government’s policy of

negotiation with Sinn Fein that this was a favourable moment to open their attack in the House of Commons. On the last day of October a vote of censure moved by them was defeated by a majority of ten to one. The issue of allegiance was never pressed, it was allowed to recede into the background pending the discussion of other matters, both in the House and in the Conference. In the latter the Irish delegates diverted the proceedings to the second essential point, partition. Here, again, they did not anticipate that they could secure complete success. But, if they could secure a reduction of the area controlled by the Northern Government, the remaining territory could hardly escape falling into their hands. They introduced the contention that two counties at least, Fermanagh and Tyrone, were preponderatingly Catholic and non-Unionist in their population, and should therefore be transferred to the jurisdiction of the South. They were, in fact, prepared to strike a bargain. Let them be given so much of Ulster that the rest must eventually follow, and they would recommend the Dail to accept a form of allegiance which would satisfy the British people. So the Conference dragged on, struggling from one difficult position to another, saved from disaster only by the fear of the events which must inevitably follow its collapse.

Meanwhile Ard Fheis, the supreme council of Sinn Fein, had met in Dublin behind closed doors. Ard Fheis was composed of delegates from the Sinn Fein clubs all over Ireland, and there was at least a hope that moderate opinion in the country would find expression in the deliberations of this body.

But, as has already been mentioned, Ard Fheis re-affirmed the Republican standpoint and pledged its "undivided allegiance and entire support to Dail Eireann, the duly elected Parliament of Ireland." This resolution was to some extent a triumph for Mr. de Valera and a setback to the undeclared policy of the moderate party. But it could not be expected that the moderate members of the Ard Fheis could formulate a new policy until the possibilities of such a policy should be revealed to them, or until they saw the certainty of a settlement as the result of such a policy. To moderate the demands at this juncture might prejudice the efforts of the delegates in London, who might find it harder to obtain concessions as the threat of war receded. It was felt by moderates and extremists alike that the whole weight of Sinn Fein must be used to back up their representatives at the Conference, at least until it was seen what sort of a bargain they would bring back.

In the first week in November Sir James Craig visited London for the purpose of conferring with the Prime Minister, and once again the impression got abroad that Ulster was to be asked to sacrifice her position in the interests of a settlement. During the next few days Sir James Craig summoned the members of his Cabinet to London in order to consider certain proposals of the Prime Minister. There was no question of their participation in the Irish Conference itself, or even of their meeting the Sinn Fein delegates. In fact, the Propaganda department of Dail Eireann, which had transferred its Chief to London during the Conference, took this opportunity of declaring Sinn Fein's triumph

in the constitution of the Conference. Sir James Craig having been reported as having said that if and when Ulster's interests were reached in the Conference her representatives would be asked to attend, Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister of Propaganda of the Dail, replied as follows:—

“ Presumably Sir James Craig means that as the British Government is responsible for the situation created by the Partition Act, it will consult with himself and his colleagues as to satisfactory means of rectifying the blunder. The Conference is, of course, confined to the accredited representatives of the British and Irish nations.”

This implication was not denied by the British Government, and, so far as Ireland at least was concerned, the contention that the Sinn Fein delegates were recognised as the representatives of the whole of Ireland was established.

On November 12th Orders in Council were issued dealing with the appointed days for the handing over to Ulster of certain of the powers granted to her under the Government of Ireland Act. Of these the most important was November 22nd, on which date were to be handed over “ Irish services in connection with the maintenance of law and order and the administration of justice.” From that date the responsibility for the suppression of disturbances in Belfast and elsewhere was in the hands of the Northern Government, who could, of course, call upon the assistance of the British Forces in case of need. On the same day, Mr. Milne Barbour, one of the Northern Ireland members of the delegation which had seen the Prime Minister, made a very interesting statement in Belfast. He said that Sir James Craig had been put in possession

of the heads of negotiation between the Sinn Fein delegates and Mr. Lloyd George.

“While it is impossible at this stage,” said Mr. Barbour, “to reveal the contents of a confidential document, I should like to take this, the earliest opportunity of assuring the people of Northern Ireland that the Northern Cabinet are absolutely unanimous in the finding at which they have arrived. They are as determined as ever that if the allegiance of Southern Ireland is to be purchased the price to be paid shall not consist of the sacrifice of any of the rights, whether territorial or administrative, recently conferred on the Northern Parliament, and that while they are satisfied that the Northern province is absolutely unswerving in its allegiance to the Crown and its devotion to the best interests of the Empire, they will never submit to any authority being placed either directly or indirectly above the Northern Parliament that would in any way detract from the authority exercised by his Majesty through the Imperial Parliament.

“Moreover, it is perfectly clear that if the position of the powers at present reserved to the Imperial Parliament is to be altered it can only be done by the transfer of similar powers to the Northern Parliament, and the expression ‘Dominion Government’ must always be construed in the light of Ulster remaining a separate and distinct unit in the free nations composing the British Empire. The only concession Ulster could make would be to accept Dominion Home Rule for herself, but as a separate and distinct unit. In any case, we expect from the Imperial Parliament that if they in order to restore peace in Southern Ireland have to give any terms which are more advantageous than are already possessed by the Northern Parliament, that equally advantageous terms should be extended to Ulster.”

Three days later Mr. Andrews, the Northern Minister of Labour, went even further. In the course of an interview he said :—

“A disgraceful betrayal of Ulster has been attempted by the Coalition Cabinet. A suggestion has been made that we should agree to a Parliament for all Ireland with Dominion powers. We have informed his Majesty’s Government that we are not prepared to admit the ascendancy of any Parliament other than the Imperial

Parliament over ours. Our Prime Minister and his colleagues have pointed out to his Majesty's Government in the clearest possible way that any discussion based on a Parliament for all Ireland must prove fruitless, and we have asked that this proposal shall be withdrawn before any conference takes place between his Majesty's Government and the Ulster Cabinet.

"In the interests of peace, which every right thinking person desires, we, the loyalists of Ulster, accepted the Parliament of our own as a compromise, and as a final settlement. It is for our opponents, if they desire peace, to accept and work their Parliament in Southern Ireland in the same spirit and with the object of producing a happy, prosperous, peaceful and loyal Ireland. Immediately on my return from London I again desire to state that our representatives will not agree to any surrender of Ulster's rights."

The Unionist dissentients in England from the Government's policy made an attempt at the meeting of the National Unionist Association at Liverpool on November 17th to pass a vote of disagreement with the policy of the leaders of their party in supporting Mr. Lloyd George, which was defeated with almost the same ease as the vote of censure in the House of Commons had been overwhelmed. Public opinion in England was at the moment not concerned with the theory of right or wrong involved in negotiating with Sinn Fein. The average man, while disliking the necessity for treating with the representatives of an organisation which he despised, was prepared to accept it for the chance it offered of saving his pocket and gaining credit for Great Britain in the eyes of foreign nations. He rarely understood the attitude of Ulster, largely owing to the fact that Ulster contented herself with somewhat bombastic statements and made little attempt to put her point of view before the British public. Once more Ulster had been manœuvred

into the position of seeming to be the stumbling block in the way of Irish peace, and had the Sinn Fein leaders had the acumen to show an attitude of conciliation towards her by removing the boycott and putting an end to the operations of the I.R.A. within her borders, she would have lost all sympathy in Great Britain. But, as usual, Sinn Fein displayed its aptitude for producing an atmosphere unfavourable to its interests. On the very day that the Northern Government took over responsibility for law and order, an outbreak of bombing began in Belfast, to which several loyalists fell victims.

But by now the tedious sittings of the Conference, with the cloud of rumour which surrounded them, were coming to an end. The Irish delegates, finding, as they had expected, that the British Government would not consent to an abrogation of allegiance or to open and direct coercion of Ulster, began their preparations for surrender. But that this surrender should sufficiently simulate a victory for it to secure the necessary support in Ireland, it must be staged and manipulated in such a way as to make it quite clear that the only alternative was war, and that Ireland had secured independence in all but name. That the extremists with Mr. de Valera would stand out from a settlement on these lines was certain; the only hope was that this settlement should appeal to the body of Sinn Fein sufficiently for it to rally to the support of the moderate party which would immediately emerge upon the publication of its terms.

The commencement of the critical week was announced by Sir James Craig at the opening of a special session of the Northern Parliament, in a

speech which must be quoted at some length, if the position of Ulster in regard to the settlement is to be understood.

He explained that on November 5th he had arrived in London, and that on that day he had received an urgent message from Mr. Lloyd George to meet him and talk matters over. As a preliminary to this meeting he had insisted that the transference of the services under the Government of Ireland Act should be carried out, and this had been done. In the afternoon of the same day he met Mr. Lloyd George, who ran roughly through the scheme which he proposed should be the basis of discussion between the Ulster representatives and the British Cabinet. "I told Mr. Lloyd George that the thing was impossible, utterly impossible, and I went further. I said instinctively that this was not so much a matter between the Six Counties and the rest of Ireland, but it was a matter that went to the root not only of Great Britain, but of the whole Empire, and I said that if it were entertained by the members of my Cabinet or by this Northern House of Commons, or by the people of Ulster, they would have to get somebody else to lead them, because I would not touch it." Since that day, continued Sir James, there had been a Press campaign without parallel in the history of Great Britain against the people of Ulster. Sinn Fein was held up to the world as the good boy, while they in Ulster were pictured as the bad boy. What the Press had asked for was concession; what they really meant was surrender. Sir James and his colleagues had pressed in every communication they had had with the British Government for full publication of the

correspondence which had passed between them. They felt strongly that the malicious representations in the Press would very soon give place to a reasonable examination of the case which the Ulster Cabinet had put forward on their behalf. They were extremely anxious that no words of theirs, and certainly no action of theirs, should in any way be thrown up against them as being the cause that had broken down negotiations between the British authorities and Sinn Fein. Therefore, if it was in any way to help towards peace in Ireland they would acquiesce in the request of his Majesty's Government, and not press to have the correspondence published at that moment. But he would say this, that if he observed the necessity for doing so he would not ask for permission, no matter what the consequences might be.

Sir James Craig let it be known that the scheme put forward by the British Government had involved the establishment of an all-Ireland Parliament. He wanted the British Government to understand finally that it was not the determination of the Northern Cabinet or of that House alone, but that it was the determination of the whole people of Ulster, that under no circumstances whatever would they contemplate entering a Sinn Fein Parliament under the present conditions. Ulster would neither be intimidated nor coerced. The only way their opponents could ever hope to secure Ulster was by winning her, by starting out upon such a path as they in Ulster had taken to tread, the path at the end of which lay happiness, peace, and prosperity throughout the land, showing to all classes and to all creeds firm justice and upright government,

throwing altogether to one side the abominable machinery of crime and outrage, and asking forgiveness for the dastardly deeds done in the past, and which had so recently stained the fair name of Belfast. How could they be asked to clasp hands with people who at the same time that they were pretending to come to a settlement were flinging their bombs and shooting behind the chimneypots of Belfast? It was preposterous. Ulster was not blocking the way to a settlement. She wanted to have a settlement, and if there was any prospect of Sinn Fein showing common-sense, even at that late hour, her leaders would renew the offer they made before, that through the machinery of the Council of Ireland they were prepared to meet them, talk round the table, and discuss those matters which were of interest to the prosperity of their common land.

But the most important statement of Sir James Craig's speech was contained in an announcement which Mr. Lloyd George had authorised him to make. "By Tuesday next either the negotiations will have broken down or the Prime Minister will send me new proposals for consideration by the Cabinet. In the meantime, the rights of Ulster will in no way be sacrificed or compromised." Sir James spoke on November 29th, which implied that the decisive day would be December 6th. He went on to explain the significance of that statement, which he said was that one more week only was given to say either yes or no. It meant that Sinn Fein, fully alive, as it was now, to Ulster's unflinching determination not to go into an all-Ireland Parliament, had got to say by Tuesday next that

she would continue to work for a settlement or negotiations would be broken off.

