

THE IRISH VOLUNTEER

EDITED BY EOIN MAC NEILL.

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NOTES

"Sás a dhéanta chuimhuigh air." Those who are capable of a sharp curve are capable of any amount of sharp curves. It comes easier by practice. Men who are not expert in the sharp curve may after all be just as "safe hands" as any. Our line is a straight line. We mean to go on with organising, training, instructing, and arming, until the whole manhood of the Irish Nation is no longer at the mercy of the plotters of unconstitutional violence at the Carlton Club, the Kildare Street Club, or the Curragh Camp. We are not in a hurry. We have never promised that this year of grace and other things, 1914, would be the Home Rule Year. For my own part, long before trouble was forced upon us, instead of promising rash things, I have told Irish Volunteers and those whom I asked to become Irish Volunteers that they had to build up from the foundations, and that they ought to be well satisfied if they succeeded in building something solid and invincible within three years, or ten years, or even twenty years. The man that cannot face whatever length of time is necessary for sure and steady constructive work is no man for Ireland. We have to plant a hardy tree, not a hothouse ornament to be cut down by the first frost.

The Imperial crisis has blotted out the boundaries of English parties. Here is an official announcement: "Mr. Balfour, Mr. Churchill, the Marquis of Crewe, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Lloyd George joined the Premier at 10 Downing Street yesterday (Dec. 16). They constituted themselves a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Mr. Churchill left the Admiralty, but the other Ministers remained in conference. Mr. Balfour, Sir Edward Grey, and the Marquis of Crewe, together with a general officer from the War Office, left together." Following this, we read a statement in the English Press to the effect that a coalition Government is in

contemplation; that is, a Ministry composed of Liberals and Unionists.

The Irish people will be curious to know how their interests will be looked after. Mr. Balfour is evidently recovering his position as real, if not acknowledged, leader of the Unionist Party. More than that, the Imperial crisis has given him a position of virtual power with the existing administration, and that position may at any time obtain formal and official recognition. The "Sub-Committee of Imperial Defence" is no sub-committee. Sub-committees do not announce that they have "constituted themselves." This particular committee may be able to exercise even greater powers than the Cabinet. The London "Times," in a recent editorial, stated bluntly that Ireland is now under "martial law." The Cabinet does not administer martial law. It looks as if, to all intents and purposes, the "Home Rule" Government has ceased to exist as the real Government.

While party lines are obliterated in England, and while the Cabinet has obliterated its own lines of Irish policy, one party, the Unionist Party, has not been induced by the Imperial crisis and the dictates of patriotism to obliterate one letter or line of its hostility to Home Rule and to Irish Nationality in every shape and form: On the contrary, every responsible Unionist pronouncement with regard to Ireland since the crisis began has been as hostile to the Irish national position as if there were no war and no crisis. Certain "Nationalist" organs have been so busy in denouncing mere Irishmen, reviling "Sinn Feiners," and demanding the head of the Gaelic League, that they have none of their choice language to spare for the attitude of Unionist leaders who are now hand in glove with the "Home Rule" Ministry and may shortly be hand in hand with them and the glove off.

What is Mr. Balfour's position? To him, as far as we know, the Irish Nationalist is still the Irish Enemy. He has

not receded one inch from his support of the policy of unconstitutional violence against Ireland. His last great pronouncement on Irish affairs was his demand for the "clean cut," the separation of all Ulster from Ireland. He has not qualified that demand. With tears in his voice, he admitted that the case against Home Rule for three-fourths of Ireland was as good as lost, and his colleagues confessed that the decisive factor in that conclusion was the rise of the "new complication," the Irish Volunteers. All the more eagerly Mr. Balfour demanded the "clean cut," the amputation of Ulster, Nationalists and all, Patrick's Armagh, Columba's Derry, Down of the Three in one grave, Tyrone of the O'Neills, all Ulster of glorious history, from Ireland, in duritatem odii, for the perpetuation of hatred and discord. The Imperial crisis has not caused Mr. Balfour's patriotism to recant one syllable.

If it is patriotism for English statesmen to lay aside their party differences, and for some of them to shelve their most solemn compacts, during an Imperial crisis, what are we to say of the patriotism of the "Freeman's Journal" and its adjuncts? We are in the greatest crisis of Irish affairs since the Famine, the greatest purely political crisis since the Union. In this crisis, while the anti-Irish policy in its most aggravated form still holds the field unshaken and unrepentant, some of our patriots can find no enemy to attack but an Irish enemy. The Sinn Feiners, who take their stand on an international treaty, the Renunciation Act of 1783, and declare the Act of Union to be a violation of that treaty, effected by fraud and force, never accepted by the Irish Nation, and therefore held to be null and void in respect of moral obligation—these, we are told, and not the unrepentant anti-Irish oligarchy of England, are the enemy. We can remember when it was still a point of honour with constitutional Nationalists to take the part of the most extreme Nationalists against British statesmen, and when the "Freeman," even the "Freeman," denounced Mr. Asquith, Home Ruler, for

"banging the prison door" on Irish political "felons."

