"ON MY KEEPING" AND IN THEIRS

By Laula J. Welch

With a Foreword by Mrs. Cecil Chesterton

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A RECORD OF EXPERIENCES
"ON THE RUN," IN DERRY GAOL, AND IN
BALLYKINLAR INTERNMENT CAMP

By

LOUIS J. WALSH
Author of "The Yarns of a Country Attorney"
"The Next Time," etc.

"Tá Dia maiṫ agus tá máṫair maiṫ Aige!"
(Saying of an old Ulster woman)

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CONTENTS.

FOREWORD.

By MRS. CECIL CHESTERTON.

MR. LOUIS WALSH—*Irish Nationalist, Sinn Feiner and author of this book—has been a reader and supporter of "The New Witness" since its foundation by Cecil Chesterton in* 1911*; and this although the charge against him by the British Government included his possession of back numbers of the paper, which in Ireland comes under the heading of seditious literature. This sympathy between an English paper and an Irish patriot, over a period of ten years, has been possible because Mr. Walsh on his side and "The New Witness" on theirs accepted the fundamental difference in their point of view, thus establishing a basis of mutual comprehension. I emphasise this aspect of the relationship, because, it seems to me, that the keystone to the understanding which alone can bridge the gulf between England and Ireland lies in the recognition*

that they are two separate countries, inhabited by different peoples with divergent traditions and national aspirations. The author's inimitable story of the English sergeant who took him to prison, in the friendliest possible way, illustrates this to perfection. It happened that on the road to Derry Gaol the prisoner stood the escort a meal, when the sergeant in charge solved the Irish Question in the most complete and satisfactory fashion. He broke a loaf in halves, and placing the two portions a short distance apart remarked to Mr. Walsh: "This is my bloody country and that's your bloody country, and they have both to live beside each other." It is the confusion of ideas that is responsible for nine-tenths of the injustice of this world; and what the English sergeant intuitively understood, well-meaning and muddle-headed persons of the middle classes still fail to comprehend. Ignorance of history and a congenital shrinking from self-examination has reinforced the false belief that the interests of Ireland are identical with those of England, and that a demand for separate existence is as ridiculous as a plea for autonomy from Yorkshire; and this attitude of mind has been exploited to the full by the professional politicians.

It needed the tragic events of the past four years

to make plain the fact that the Irish are not merely a different kind of English, but a nation as foreign to our methods of thought and forms of government as are the French or the Italians. Even now the legend still persists in relation to what is called the Ulster problem, though, as the author shows us, the Protestant population of the North, leaving aside the Orange city, share the aspirations of their Catholic fellows. They are as thoroughly Irish as the natives of Cork, and, according to Mr. Walsh, far more humorous. A native of Ulster, the author's testimony of Protestant cohesion to the national ideal is of vital importance to those who want to understand the truth. His narrative destroys the shibboleth current for so many years in England, and elsewhere, and shows clearly and irrefutably that not Ulster but Belfast is irreconcilable; the one spot in Ireland where bigotry outweighs nationalism.

It is these two things which make Mr. Walsh's book so valuable. In the first place he recognises that it is the English politicians and not the English people who have withheld Ireland's independence. Throughout his imprisonment, and the weary months passed in an internment camp, his kindliness for English folk remained unspoiled;

not all the petty tyranny of malicious and ignorant young subalterns, not all the harshness of camp life, nor the sudden horror of the cold-blooded butchery of certain of his fellow-prisoners, could cloud his sense of justice, dim his belief that in the ultimate the Irish people and the English people must be friends. In the second place, as I have said, he utterly destroys that mischievous figment of the imagination, a solid North definitely opposed to the idea of Ireland free and united. He centres our attention upon Belfast, not by indictment but by those simple and most touching glimpses of life in the Ulster towns and country-side, where Protestants and Catholics work together, play together and go to the same prison for the same political ideals. It is worth noting in this connection that Mr. Louis Walsh, himself a Catholic, was returned to the County Council of Antrim by the Protestant vote, and that, as he tells us, a large proportion of his clients are Protestant also.

For years a member of the Nationalist Party, Mr. Walsh joined Sinn Fein following the Easter rising of 1916. *When the history of the last decade comes to be written the wholesale executions following on that tragic week must be recorded as one of the most fatal mistakes England has*

made in Ireland. The number of lives ended on the scaffold, the circumstances of their death, the knowledge that the victims had gladly paid the price of patriotism stirred the heart of every Irish man and woman, with the result that all over the country, in Ulster as elsewhere, adherence to Sinn Fein was registered by thousands. I do not think it has ever been sufficiently realised in England, or America, that the first great impetus in favour of the party, pledged to secure freedom for Ireland, was the result of England's policy following Easter week, and it is no small part of the value of this book that it shows, quietly but with deadly effect, that each step the British Government has taken in the repression of Sinn Fein has evoked a closer loyalty; that every attempt at the destruction of Irish Nationalism has made the fires of patriotism burn clearer.

The case of Mr. Walsh is typical of very many others. A peaceful, kindly man, dwelling in friendship with Protestants and Catholics alike, he was chased out of his home to take refuge among the hills, a preliminary raid having warned him of what he might expect. What happened to him in the weeks that followed he tells with the simplicity and restraint that marks fine writing. The peasants gave him of their best;

he sat with "bright-eyed mountainy men, keen, big-hearted, strong in body, and clean in mind." They talked to him with a strange light in their eyes and sometimes with a husky note in their voices, of Ireland and her long-suffering. The record of the days and nights that followed makes one understand that there is no price too high for an Irishman to pay for Dark Rosaleen, and that the heavier the hand of the oppressor the more valiant the resistance of the oppressed.

The distinction the author draws between the conduct of the military and the Black-and-Tans is most important. He shows that, in the main, British army officers preserved the consideration due to prisoners of war. Indeed there seems to have been no confusion in the minds of the commandants of the internment camps as to the status of the men under their charge. The politicians insisted that members of the Irish Republican Army were rebels unable to claim protection under international military law. The officers at Ballykinlar had no such delusions. The author tells how Colonel Hely-Hutchinson, known to the prisoners as "Play-the-Game," always informed newcomers that he understood they were soldiers and intended to deal with them as such, and to treat them as prisoners of war.