The imposition of this time limit was a warning to the Irish delegates that the patience of the Government was exhausted, and that they must face facts at last. The position immediately became critical. Nobody, not even the delegates themselves, knew the strength of the moderate party in Ireland, nor how it would be represented in the Dail. In fact, it is not too much to say that the moderate party as yet existed only in theory. It was composed of those who desired peace in Ireland, but the numbers of its adherents would depend entirely upon the terms of the settlement, and could not be forecasted in advance. The more nearly the terms approached the Sinn Fein ideal, the stronger would be the support for them among the members of that party. Mr. de Valera and his adherents would no doubt oppose any settlement which did not recognise the Republic. Speaking at Ennis, Co. Clare, on November 30th, Mr. de Valera re-affirmed his adherence to his principles, without, however, specifying those principles in any detail. It was evident from his words that he knew of the likelihood of a moderate party accepting the settlement secured by the delegates, even if that settlement were not in accordance with his own principles. When Ireland gave her delegates work to do, he said, it was not for others to cut into that work.

“ There is one thing they know. It is this, that we stand in the movement for certain principles, and there is no power on earth that can make us change those principles. All the power of the Empire cannot break the spirit of one

true man, and they cannot break the spirit of one true nation. . . . If there is anybody in Ireland, or in any country beside Ireland, who thinks we can be driven beyond the point we are entitled to hold by our principles, then the sooner they know we cannot the better, because they certainly will be disappointed. We are going to stand on the rock of truth and principle. We will face the future with exactly the same confidence and knowledge as we faced our work four years ago. We know what can be done by the same powerful nation against us. We know the terrorism, we know the savagery, that can be used against us, but we defy it. When the report of the work done by the nation's representatives in London is published this nation will find that we have gone as far as we can possibly go to make peace, and if peace is not made it is not because there is not the will on the part of Ireland or its representatives to make it, but because those who are opposed to us in Ireland do not want to make peace with us. I may tell you we stand to-day, no matter what other people say, exactly where we stood and for the principles for which we stood four years ago. We have gone as far as we can go, consistently with those principles, for peace. We cannot go and will not go any farther. If we go any farther it would be for us to betray those principles which have been fought for by generations of Irishmen for the past six or seven hundred years."

During the week-end before December 6th hope of a successful termination of the negotiations had been practically abandoned in all quarters except those where the belief that the delegates might challenge the official policy of Sinn Fein was held. Extreme Republicans throughout Ireland were clamouring for war and doing their utmost to incite the I.R.A. to breaches of the truce which would terminate negotiations and precipitate hostilities. Extracts from a circular distributed in County Mayo form an excellent example of the methods employed.

"The Irish people forget too easily, they forgive too easily. Let Ireland's wrongs, financial, social, economic, and moral, be borne in mind."

“ The Irish envoys must not forget that ‘ He who sups with the devil needs a long spoon.’ ”

“ In England’s envoys, the world, the flesh, and the devil are personified.”

“ We would just as soon trust the shark to be just as to trust the English politicians or the English Press on the subject of Ireland.”

“ Our advice then to the Irish representatives is, do not trust the men with whom you have to deal, they will deceive and swindle you if they can.”

“ The Irish representatives are face to face with an unprincipled gang, who would do nothing for God if the devil was dead.”

“ The double turncoat Churchill, the double distilled liar Greenwood, the Prime Minister who has sold everyone and every party in turn, Galloper Smith, and one of the foulest and rottenest of them all, Gordon Hewart, who could trust these men? ”

“ Lloyd George sent Balfour to Washington, the same Balfour who lied to and tricked Wilson into the war.”

“ We fear treachery and bad faith on England’s part, and not without cause, she is represented by men as infamous, as treacherous, as unscrupulous, as unprincipled, as ever broke faith on her behalf with Ireland, or Egypt, or India, or any other nation. Never has she failed to take her advantage to use brutality, duplicity or deception.”

“ We warn the Irish leaders and the Irish people that they are dealing with men who have no honour, no principles, no scruples. The men who let loose the Black and Tans upon the Irish people are the same who still direct England’s destinies.”

“ The key is now in the hands of the Irish Republican leaders, but they must have the cunning of the serpent, and the gentleness of the dove.”

“ Let it not be said that we write harshly or bitterly, we have no wish to do so. Again let it not be said that we are influenced by the long gone past.”

This kind of utterance sounds merely stupid to English ears, and it is difficult to realise that it could carry any weight in so large a matter as the settlement of the Irish question. But its influence, and

the influence of a thousand pamphlets of the same nature, must always be exceedingly grave upon a population such as inhabits the remoter districts of the South and West of Ireland, a large proportion of which would accept its statements as they would the gospel. Spreading from these remoter districts towards the cities, a wave of unrest and longing for war rolled over the whole country during the last days of the Conference. In the same county as the circular just quoted was published, Mr. J. J. McKeown had said a short time previously :—

“ Do not imagine that the fight is over yet. Our representatives have not gone to England for a settlement, but for a Republic, and we will accept nothing less. It is not certain that we will get this, so we must go on training and preparing for the continuation of the war.”

The military reports of the condition of the country pointed to a condition of affairs rapidly approaching a complete disregard for the truce on the part of large sections of the I.R.A.

On the other hand, a very large section of the population, including all those who had a stake in the country, although they too had almost given up hope of a successful termination to the negotiations, were desperately seeking some alternative to a resumption of hostilities. “ The truce must be preserved at any cost,” was their cry, and it voiced the feeling of a large section of the people of England as well as their own. But how this was to be accomplished if the Sinn Fein leaders refused to accept the British offer it was difficult to see. Even if neither side formally denounced the truce, events must necessarily lead to a catastrophe. Some form of administration would be set up by the British

Government which would necessarily involve the dissolution or proclamation of the Dail. That the I.R.A. would submit to this was hardly to be imagined. During the first week in December there seemed hardly any hope that war, on a greater scale than Ireland had ever yet known, could be averted.

Such was the position on December 5th. The final proposals of the British Government had been conveyed to the Irish delegates, who had carried them to Dublin and laid them before the Dail Cabinet. Allegiance and Partition, the two eternal questions, were still unsolved. The first remained in its original and unalterable form, the second, although somewhat weakened, was still in a form which could not be said to agree with Republican principles. The attempt to bargain one for the other had been demonstrated as hopeless. The problem before the delegates was this: Were the terms they must decide upon within the next twenty-four hours sufficient inducement for a majority of Sinn Fein to abandon the Republican standpoint and adopt a policy based upon Dominion status?

Six months before this time the problem would have been capable of immediate solution in the shape of a reply in the negative. But, during the period of negotiation, the leaders of the party had had time to think out the true welfare of Ireland, and the rank and file to wonder whether, after all, peace was not preferable to a state of guerilla warfare. Sinn Fein, and from its inception, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, had been formed in the first instance to destroy English domination of Ireland. The assumption of republican status by

the latter country had been for the purpose of rendering that destruction absolute. The proposed terms of settlement removed every vestige of English control from Irish government, drove from Dublin Castle every official in English pay. The sole vestige that should remain was henceforth a splendid figurehead in the Viceregal Lodge. Was not this a sufficient realisation of independence?

Again, Sinn Fein had never secured its support from the people of Ireland because of its Republican tendency, but rather in spite of it. The Irish people as a whole are not, and never have been, advocates of any other form of government than a monarchy. Sinn Fein had attracted the masses because it was "agin the Government," because it promised in some vague way relief from the unsatisfactory conditions of Irish life and conditions, which the Irish people attributed, rightly or wrongly, to "Castle Rule." Sinn Fein had secured for the Irish people the abandonment of English control. Would they continue to support it if it abandoned the advantages which it had gained in the pursuit of an unattainable Republic?

The delegates themselves were divided in their opinion. Each knew that acceptance of the terms would split the Sinn Fein movement, and with it the Dail and the Dail Cabinet, from top to bottom. If the majority supported them in their acceptance, then, despite the inevitable opposition of the Republicans, who would carry with them all the disorderly and dangerous elements in the population, it might be possible for them to evolve an Irish State within the Empire, with themselves at its head. If, on the other hand, the majority went

against them, they would be proclaimed as the would-be betrayers of their country, and might expect short shrift at the hands of ' patriots,' who would consider their assassination a blow struck for Ireland. They would have disobeyed the injunctions of the President and of the men who had selected them as their representatives, and any defence of their actions at the bar of the Dail would have been impossible.

At half-past seven on the evening of December 5th the Irish delegates left No. 10, Downing Street, after a four and a half hours' discussion with the British representatives, to consider the question of acceptance or rejection of the final terms of the British Government. At twenty minutes past eleven they returned, and for three hours the world awaited the issue of peace or war. At last, shortly after a quarter past two on the morning of the 6th, the Conference broke up, a courier was despatched to Belfast bearing a copy of the terms to Sir James Craig, and the announcement that an agreement had been reached was made. The Irish delegates had taken the decisive step. It remained to be seen how far Sinn Fein and the Irish nation would support them.

CHAPTER XI.

The agreement which had been reached as a result of the London Conference was officially described as *Articles of Agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland*, and became popularly known as 'The Treaty.' It was as follows :—

1. Ireland shall have the same constitutional status in the Community of Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, with a Parliament having power to make laws for the peace order and good government of Ireland and an Executive responsible to that Parliament, and shall be styled and known as the Irish Free State.

2. Subject to the provisions hereinafter set out the position of the Irish Free State in relation to the Imperial Parliament and Government and otherwise shall be that of the Dominion of Canada, and the law, practice and constitutional usage governing the relationship of the Crown or the representative of the Crown and of the Imperial Parliament to the Dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State.

3. The representative of the Crown in Ireland shall be appointed in like manner as the Governor-General of Canada, and in accordance with the practice observed in the making of such appointments.

4. The oath to be taken by Members of the Parliament of the Irish Free State shall be in the following form :—

I do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State

as by law established and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.

5. The Irish Free State shall assume liability for the service of the Public Debt of the United Kingdom as existing at the date hereof and towards the payment of war pensions as existing at that date in such proportion as may be fair and equitable, having regard to any just claims on the part of Ireland by way of set off or counterclaim, the amount of such sums being determined in default of agreement by the arbitration of one or more independent persons being citizens of the British Empire.

6. Until an arrangement has been made between the British and Irish Governments whereby the Irish Free State undertakes her own coastal defence, the defence by sea of Great Britain and Ireland shall be undertaken by his Majesty's Imperial Forces, but this shall not prevent the construction or maintenance by the Government of the Irish Free State of such vessels as are necessary for the protection of the Revenue or the Fisheries.

The foregoing provisions of this article shall be reviewed at a conference of Representatives of the British and Irish Governments to be held at the expiration of five years from the date hereof with a view to the undertaking by Ireland of a share in her own coastal defence.

7. The Government of the Irish Free State shall afford to his Majesty's Imperial Forces:—

- (a) In time of peace such harbour and other facilities as are indicated in the Annex* hereto, or such other facilities as may from time to time be agreed between the British Government and the Government of the Irish Free State; and
- (b) In time of war or of strained relations with a Foreign Power such harbour and other facilities as the British Government may require for the purposes of such defence as aforesaid.

8. With a view to securing the observance of the principle of international limitation of armaments, if the Government of the Irish Free State establishes and maintains a military defence force, the establishments thereof shall not exceed in size such proportion of the military establishments maintained in Great Britain as

* See Note E in Appendix.

that which the population of Ireland bears to the population of Great Britain.

9. The ports of Great Britain and the Irish Free State shall be freely open to the ships of the other country on payment of the customary port and other dues.

10. The Government of the Irish Free State agrees to pay fair compensation on terms not less favourable than those accorded by the Act of 1920 to judges, officials, members of police forces, and other public servants, who are discharged by it or who retire in consequence of the change of government effected in pursuance hereof.

Provided that this agreement shall not apply to members of the Auxiliary Police Force or to persons recruited in Great Britain for the Royal Irish Constabulary during the two years next preceding the date hereof. The British Government will assume responsibility for such compensation or pensions as may be payable to any of these excepted persons.