In Mr. Redmond's Limerick pronouncement there was nothing new. Certain features of previous pronouncements were absent, notably, if the report I have read is adequate, the denunciation with appropriate terms of those who are convinced that his attitude towards the Volunteers has been unnecessary, unwarranted, and unfruitful. He said in Limerick,—we take him as addressing Volunteers—that a certain course of conduct was dictated by honour, by justice, and by policy. By honour, because of the enactment of Home Rule. By justice, because of the sufferings of Belgium and the French Cathedrals. By policy, in the hope of converting anti-Irish prejudice.

On the question of honour, I must refer once more to the London "Times." In an editorial of Dec. 7th, the "Times," probably bearing in mind a famous saying of Daniel O'Connell about its praises, professes to be anxious to help Mr. Redmond by encouraging the suppression of certain "rags." The "Times" gives the word "rags" as a quotation. The "Times" says, in the course of this article, that Ireland is at present under, not Home Rule, but Martial Law, and does not even suggest that it looks forward to Ireland coming at any time under Home Rule. Is it ordinary common-sense or "political insanity" to think that the obligations of honour will not begin until what the "Times" calls Martial Law, administered by an external authority, gives place to Home Rule administered by a National authority? We have a cheque signed for Home Rule, or, if we have not got it, it is there in the Cheque Book. Before the cheque was signed and left in the Cheque Book, the drawers of the cheque openly withdrew from the bank a large part of the funds that were to meet the cheque, and at the same time they postdated the cheque to the year "after the war." Are we bound in honour to honour that sort of cheque with prompt payment?

It is not only that what the "Times" calls Martial Law is administered instead of Home Rule, government according to Irish ideas, etc. We have the authority of the "Freeman" for stating that the particular acts of administration commended by the "Times" are injurious to Mr. Redmond's position, and therefore presumably done against his wish. What obligations of honour are created by this special brand of Home Rule?

EOIN MAC NEILL.

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PEACE ON EARTH.

This is the season of peace and goodwill, but peace and goodwill seem to be banished from a large part of the earth. Even in this peaceful country of ours, where everybody except the Tory Party is prohibited from making war, and where we are not allowed to defend ourselves against threatened war, where the Bill on the Book, so far as it can be understood to be a reality, says that at no future time shall we be allowed to defend ourselves, even here in Ireland where peace is our lawful condition, we cannot boast of over much peace and goodwill. Our platforms and Press, alongside of telegrams from the war of guns, report speeches full of warlike metaphors. "The relentless enemies of the Home Rule movement," not the Tories, oh no! but the Sinn Feiners. "The attempt to defeat the constitutional policy of the last thirty-five years," not by the unconstitutional movement promoted and financed by English Unionists, but by those wicked and misguided men who hold that the Constitutionalists ought to stick to Constitutionalism and not to compromise themselves by association with work which the highest legal authority in the Liberal Home Rule Government has declared to be illegal and unconstitutional. Sir Edward Carson, at the head of his "illegal and unconstitutional" Ulster Volunteer Force, declares that the one burning passion of his heart is love of the British Constitution, and that he would rather die a thousand deaths than be put outside of the thing. Let us agree to call such Volunteers as are not of the processional and periodical excursions variety by the name of extra-constitutional. At all events, like all the religions in Ireland since Disestablishment, the Volunteers are outside of the Constitution, and debarred from all the virtues and merits of Constitutionalism. But to return to the subject of peace and goodwill, since the voices of the herald angels have no chance of a hearing just at present, let us look to the future and ask ourselves the question, what is likely to happen after the war.