" It is my wish that your time here should be as pleasant as possible in the circumstances ; if you play the game with me I'll play the game with you." This effectively answers the politicians' argument ; undoubtedly the attitude of the British army officer influenced the final recognition of the I.R.A. under the terms of the truce.

Of the months he spent in the internment camp the author writes with invincible courage and humour. The native genius of the Irish for making capital out of England's mistakes enabled the Irish Republican Army to use Ballykinlar as a training ground for recruits. The prisoners were drilled every morning by one of their own officers, and went through evolutions for which they would have got two years' imprisonment outside the wires. Finally the authorities woke up, and drill was prohibited. This however did not prevent the teaching of the various technical subjects that helped to make our men more efficient soldiers. Apart from military training propaganda was carried on effectively among those prisoners not yet attached to Sinn Fein, and as the author says, hardly one of them but were converted during their stay. " And the grand thing about it was that the British Treasury paid for it all."

All that the author has to tell us of the heroism

of the Irish people under the British army of occupation is of historic significance—as showing the impossibility of crushing the soul of a people by brute force. His adventures have that touch of romance and sense of breathless escape which we find in those tales of the Middle Ages, where Christian knights fought their way to freedom through barbarian hordes. And the same chivalry, the same quiet faith in the eternal justice which armed the old heroes for their fight animates the Irish of to-day. For Mr. Louis Walsh, quiet country solicitor as he describes himself, shares with the men who have perished on the scaffold, the soldiers who have fallen under British bullets, that spirit of high heroism which cannot be defeated. And with that heroism goes a kindliness of heart, a tender charity which looking beyond the bloodshed of the past, sees in the future a free Ireland, living side by side with a free England, united by the good-will of their separate peoples.

It is a remarkable volume, and though it is hard reading for the English man or woman conscious of the horrors done in their country's name, it is written with so complete an absence of ill-feeling that the most prejudiced must realise its candour. The simple eloquence of the story, the sudden beauty of those passages wherein we see the little

homes scattered among the Antrim hills; fugitive figures stealing through the mists at night, outlawed and hunted from their own firesides, is almost unbearably poignant. I have always been a fierce fighter for Ireland's freedom, realising to the quick the long tales of her wrongs, but I did not, nay, I could not understand all that it means to live under an alien rule until I read On My Keeping. *I could wish that everyone of Ireland's friends—and Ireland's enemies as well—would read it also.*

"ON MY KEEPING."

CHAPTER I.

WHEN DAY DREAMS COME TRUE.

All my life I have loved and yearned for the mountains and wished to wander over them as it pleased me, without thought of time or tide. The valley which held my childhood's home and whither I have now returned is begirt with blue hills; and as a child it was my fond ambition to climb each distant peak and gaze therefrom at the great outside world and see the wonders of the mysterious Beyond. But school and examinations and the routine of little duties cramped my boyhood, and before I knew I was tied to a desk in a musty office; and the years crept on and the hilltops beckoned me in vain. I had entered on the dreary middle years, and had, perforce, to put away from me many of my dearest dreams. I was becoming prudent, practical; and the costs-hunger began to corrode my poor attorney heart. Then, one September morning, came the great change. I shed the years as if they had been but a coat of feathers, and my day dreams began to come true.

It was all due to David Lloyd George and Viscount French and Sir Neville Macready and Sir Hamar Greenwood. They had determined to present Parliament, when it met on October 19th, 1920, with the accomplished fact in Ireland of "a broken movement and a cowed country";

and they did me the honour of thinking that Ireland would not be finally conquered whilst even poor, insignificant I was left to bleat my pettifogging plea for Irish freedom. So their soldiers had raided my office that morning, and I, having been informed of what was taking place and realising what it all meant, felt myself at last free to turn, without any qualms of conscience for my unfulfilled tasks, to the hills I loved. I had my anxieties, to be sure, for I have many responsibilities; but I did not fear, knowing what constant intercession is made for me from the hearts of friends and dear ones, to whom the good God who loves the pure of soul must needs hearken; and it was sweet to suffer even a little for Ireland, knowing, as the martyr of Brixton has put it, that it is the nation that can endure most that will win in this struggle. So I went forth that harvest day with a strange joy at my heart, and gloried in the bright sunshine and in all the beauty of the life and country around me. I sat by babbling brooks that sang for me again the songs of my childhood; gathered nuts in shady groves, with all the zest of thirty golden years ago; lay among the heather and felt my heart swell with pride and love at the sight of the beauteous valley, bedecked in all the golden glory of the ripened corn and gemmed with white-washed homesteads, that spread itself out below; sat with bright-eyed mountainy men, keen, big-hearted, strong in body and clean in mind, who told me stories of old days on those hills and of other men who, too, had been "on their keeping" on them, and of the adventures of their own simple lives—the great journeys they had taken and the wondrous sights they had seen at sheep fairs "away in Donegal" or in distant Tyrone or in the glens of Antrim—and talked to me, with a strange light in their eyes and sometimes with a husky note in their voices, of Ireland and her long sufferings and of the wicked-

ness of her oppressors and the undying hope of the Gael. No need for me to conceal the cause of my journey; for none of these people but would have laid down his life rather than betray me. I was no longer the commonplace attorney, whom they were wont to consult about their quarrels and difficulties, and whose bills of cost made such distressful reading. The enemy had struck at me and I had become exalted in their eyes in consequence. I had joined—even poor, insignificant, selfish me!—the long line of those who had worked and suffered for Ireland; and from the warm handclasp of every rough, manly hand, and the fervent "God and His Blessed Mother protect you!" that the women spoke, I knew that, all unworthy though I was, I was identified in these people's eyes with the men of '98, and '48 and '67 and '16, who had written their names in letters of gold on the dark pages of Ireland's history.