11. Until the expiration of one month from the passing of the Act of Parliament for the ratification of this instrument, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall not be exercisable as respects Northern Ireland, and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, shall, so far as they relate to Northern Ireland, remain of full force and effect, and no election shall be held for the return of members to serve in the Parliament of the Irish Free State for constituencies in Northern Ireland, unless a resolution is passed by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland in favour of the holding of such elections before the end of the said month.

12. If, before the expiration of the said month, an address is presented to his Majesty by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland to that effect, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall no longer extend to Northern Ireland, and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 (including those relating to the Council of Ireland), shall, so far as they relate to Northern Ireland, continue to be of full force and effect, and this instrument shall have effect subject to the necessary modifications.

Provided that if such an address is so presented a Commission consisting of three persons, one to be appointed by the Government of the Irish Free State, one to be

appointed by the Government of Northern Ireland, and one who shall be Chairman, to be appointed by the British Government, shall determine, in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic conditions, the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland, and for the purposes of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and of this instrument, the boundary of Northern Ireland shall be such as may be determined by such Commission.

13. For the purpose of the last foregoing article, the powers of the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, to elect members of the Council of Ireland, shall, after the Parliament of the Irish Free State is constituted, be exercised by that Parliament.

14. After the expiration of the said month, if no such address as is mentioned in Article 12 hereof is presented, the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland shall continue to exercise as respects Northern Ireland the powers conferred on them by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, but the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State shall in Northern Ireland have in relation to matters in respect of which the Parliament of Northern Ireland has not power to make laws under that Act (including matters which under the said Act are within the jurisdiction of the Council of Ireland) the same powers as in the rest of Ireland subject to such provisions as may be agreed in manner hereinafter appearing.

15. At any time after the date hereof the Government of Northern Ireland and the provisional Government of Southern Ireland hereinafter constituted may meet for the purpose of discussing the provisions subject to which the last foregoing Article is to operate in the event of no such address as is therein mentioned being presented, and those provisions may include:—

- (a) Safeguards with regard to patronage in Northern Ireland,
- (b) Safeguards with regard to the collection of revenue in Northern Ireland,
- (c) Safeguards with regard to import and export duties affecting the trade or industry of Northern Ireland,
- (d) Safeguards for minorities in Northern Ireland,

- (e) The settlement of the financial relations between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State,
- (f) The establishment and powers of a local militia in Northern Ireland and the relation of the Defence Forces of the Irish Free State and of Northern Ireland respectively;

and if at any such meeting provisions are agreed to, the same shall have effect as if they were included amongst the provisions subject to which the powers of the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State are to be exercisable in Northern Ireland under Article 14 hereof.

16. Neither the Parliament of the Irish Free State nor the Parliament of Northern Ireland shall make any law so as either directly or indirectly to endow any religion or prohibit or restrict the free exercise thereof or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status or affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending the religious instruction at the school or make any discrimination as respects State aid between schools under the management of different religious denominations or divert from any religious denomination or any educational institution any of its property except for public utility purposes and on payment of compensation.

17. By way of provisional arrangement for the administration of Southern Ireland during the interval which must elapse between the date hereof and the constitution of a Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State in accordance therewith, steps shall be taken forthwith for summoning a meeting of members of Parliament elected for constituencies in Southern Ireland since the passing of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and for constituting a provisional Government, and the British Government shall take the steps necessary to transfer to such provisional Government the powers and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties, provided that every member of such provisional Government shall have signified in writing his or her acceptance of this instrument. But this arrangement shall not continue in force beyond the expiration of twelve months from the date hereof.

18. This instrument shall be submitted forthwith by his Majesty's Government for the approval of Parliament and by the Irish signatories to a meeting summoned for the

purpose of the members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland, and, if approved, shall be ratified by the necessary legislation.”

This document was signed by Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Birkenhead, Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Sir Hamar Greenwood, and Sir Gordon Hewart, on behalf of the British Government, and, in Erse, by Messrs. Griffith, Collins, Barton, Duggan, and Gavan Duffy, on behalf of the Dail.

We have no space for a detailed examination of these articles of agreement, but there are certain phrases in them which will repay a passing notice, by reason of their influence upon the situation brought about by these terms of settlement. The method of appointing the “representative of the Crown in Ireland” and the title of that representative is left as indefinite as possible, in order that the Irish people should be free to indicate their wishes on these points and to suggest the name of the occupant of that post. In Article 5 the limitation of membership of the Board of Arbitration to “citizens of the British Empire” disposed of Mr. de Valera’s suggestion as to external arbitration on this very point, contained in his original reply to the Prime Minister’s offer (see page 177). The inclusion of the harbour defences of Belfast Lough in the Annex to the Articles dealing with naval facilities gave considerable offence in Ulster, where it was considered that this was a matter concerning the Northern Government exclusively, and that should not have been discussed at a conference between the representatives of the British Government

and Sinn Fein. In Article 8 the phrase "military establishments maintained *in* Great Britain" is important. The intention was that if, for the sake of argument, the population of England, Scotland, and Wales together were taken as forty millions, and of Ireland as four millions, and at the same time the establishment of troops actually maintained as the home establishment in Great Britain as fifty thousand, the strength of the Free State defence force should not exceed five thousand. With reference to the phrase "not less favourable than those accorded by the Act of 1920" occurring in Article 10, the terms in question are contained in the seventh, eighth, and ninth Schedules of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920. In the same article, "persons recruited in Great Britain for the Royal Irish Constabulary during the two years next preceding the date hereof" means the 'Black and Tans,' who were men recruited in Great Britain for regular service in the R.I.C.* Recruitment for the R.I.C., hitherto confined to Ireland, was opened in Great Britain on January 1st, 1920. In Articles 11 and 18 the distinction between approval and ratification must be carefully noted. The first was a proceeding to be undertaken as soon as possible after the signing of the treaty, the second must be deferred until the arrangements contemplated by the treaty were complete. It was not until after ratification that Ulster's month of grace was intended to begin. The phrases "members of Parliament elected for constituencies in Southern Ireland since the passing of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920" (Article 17)

* See Note F in Appendix.

and “ Members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland ” (Article 18) are euphemistic expressions for describing the Southern members of the Dail with the four Dublin University representatives. The distinction between the Southern Parliament and Dail Eireann has already been explained (page 20). With these few explanatory notes, we may pass to the reception of the treaty by the various parties concerned.

That Mr. de Valera would express strong disapproval of the treaty was certain from the first, although the belief at the time was that he had instructed the delegates to sign it if they were faced with no other alternative but war. The fact that they had been to Dublin to attend a meeting of the Dail Cabinet two days before the treaty was signed lent colour to this view, for the extent of the divergence between the extremists and the potential moderate section was not yet generally known. Any optimism in this direction was shattered by the issue on the evening of the 8th of Mr. de Valera's statement, which was as follows :—

“ Fellow Gails (*sic*),—You have seen in the public Press the text of the proposed Treaty with Great Britain. The terms of this agreement are in violent conflict with the wishes of the majority of this nation, as expressed freely in successive elections during the past three years. I feel it my duty to inform you immediately that I cannot recommend the acceptance of this treaty either to Dail Eireann or to the country. In this attitude I am supported by the Ministers for Home Affairs and Defence.” (These were Messrs. Austin Stack and Cathal Brugha respectively.)

“ A public session of Dail Eireann is being summoned for Wednesday next, at eleven o'clock. I ask the people to maintain during the interval the same discipline as heretofore. The members of the Cabinet, though divided in opinion, are prepared to carry on the public services as heretofore. The army is, of course, as such, not affected

by the political situation, and continues under the same orders and control.

“ The great test of our people has come. Let us face it worthily without bitterness, and above all without recriminations. There is a definite constitutional way of resolving all our political differences. Let us not depart from it. Let us all abide by it, and let the conduct of the Cabinet in this matter be an example to the whole nation.”

An T'Oglac, in its issue following the announcement of the treaty, enlarged upon the words of Mr. de Valera respecting the Army as follows :—

“ Within the next few days, perhaps before this issue of *An T'Oglac* reaches the hands of the Irish Volunteers, fateful and far-reaching decisions will have been taken by the Government and Parliament at present in control of Ireland's destinies. The future of Ireland and consequently the future of the Army of Ireland may be profoundly affected by these decisions. Now, as in the past, it is the duty of the Army not to allow its discipline or efficiency to be impaired by political happenings.

“ The Army is the servant of the nation and will obey the national will expressed by the chosen representatives of the people and interpreted through the proper military channels.

“ Whatever that decision may be, the soldiers and officers of the Army of Ireland will accept it in the true spirit of disciplined soldiers loyal to the nation in defence of whose rights and liberties they have been enrolled, and will obey their orders cheerfully and unflinchingly whatever the consequences.

“ As in the past, they will not shrink from any risks they may be called upon to face, nor will they allow their own personal views and feelings to interfere with their loyalty to the nation. It is the duty of officers, at a time like this, to see that nothing is allowed to lower the sense of discipline, loyalty, and unity of the soldiers of the Irish Army. One of the first virtues of the soldier, one of the sources of the strength of a military organisation, is obedience to superior authorities.

“ The Army of Ireland has at its head men who are fully conscious of their responsibilities and are prepared to carry out their duty as soldiers and as citizens; they look to the officers and men of the Army for disciplined

obedience in the same spirit, the spirit which we have called the 'Volunteer Spirit.'

"The strength of the Army lies in its having acted as an organised and disciplined whole, under a single authority, in support of the national will constitutionally expressed. It will continue to act as such. It will never be a menace to the people of Ireland, but a defender of the rights and liberties of the whole nation. No political influences, no personal differences among officers or men will be allowed now, any more than in the past, to impair its discipline and efficiency."

These words form interesting reading in the light of the sharp divisions in the I.R.A. which so soon followed them.

Mr. de Valera's words found an echo in the advice given by Mr. Art O'Brien, the President of the Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain, 'to the Irish in Great Britain.'

"Be not misled into rejoicing and thanksgiving without cause or reason," says this faithful henchman of the Republic;

"The claims of the people of Ireland is, and always has been, the recognition of the complete independence of their country. That is a claim no nation can forego, and until it is met in their case, the Irish race cannot rejoice. If, under the threat of renewed and intensified warfare, and as an alternative to seeing their country ravished and laid waste by fire and sword, and their race exterminated, five Irishmen have been compelled to sign their names to the document published yesterday, that is not a cause for us to rejoice or a reason for us to offer thanksgiving. The 750 years' war is not ended, because no war can be ended by an enforced peace, nor can understanding between two peoples be attained where one people uses its physical might to hinder the attainment of the other's moral right. The English people have cause—at all events a superficial cause—to rejoice. Do not let us interfere with their rejoicing and thanksgiving. They have won another round. We could even, in accepting the fall of the dice, congratulate them; though we could not congratulate ourselves."

It should perhaps be mentioned that the Self-Determination League, and particularly its President, had been somewhat in the background during the period of the Conference. The delegates mistrusted its influence, which they knew to be extreme rather than moderate, and they had usurped its functions as the mouthpiece of Sinn Fein in England by importing their own Minister of Propaganda for that purpose. This may to some extent explain the adherence of the League to the extremist party.

But, on the whole, the access of support to the delegates upon which they had counted, and without the assurance of which they would never have signed the paper, was even greater in appearance than they can have suspected. The great mass of the people of Ireland, the Catholic Church, and the Irish Press, including the great majority of the provincial papers, rallied to them at once. The people were naturally inarticulate, but the symptoms of joy visible throughout the South and West could not be misinterpreted. A competent observer, very closely in touch with Sinn Fein and with the people in general, wrote at the time: "The immediate effect of the treaty was one of intense thankfulness, but contrary to the expectation of most people there was no flag-waving or 'mafficking'; the news was taken calmly and quietly, but nevertheless thankfully, and the churches were filled the next morning, which, in Ireland, is a sure barometer."