The statesmen of empires and the military experts have been making their calculations, and we are told that certain things will result from victory on one side, and other things from victory on the other side, and other things from a draw. Let them calculate as they please; the one thing to be counted on is that the consequences of the war will be altogether beyond the anticipations of imperial statesmen, not to mention military experts. For that conclusion there is a very good and plain reason. The present war is altogether unlike anything in human experience. Never before in the

world's history has there been a war like it. Consider that the greater part of the inhabited world is implicated in this one war, the whole British Empire, on which the sun never sets, three-fourths of Europe, about two-thirds of Asia, half of North America, nearly the whole of Australasia, and most of the colonies and dominions that have been carved out of Africa. In a single day of this war, more of the wealth that toiling men and women have created by the sweat of their brows is consumed and annihilated than would have been spent altogether in the whole course of some of the great wars of history. In previous great wars, a large part of mankind took no interest at all. We may be certain that the present war is eagerly watched and discussed by the great majority of mankind, even outside of the several hundred millions whose kith and kin are slaughtering each other and whose means are taxed to bear the enormous cost.

In previous wars, the victors have sometimes managed to exact indemnity from the vanquished. Not a single Power engaged in this war has the slightest chance of exacting a fraction of its financial losses from the other side. It follows that this war will entail tremendous hardships on all the countries engaged in it. Even countries that stand neutral will lose heavily if they have any considerable international trade, for the profits of their trade depend on the purchasing power of other countries, and their wealthiest customers are diminishing their purchasing power at the rate of millions per day.

Though in every civilised country the democracy has greater power now than in past times, the present war is not in reality a war of the democracies. It is a war conducted by imperial statesmen, of whom the most democratic are men who manipulate the democracy to cover up the traces of autoeracy. Every democracy implicated in the war, and many democracies that stand neutral, will suffer severely, and when the democracies realise that they have been manipulated to make them suffer, they will demand satisfaction. There is trouble ahead for the imperial statesmen.

The hardships that will arise from the war are at present incalculable. The wealth destroyed by the barbarians who overran the Roman Empire was a trifle compared to the destruction of wealth in the present struggle. If the war were to stop at this moment, so much wealth has already been consumed that every wage-earner must suffer for years to come. If the war goes on for another year, the consequences to millions of toilers will be frightful. It is quite possible that the whole civilisation to which we are accus-

tomed will be shocked to prostration. We need not discuss the prospect announced with all the stupidity of which the military mind is capable, that the war will last three years. Humanity would not stand it, and long before the three years were out, humanity would provide a cruel surprise for the war-masters.

The war will cost Ireland many millions. Let us think of what one million means to Ireland. If the Congested Districts Board asked for a million to repair the ravages of Unionist rule in the poorer parts of Ireland, our statesmen would laugh in their faces. If the C.D.B. could get that million! If one of the millions that Ireland will have to pay could be spent on Irish fisheries, on the improvement of Irish dairy cattle, on the utilisation of Irish peat resources, on the provision of proper dwellings for the poor, on Irish education—on any one of these objects! Yet it is certain that Ireland's contribution for the war will be sufficient at least to provide not a million alone, but a million a year for a considerable time, to further each one of the objects we have mentioned. What does Ireland stand to gain? Perhaps some of our statesmen would enlighten us. Already we are feeling the drain. Many thousands of able-bodied Irishmen have left their employment and gone to the war. Instead of more employment for those who are left behind, there is far less. Every penny spent on the war, whether in taxation or by voluntary contributions of any kind, diminishes somebody's power of paying wages and giving employment, either directly or indirectly, by reducing the purchase of the products of work. Every sort of expenditure on the war increases poverty and suffering. Thousands who are still able to make the war a subject of sensational gossip or of high-strung emotional sentiment will live to find it a very black affair and will remember it with execration. They will look back on the days of the war fever as a time of reckless folly, and they will have scanty respect for the whole tribe of guardians of the public interest that showed no more sense than themselves.

The people of Ireland are only a tiny fraction of the millions of men who will live to rue this war. The first question that these countless millions will ask is: "Why was there ever such a mad calamity?" Their next question will be: "What must we do to prevent the like ever happening again?"

To the first question, there will be only one possible answer—"Because of Empire." The answer to the second question will take shape accordingly.

By Empire, I mean a centralised political power which enables a single autocrat and his advisers, or a small group of statesmen acting in concert, to control the forces and resources of many countries and of many millions of people, and, if

those in control so desire, to commit these people to a course of hostility towards other countries.

But, it may be said, this is a democratic age, and the most powerful rulers and ministers have to take account of the wishes of the democracy. As far as war and international relations are concerned, this objection is empty talk. The democracy is only half civilised and is still as full of tribal hatreds and prejudices as any community of primitive savages. Where these hatreds and prejudices are not in a state of activity, they are only sleeping, and they are easily awakened and stimulated. They are the raw material out of which imperial statesmen create warlike preparations and ultimately war itself.