Every door was open to me, because for the moment I stood for Ireland and against her oppressors; and when I had reached the hospitable homestead where I had made up my mind I would be safest from my pursuers I got a welcome that a king might have envied. The best room was made ready for me, and the biggest possible fire piled on the wide hearth, and the good wife spared herself no trouble that her generous heart could suggest to make me comfortable. And what a night of it we had! The man of the house sang and recited his own songs and poems, for he was a song maker, and a grand string of ballads he had to his credit, rich in the humour of the countryside, and redolent of its beauty, and inspired by its memories and traditions; and I recited "The Man from God Knows Where," and a neighbour lad sang songs.

We made merry, as every normal gathering of Irish people always do. We told each other stories of the "characters"

of the district; repeated witticisms, and recounted all sorts of funny experiences. The man of the house performed various feats of skill for our edification, and made the tears of happy laughter run down our cheeks with his humour and his comical description of men and things. As the smoky rafters of the old kitchen rang with our merriment I knew that there was none of us—not even the hunted man, though he did not know what fate was in store for him—but was a great deal happier that night than was Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of England.

Then we all knelt down, and the man of the house gave out the Rosary, and the good woman led with the first decade, and we all took ours in our turn. And we prayed that God and His Blessed Mother might protect us and our homes and families, and for the suffering souls, especially those near and dear to us, and for poor Ireland that God might shorten the arm of the oppressor, and for all who were suffering for her, and for the men on hunger strike, and for all imprisoned Irishmen. Later on, when I awakened in the middle of the night, I thought I heard a step outside. I went to the little window and peeped out into the moonlight, and I saw the figures of three or four young men. Then I knew that the lads, unknown to me, were keeping guard whilst I slept, lest the military should come upon me by surprise.

It was a symbol. For the moment I represented in a small way in that area the centuries' long struggle against the oppressor; and so these young men, with the hard day's work of the Irish peasant behind them and as hard a day's work before them, had come unasked to spend that weary vigil on the mountain side to testify their love for their "Dark Rosaleen." That is the spirit found everywhere and in every age and class in the country that makes Ireland unconquerable.

CHAPTER II.

THE MOUNTAINY MAN.

THERE were rumours that the enemy were upon my track, and so I deemed it wiser to move into another district. A patriotic mountainy man, who had driven and herded sheep all over the surrounding hills and knew every glen and pass and summit that they held, undertook to be my guide, and on a bright September afternoon we set forth. The tear-drops glistened in the eyes of the kindly woman of the house as she bade us good-bye. She sprinkled us with holy water and gave us into the protection of the Mother of God; and the good man took off his boots and accompanied us for two or three miles across the heath to the summit of the first hill we had to cross.

It was another glorious day, and again and again we stopped to feast our eyes on the fair plains of Derry that stretched for miles below us, and the lovely valley of the Bann, and "the blue hill of Antrim" that rimmed the horizon. One by one my guide pointed out to me the places I knew so well, but which were obscured for me by the unfamiliar distance from which I viewed them.

They were all rich in memories and endeared to me by a hundred traditions, stories and associations of my boyhood. There were distant Slemish on which holy Patrick herded the swine; and Dunglady Fort round which many a battle had waged in the olden time; and "bonny, bonny Slieve Galleon's braes"; and "Knockloughrim Planting"; and "the three spires of Magherafelt," that to my childish

mind used to seem so wondrous and far-away; and the Poplars of Tobermore; and the Cross of Ballynascreen.

There, too, was the fair valley of the Moyola, along whose banks was "Shillgrove"; and as we lay in the heather and my guide pointed out to me where the thickly wooded demesne was, I saw myself for a fleeting moment a wide-eyed little listener, awed and somewhat frightened at the Paganism of the incident but with a keen sense of the magnificence of the drama involved, as my old nurse told me the story of one of the old landlords who had dwelt in the place, and how when the darkness of death began to shade his eyes he had asked to be carried to the window, and then have taken his last, long, lingering look at the lovely lawn, at the bottom of which the river glided through a line of stately trees, he had exclaimed: "Oh Shillgrove, Shillgrove! How can I leave you? What are the glories of Heaven to the beauties of Shillgrove!"

Dearer than all was the village of my childhood. Only its dim outlines showed through the haze; but every house and stone and step, illumined by the light of love and memory, stood clear before my mind's eye. There were the ruined church where St. Lurach was buried, with all the stories that clung to its ivy-clad walls; and the tree on which Wattie Graham, the young Presbyterian patriot who had headed the local "United Men" in '98 had been hanged; and the houses in which had dwelt so many dear friends of the past. Many of the young ones, with whom I had played and gone to school and gathered blackberries and danced and made merry, were dead or in distant lands; and most of the older generation, whose wisdom and humour and wealth of story I had delighted to listen to as I walked beside my father on a Sunday morning to "late Mass" out at Glen, had long since been laid to rest in the peaceful graveyard among the ash trees where my own dearest

also slept. But all very living and real they seemed to me that September day ; and dead or living I knew that there was none of them who would not be proud to think that I had not proved unfaithful to the unbroken tradition of Irish Nationalism.

As we walked along, my companion talked with that eloquence and keenness and breadth of interest which are so characteristic of the Irish peasant. He told me stories of the mountains, narrated wanderings and adventures in search of strayed sheep, gave his views on farming and prices and crops, quoted songs and ballads and discussed great events, both in Irish and world history. Needless to say, the present, with all its sufferings and all its proud hopes, was never far from our thoughts.

" I'm saying," my friend remarked as we sat to rest on the side of a green hill that shelved down to a mountain stream that gurgled below, " I was reading that this man, Lloyd George, expects to have this job of conquering Ireland finished in about six weeks time."

" In less," I responded. " Sir Hamar Greenwood has announced that the Last Conquest of Ireland is to be finally completed by the 19th October."*

" Well," was the reply, " if Lloyd George finishes the job in that time, I'm afraid he'll have to work overtime—both by night and day."

" It's a grand thing to feel, anyway," I said, " that with all their power and the hundred thousand troops they have they cannot catch me."

" Ach ! " he exclaimed, clasping my hand. " I'm proud to be taking a hand at beating them."

Thus the day passed. I gloried in the beauty of the hills and plains, drank in great draughts of pure air from the

* It may be remarked that the date of final conquest was afterwards put back to 1st December, then to 1st March, and then to Easter.

heather, and listened to my companion's ever interesting conversation.