The Nationalist papers were outspoken in their joy. The *Freeman's Journal* said: "In the articles of settlement will be found every essential of that freedom for which the Irish people have fought for

over seven long and sorrowful centuries. Let the people of Ireland make it their own." The *Independent* said: "The feud and friction of centuries come to an end, and after the terms have been ratified by the Parliaments of both countries, as we have no doubt they will be, the Irish Free State will be master in her own house, and in a position to work out her own salvation in full and without hindrance."

The Catholic Hierarchy were less outspoken, from their natural reluctance to bind the Church to the support of any one political party. On the 13th the Bishops met at University College, under the presidency of Cardinal Logue. At the close of the meeting a statement was issued, signed by the Cardinal, as follows:—

"At a general meeting of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, held in Dublin on December 13th, his Eminence Cardinal Logue in the chair, the following statement was unanimously adopted: 'The Bishops of Ireland hold in the highest appreciation the patriotism, ability and honesty of purpose in which the Irish representatives have conducted the struggle for national freedom. Now Dail Eireann have the responsibility of deciding the destiny of Ireland in the approaching deliberations, in the course of which they will be sure to have before their minds the interests of the country and the wishes of the people to whom they and we happily belong. We most earnestly beg of God that they may be guided by wisdom from above, and to implore the divine blessing on their counsels we ask every priest in Ireland who is free to offer up the holy sacrifice one of these days, and all our people, to join in prayer with unfailing perseverance.'"

The observer already quoted comments as follows upon this statement: "The Church in Ireland is unquestionably whole-heartedly in support of the Treaty. It has been stated broadcast in England that the Bishops of Ireland made a great mistake

in the statement they issued since the signature of the Treaty, by not according it whole-hearted and unequivocal support. The reason for this is that although individually they thoroughly approve they do not proclaim this collectively because very great pressure was brought to bear on them to adopt this attitude by those in favour of ratification, including Griffith himself. The latter hopes for a united and peaceful Ireland in the future, and knowing how every move of the Hierarchy in Ireland is looked upon with suspicion by Ulster did not wish Ulster to get the impression that as the Bishops had recommended the ratification of the Treaty it must therefore tend towards producing some sort of a one-sided religious solution. To those who know the situation in Ulster and in Ireland generally this argument seems perfectly logical."

The Southern Unionists, whatever may have been their private feelings, welcomed the Treaty officially. The *Irish Times*, which may be considered as their organ, said : " Nobody will welcome it more gladly than the loyalists of Southern Ireland." Mr. Griffith wrote to the Prime Minister as follows :

" I write to inform you that at a meeting I had with the representatives of the Southern Unionists I agreed that a scheme should be devised to give them their full share of representation in the first Chamber of the Irish Parliament, and that as to the Upper Chamber we will consult them on its constitution, and undertake that their interests will be duly represented.

" I wish also to take this occasion to say that we desire to secure the willing co-operation of Unionists in common with all other sections of the Irish nation in raising the structure and shaping the destiny of the Irish Free State. We look for their assistance in the same spirit of understanding and goodwill which we ourselves will show towards their traditions and interests."

The *Voice of Labour*, the organ of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, in a leading article urged that there should be no bitterness in spite of the divergence of opinion among the Sinn Fein leaders, and stated that until the Dail had had an opportunity of debating the question of the Treaty the *Voice of Labour* did not propose to intervene, because the responsibility of decision rested on the Dail in the first instance and after that, if need be, upon the whole body of the people whose representatives were the members of the Dail. All Unions were advised not to take sides in the matter lest labour in Ireland should be split, which would be disastrous in view of the coming attack by employers. "Already we have too little unity and solidarity in our ranks." The same issue of the paper contained a most bitter attack on the Southern Unionists, and a heated protest against their having any special privileges in future because they were "the miserable remnants of the landlord ascendancy," of whom the country would be well rid. The cause of this attack was the letter from Mr. Griffith to the Prime Minister quoted above. On the other hand, the *Workers' Republic*, the organ of the communist party of Ireland, had a most violent manifesto against the terms of the agreement as a "most shameful betrayal of Ireland's fight for national independence and of the cause of Irish Republicanism." The observer already quoted comments: "The Citizen Army and the Transport Workers undoubtedly intend to create as much trouble as they possibly can; and it remains to be seen whether as a party they are as strong in reality as their boasted paper

strength. If composed of Transport Workers only, they would be almost negligible and local, but their aim and ambition are to affiliate all the agricultural labourers of Ireland."

The reception of the Treaty by the Dail will be dealt with in the following chapter. We must now consider its effect upon the attitude of Ulster. Press comment in Northern Ireland may be exemplified by the *Belfast Telegraph*, which took the line that the British Government had resolved to purchase peace with Sinn Fein, however desperate the price and disgraceful the surrender of honour might be. That fact Ulster must look squarely in the face and direct her own course accordingly. This paper also recalled a saying of Mr. Birrell's: "It is a British characteristic, though not an agreeable one, that once we are beaten we go over in a body to the successful enemy and too often abandon and cold-shoulder and snub both in action and in writing the suffering few who adhered to our cause in evil and difficult times." The cry of the Representative Body of the R.I.C. came as an echo to these words. In a telegram to the Prime Minister its members declared that "all ranks of the R.I.C. view with the greatest consternation the terms of the agreement between the British Government and the Sinn Fein delegates as far as these terms affect the R.I.C." They had good cause for their consternation. The R.I.C. was disbanded in the year of its centenary, but not before many of its members had paid with their lives, which the Treaty did not protect, for their adherence to the British cause in evil and difficult times.

The Belfast correspondent of the London

Daily Telegraph, always impartial and well-informed, wrote on the 7th :—

“ A night’s reflection on the peace terms has not minimised the difficulties now confronting the Northern Parliament. On the one hand, if it abides by Westminster it sees its boundaries reduced, its taxes probably higher than the South, and a probable tariff against its goods; if it reverses its previous decision and goes under Dublin, its finances pass virtually under the control of Sinn Féin, which all here believe will do all in its power to squeeze the Parliament out of existence. In either event the boycott goes on, so that it is not surprising that there is more or less bewilderment at the position in which the Six Counties find themselves placed.”

As a matter of fact the terms of the Treaty were a form of coercion of Ulster, whether justified by the issue at stake or not. In theory if not in practice the right of the Irish delegates to speak for Ireland as a whole had been recognised, and, again in theory, Ulster had been regarded as a part of the Free State which might legally exercise the right of secession. Two words, here italicised, in Article 12, are sufficient to prove this. That Article reads: “ If an address is presented to his Majesty by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland to that effect, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall *no longer* extend to Northern Ireland. . . .” Further, Ulster was compelled to buy immunity from the Treaty at the price of rectification of her frontier, which both Sinn Féin and Ulster understood as involving the transference of parts of Tyrone and Fermanagh to the South, or, as it must now be called, to the Free State. And this act of purchase must be on the initiative of Ulster. Northern Ireland had been promised that if she accepted the Government of Ireland Act in the interests of Irish

Peace, this would be the utmost demanded of her. Her Parliament was by this Act given certain powers, and the remainder were reserved to the Imperial Parliament. But the Treaty, without Ulster's consent, took the reserved services from the Imperial Parliament and handed them over to the Government of the Free State. In order to recover the rights awarded her under the Act, Ulster must present an address praying for the continuance of partition, an action which would certainly be displayed by British and Free State propagandists as yet another example of Ulster standing in the way of Irish settlement.

That it would be to Ulster's economic advantage to join forces with the Free State few doubted at the time. In the words of a prominent Nationalist : " Although there are extremists in both Ulster and the South, there can be little doubt that they will come together in the future, provided the South of Ireland plays the game and proves herself able to govern. If this takes place it is obviously to the advantage of both. The boycott had seriously disturbed the business men of the North, although it had not so far had any far-reaching effect on Ulster's prosperity. A report upon it by a disinterested observer says : " No matter what has been said to the contrary, the Belfast boycott has not had the effect that it was meant to have, it has hit the wrong people. It has affected the tobacconists and grocers and smaller shopkeepers, but Belfast works and thrives on its linen and shipping, and no boycott by the South of Ireland can in reality hit those engaged in these trades, either magnates or workers. The Sinn Feiner has stated that he is

aware that the linen and shipping of Belfast has not been affected by Southern Ireland, but that America is Belfast's chief customer and has been Belfast's chief customer in the past, and that with regard to linen America no longer buys as she did formerly. The Americans, however, although they have allowed Sinn Fein flags to be waved, Sinn Fein placards to be displayed, and Sinn Fein loans to be raised, have bought linen every time they wanted it and will continue to do so." It is interesting to compare this opinion with the suggestions of the Dail Minister of Labour referred to on page 93.

The first important official pronouncement on the part of Ulster was made by Sir James Craig. He had proceeded to London immediately on the publication of the terms of the Treaty in order to interview the Prime Minister, and on his return to Belfast he made a statement in the Northern House of Commons. He said that never before had there been so complicated a situation as that which had been created by the signatures which had been attached to what was called a treaty between the British representatives on the one hand and the Sinn Fein representatives on the other. Ulster was not included in the treaty. In pursuance of their attitude throughout her leaders refused either to interfere with or to determine the settlement that might be arrived at between those two parties. But they had reserved to themselves the right to go into conference with British Ministers wheresoever Ulster's rights and privileges became affected. On that clear and distinct understanding the Prime Minister of England had assured them, and had assured the Northern House of Commons, by the

statement he had permitted to be read at that table that by December 6th either negotiations would have broken down or fresh proposals would have been submitted, and that in the meantime the rights of Ulster would not be sacrificed or prejudiced. "I think those are the exact words," continued Sir James Craig. "Without going into exact details, I must confess that the treaty has not carried out that solemn pledge to this House, the Northern Parliament, and the Ulster people that their rights would not be prejudiced or sacrificed."

Space will not permit the reproduction of the complete correspondence between Mr. Lloyd George and Sir James Craig relating to the negotiations which ended with the treaty. It may be found in the Press of December 14th. 1921. It is sufficient to state that it discloses the fact that the British Government entirely failed to remove Ulster's objection to an all-Ireland Parliament. But Sir James Craig's reply to the British Prime Minister's letter informing him of the terms agreed to by the Conference must be quoted in full in order that the official attitude of Ulster may be understood.

Sir James Craig's letter is dated December 14th, and is as follows :—

"My dear Prime Minister,—I duly received your letter of December 5th covering the articles of agreement for an Irish settlement, which latter have been most carefully considered by my colleagues and myself. Our formal reply had to be deferred until I had had an opportunity of clearly understanding through informal conversations with you certain matters in the agreement which were not quite definite, and also until I had consulted my party here.

"In earlier correspondence my colleagues and I had made it plain that we did not wish to impede negotiations between the British Cabinet and the representatives of

Sinn Fein, or intervene until matters which concerned Ulster were reached. In the agreed statement which you gave me on November 25th to take back to the Parliament of Northern Ireland you promised that the rights of Ulster will be in no way sacrificed or compromised until new proposals had been placed before the Cabinet of Northern Ireland. It was with grave concern, therefore, that we noticed that an agreement, which materially involved Ulster's interests, had been signed by his Majesty's Government without our having previously been consulted.

"A question which vitally affects our interests is the decision to establish a commission to revise the boundaries between Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland. There is, I believe, no precedent in the history of the British Empire for taking any territory from an established Government without its sanction. Moreover, this is a breach of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, which was put into operation only last June, when his Majesty the King in person opened the Parliament of Northern Ireland. At our meeting on December 9th you explained that it was only intended to make a slight readjustment of our boundary line so as to bring into Northern Ireland loyalists who are now just outside our area, and to transfer correspondingly an equivalent number of those having Sinn Fein sympathies to the area of the Irish Free State. The Lord Chancellor's speech,* however, has given encouragement to those endeavouring to read into it a different interpretation. As I intimated to Mr. Austen Chamberlain by telephone before leaving London, I reserved to my Government the right of dissenting from the appointment of any boundary commission.