We have seen the thing done in our own time. The British democracy regretted and condemned the South African War. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a rare honest man among democratic statesmen, denounced the conduct of that war by "methods of barbarism," and the British democracy endorsed his attitude and put him at the head of the administration that replaced the statesmen convicted of barbarism. Let us bear that fact in mind, in view of things that are said at present. The man who publicly accused British imperial statesmen of barbarism in warfare became soon afterwards the head of the Imperial Government. But how did it happen that the democracy for a time gave it full and enthusiastic approval to that war? Mr. Lloyd George, who only the other day sought the goodwill of the French and British democracies that Great Britain (and Ireland) are spending £45,000,000 (forty-five million pounds sterling) every month on the present war, Mr. Lloyd George had to fly for his life from an audience of the British democracy when he attempted to argue with them against the South African war. So much for the value of democratic opinion and democratic hostility. At present, democratic opinion in Great Britain has allowed the ordinary law and the provisions of Magna Charta to be annulled by what an ultra-Tory ex-Lord Chancellor of England has called a grave invasion of the Constitution, and has allowed what the London "Times" calls Martial Law to come into operation in Ireland with Home Rule on the Statute Book, and this unprecedented revolution in the law has been carried through the British Parliament without any audible discussion—I do not say protest—on the part of the representatives of the British democratic Press; and if any man finds himself at the mercy of what the "Times" calls Martial Law in Ireland, the one bright spot with Home Rule on the Statute Book under honourable obligations to the British democracy, that man should know well that he comes under what the "Times" calls Martial

Law, with the full approval and consent of the men who claim to be the representatives of the Irish democracy, and who sat silent and kept their obedient Press silent while the liberty of Irishmen, what they have of it, was hurriedly and quietly legislated out of existence. In Ireland, you are free now to adopt the at last avowed Imperialism of Mr. John E. Redmond. You are free to belong to that "illegal and unconstitutional" body, the Ulster Volunteer Force, which, even since the war began, has been allowed through its Commander-in-Chief, General Richardson, to threaten violence against the constitutional establishment of Home Rule. If you belong to the Irish Volunteers and adhere to the programme and pledges which you accepted and adopted long before the war was even anticipated, you are liable to penalties. Only the other day, a man was peremptorily dismissed from the public service for having held up his hand to vote against Mr. Redmond's Volunteer policy at a meeting presided over by a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party, who demanded a show of hands on the question.

Such things are at the moment, at all events in Great Britain, accepted and approved by the democracy. The democracy will perhaps remember in a few more months that it is a democracy. Its memory will be greatly assisted when it begins to realise all that is meant by Mr. Lloyd George's announcement of the expenditure of £45,000,000 a month. Let us give another exemplification of what this may mean. It will entail that various reforms for the betterment of the conditions of the workers and the poor and for the development of industry and the utilisation of increased resources must either be put off to the distant future or brought about by the awakened democracy in a drastic fashion that will be very little to the liking of the privileged few. The cost of the South African War was a fleabite in comparison. One of the practical effects of that cost, in the case of Ireland alone, was this:—Government Stocks that stood before the war at 113 fell after the war to 80. This means that where the Government could raise and lend out £113 at a certain rate before the war, it could only raise and lend out £80 after the war. One of the purposes for which the Government advanced loans was land purchase in Ireland. Every occupier who has purchased his land in Ireland since the Boer War has had to pay for that war, and he and his successors will continue to pay for the Boer War until the last instalment of purchase money has been paid. Owing to the Boer War, every purchaser since that time is paying extra from five to six shillings in the pound every year, beyond what he would have had to pay if Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had not deluded the British

(Continued on page 6.)

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All literary communications for the
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VOLUNTEER HEADQUARTERS,
41 Kildare Street, DUBLIN.

All communications re Advertisements
to be addressed to the

IRISH PRESS BUREAU,
30 Lr. Abbey Street, DUBLIN.

The Irish Volunteer.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2, 1915.

HEADQUARTERS BULLETIN

The Central Executive of the Irish
Volunteers met at Headquarters on Wed-
nesday evening, 23rd December, Professor
Eoin Mac Neill, President, in the chair.

A report on the Scheme of Training
was considered.

A requisition from Company C, 1st
Batt., Dublin Regiment, that Captain
M. J. Judge be dismissed from the com-
mandership of the Company, was con-
sidered and granted.

Headquarters, 41 Kildare Street,
Dublin, 23rd Dec., 1914.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL DUBLIN COMPANIES.