When the darkening shadows of the evening began to fall, we called in a house that adjoined a mountain road, and I was received as if I were a prince. A week ago no fuss would have been made about me; but now I was a man hunted for Ireland! So the girl of the house hastened to make a meal for us, and her brother showered kindnesses on us. It will take a lot of conquering to make a nation, the backbone of which is a peasantry made up of people like these, forget its proud dream of freedom and settle down as slaves.

We were now near the village in which I carried on my professional work; and just as it was getting dark we stopped to talk to a very old man at the door of a cottage. He knew my guide but was not aware of my identity.

"Is there any news in the town?" my friend asked.

"Oh aye! Did you not hear about the attorney? The sodgers were looking for him the other day and raided his office."

"And did they get him?" I asked.

"No!" he responded. "But he needn't be hidin'! For there will be always somebody to tell on him."

The night came down and the stars shone bright above us and lights began to twinkle along the mountain-side and in the valley. I knew that they shone from happy, innocent homes where old and young would gather round the fireside before bed-time and tell stories and sing songs of love and Ireland.

Then the moon rose from behind the mountains of Tyrone, and soon the whole valley of Ballynascreen lay clothed in glorious radiance. It was good to stand for a minute now and then and let the peace and glory and beauty of it all sink into one's soul.

At road ends we passed groups of young men that bade us " Good Night "—no doubt wondering who we were. Good, too, to know that the country now contained so many such young men and to realise the proud determination that filled their souls to see the country freed in this generation.

" There's a fire kindled in Ireland now," my friend remarked as we walked along, " that can never be put out."

Then we reached our destination, and sought shelter under another hospitable roof. I thanked my guide for his long, weary journey and apologised for bringing him so far.

" I said I would bring you safe to where you asked me," he answered proudly ; " and it would have been the same if it had been to Galway, let alone to here. A small thing that to do for any man that's on his keeping for Ireland ! "

CHAPTER III.

IN AN ULSTER GLEN.

SOME of the most enjoyable days I spent when I was "on my keeping" was in one of the most beautiful of our Ulster glens. It is situate in the heart of the hills, far away from towns and villages. Stately mountains wall it in and a fair stream, fed by fast-rushing mountain rivulets, winds its serpentine way through it.

The people who dwell in it are a joy to know. They are industrious and comfortably circumstanced, living simple, duty-filled, innocent lives, with keen minds and clean hearts, and they are full of the spirits of Faith and Patriotism and Fun.

It is a perfectly peaceful place, even in the present restless state of Ireland, for the simple reason that there is no disturbing element. The Army of Occupation in the persons of the Royal Irish Constabulary, were withdrawn from the Glen a year or two ago; and, strange though that might appear to an unsophisticated Englishman or Frenchman or American, the withdrawal of the police from any district in Ireland usually means that there is going to be a chance for the "reign of Law." Order is now preserved by the Volunteers and disputes settled by the local Arbitration Courts; and, although the Glen is in the very heart of Carsonite Ulster, it is entirely governed by the authority of the Irish Republic.

The approaches to the Glen are so difficult and the one road that runs through it so narrow that a military lorry

dare not venture into the place. So that the people can sleep peaceably and contentedly at night. I had no cause to worry for my safety whilst I was there ; and, accordingly, I roamed about amongst the people as it pleased me, talked Irish with the old and made fun with the young, entered into all the life and gossip and interests and amusements of the parish, climbed the mountains and revelled in the beauty of the hills and valleys that surrounded me.

The Glen was full of life and character ; and as I sat at night by the kitchen fire of the good priest, whose guest I was, and the neighbour lads gathered in for a night's talk, many a hearty laugh I got at their comical accounts of incidents in the life and history of the happy valley.

Of course, everybody in the Glen was intensely interested in the great national struggle in which their country was engaged. The newspapers only reached the place on the day subsequent to publication ; but if anyone had happened to have business to what was dignified with the name " the Town " and had seen a paper on the day of issue, he had to be prepared to summarise its contents for the benefit of all he met. I used to admire their skill as sub-editors.

This is the sort of dialogue you would hear :

" And were you in the town the day ? "

" I was."

" Is there much in the paper ? "

" The Black and Tans have burned down another town ; and Greenwood says it must have been the Sinn Feiners that wrecked the last one."

" He wud that. Boys, but isn't he the notorious liar ! "

" And," the sub-editor would proceed, " Griffith has wired De Valera asking that wan of the American States should each adopt wan of the ruined towns ; and Asquith has a letter in favour of full Colonial Home Rule."

Everybody in the Glen was full of interest in all that went on in the great outside world; and surveyed with keen and critical eye the doings of mankind "from China to Peru." One of those most interested in world movements and politics was a deaf mute who read with great zest every scrap of newspaper that fell into his hands. Sometimes he would miss seeing a paper for a day or two and then he would take great trouble to piece together the resulting broken threads. Thus, one day, he saw a reference to the "Red" and "White" armies in Russia; and, not having heard of these bodies before, he went to the priest who was the most learned man in the place, and, pointing his finger to the two names, intimated that he would like his advice as to which army the public opinion of the Glen should support.

I was present as a spectator at one of the Courts held in the Glen, and as one who has spent his working life in the practice of English law and attendances at British courts I carried away a very high opinion of the efficiency and common-sense that characterised this Court and its methods. One case was very illuminating, as showing how completely the British legal system had broken down in all parts of Ireland.

In one of the Unionist counties some men had broken into a Protestant small farmer's house and stolen a sum of money. Though the district in which this had occurred was in the very heart of so-called homogeneous, Carsonite Ulster, the British Authorities were unable to trace the wrong-doers. The Crown Forces in Ireland are too busy at present raiding and burning houses and persecuting people for the crime of wishing to be free to bother about defending even Unionist property.

Finding that the police had not moved in the matter, the Irish Volunteers stepped in and arrested the evil-doers

and brought them before the Court. The judge seemed a young man and was obviously not a professional lawyer, but he comported himself with a dignity and impartiality and, above all, a sturdy common-sense that would have done honour to any tribunal. He showed the accused every consideration, and treated them with the utmost fairness; but he made short work of the legal quibbles of their advocate, and the decision at which he arrived struck me as an eminently reasonable one.