"We protest against the declared intention of your Government to place Northern Ireland automatically in the Irish Free State. Not only is this opposed to your pledge in our agreed statement of November 25th, but it is also antagonistic to the general principles of the British Empire in regard to the liberties of her peoples. It is true that Ulster is given the right to contract out, but she can only do so after automatic inclusion in the Irish Free State. The action of the British Cabinet in this matter is a complete reversal of their own policy as declared in the King's speech at the opening of the Northern Parliament last June, and also in the published correspondence between you and Mr. de Valera. This policy was that Ulster should

* See Note G in Appendix.

remain out until she chose of her free will to enter an all-Ireland Parliament. Neither explanation nor justification for this astounding change has been attempted. We can only conjecture that it is a surrender to the claims of Sinn Fein that her delegates must be recognised as the representatives of the whole of Ireland—a claim which we cannot for a moment admit.

“ The reference to the future of Belfast Lough in your agreement with Sinn Fein is gravely resented by the people of Ulster, although they fully concur with the decision that the harbour defences should remain under British control. What right has Sinn Fein to be recognised as parties to an agreement concerning the defences of Belfast Lough, which touches only the loyal counties of Antrim and Down?

“ The principle of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, was to give equal rights and privileges to the North and to the South of Ireland. This principle has been completely violated by the agreement made with Sinn Fein, whereby the Irish Free State is relieved of many of her responsibilities in regard to the British Empire, and is to be granted financial advantages which, you have made clear, are expected to relieve her considerably from the burden of taxation which must be borne by us and other parts of the United Kingdom. Ulster, on the other hand, is only to obtain such concessions if she first consents to become subordinate to Sinn Fein Ireland.

“ We note with apprehension that you have abandoned the condition laid down in your original maximum concessions to Sinn Fein that there should be ‘ no protective duties or other restrictions upon the flow of trade and commerce between all parts of these islands.’ We foresee in this abandonment the beginning of friction and tariff wars in which the United Kingdom, and more especially Ulster, must be gravely involved.

“ We are forced to conclude that in refusing to accept the same oath of allegiance taken by Canada, South Africa, and all other parts of the British Empire, Sinn Fein has demanded, and the Government conceded, a different oath, and therefore a different standard of loyalty, which appears to us to make it impossible for Ulster ever to enter the Irish Free State.

“ In spite of the inducements held out to Ulster under your arrangements with Sinn Fein, we are convinced that it is not in the interests of Great Britain or the Empire that Ulster should become subordinate to a Sinn Fein Government. We feel that in years to come the British

nation will realise the advantages in having in Northern Ireland a population which is determined to remain loyal to British traditions and citizenship, and we are glad to think that our decision will obviate the necessity for mutilating the Union Jack—the flag of the British Empire. In the long run the British nation will come to recognise that the action we are taking is in their interests, and will accord to Northern Ireland such measure of protection and such fair considerations as will counteract any disadvantages due to her position as a frontier State of the United Kingdom.

“There are very many further adverse criticisms we might justifiably advance against the terms of the Treaty such as the anomalous position created by the clause relating to the Council of Ireland and the Judiciary, but they can fittingly stand over until the introduction of the bill embodying the terms of the Treaty.”

On the 19th, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland issued the following manifesto:—

“Brother Orangemen,—This meeting of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, representative of Orangemen from all parts of their native land, is of opinion that the so-called Treaty entered into between the representatives of his Majesty's Government and the rebel forces of Ireland will break up the Empire and deprive many loyal citizens of their positions in the Empire without their consent. It is the opinion of this Grand Lodge that if an Irish Free State is set up loyalists will be compelled to defend their lives and liberties by force—a result most distasteful to them, but is the only argument accepted by his Majesty's Government. The insincere and ambiguous document called ‘a Treaty’ will receive conflicting interpretations and be a cause of further trouble between Great Britain and Ireland, and that treason will bring misery to its deluded followers, for a close political connection is essential to the prosperity of both islands.”

Sir James Craig's letter and the pronouncement of the Grand Orange Lodge give some idea of the reception accorded to the Treaty by the Unionists of Ulster. On the other hand, the Sinn Fein and Nationalist population of the Six Counties were in favour of its ratification, although objecting to the

clause giving Ulster the power to contract out of the Free State.

The actual effect of the Treaty in Belfast may be gathered from the following extract from a military report :—

“ It is reported that the feelings of the rank and file of the Unionist party are turned against the military and that resentment is shown whenever they intervene on behalf of Roman Catholic persons or property. This resentment evinced itself by the murder of a soldier of the Norfolk Regiment and the attempted murder of another, when both were on patrol duty.

“ All the disturbances are caused by the low class hooligan section of each party, and the better class working men and business men are not in sympathy with them. Unfortunately, however, they are not denounced and decried by the public men or the Press of either party.”

Ulster, in fact, believed that she had been betrayed by the British Government, and a wave of resentment against Britain and her people swept over the Province. But, despite this bitterness, it was Ulster's intention to cleave to the Union, rather than to adventure herself in the dreaded atmosphere of an all-Ireland Parliament.

CHAPTER XII.

The Treaty having been signed, the next step was to secure its approval by the British Parliament and by Dail Eireann. The British Government immediately made the necessary arrangements for summoning Parliament on December 14th for the purpose, and when the matter was put to the vote the majorities for approving the Treaty were large in both Houses, despite the efforts of the independent Unionists, or 'Die-hards' to give them their topical nickname. This party put down an amendment in the House of Commons as follows:—

“ This House regrets that the proposed settlement of the government of Ireland indicated in the gracious Speech from the Throne involves the surrender of the rights of the Crown in Ireland, gives power to establish an independent Irish army and navy, violates pledges given to Ulster, and fails to safeguard the rights of the loyalist population in Southern Ireland.”

This amendment was defeated by 401 votes to 58, and a similar amendment in the House of Lords, standing in the name of the Duke of Northumberland, was defeated by 166 votes to 47.

But a very different fate awaited the Treaty at the hands of the Dail. The first move on Mr. de

Valera's part was to issue on December 7th a statement as follows :—

“ In view of the nature of the proposed Treaty with Great Britain, President de Valera has sent an urgent summons to the members of the Cabinet in London to report at once, so that a full Cabinet decision may be taken. The hour of meeting is fixed for twelve noon to-morrow. A meeting of the Dail will be summoned later.”

The statement issued by Mr. de Valera as a result of the meeting of the Dail Cabinet has already been quoted (page 263). This was the first indication that the long-expected split in the ranks of Sinn Fein had at length occurred. At last the answer was to be given to the question which had been agitating the minds of all Irishmen : to what extent would the Sinn Fein leaders rally to the moderate party? The country as a whole was warmly in favour of the Treaty. Would the common-sense of its leaders rise to the occasion and induce them to forsake the shadow for the substance?

Mr. Griffith promptly replied to Mr. de Valera's manifesto in the following statement, in which he was supported by Mr. Collins :—

“ I have signed the Treaty between Ireland and Great Britain.

“ I believe this Treaty will lay the foundation of peace and friendship between the two nations.

“ What I have signed I shall stand by, in the belief that the end of the conflict of centuries is at hand.”

The Publicity Department of Dail Eireann issued the following a few hours later :—

“ President de Valera to-day made the following statement. To prevent a misunderstanding the public should realise :—

1. That the Treaty signed by the plenipotentiaries

must be ratified by Dail Eireann no less than by the British Parliament in order to take effect.

2. That the usual course would be for the Cabinet to introduce a treaty agreement as a Cabinet measure.

In the present case, owing to the fact that in the later stages of the negotiations the views of the plenipotentiaries differ from those of certain members of the Cabinet, this course cannot be taken. A motion for the ratification will now be introduced by Mr. Griffith, as Chairman of the Delegates.

In the interval before the Dail meeting, which was timed to coincide with the meeting of the British Parliament, the case at issue between the two parties in Sinn Fein, which may now be termed without reservation the extremists and the moderates, became clearer. The moderate section of the people of Ireland took the line that since Ireland had sent plenipotentiaries to London to come to terms with the British Government, the honour of the country demanded that the terms which bore the signature of those plenipotentiaries would be ratified. To this Mr. de Valera made the following reply :—

“ I have been asked whether the honour of Ireland is not involved in the ratification of the agreement arrived at. The honour of Ireland is not involved. The plenipotentiaries were sent on the distinct understanding that any agreement they made was subject to ratification by Dail Eireann and by the country, and could be rejected by Dail Eireann if it did not commend itself to Dail Eireann, or by the country if it did not commend itself to the country. The Parliament of Britain and the people of Britain will, on their side, similarly consider the agreement solely on its merits. If the English Parliament desires, it can reject it; so can the British people. Ratification is, then, no mere empty formality. The United States refused to ratify a treaty signed even by its President. The honour of the nation is not involved unless and until the treaty is ratified.”

Mr. de Valera was correct in his contention. The delegates had signed the Treaty as a gamble, if it may be put so crudely. They knew that a section of their own Cabinet would not accept it, but they counted upon sufficient support both in the Cabinet and in the body of the Dail and of the country to enable them to carry out the approval of the Treaty despite opposition. Opinion in Dublin and indeed throughout Ireland was at this time that the Treaty would be approved in the Dail by a majority of at least two to one.

When the Dail met the first speaker was Mr. de Valera. He set out the circumstances under which the delegates were appointed, and explained the terms of reference and the directions given to them. It was understood when the plenipotentiaries were appointed that they would report to the Cabinet, which would frame a policy. It was necessary that the plenipotentiaries should be either the whole Cabinet or some persons themselves members of the Cabinet. What they did was to select three members of the Cabinet and two others. It was obvious that if these were to be in a position to do the work they should have full powers of negotiation. At the two meetings of the Dail at which they were appointed, he had made it quite clear that the plenipotentiaries should have full power to negotiate, with the understanding that when they reported the Cabinet would decide its policy, and whatever arrangements they arrived at would have to be submitted to the Dail for ratification. The question of committing the country without ratification by the Dail was out of the question. In the event of a difference of opinion among the

plenipotentiaries it was the plenipotentiaries themselves who had the responsibility of making up their minds and deciding. The Dail had the right of refusing to agree if it thought right. It was obvious that the Cabinet and the plenipotentiaries must keep in the closest touch. They did that. They were in agreement up to a certain point. A definite question had to be decided and they did not agree.

Mr. de Valera then gave the actual text of the instructions which he wrote at a Cabinet meeting on October 7th, on the eve of the delegates' departure for London. It was as follows :—

“ 1. The plenipotentiaries have full powers, as defined in their credentials.

“ 2. It is understood, however, that before decisions are finally reached on the main questions that a despatch notifying the intention of making these decisions will be sent to the members of the Cabinet in Dublin, and that a reply will be awaited by the plenipotentiaries before the final decision is made.

“ 3. It is also understood that the complete text of the draft Treaty about to be signed will be similarly submitted to Dublin and reply awaited.

“ 4. In case of breakdown, the text of the final proposals from our side will be similarly submitted.

“ 5. It is understood that the Cabinet in Dublin will be kept regularly informed of the progress of the negotiations.”

Mr. de Valera went on to explain that this was all done with the exception of paragraph 3. It was obvious that a Treaty that would be a lasting agreement between the two nations, and which might have the effect of governing the relations of the nations for centuries, was a document which, even when the fundamental principle had been agreed upon, should be most carefully examined.

He had to say that the final text was not submitted, and that there was a previous draft before the final text. On that he could not sign, and he did not think the other members of the Cabinet would. He felt that if paragraph 3 had been carried out to the letter they might have got complete agreement between the Cabinet and the plenipotentiaries. This was a case of a difference of opinion between two bodies which might naturally arise, and therefore he was anxious that it would not in any way interfere with the discussion on the merits of the Treaty which the plenipotentiaries had brought back. The vital question, the main question at issue, was decided about the third week in October by the Cabinet, and those in favour of the decision then taken were certainly a majority of the Cabinet, though the whole Cabinet was not present at the meeting. Mr. de Valera closed his speech with a repetition of his offer to explain the circumstances more fully at a private session.