During the week commencing Mon-
day, Jan. 4th, the Director of Organisa-
tion will visit the Companies of the Dub-
lin City Battalions at their respective
Drill Halls with the object of reporting
to Headquarters on their strength and
efficiency and of conferring with the
Company Officers as to the creation of the
Special Sections required by the new
Scheme of Military Organisation.

IRISH BATTLES.

II.—VINEGAR HILL AND ENNISCORTHY.

The Battle of Vinegar Hill is generally represented as being the decisive action of the Revolution of 1798, and as an easy victory of the Royal forces. Nothing could be further from the truth. The battle was well and bravely fought for several hours, the Irish retreat was conducted in good order, and was unmolested by the enemy, and shortly afterwards the Army of Wexford was able to renew the offensive.

PRECEDING EVENTS.

The War in Wexford commenced with the rout of the British at Oulart on the 27th May, 1798, and the capture of Enniscorthy and Wexford by the Irish. These successes were followed by a severe reverse at New Ross on June the 5th, and an indecisive action at Arklow on the 9th.

PRELIMINARY MANŒUVRES.

After the Battle of Arklow the Irish withdrew to Gorey, where they encamped during the 10th and 11th of June. The following day they shifted their camp to Limerick Hill, mid-way between Gorey and Arklow, where they rested, while the British Army received reinforcements. For some days the Irish manœuvred unsuccessfully to get General Needham to come out from Arklow and fight. Then, hearing of the advance of General Loftus and Dundas on Tinahely they went to meet them, and after some preliminary skirmishing on the 15th, prepared for a pitched battle at Mount Pleasant on the 16th. On the following day the British Generals advanced, but hesitated to attack, whereupon our men took the offensive, forced them to retreat on Tullow and Hackettstown, and captured numerous stores and prisoners. Tinahely was occupied but proved of little use, and unfortunately the victory was not followed up.

Shortly afterwards news arrived at Mount Pleasant of the collapse of the rising in Dublin and Kildare, and of Napoleon's nomination to the command of the army for the invasion of England and Ireland. This raised the question whether it would not be wiser to wait for the arrival of the French before risking another battle, but, as there were no places available that were strong enough to defend, it was resolved to keep the field. Accordingly on the 19th Kilcavin Hill was occupied, but once more the enemy refused battle. Our army thereupon attacked Carnew and drove the British before them until nightfall compelled them to return to their camp. There despatches were received from Father Philip Roche, in command of the Irish Army before Ross, saying that he

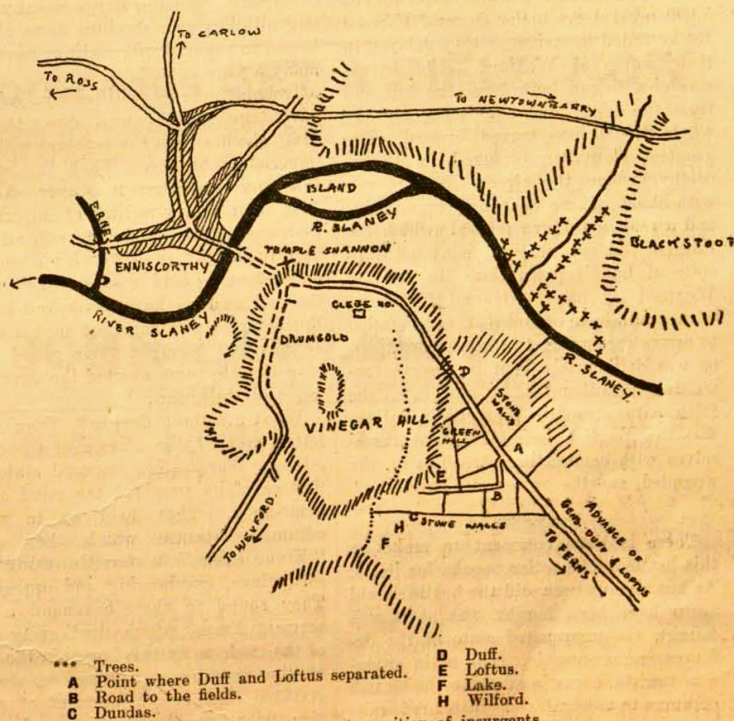
could not hold out there any longer and was falling back to cover Wexford. He also advised the Kilcavin Army to fall back on Vinegar Hill to assist him. There were two other courses open to the latter. Some of the leaders wished to attack Rathdrum, and so cut off the British forces from Dublin; others wanted to maintain their present position. Both of these plans would have been better on their own merits than the retreat to Vinegar Hill, and would have been quite as useful as a diversion from Wexford, but after some debate it was decided to co-operate with Father Roche, and the retreat was begun. They left Kilcavin Hill on the night of the 19th, and reached Vinegar Hill on the night of the 20th.

on the 20th, and was now safe in Wexford.