For endeavouring to make life and property secure through the agency of these Courts men are now being hunted down all over Ireland by the forces of British tyranny. I met a young man in Derry Jail—Liam O'Duffy—who was a solicitor's clerk. He was a fine, manly, noble-hearted youth who in any civilised country but Ireland would have been regarded as an ornament to the community in which he lived. He was tried by Court-Martial, and the only evidence tendered against him was that of policemen who swore that they saw him at an Arbitration Court, sitting with a bundle of documents before him. On the strength of this evidence the boy was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment.

I had a splendid opportunity of becoming acquainted with the inner life of the people as my host used to bring me with him on his "sick calls." The priest in such a parish has to be a man of many parts. In addition to providing them with spiritual comforts my friend had to make wills for the old, prescribe for the sick, and to advise on all sorts of matters. It was a delight to sit with him in the neat cottage kitchens, to see the joy with which he was welcomed, and to observe the sweet chains of mutual affection that bound him to his spiritual children. Everywhere there was that note of happy cheerfulness that characterises a people who live the lives of simple piety and devotion to

duty for which the Irish peasantry are so remarkable. Many a good story I heard in those kitchens, many an original saying, sharp epigram, and brilliant judgment.

Though their hearts were sore for what their fellow-countrymen were suffering, the Glen folk had a keen eye for the humour that seemed always to lurk amongst the ruins. Thus they quickly seized on the absurdity of an incident that centred round a certain Englishman who had come to take a hand in the "Last Conquest of Ireland" (perhaps). The name of the hero was, I believe, Alfred Flint, of some address in London; but if my memory plays me false I apologise to all the Alfred Flints in the world. The man had been in the "Black and Tans" or "Auxiliaries," and after he left them he wrote a letter to the *Freeman* in which he suggested that the Force was not made up of policemen but of bandits and desperadoes. He described the sort of raids in which they were accustomed to take part, and said that he had resigned from them in disgust. The next day or so Dublin Castle issued an official communique commencing somewhat in this fashion: "The attention of His Majesty's Government has been drawn to a letter which has appeared in the Press over the signature of Alfred Flint." Then it expressed its "desire to point out" that Mr. Flint had not resigned, but had been dismissed for stealing a pair of trousers. Which allegation Mr. Flint solemnly denied in a letter the following day.

This is the sort of conversation you would hear in the Glen about all this:

"Is there much news in the paper the day?"

"No. Nothing worth talking about."

"Is there nothing more about Flint's trousers? Boys-a-boys! But the oul' Empire must be in a bad way when the Government had to start arguing with a boy like Flint about a pair of oul' trousers."

For a hunted man my days were wonderfully peaceful in that happy valley. Only once was I really anxious. I was at breakfast with the priest when the housekeeper rushed in to say that there was a motor load of police coming up the road. I was astonished at my own agility as I dashed, without coat or hat, in the rain, through a hedge at the back of the house and across a field up to the heath.

I took shelter in a poor woman's house on the hills for an hour or two till the danger had passed. The cabin was a wretched one and the rain was coming in through the thatched roof; but the welcome she gave me when I told her I was "on my keeping" for Ireland's sake would have brightened any habitation. We talked about the country and the "trouble," the stormy season and the bad crops, and she told me the story of her simple but sorrow-laden life. Her potato crop was almost a complete failure and she had hardly been able to get home any turf against the winter that was then almost upon us.

It was a bleak outlook. "Acht" (But), she said, "Ta Dia maith agus ta mathair mhaith Aige!" ("God's good and He has a good mother!") And she turned her eyes with a look of loving confidence to the picture of the Virgin that hung above her bed.

It was a striking exemplification of the personal love and intimacy that binds the Irish peasant to God and His saints. Justice might demand punishment for wrong-doing, but the human heart of the Son of Man could not resist His Mother's pleas for pity.

I thought of what the woman had said as I stood at the open window of my bedroom that night. The dark peaks of the mountains looked wonderfully solemn in the moonlight and I could hear the murmur of the river as it glided down the Glen. Lights still shone in the cabins along the hillside and away in the distance a restless dog bayed the

moon. I knew that that same moon was shining into a room a long distance away from me, where a woman was kneeling amid a group of little worshippers who were praying that the soldiers might not find "Daddy" and that God might soon send him home.

What would be the end of it all for them and for me?

"Acht ta Dia maith agus ta mathair mhaith Aige," I said to myself. And I knew that all would be well.

CHAPTER IV.

DUBLIN DURING THE TERROR.

When I had spent about a week in the Happy Valley I thought I would try and make my way to Dublin. To get to the most convenient railway station I had to go to a garrison town, and there was a danger that I might be recognised there by some policeman.

My host motored me to the house of another "rebel" priest who lived about three miles from the railway station. When we got to his house, we found that it had been raided by a party of military on the night or two preceding. The search had been a most exhaustive one and the soldiers had been even ordered by their officers to dig up a grave in the adjoining graveyard. But neither arms nor what is called in Ireland "seditious literature" (*i.e.*, copies of the *New Witness*, extracts from Mr. Bonar Law's speeches in 1913, or portraits of certain dead Irishmen) had been found on the premises. Thereon hangs a tale in which a brave and nimble-minded girl, who acts as the priest's housekeeper, figures, but it must remain untold "for the duration of the war."

The news that met us from the garrison town was that there was great police and military activity in the neighbourhood; and it was doubtful if I could get through. But I thought it worth risking, and my friends worked out the strategy that I was to adopt. A young lady teacher, who had business in the town, got into the motor with me and agreed to accompany me to the train and see me off as if

I were a person going away after a visit at his country cousin's. She played her part very well. The policeman on the platform, whose duty it was to keep his eye on strangers, paid no further heed to me when he saw me engage in animated conversation—about the weather—with a British officer who stood beside me in the queue at the ticket office, and the affectionate farewell that I bade my fair "cousin" when the train steamed in was, I fear, an entirely superfluous histrionic effort.