This speech was highly interesting, in that it revealed Mr. de Valera's desire to avoid the split between the moderates and the extremists extending by the charge of bad faith against the delegates. His one hope of uniting Sinn Fein once more lay in conciliation and in the avoidance if possible of a direct vote for or against the Treaty as it stood. His attitude throughout the deliberations which followed must be considered in this light. Another interesting fact revealed in this speech is that the Dail Cabinet had considered the question of allegiance at the time of the first 'crisis' in the Conference, and had decided against its acceptance.

In the course of subsequent discussion Mr.

Collins read the credentials served on each member of the delegation, and referred to by Mr. de Valera, as follows :—

“ In virtue of the authority vested in me by Dail Eireann, I hereby appoint (here follow the names and designations of the delegates) as Envoys Plenipotentiaries for the elected Government of the Republic of Ireland, to negotiate and conclude on behalf of Ireland with the representatives of his Britannic Majesty George V. a treaty or treaties of settlement, association, and accommodation between Ireland and the community of nations known as the British Commonwealth. In witness hereof I hereunder subscribe my name as President. (Signed) EAMON DE VALERA.”

It also transpired in the course of debate that Mr. Lloyd George had ‘ seen ’ this precious document, which again asserted the position of the delegates as the representatives of an independent nation. But the credentials had never been ‘ presented ’ to him, nor had he ‘ accepted ’ them. The blind eye had once more been put to the telescope.

The Dail then went into private session, with the intention of resuming public discussion on the motion for the ratification of the Treaty on the following day. But it appeared that in private session the members of the Cabinet had more to say to one another and to their supporters in the Dail in justification of their views than had been anticipated. For the rest of the week the private session continued, and it was not until the 16th that announcement was issued under the joint signatures of Messrs. de Valera and Griffith, in itself a significant innovation. This announcement ran :—

“ The private session of Dail Eireann will end to-morrow evening. The motion for ratification of the

treaty will be taken up at the public session on Monday next at eleven a.m. We are confident that the Irish people will continue to maintain the same calm dignity and discipline which they have heretofore displayed."

During this period of private session, Mr. de Valera produced and expounded an alternative to the Treaty, which did not include the recognition of the Republic. There seems no doubt that this was merely a tactical move, and that neither Mr. de Valera or his followers desired for a moment the acceptance by the Dail of this alternative. The idea at the back of Mr. de Valera's mind throughout was the avoidance of a direct vote on the Treaty. The submission of an alternative might accomplish this. Rejection of the Treaty meant war, and Mr. de Valera knew that the prospect of a renewal of hostilities was the most powerful argument on the side of the delegates. If he could so contrive matters that the Treaty could be rejected and at the same time the British Government committed to a fresh period of negotiation, his own supremacy would prevail, and the moderate party in the Dail, which had, so to speak, sprung up in the night, would return to its allegiance. Mr. de Valera's alternative, which became known as 'Document No. 2,' is printed in the Appendix to this book.*

The Dail met again in public session on the 19th. Mr. Griffith, in moving the ratification of the Treaty, referred to Mr. de Valera's alternative as 'a mere quibbling of words.' By it the President was asking them to throw away the Treaty and to go back to war. What had the delegates got? They had come back from London with the evacuation of British troops, who had been in

* See Note H in Appendix.

Ireland 700 years; they had got a full right of fiscal control; equality for Ireland with all the other nations of the Commonwealth; and equal views with others in peace and war. Yet they were told that the Treaty was a poor thing, and that the Irish people were to go back on it and fight for a quibble. But the people were not sophists, and the men of words would not deceive them. Mr. Griffiths then read a letter from Mr. Lloyd George undertaking to withdraw the Forces of the Crown from the South of Ireland when the articles of agreement were ratified, an announcement which was greeted with cheers.

But the most dramatic moment of the day came when Mr. Barton, one of the delegates, was speaking. He told the story of the last hours of the Conference. "Mr. Lloyd George gave us till ten o'clock to make up our minds whether we should stand by our proposals for external association, face war, and maintain a Republic, or whether we should accept inclusion in the British Empire and make peace. The responsibility for that war was to rest directly on two of the delegates who refused to sign. For myself I declared I could not accept that responsibility." And accordingly he had signed the agreement.

The following day was devoted to public session, with a short interval for discussion of military matters in private. During the public session the most notable contributions to the debate were those of Mr. Etchingham, who denounced the Treaty; Mr. Finian Lynch, who in supporting it deplored the emotional element that had been introduced into the discussion, saying "The bones of the dead have been

rattled indecently in the face of this Assembly ”; and Mr. Sean Milroy, who stigmatised the manœuvres of Mr. de Valera as asking members to withhold their support to the Treaty in the expectation that something better would follow. Dr. McCartan, who had been the Sinn Fein envoy in America, made a speech in the course of which he expressed the sentiment of a large section of American sympathisers with the movement. He said that a Republic for Ireland was dead. They had not a united people, nor had they a united Dail, and he questioned whether they had a united army. The Republic was no longer a factor in international politics. It was the duty of the Cabinet to submit a policy, and they had failed in this duty. As a Republican he could not endorse the Treaty, but he would not vote for chaos and that meant that he would not vote against ratification. Rejection meant war, and every man who voted for rejection should be prepared for war.

On the 21st Mr. Gavan Duffy, one of the delegates, was the first speaker. He said that he was going to recommend the Treaty very reluctantly, because he saw no alternative. The Treaty inflicted a grievous wound on the dignity of the Irish nation by inflicting an alien king upon them. This fact remained, although the framers of the constitution could subsequently relegate the King of England to exterior darkness, which was within their powers to a large extent. “ Yet I signed. I will tell you why. On December 4th a Conference was held, attended by Mr. Griffith, Mr. Barton, and myself, at which Lloyd George broke with us definitely, subject to confirmation by his Cabinet next morning.

That might or might not have been final. On the next day another Conference was held, attended by Mr. Griffith, Mr. Collins, and Mr. Barton, and after four and a half hours' discussion our delegates returned and informed us that four times they had all but broken, and that the fate of Ireland was to be decided that night. Lloyd George had issued to them an ultimatum to this effect: 'It must now be peace or war. My messenger goes to-night to Belfast. I have here two answers—one the Treaty, the other a rupture; and if it be rupture it is immediate war. The only way to avert that immediate war is to bring me the signature of every one of the plenipotentiaries with a further undertaking to recommend the Treaty to Dail Eireann and to bring me that by ten o'clock.' "I shall not forget the anguish of that night. Again this ultimatum may have been bluff, but every one of those who had heard the Prime Minister believed beyond doubt that this time he was not play-acting, and that he meant what he said." Mr. Duffy concluded by recommending the Dail to ratify the Treaty, on the grounds that there was no possible alternative.

Mr. Duggan, another of the delegates, said that in recommending the acceptance of the Treaty he was acting in accordance with the wishes of the people who had elected him. If under the terms of the Treaty the Irish people could not achieve their freedom, it was the fault of the Irish people, not of the Treaty. Mr. Cosgrave supported the Treaty on the grounds that it gave Ireland far more than all the patriots from O'Connell to Parnell had hoped for. After a final speech by Miss McSwiney, which was full of fierce denunciation of the Treaty and

lasted for nearly three hours, the Dail adjourned for the day.

The most important speech on the morrow was that of Mr. Mulcahy, Chief of Staff of the I.R.A. He said that none of the men wanted the Treaty, or the Crown or the representatives of the Crown. No one wanted harbours occupied by the forces of the enemy, and no one wanted Partition. But he saw no alternative to the acceptance of the Treaty, because it definitely secured to Ireland a Parliament with full executive and administrative powers, and an executive in Ireland responsible to that Parliament. They in Ireland were not in a position, military or otherwise, to drive the enemy from their ports. They had not been able to drive the enemy beyond a good-sized police barracks. Should they grow to equality with their old enemy by taking complete control of their resources, or should they take the chance of war not with an adequate kind of military force, but with a very small force, sufficient to make their country a resisting people for many years, but certainly not sufficient to win the war? They had suffered a defeat, but even in that defeat they had got great powers for the Irish people.

At the close of the day's debate the question rose as to its continuation, and it was agreed to adjourn until January 3rd. The Cabinet would continue to do its duty in the meanwhile, and no speeches were to be made on either side during the interval.

The prolongation of the debate in the Dail was a great disappointment to those in England who desired the ratification of the Treaty. It was felt, with some show of reason, that the Dail was standing

entirely aloof from the known wishes of the Irish people, and, for the matter of that, that its members were entirely out of touch with the views of their constituents. The majority of the I.R.A. leaders had declared themselves on the side of the Treaty, but it was very doubtful how far they spoke for their followers. It was not likely, even if the Treaty were rejected by the Dail, that this would be the end of discussion. Mr. de Valera's Document No. 2, which had not yet been published but of which every Dail member possessed a copy, must be discussed as an alternative, and if accepted by the Dail, would no doubt form the basis of a second delegation to the British Government, the members of which would be selected from those known to be faithful to the ideas of the President. Probably, even at this period, none of the leaders of Sinn Fein believed in his heart that either the Treaty or Document No. 2 could afford a permanent solution of the Irish question. The idea of an eventual Republic was too deeply ingrained in the rising generation of men of the type that joined the ranks of the I.R.A. for its abandonment without a struggle. After the disclosures of the Minister of Defence in private session, and the frank speech of Mr. Mulcahy, few even of the most desperate in Ireland can have continued to believe that the best way to secure the Republic was by force of arms at that time. The question was whether it were better to accept the Treaty or Mr. de Valera's alternative as a stepping stone.

On the 29th a statement by Mr. Lloyd George was published in the Press, which contained a warning to those who supported Mr. de Valera's

scheme. It is worth quoting in full:—

“ No British statesman could go further than we have gone. No British statesman could consider any proposal involving Ireland being out of the Empire.

“ The Treaty places Ireland on an equality with the other States of the Empire, gives Ireland the same claim to membership of the League of Nations, and every right that Canada has in law, fact, and constitutional practice; and not merely the rejection, but the alteration even of the Treaty by Ireland or Great Britain would render it null and void. This would indeed be deplorable in the interests of both countries. The British Government have gone to their utmost limit in the Treaty, and to re-open the discussion which was closed only after the most exhaustive consideration of every point would be a fruitless proceeding and is impossible.

“ A committee consisting of British Ministers, presided over by the Colonial Secretary, has been set up to deal with the evacuation of the British Forces, the settling of an amnesty, and the making of all necessary arrangements on the British side for transferring full executive responsibility to an Irish provisional Government. The work of this committee, which has been in continuous session up to Christmas and had proposed to sit through the Christmas holidays, is now unavoidably held up pending approval of the Treaty; but on approval it would be carried through with the utmost possible despatch.

“ It is the intention of the British Government to hand over without delay their responsibilities to the provisional Government which will function during the period of transition required for the setting up of the Irish Free State Administration.”

Stronger inducement could hardly have been held out to the members of the Dail to ratify the Treaty. After a blunt announcement that the British Government were prepared to go no further, and would not even consider Document No. 2, Mr. Lloyd George goes on to catalogue the advantages to be secured for Ireland by the ratification of the Treaty, and gently deplores the fact that the delay is withholding him from pouring out these

advantages with both hands. It sounded so idyllic that, as one of the members of the Dail remarked at the time, it seemed as if 'there must be some catch in it somewhere.'

There is one reference in the Prime Minister's statement which requires some explanation, the phrase relating to the settling of an amnesty. Immediately upon the signing of the Treaty, the British Government had issued an order as follows :

"In view of the agreement signed yesterday between the representatives of the British Government and the Irish Delegation of Plenipotentiaries, his Majesty has approved of the release forthwith of all persons now interned under Regulation 14b of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations. Instructions have been given accordingly."