THE BATTLE.

Vinegar Hill is not a good military position, and little had been done to make it more easily defensible. The River Slaney flows round its base and separates it from the town of Enniscorthy. Along the north-east side, where the attack was to be delivered, were very inadequate entrenchments, in many places only two feet in height, while hedges and ditches, which nobody apparently thought of destroying, gave excellent cover for the enemy's advance.

On this hill and in the town of Enniscorthy the Army of Wexford, 20,000 strong, of whom only three or four thousand had firearms, took its stand. They had only a few small pieces of artillery, for which they had hardly any ammunition, and the supply of ammuni-



Their march was greatly encumbered by women and children fleeing before the English, who devastated the country as they advanced.

The enemy were now closing in on all sides. Dundas and Loftus were in pursuit from Kilcavin Hill, Needham was coming up from Arklow, and Duff from Newtownbarry; while Johnston, from Ross, was already in action with our outposts beyond Enniscorthy.

Father Roche had retreated from his position before Ross to the Three Rock on the 19th, had fought a rearguard action with Sir John Moore at Longraig

tion for their muskets was also very scanty. Against them the English General, Lake, had 20,000 regular troops, assisted by large bodies of militia and yeomanry, and a vast quantity of artillery.

At daybreak on the 21st the outposts on both sides came into action, while the Irish wounded, and the women and children were placed in comparative safety at Drumgold. At seven o'clock the enemy's artillery opened fire, and our little guns, short of ammunition, were soon silenced. Then the English infantry made its attack in four columns, as shown

in the plan, while General Johnston continued his assault on Enniscorthy.

Under cover of walls and hedges the enemy pressed up the sides of Vinegar Hill. They were met by desperate counter-attacks by the pikemen, who fought with desperate fury under a hail of lead from artillery and muskets. Still the attack pushed on, and the advance became easier as the ammunition of the Irish musketeers gave out. A plan to concentrate the Irish attack on the English left and so open a way into Wicklow was now proposed; but was abandoned, as it involved leaving the Enniscorthy men to their fate.

Enniscorthy was defended by William Barker and Father Kearns. They had placed a reserve on the bridge and then taken the offensive against Johnston, maintaining their ground until the main body retreated from Vinegar Hill.

When their ammunition was finished the position became hopeless, especially as 5,000 musketeers under General Edward Roche failed to arrive, as they delayed in their march at Wexford. The retreat was now begun both from the hill and from the town, and simultaneously the whole British force moved forward. The greatest slaughter occurred in Enniscorthy, where the streets literally ran with blood. There was, however, no rout, and a rear-guard was formed, which the English did not venture to attack. In spite of Lake's precautions the road to Wexford lay open. General Needham, who should have occupied it, either failed to arrive (according to some authorities), or was deliberately kept in reserve (according to others). At any rate, the Irish Army reached Wexford in safety, and the English had to content themselves with committing atrocities on the wounded, and the women and children.

COMMENTS.

There is little comment to make on this battle. The action speaks for itself. As has already been said the battle should never have been fought, but as it was fought, the unprepared state of the defences is inexcusable. The main subsequent mistake was in allowing the British columns to concentrate. Instead of waiting for them on Vinegar Hill, the more mobile Irish forces could have attacked either one or two of the columns in detail and so made the others pause. Miles Byrne insists that on the 20th he could easily have turned on the pursuing columns of Dundas and Loftus with 10,000 pikemen and routed them. Had this alone been done, Vinegar Hill might have been a very different story.

PEACE ON EARTH.

(Continued from page 3.)

democracy into a temporary fit of full-blooded Imperialism. In all their wrangles about land purchase, and with all their vast anxiety for the Irish farmer, we could hardly expect either Mr. Redmond or Mr. William O'Brien, both of them now discovered to be true blue Imperialists, to tell the Irish farmer what Imperialism has cost him and what it is likely to cost him in the future. The farmers who are still hoping to become purchasers and the town tenants who hope to become purchasers of their holdings may try to think what sort of prospect is before them after a war that costs the British Imperial Treasury £45,000,000 a month, according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The farmer will get a temporary advantage through war prices for produce. He will pay dear for that advantage before long. The farm labourer, every wage earner, every salaried person, and all the town dwellers have already begun to pay and will continue to pay for many a year.