In Dublin I felt perfectly secure. In the country a stranger cannot escape unwelcome attentions, and there is always a certain amount of tension for a hunted man. But it was different in the Capital, and I was able to enjoy some really restful days.

I stopped in a quiet part of the city with two ladies; and as they led a very secluded life, only minding their prayers and their work, there was hardly any danger of a raid on their house. They spared themselves no trouble to make me comfortable. I was able to write to my wife and my clerk every day and to receive letters under cover. So that I had every reason to be as happy as a hunted man could be.

I had not been in Dublin for months; and it was interesting to feel the pulse and mark the heart-beats of the grand old city in the crisis of the supreme struggle upon which Ireland had then entered.

It was just then that the British Cabinet had made open league with the fiends of Hell and launched their policy of "Black and Tanism" and reprisals: in the foolish hope that thereby they would break for ever the Irish determination to be free.

The newspapers reeked with horrors every day. We read of towns sacked by savages wearing the King of England's uniform; of men being taken out of their beds

and shot in cold blood ; of smoking homesteads, tortured women, and shrieking children. Military motor lorries and armoured cars careered through the streets both by day and night, and every person one met had some fresh tale of horror to relate.

I wondered what the effect of it would be on the *morale* of our civilian population ; and Dublin is so representative of all Ireland that it was the most favourable place in which to test the matter. I had always believed that our people would stand the strain. But their amazing courage exceeded all my expectations. So far from there being any sign of weakening, there seemed a hardening of the determination to see the struggle through. Everybody, too, was full of hope, and it was no spirit of mere unreasoning optimism that prompted the feeling. There was no underrating of the enemy's resources. The cost was counted and the danger duly appreciated. But we were sustained by the knowledge that there was a spirit abroad in Ireland which simply could not be broken.

The men bit their lips with grim determination, the women prayed, and in every church you entered you saw tense-faced groups who made intercession before the Blessed Sacrament or round a picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour for their country and themselves. But there was not even a whisper of surrender, and on every side the proud declaration was re-echoed : " We shall have our own again ! " So it has been in every time of intensive coercion and repression in Ireland. After all, it was the suave Mr. Birrell that went nearest to achieving " the Last Conquest of Ireland."

I had no trouble in getting through the garrison town on my way back to the Happy Valley. I came off the evening mail train from Dublin ; and in the rush and bustle of the platform nobody seemed to pay any attention to me.

The good priest of the Glen was waiting for me with a motor at the outskirts of the town ; and just as the shades of night fell we set out on our journey over the hills.

A hold-up that night might have had serious consequences for more than me. For our driver had no "permit," and in addition to such a lump of contraband as I myself constituted we had on board a Volunteer who, I was informed, had been wounded in action and whom it was found necessary to remove to a place of safety to escape the danger of a military or police raid on the house in which he had been convalescing.

We soon got out of what we considered the danger zone, but then a new peril beset us. Our lights went out and we had no means of making them right again. It was a pitch dark night, and we just had to creep up the narrow mountain road and down the other side. The road ran across a bleak, desolate mountain. At parts there were no fences, and only our chauffeur knew every inch of the ground I don't know how we could have avoided disaster. I breathed a prayer of fervent thankfulness, indeed, when at last the lights of a little mountain village that nestled between the hills shone through the darkness.

We had hoped to get proper lights in the village, but after searching over the whole place all we could secure was a small lamp belonging to an ordinary "push" bicycle. With it to guide us, we began the last stage of our journey. It was the most perilous, because we had to make our way through a gap in the hills that divided our glen from the adjoining one, and the road was a great deal worse than the one we had crossed.

Near the entrance to the gap a friend persuaded us to stop for a few hours at his house till the Moon would rise. He said that we could never get through the gap in the dark. So we accepted his hospitality, and drank tea and

smoked and chatted by his comfortable fireside till one or two in the morning.

It was a mistake. For the Moon forgot to rise that night, and it began to rain. So that when we got into the car again it was even darker than when we entered the house. But we had to risk it. For the good priest feared that there might be a sick call awaiting him, and, at any rate, we had to dispose of the wounded volunteer.

The experience was anything but a pleasant one. The wretched bicycle lamp hardly afforded us any assistance. The rain poured down on us and blew into our driver's face ; and the wind howled furiously around us. Our first difficulty was to get across a wooden bridge that spanned a mountain torrent. There was a sharp turn at the point ; and if we had deviated even a foot from the narrow path we would probably have been dashed to pieces against the rocks in the bed of the stream below. But our driver kept the path and negotiated the turn with superb skill.

That was only the beginning of our troubles. The road ran for a considerable distance along the face of a hill which on one side towered above us like some hideous monster, whilst on the other there was a steep decline that in the darkness seemed to lead into a bottomless abyss. There were no fences here at all, and only for the skill and nerve and brawn of our driver we might easily have been smashed into bits. At other parts of the road we had to climb or descend hills that seemed almost as steep as the side walls of a house. The strain on the brakes was terrific, and once we had to stop in the pelting rain till our driver rested his arms and his nerves had recovered their equilibrium. It was bitterly cold, and my heart was sore for the wounded man who I saw was enduring agonies.

But we had some poor body's prayers, as we say in Ireland, and at last we reached my friend's house about three in

the morning without accident but wet to the skin and cold and hungry.

"Well," I said to the priest as I sipped hot milk and tried to dry my clothes at his kitchen fire, "it's funny to find a middle-aged, humdrum solicitor, with a wife and family and a comfortable home, out on an expedition of that sort on such a night as this!"

"It's a queer country, Ireland!" responded my friend sententiously.

That week I learned the joyful tidings that the warrant for my arrest had been withdrawn; and on Saturday evening I heard the cry for which my heart had hungered during the preceding weeks, when a band of little toddlers, who had been watching all evening by the window of our home rushed up the street to meet me with a wild shriek of "Daddy!" As my wife and I knelt down that night to say the Rosary in thanksgiving and I looked at the happy-faced, bright-eyed little worshippers around us, the words of the old woman came back to me: "Ta Dia maith agus ta mathair mhaith Aige!" ("God's good and He has a good mother!")

CHAPTER V.