Regulation 14b covered the cases of those who had been interned without conviction of definite offences, but not those who had been imprisoned by sentence of Court Martial or otherwise. The release of these men had been effected at once, this step having been insisted upon by the Irish Delegates. An agitation immediately began for the release of political prisoners who were actually serving sentences, and it is to these men that the Prime Minister referred.

During the days that elapsed between the adjournment of the Dail and its reassembly, frantic efforts were made by both parties to determine the extent of their support. On the surface it appeared that the moderates were gaining strength, and that the body of Sinn Fein opinion was behind them. Resolutions in favour of the Treaty poured in from local bodies in the provinces, and no observer could form any other conclusion than that the people of

the cities were almost unanimously in support of it. But the extremists bided their time and made very little show of their views, trusting rather to the argument of the pistol than to eloquence, should the split lead to an appeal to the country, as seemed probable. The opinion of the average Dublin citizen at this time is ably presented in the following words, which are those of a contemporary report :—

“ The Church in Ireland is unquestionably wholeheartedly in support of the Treaty, in spite of the apparently neutral attitude of the hierarchy at their late meeting.” (For the statement issued after this meeting see page 267). “ Various reasons are given for this attitude. It is said that the Bishops from the North are so strongly opposed to partition that a unanimous approval was impossible. It is also said that though individually all approved they could not do so collectively because of the pressure brought to bear on them chiefly by those in favour of ratification. This may have been in deference to the prejudices of Ulster and with a view to future Union, or it may have been felt that any appearance of active intervention by the Church would have been resented in Dail Eireann and would prejudice approval of the agreement.

“ There is every sign that at least Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins will keep their word and that their oaths may be trusted, but it is doubtful whether the same can be said of all their followers. Richard Mulcahy’s speech is likely to have irritated many of the I.R.A. who had persuaded themselves to believe that they did defeat or could have defeated the Army and Police in open fight, but it probably had a great and steadying effect on both the extremists and the people.

“ It should be remembered that the Dail is, considered as a Parliament, very much in its infancy and consequently both very much on its dignity and very confused in its notions as to how that dignity should be maintained. Also that probably every member wants his or her constituency to hear their words. This, coupled with the weakness and inefficiency of the Speaker, resulted in the astonishing flow of words and the almost complete failure to keep to the point either in speeches or interruptions which have made them the world’s tragi-comedy of Christmas 1921.

“The future must depend on what support the Griffith-Collins combination can get in Ireland. It would be possible to mobilise nearly all the brains and all the property-owning classes on their side, and, if they are supported, but not obviously, by his Majesty’s Government, it is quite possible that eventually they may be successful, though at present their difficulties are considerable.”

Just before the reassembly of the Dail the extremist party began the publication of their own organ, which they called *The Republic of Ireland*. The policy of this paper was outlined in a leading article in its first issue, dated January 3rd, 1922 :

“We shall labour to unite the Irish people, temporarily disunited under duress and the temptation of an easy peace, upon the only basis upon which unity is possible—loyalty to the Irish Republic established once for all in 1919 and never to be forsworn without dishonour. We fear a peace which destroys our nationhood and disestablishes the Republic of Ireland. That peace we cannot and will not accept. Britain can have her safeguards if she wants them, but we shall give them as one independent nation to another.

“We are ready to associate ourselves with Britain as one sovereign people with another, but to be included among the possessions of Britain, to derive our rights as a people from the Parliament of Britain—these are things our nation will not do. No representative of our people had, or could have, the right to enter into a treaty annulling our national independence.”

The first day of the reassembly of the Dail gave an opportunity for a display of bad manners by the Countess Markievicz, and an offer to the extremists by Mr. Collins.

“I will make a suggestion,” said the latter, “whereby the Dail can avoid division. Rightly or wrongly, deputies or no deputies, the Irish people have accepted the Treaty. I have my own feelings about this Treaty, feelings about it very much keener, perhaps, than those of the deputies who are against it. But I believe that the Treaty was inevitable. . . . The proposition is that you should allow the Treaty to go through, that you allow the

provisional Government to come into existence, and if necessary fight the provisional Government for a Republic afterwards."

In reply to this speech Mr. de Valera issued an appeal "To the people of Ireland," in which he implored them not to support the Treaty, which he denounced in the strongest possible terms.

"To the utmost limit to which they could go our delegates had gone to arrive at an agreement such as this nation could fully accept and in full appreciation of the governing conditions. By the threat of war they were dragged beyond that limit, and the deed and circumstances will ever be remembered by Irishmen as the crowning act of infamy of England's rulers against Ireland. . . . You, the people, can retrieve the position even at this eleventh hour."

After this there could be no further talk of compromise or agreement between the two parties.

Very little of interest was said during the course of the discussion on the 4th, but at the end of the session the famous Document No. 2 was released for publication, not without criticism that it had been so amended since it was originally circulated to members of the Dail that it was in effect Document No. 3. On the following day the most important speech was that of Mr. O'Duffy, who said that he was a member of an unofficial committee of the Dail which had been trying to find common ground. On the previous night substantial agreement had been reached on a number of very vital questions, making it possible to retain the services of the President for the nation and possibly avoiding a split in the country. Mr. Mulcahy moved that the Dail should meet in private the following day, in order to discuss a statement to be prepared by Mr. O'Duffy's Committee.

But an extraordinary enterprise carried out by a party of Republicans from Cork on the 4th seemed to show that there was very little likelihood of their being bound to any agreement that could be entered into. The correspondent of the *London Times* was calmly kidnapped while he was lunching in the heart of Dublin, and taken in a motor car to Cork to "stand his trial" before a Republican court. His offence was presumably contained in a series of articles which he had written in the *Times* during the previous few days, in which he had fearlessly described the conditions in various parts of Ireland. In the course of these articles he had referred to the attitude of the I.R.A. towards the Treaty. Mr. Kay was subsequently released and brought back to Dublin, but not until an energetic protest had been made to the Dail by the correspondents of the world's Press then assembled in the city.

On the morning of the 6th the Dail met in private session and refused to accept the suggestions of Mr. O'Duffy's Committee, on the initiative of the extremists, who had all along been opposed to compromise. This matter having been disposed of, the public session was resumed in the afternoon. Mr. de Valera opened the debate with a speech which began with an explanation of the difficulty of governing the country with a divided Cabinet and ended with the declaration of his intention of resigning from the office of 'Chief executive officer of the Irish Republic.' So much of interest to the student of recent Irish history was revealed in his speech that it must be quoted at some length.

"I entered politics as a soldier, as one who stood for

the principles of those who proclaimed the Republic in 1916. . . . When I came out of prison I found the present Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Griffith) was the head of the Sinn Fein organisation, while the present Minister of Defence (Mr. Burgess or Brugha) was the head of the Irish Volunteers. I found that they differed then as fundamentally as they do to-day, and I found that I was a sort of connecting link between the two. At the first Convention of Sinn Fein we devised a basis on which we have worked so successfully for four years—the basis of the Sinn Fein Constitution. Since then I have been the link between the two, and at the Convention Mr. Griffith surrendered his position as head of the Sinn Fein organisation to me, and I was elected to the headship. Mr. Burgess also surrendered to me, as the senior officer in the Army at the time, the headship of the Irish Volunteers, and it was the combination of these two in me which enabled the two sides to work together. When I went to America to try to get recognition for the Republic, I nominated as Acting President Mr. Griffith. In every Cabinet I formed I took care to have the two sides properly represented. . . . I felt that the unity of those forces was absolutely essential to national success, and until December 6th last I succeeded. On December 6th a document was signed which irrevocably sundered that connection. On October 25th I saw the danger and I found it my duty to send to the delegation in London what I regarded as a warning. I wrote to the head of the delegation: ‘I received the minutes of the seventh session and your letter of the 24th. We are all here at one that there can be no question of asking the Irish people to enter into an agreement which would make them subject to the Crown or demand from them allegiance to the British King. If war is the alternative we can only face it, and I think the sooner the other side is made to realise it the better.’

“That was definite. On December 2nd the plenipotentiaries came back with a document which represented the proposals of the British Government at that stage—a document which was clearly inconsistent with our position and my position. . . . I therefore rejected that document and made it clear to the Chairman of the delegation that it would be unacceptable to us.”

Mr. de Valera then tendered his resignation, but offered himself for re-election.

“ If you re-elect me, I will have to have the right to have a Cabinet of those with me and acting as a unified body. Next I will have to have the full use of the resources of the Republic to defend the Republic. If you elect me by a majority I will throw out that Treaty, even if my Government goes down. Next I will bring from the Cabinet that document I have mentioned (‘ Document No. 2 ’), and will offer it to the British people as a genuine Peace Treaty. It is a generous offer of peace, and if it is turned down we will stick to the Sinn Fein Constitution as we have done, deny the right of the British Parliament to legislate for Ireland, and will make use of any and every means available to make the power of England impotent to hold Ireland in subjection by force or otherwise.”

On the following day, January 7th, after a powerful speech by Mr. Griffith, the original motion was put to the vote, and the Treaty was ratified by 64 votes to 57. The moderate party had won, and the policy of Mr. Griffith was justified. Ratification of the Treaty was the first step in the ultimate triumph of Sinn Fein as conceived by him and by his followers over Fenianism and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Both moved towards the same end, the independence of Ireland, but by different paths. The original Sinn Feiners believed that their object could be secured by peaceful means, but more drastic than those of the Nationalists whom they superseded. The extremists of all shades believed that their object could only be secured by violence. As Mr. de Valera had said in his speech quoted above, the alliance between the two had endured for four years, and this alliance might have ended in a compromise, had the extremists been of a nature that admitted argument. But the signing of the Treaty made the support of the extremists unnecessary to the moderates, and the latter, feeling their support in the country, determined to strike

out for themselves, and if possible to form their Free State without further aid from the powers of violence. The coalition which had been known as Sinn Fein, and which had worked together with greater devotion than any other coalition recorded in history, was irremediably split into its component parts. Henceforth the originators of the movement, the original Sinn Feiners, were to be on the side of law and order, the men who had inherited the spirit of the Fenians and were imbued with the teaching of the Secret Societies* continued upon their path, which must inevitably lead to chaos and to the subversion of all established government. But now the Government which they attacked was no longer English but Irish, the men killed in defence of it were men acting under the authority of their own nation.

It is beyond the scope of this book to record the events that followed the ratification of the Treaty by the Dail, but it may be mentioned that on the following day Mr. de Valera was defeated upon his offering himself for re-election, by the narrow margin of two votes. Almost exactly a year before his defeat he had landed in Ireland from America, having failed in his mission to that country, but prepared for a prolonged struggle which should somehow, he knew not how, end with the recognition of the Irish Republic. In the short space of that year he had seen the people of Ireland abandon the Republic and become reconciled to Partition as a means to an end. Abandoned by Irishmen at home and abroad, he still continued unshaken in his belief that the destiny of Ireland was to be found in the

* See Note I in Appendix.

establishment of an all-Ireland Republic, and that no other status ought for a moment to be considered by her people. But in spite of his efforts, in spite of the powers he represented, he saw Ireland become a nation before his eyes, and the dream of the Republic, to which he had adhered with fanatical fervour throughout his career, relegated once more to the distant and uncertain future. The year 1921 had indeed witnessed the birth of the Irish nation, but it had also witnessed the downfall of the Republican cause and the return of Sinn Fein to the realisation of practical politics.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

On March 26th premises situated at 11, Molesworth Street, Dublin, were entered by a party of Auxiliaries, and were found to contain the Publicity Department of Dail Eireann. Literally tons of papers and documents were seized, and among them the whole apparatus for the production of the *Irish Bulletin*, together with the list of its recipients. It occurred to one of the officers on the staff of the Chief of Police that a very good way of countering the Sinn Fein propaganda would be to continue the issue of the *Bulletin*, imitating its style, and attributing to it the most astounding sentiments. I cannot forebear quoting a passage from one of these bogus *Bulletins*, which almost exactly follows the verbiage of a passage in an issue of the genuine *Bulletin* a few days previously.