Ireland, however, will perhaps gain one advantage from this war. Since the year 1169, she has been the constant victim of imperial ambitions. When this war is over, perhaps before it is over, she will have more fellow-victims of imperialism than ever before, and they will all have such opportunities of forming a common understanding and co-operating against the evil as they have never had before. Democracies will have got such a lesson as may put them on their guard for a long time to come against the devices of imperial statesmen.

What are these devices? Once more, let us recall "the lessons of the South African War." The imperial statesmen first carefully prepared the mind of the democracy. They held up to public odium a spectre which they called "K(rug)erism," a terrible thing, unscrupulous, overbearing and oppressive. They found to their command a subservient Press, which used every trick of the trade to fix this bogey in the mind of the democracy, relying on the uncivilised element, the element of primitive tribal savagery which makes one people inclined to believe the worst about another people. Vengeance was appealed to—"Avenge Majuba!" Atrocities were hinted at—"save the women and children." The lust of conquest was aroused. Above all, the grand instrument was the Press. Day in and day out, the Press prepared the democracy for the war that was to cost the democracy £300,000,000. In this case, the whole Press was not brought quite to heel, but the less obsequious portion was cowed and made flabby by the taunts of being "Pro-Boer" and "Little-Englander." Some newspapers do as they are told, others do as they are paid, others have a proprietor.

Our State systems of education, being designed to produce serviceable employees not citizens nor even men, teach people to read but not to think, and cultivate their activities but not their faculties. Newspapers under political control are instruments of control. The ordinary man pays his halfpenny or penny for news. News is the jam that help him to swallow the powder. It is not only the powder the editorial prescription, that gets at him. The jam itself is medicated in the making. The poor man is so eager for news, like the child for jam, that he never thinks what else he is getting for his penny. He shuts his eyes and opens his mouth, down goes the dose, and next morning the little pet awakes fully fortified against Krugerism and prepared to back Joe Chamberlain or whatever other Joe wants backing, with men, with millions, and with mass meetings, never imagining that he will live to wonder what on earth could have made him such an idiot.

These remarks are not applicable merely to the British democracy or to the Irish democracy. Other democracies, as Carlyle, the British apostle of the Supermarket truly said, consist likewise of so many millions of people, mostly fools. Indeed there are signs that the Irish democracy is less easily and less permanently deluded than some others, perhaps because of its long experience of imperial statecraft.

Abraham Lincoln said that you could fool some of the people all the time at all the people some of the time, but you could not fool all the people all the time. There is poor consolation in the "but." All the imperial statesman needs is to be able to fool all the people or most of the people some of the time, namely at the special times chosen for special big undertakings. People find themselves on fire about a matter that did not get the hundredth place in their thoughts a few months ago, not merely on fire themselves but ready to roast anybody that is not of their own way of thinking. The art of the imperial statesman is to work them into this condition without letting them think they are manipulated. The thoughtless crowd, which includes people of all ranks and classes, has two qualities that are easily played upon; it has the old savage instinct of the tribe, ready to believe that any stranger is an enemy and it has a greedy appetite for sensational statements from pen and platform.

If people could only foresee the consequences of a great war like the present one, they would spare no exertion to make it impossible. The first care of those who want the war, or who want to make the people keen for it, is to raise such a cloud of passion as will deprive the people of foresight and even of the power of common thinking.

After the war, perhaps before the war is much older, the people will begin

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think. They will ask themselves what caused so great an evil and so great a calamity. They will get a big step nearer the truth by recognising that the guilt does not rest on the small nations. Servia did not plan this war, nor did Belgium, nor Poland, nor Egypt, nor Ireland. Such countries only fight for their lives, and when they do fight, they do not inflict great evil and distress on peoples far from the scene of war. This war is a war of empires, and a war for empire. We may hold those guiltless of it who have not been making special preparation for it.

There are, roughly speaking, three kinds of sovereign state. The national state is held together by the bond of national sentiment, the federal state by the bond of political agreement, the imperial state by the bond of military power. There are nine great empires in the world, and seven of them are engaged in this war. It is the War of Empire, a war for empire, but in the end it may prove a war against empire, a war fatal to the imperialist idea, a war in which imperialism, not this imperialism or that imperialism, but all imperialism, has been found guilty of treason against civilisation, justice, and liberty, has been taken in the act, and has been condemned to suffer the death penalty. The deluded democracies, the injured and threatened small nationalities, may be shaken out of their drowsiness by this immense catastrophe and its calamitous results that are only beginning to be felt. If they can find a common voice and a common way of action, they will be able to free the world for an age from the incubus, the danger, and the horror of militarist domination of the nations. "O God!" cries the poet, "make no more giants, elevate the race!" And we pray in like manner, "O God, who hast kindled in our hearts the honest and sincere fire of hatred, make no more empires, set the patriotism, a fire of love and not of nations free!" Amen, a Thighearna, amen. Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

EOIN MAC NEILL.