"IN THEIR KEEPING"

THE year 1920 was for me a veritable *annus mirabilis*. During it I bought a house in The Cross—or, to give it its modern, commonplace, Anglicised name, Draperstown—with a view to moving there from my former home in Ballycastle ; I had a miraculous escape from death at the hands of an Orange mob that had been imported into Ballymoney with the object of preventing me holding an election meeting there ; I had surprised alike my friends and my foes by getting returned to the Antrim County Council at the top of the poll for the Ballymoney Electoral Area ; I had my premises raided two or three times by the British armed forces ; I spent part of the Autumn "on my keeping" ; and I ate my Christmas dinner and closed the year in jail.

My new house was being made ready for me in December. For the previous eighteen months I had only been able to spend the week-ends with my family, and I was looking eagerly forward to the happiness of having them with me always. I lived in anticipation through all the joys that Christmas brings when one lives in a home full of healthy, happy children ; and we had already invited the few friends who were to share with us our Christmas dinner.

I was spending the week-end in Maghera, where my family, during the transition period, were quartered in the houses of kind relatives. On Sunday evening, the 12th

December, I had walked out to my wife's mother's place at Silver Hill for tea. My wife and some of the little ones were there. A couple of friends dropped in and we had a merry evening. The conversation turned—as it is so liable to do in Ireland these times—on the subject of jails, and we laughed a good deal about prison experiences that we had heard recounted by acquaintances who had been privileged to enjoy his Britannic Majesty's hospitality in some of these institutions.

On my way back to my sister's house, where I was stopping, I called in Rathlurie, the home of my dear friend and good comrade, Pat Agnew, solicitor. There was a card party in progress there ; but we broke up early as Mr. and Mrs. Agnew had arranged to go to Belfast on the early train on Monday morning. Pat had some business in the city, and if he would have time, he intended to call in to the prison to see our mutual friend, Tom Finnegan, to whom I sent a message of good cheer.

After we had left, Mr. and Mrs. Agnew lingered for a few minutes by the fireside. They sat on easy chairs, a good fire burned on the hearth, the room was bright and cosy. They had been talking of Finnegan and other "jail-birds" of their acquaintance, and the contrast that the mention of a lonely prison cell suggested made their present surroundings seem all the more delightful. Pat felt that glow of sweet content and satisfaction at his heart that a man is wont to feel when he looks across the fireplace at a pretty wife shining like a dazzling jewel in a well furnished room, and following up the train of thought that the mention of poor Finnegan had initiated, he exclaimed, as he lit his last cigarette : "It's a good deal"—or perhaps his exact words were : "It's a damned sight" for he only spoke from memory when he told me the story—"more comfortable here to-night than it would be in jail, darling."

He did not tell me that he said "darling," but I know that if he did not say that, he used some equally endearing term. In about an hour's time he was shivering on a motor lorry on his way to jail!

I got to my sister's about twelve o'clock, and was preparing to go to bed when I heard what sounded like a military lorry lumbering up the street. I had no expectation of being arrested at the time, but as one never knows what is going to happen in Ireland I listened for a few moments to see if the vehicle would stop at the house. It did not. So commenting to myself: "They must be raiding somewhere in this district to-night!" I lit a candle and went to bed.

I had a strange feeling that something was going to happen that would profoundly influence my subsequent life. But I said my prayers, and placed myself under the special protection of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, knowing that she would see me safely through every difficulty.

Next morning before I was up I heard that Mr. Agnew and my brother had been arrested during the night; and whilst I was dressing, my little niece, Maighread, ran upstairs to tell me that the local sergeant of police was waiting for me downstairs.

He told me that the military had, after the arrest of the other two, gone on to the Cross during the night in the hope of catching me there, but finding that I was at Maghera they had telephoned to him to detain me. So for the first time I felt myself in the grip of England's mighty paw, and I proceeded with Sergeant Carter to the police barracks.

In the evening a military lorry arrived from Magherafelt for me and I was placed on it in the midst of bayonets. A crowd had gathered outside the barracks, and I got the greeting and send-off that the big hearts of our common

people love to bestow on everyone who is privileged to suffer for Ireland. The men cheered and the women waved their hands at me, and in a flash were revealed to me the subtle bonds of affection that linked together myself and all "the old neighbours," as we love to call them in Ireland. I knew that women to whom I had never more than nodded all my life would weep for me that night as they would have done for their own sons, that all my shortcomings would be forgotten, and that in every Catholic home in the village I would be remembered when the family knelt for "the joint prayer."

At the police barracks at Magherafelt, whither I was brought, I found Mr. Agnew and my brother. The former gave me an account of the raid on his premises, and the story throws so much light on British Government methods in this country that it is worth recounting.

He had not been long in bed when the knock came. He rushed down in his pyjamas and found at the door an officer in charge of a party of soldiers, accompanied by a "Black-and-Tan" policeman. The officer said that he came to arrest Mr. Agnew and to search the house, and bade him dress. They went upstairs together, and the officer stood at the open bedroom door, with a flashlight in his hand, whilst Pat dressed. When he had finished he said to the officer: "You can now proceed with your search here." "Oh," responded the other, "I only want to search two rooms on the ground floor."

Downstairs, then, they went; and when they got there my friend noticed that a soldier and the policeman were still in the hall. The officer walked into a room that opened off it, and almost immediately exclaimed: "Here are five rounds of ammunition!"

The house had been searched by another party of military about three weeks before and nothing found. Mrs. Agnew

and the other members of his household, who had constant access to the press in which the ammunition was found, were positive that it could not have been there when they were last in the room. Only a man fit for a lunatic asylum—much less a hard-headed Ulster solicitor—would have left ammunition lying about in that careless way in the then condition of Ireland. Furthermore, the officer refrained from searching any of the other rooms, although one would naturally think that, having found the ammunition, he would be likely to make some effort to discover the weapon for which it was to be used.

Mr. Agnew at once protested that the ammunition had been "planted," and renewed his protest before his Court-Martial when charged. Yet in face of all this he was found "guilty" by a court of officers and sentenced to six months imprisonment (reduced to three by the Confirming Authority) with hard labour.