“The tactics of the Republican Forces have been masterly in handling the situation created by the English Government in flooding Ireland with ex-soldiers in the uniform of police. In no single recorded case have the Republican Forces attacked a single policeman with the odds less than six to one. By this strategic handling of all combats victory has invariably rested with the Republicans. Science in war, as practised by the young men of Ireland, has staggered humanity—and it will be a long time ere humanity recovers from the blow.”

This example is merely typical. The Publicity Department then set to work to resume publication of the genuine *Bulletin*, stamping their issue ‘Official Copy,’ a measure immediately imitated by the editor of the bogus *Bulletin*. Both genuine and bogus then proclaimed their productions as the only original, and denounced the contents of the opposition sheet as forgeries. During the period of this comedy the *Bulletin* lost any authority it may have had, owing to the impossibility of distinguishing false from true.

NOTE B.

The part played by Mr. Cope in the negotiations was recognised by General Smuts, who sent him a hearty letter of congratulation and appreciation on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty in December.

NOTE C.

I have not thought it necessary to reproduce in full the correspondence between Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. de Valera. The full text of the various letters and telegrams will be found in Command Papers Nos. 1502 and 1539 entitled *Correspondence relating to the Proposals of H.M. Government for an Irish Settlement* and *Further Correspondence relating to the Proposals of H.M. Government for an Irish Settlement*, respectively.

NOTE D.

For details of the constitution of Sinn Fein, the authority and composition of Ard Fheis, and the aims of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, see H. B. C. Pollard's *Secret Societies of Ireland* and my *Administration of Ireland, 1920*.

NOTE E.

The following is the Annex to the Treaty :—

1. The following are the specific facilities required:
 - (a) Dockyard Port at Berehaven. Admiralty property and rights to be retained as at the date hereof. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.
 - (b) Queenstown. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties. Certain mooring buoys to be retained for use of his Majesty's ships.
 - (c) Belfast Lough. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.

- (d) Lough Swilly. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.
- (e) Aviation. Facilities in the neighbourhood of the above ports for coastal defence by air.
- (f) Oil Fuel Storage—

Haulbowline	{	To be offered for sale to commercial companies under guarantees that purchasers shall maintain a certain minimum stock for Admiralty purposes.
Rathmullen		

2. A Convention shall be made between the British Government and the Government of the Irish Free State to give effect to the following conditions:

- (a) That submarine cables shall not be landed or wireless stations for communication with places outside Ireland be established except by agreement with the British Government; that the existing cable landing rights and wireless concessions shall not be withdrawn except by agreement with the British Government; and that the British Government shall be entitled to land additional submarine cables or establish additional wireless stations for communication with places outside Ireland.
- (b) That lighthouses, buoys, beacons, and any navigational marks or navigational aids shall be maintained by the Government of the Irish Free State as at the date hereof and shall not be removed or added to except by agreement with the British Government.
- (c) That war signal stations shall be closed down and left in charge of care and maintenance parties, the Government of the Irish Free State being offered the option of taking them over and working them for commercial purposes subject to Admiralty inspection and guaranteeing the upkeep of existing telegraphic communication therewith.

3. A Convention shall be made between the same Governments for the regulation of Civil Communication by Air.

NOTE F.

The " Black and Tans " and the Auxiliary Division of the R.I.C. are frequently confounded. For a detailed description of the two forces see my *Administration of Ireland, 1920*.

NOTE G.

The Lord Chancellor, speaking at Birmingham on December 6th, had said :—

" If Ulster elects to remain more closely associated with us, there must, in our judgment, be rectification of frontiers. We do not propose to interfere with the arrangement of a year ago in relation to counties, but we propose that a boundary commission shall examine into the boundary lines with a view to rendering impossible such an unhappy incident as that of a few days ago, in which the popularly elected bodies of one or two of these districts were excluded from their habitations by representatives of the Northern Parliament on the ground that they were not discharging their duties properly. I am making no criticism, but such a system cannot be consistent with the maintenance of order. That boundary must be rectified. It may be rectified on one side or the other. It is not an artificial boundary, but one which can be worked out with infinite flexibility."

The incident referred to by the Lord Chancellor was the action of the Northern Parliament in passing a Bill dealing with the situation created by the action of certain public bodies which had proclaimed their intention of ignoring the Northern Parliament. Under this Bill powers were sought to exclude the members of these bodies from their offices.

NOTE H.

The following were Mr. de Valera's alternative proposals, known as ' Document No. 2 ' :—
PROPOSED TREATY OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN
IRELAND AND THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH.

In order to bring to an end the long and ruinous conflict between Great Britain and Ireland by a sure and lasting peace, honourable to both nations, it is agreed :

STATUS OF IRELAND.

1. That the Legislative Executive and Judicial Authority of Ireland shall be derived solely from the people of Ireland.

TERMS OF ASSOCIATION.

2. That for purposes of common concern Ireland shall be associated with the States of the British Commonwealth, viz., the Kingdom of Great Britain, the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa.

3. That when acting as an associate the rights, status, and privileges of Ireland shall be in no respect less than those enjoyed by any of the component States of the British Commonwealth.

4. That the matters of "common concern" shall include defence, peace and war, political treaties, and all matters now treated as of common concern amongst the States of the British Commonwealth, and that in these matters there shall be between Ireland and the States of the British Commonwealth such concerted action founded on consultation as the several Governments may determine. That in virtue of this association of Ireland with the States of the British Commonwealth, citizens of Ireland in any of these States shall not be subject to any disabilities which a citizen of one of the component States of the British Commonwealth would not be subject to, and reciprocally for citizens of these States in Ireland.

5. That for purposes of the association Ireland shall recognise his Britannic Majesty as head of the association.

DEFENCE.

6. That so far as her resources permit Ireland shall provide for her own defence by sea, land, and air, and shall repel by force any attempt by a foreign power to violate the integrity of her soil and territorial waters or to use them for any purpose hostile to Great Britain and the other associated States.

7. That for five yeas, pending the establishment of Irish coastal defence forces or for such other period as the Governments of the two countries may later agree upon, facilities for the coastal defence of Ireland shall be given to the British Government as follows :

(a) In time of peace such harbour and other facilities

as are indicated in the annex hereto, or such other facilities as may from time to time be agreed upon between the British Government and the Government of Ireland.

- (b) In time of war such harbour and other naval facilities as the British Government may reasonably require for the purposes of such defence as aforesaid.

8. That within five years from the date of exchange of ratifications of this Treaty a conference between the British and Irish Governments shall be held in order to hand over the coastal defence of Ireland to the Irish Government, unless some other arrangement for naval defence be agreed by both Governments to be desirable in the common interests of Ireland, Great Britain, and the other associated States.

9. That in order to co-operate in furthering the principle of international limitation of armaments the Government of Ireland shall not

- (a) Build submarines unless by agreement with Great Britain and the other States of the Commonwealth.
- (b) Maintain a military defence force the establishments whereof exceed in size such proportion of the military establishments maintained in Great Britain as that which the population of Ireland bears to the population of Great Britain.

MISCELLANEOUS.

10. That the Governments of Great Britain and of Ireland shall make a Convention for the regulation of civil communication by air.

11. That the ports of Great Britain and of Ireland shall be freely open to the ships of each country on payment of the customary port and other dues.

12. That Ireland shall assume liability for such share of the present public debt of Great Britain and Ireland and of the payment of war pensions as existing at this date, as may be fair and equitable, having regard to any just claims on the part of Ireland by way of set off or counter claim, the amount of such sums being determined in default of agreement by the arbitration of one or more independent persons, being citizens of Ireland or of the British Commonwealth.

13. That the Government of Ireland agrees to pay compensation on terms not less favourable than those proposed by the British Government of Ireland Act of 1920

to that Government's judges, officials, members of police forces, and other public servants who are discharged by the Government of Ireland, or who retire in consequence of the change of Government effected in pursuance hereof; provided that this agreement shall not apply to members of the auxiliary police force or to persons recruited in Great Britain for the Royal Irish Constabulary during the two years next preceding the date hereof. The British Government will assume responsibility for such compensation or pensions as may be payable to any of these excepted persons.

14. That neither the Parliament of Ireland nor any subordinate legislature in Ireland shall make any law so as either directly or indirectly to endow any religion or prohibit or restrict the free exercise thereof, or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status or affect prejudicially the rights of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending the religious instruction at the school, or make any discrimination as respects State aid between schools under the management of different religious denominations, or divert from any religious denomination or any educational institution any of its property except for public utility purposes and on payment of compensation.

15. That by way of transitional arrangement for the administration of Ireland during the interval which must elapse between the date hereof and the setting up of a Parliament and Government of Ireland in accordance herewith the members elected for constituencies in Ireland since the passing of the British Government of Ireland Act in 1920 shall at a meeting summoned for the purpose elect a transitional Government to which the British Government and Dail Eireann shall transfer the authority, powers, and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties. Provided that every member of such transitional Government shall have signified in writing his or her acceptance of this instrument. But this arrangement shall not continue in force beyond the expiration of twelve months from the date hereof. That this instrument shall be submitted for ratification forthwith by his Britannic Majesty's Government to the Parliament at Westminster, and by the Cabinet of Dail Eireann to a meeting of the members elected for the constituencies in Ireland set forth in the British Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and when ratifications have been exchanged shall take immediate effect.

ANNEX 1.

The following are the specific facilities referred to in Article 8:

- (a) Dockyard Port at Berehaven. British Admiralty property and rights to be retained as at the date hereof. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.
- (b) Queenstown. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties. Certain mooring buoys to be retained for use of his Britannic Majesty's ships.
- (c) Belfast Lough. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.
- (d) Lough Swilly. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.
- (e) Aviation. Facilities in the neighbourhood of the above ports for coastal defence by air.
- (f) Oil Fuel Storage. Haulbowline, Rathmullen, to be offered for sale to commercial companies under guarantee that purchasers shall maintain a certain minimum stock for British Admiralty purposes.

ANNEX 2.

A convention covering a period of five years shall be made between the British and Irish Governments to give effect to the following conditions:

- (a) That submarine cables shall not be landed or wireless stations for communication with places outside Ireland be established except by agreement with the British Government. That the existing cable landing rights and wireless concessions shall not be withdrawn except by agreement with the British Government, and that the British Government shall be entitled to land additional submarine cables or establish additional wireless stations for communication with places outside Ireland.
- (b) That lighthouses, buoys, beacons, and any navigational marks, or navigational aids shall be maintained by the Government of Ireland, as at the date hereof, and shall not be removed or added to except by agreement with the British Government.
- (c) That war signal stations shall be closed down and left in charge of care and maintenance parties,

the Government of Ireland being offered the option of taking them over and working them for commercial purposes, subject to British Admiralty inspection and guaranteeing the upkeep of existing telegraphic communication therewith.

ADDENDUM.

NORTH-EAST ULSTER.

Resolved that whilst refusing to admit the right of any part of Ireland to be excluded from the supreme authority of the Parliament of Ireland, or that the relations between the Parliament of Ireland and any subordinate legislature in Ireland can be a matter for treaty with a Government outside Ireland. Nevertheless, in sincere regard for international peace, and in order to make manifest our desire not to bring force or coercion to bear upon any substantial part of the province of Ulster, whose inhabitants may now be unwilling to accept the national authority, we are prepared to grant to that portion of Ulster which is defined as Northern Ireland in the British Government of Ireland Act of 1920 privileges and safeguards not less substantial than those provided for in the articles of agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland, signed London, on December 6th, 1921.

NOTE I.

Through the courtesy of the author and the publishers, I have been enabled to consult the proofs of Captain H. B. C. Pollard's *Secret Societies of Ireland*, in which the significance of the Secret Societies is described as follows:

“The problem of the Irish Secret Societies raises a vital question for solution by statesmen rather than by politicians. So long as there exists a powerful criminal organisation rooted in the United States, as well as in Ireland, and with ramifications all over the globe, whose avowed object is the establishment of an independent Irish Republic by methods of political assassination and secret murder, then how long will any settlement of ‘The Irish Question’ endure?”

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