Xmas, 1914.

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"The Month," in the course of a review, says: "It is a book which is the product of profound thinking, and itself demands and challenges thought. . . . The whole idea—the gradual recognition of a highly intellectual and deeply sensitive man of the divine purpose underlying the apparent chaotic scheme of things—is developed by conversations, many of them brilliant, wherein current convictions are questioned and analysed with a boldness that makes one pause to reconsider their foundations, and by a skilful use of the 'dramatis personae' the author manages to ventilate every side. It is a book which many people will want to read twice."

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At the outset I wish to thank many of my comrades for their Christmas greetings. I hope they enjoyed the day and the feast as thoroughly as I did myself. I always enjoy Christmas, and I sincerely wished the peace and goodwill to men that exudes from a plump feeling of satisfaction around the waistband.

Two of my correspondents were good enough to wish me speedy promotion. Thanks! Another, "Boy Scout," who recently joined the Fianna, inquires why it is the Fianna do not do good turns "like other scouts." It is extraordinary how benevolent plum pudding makes a fellow. I would like to inform my benevolent friend that as far as I know the Fianna are not under "geasa" not to do good turns. Quite the reverse. The Fianna always do good turns as many times per day as opportunity offers, and they are taught not to waste their wind blowing about them.

Talking about good turns reminds me of a story about Diarmid of the old Fianna. In those days the best youths of the country were educated so as to pass the severe tests necessary to admit them to the Fianna Éireann. It is related that when Diarmid came before Fionn to pass the tests he looked like a spot in the midst of the other applicants, who wore their best and most brilliant raiment. His tunic was soiled and dripping, and its gold buttons were covered with mud. His appearance did not please Fionn for when Diarmid came before him he said, sternly, "Thou hast been wading in torrents to-day."

"I have," said Diarmid.

"Why did you not leap them like your comrades?" said Fionn.

"That I cannot tell," muttered Diarmid, bashfully.

Then Fionn, who had great wisdom, looked into the eyes of the boy, and said,

"I see thee crossing a swollen torrent with an aged woman in thy arms. And thou hast done a splendid deed. Thou shalt have success in war and success in love. All things good and nothing bad shall be told concerning thee."

I am told that the Council of Officers of the Dublin Battalion which met last Sunday was a success and quite justified this departure from precedent. I am glad to learn that the suggestions made in these columns last week were duly considered. A system of training for the senior boys was drafted up, and I understand it will come into operation immediately. Musketry, field training, reconnoitring, and scouting generally are the subjects to be taught to the seniors. The juniors will be instructed in signalling, dispatch carrying, tracking, drill, and physical culture. It was also decided to recommend the appointment of Captain Padraic O'Riain as Inspecting Officer of the Dublin Battalion.

The staff of "Nodlaig na bhFiann" has decided to bring out a monthly paper for the Fianna. It is not going to be an official organ in any sense. It will be edited and managed by Lieut. O'Connor and Percy Reynolds. The Officers' Council are anxious to inform all and sundry that they will not be responsible for any attacks made upon individuals in the paper. This seems rather premature. It is not justice to condemn a man before he commits the crime.

A "past member of An Ceud Sluagh" sends me a long thing which he calls a poem. It is too long to publish, and in any case the humour is too subtle for the uninitiated. Here are a few lines:—

O'Connor & Co. for the Re-Union did kick

But Kavanagh swore by his officer's stick
To squelch for ever the Surrey House clique,
When we came to Ceud Sluagh, my boys,
When we came to Ceud Sluagh.
"Past member," please do not send me any more "poetry."

WILLIE NELSON.

2nd BATTALION ARRANGEMENTS.

A meeting of all Officers and Section Commanders of above Battalion will be held on next Friday evening, January 1, at 41 Kildare Street, at 8 o'clock sharp, for the study of Tactics, etc.

It is earnestly requested that there be a full attendance.

MUSIC AND MIRTH AT RATH-FARNHAM.

The Rathfarnham Company, which has been getting through some strenuous field work of late, will relax on New Year's Eve, this (Thursday) evening, 31st inst., when it will hold a Musical Reunion in its Hall at Willbrook. Members of other Volunteer Companies will be made welcome. Chair at 8 p.m.; admission 2d.

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