On the day after our arrest the three of us were brought to Derry Jail by a military escort in charge of a sergeant, who told us that he was prepared to fight any people except Englishmen, Scotchmen, Welshmen or Irishmen, and who objected strongly to having to do what he regarded as "dirty police work" in Ireland. There was a good deal of fraternisation on the journey. We stood some of our captors a luncheon at Coleraine, and the sergeant demonstrated by the aid of two lumps of bread how the Irish Question should be settled. "This is our bloody country, and that is yours" was his formula, "and they have both to live beside each other." One lad—from Berkshire I think he was—got very friendly with me and told me, in that delightful English intimate way, all about his mother and his sisters and his brothers and his best girl. "This is the best escort ever I was on," he exclaimed enthusiastically during our little feast. "I'm going to write

home to mother about it; and any time you're going to be arrested always send for us"

We sang Irish ballads together and joined in soldier choruses such as one about "We had a sergeant-major that never saw a Hun, but he got the V.C. for drinking the Conchies' rum."

On the whole the journey was a very merry one indeed; but we got to Derry Gaol just as well as if we had been handcuffed all the way and the escort and prisoners had been disciples of Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson. That night, at about half-past eight, I was locked in my little cell with a can of cold cocoa and a piece of hard bread, having been first taught by a sympathetic warder what was the most comfortable way of putting down a plank bed.

CHAPTER VI.

PRISON LIFE.

It is strange to find oneself cut off suddenly from all one's work and ordinary interests and to be projected into a new sphere where every standard of value is completely changed. Stranger still, how quickly a normal person accommodates himself to such an altered existence.

Thus it was with me in Derry Gaol. It was no avail to me there that I could draft a "Conveyance," or that I knew something about "Contingent Remainders" and quite a lot about the "Law of Contracts." But it was of vast importance that I learned the most effective way of heating my milk on the flickering cell gas-jet, and that I was able to make my wooden spoon serve all the purposes of a knife and fork. All my other accomplishments, too, paled into utter insignificance compared with the one great fact that I found that I could write doggerel about the life and humours of the prison, that passed from cell to cell and was laboriously transcribed into tattered copy-books against the day when the General Release would come and the boys go home to tell their friends all about their varied experiences.

One quickly settles down to the dull routine of prison, and all the interests and causes for excitement in one's outside existence are soon replaced by the incidents that ripple the surface of that monotonous life that makes up the sum of one's days within those dreary walls. What commotion there was if the long hours after the evening "lock-up" were broken, say, by the step of the Governor

along the corridor, and you heard him going into another prisoner's cell! What could he be coming about? Was somebody going to be released? And the tremendous interest that was excited amongst us by seeing one of our comrades going off to his Court-Martial! How we clambered round him on his return and listened to his account of the proceedings and wondered what his sentence would be!

There were sixty or so of us, untried political prisoners, in Derry at the time, representing several counties and many walks in life. We were professional and business men, farmers, artisans and labourers; but we all stood for the same ideal, and a fine spirit of comradeship linked us all together. We had the usual prison organisation that has proved so effective in many jail fights. For the British Authorities have had to accept the awkward fact that they cannot put more than two Sinn Feiners together without an organisation emerging. Our Commandant was Mick McCartan, a veterinary surgeon, and a very nice, genial fellow, both brainy and tactful.

The courage and cheerfulness of the political prisoners was amazing. Most of them were lads, full of the exuberance and energy and the restlessness and vitality of youth. What that rigid routine and close confinement meant for them can scarcely be imagined by a person who has never felt the peculiar feeling of helpless loneliness that is wont to overcome a prisoner when the warder turns the key in his cell door for the long evening and night "lock up." But they knew that they were serving the "Dark Rosaleen" of their dreams, and their love for her made all things easy.

The jails of Ireland, England and Scotland are full these times of young men of this type—clean of heart and pure of soul, brave, truthful and high-minded. Two or three years ago I had occasion to visit a peasant home in County Antrim on some legal business. The owner had no children,

but a nephew of his wife was hired with them as a servant and would, no doubt, be adopted by them and inherit the little place. I had walked out, and the lad was sent to drive me home on his master's car. He was a boy of about seventeen. He was a shy lad and appeared to lead a very lonely life, as the homestead was situate high upon a mountain side. But he had read some Irish history, and he was full of the dream of freeing Ireland. " I would like to get a chance of fighting for Ireland," he told me naively, with a proud look in his eye, and a flush on his frank, boyish cheek. I lent him some books about Ireland and Irish history, and sometimes, full of diffidence, he would slip in to me at night to return a book that he had read and to borrow another. He had to work very hard, but when his aunt and uncle had gone to bed he would sit up by the kitchen fire devouring what I had given him to read and watching the strange visions that shaped themselves for him in the glowing turf embers. Then I left the district, and lost sight of him, but I often wondered how he had developed.

On the day of the Ulster Elections I was standing at one of the polling booths at Ballycastle when I saw the lad's aunt and her husband coming up to vote. I shook hands with them eagerly, and asked the woman how her nephew was. She evidently thought I had heard, and said : " They sent him to Preston," whilst a big tear-drop glistened in her eye. I understood at once and asked : " How long did he get ? " To which she replied : " Eighteen months." Poor but proud and in a sense—despite the ache that I know is in his heart this Summer's day on which I write for a breeze from the " blue hill of Antrim " and a look at the white foam of the waves that break at the foot of the stately promontory of Benmore—happy, happy boy ! His dream has come true. He has fought and is now suffering for his beloved Ireland !

Nor was the courage that I saw so manifested in jail merely the product of youthful irresponsibility. For it was shared by prisoners of more mature years. Men like Eamonn McDermott, but recently married, who had two business houses burned down maliciously in Derry City, so far from mumuring only thought of thanking God that they were called upon to suffer so little, when such supreme sacrifices were demanded from others. Old Peter McCannon of Sligo had his homestead and his cornstacks burned to the ground by the British armed forces. His wife had to seek shelter in a labourer's cottage. Five or six sons were "on the run," and the youngest, Charlie, a boy of less than 18, was in jail with him in Derry. Peter himself suffered from epileptic fits, and his health was so bad that the authorities were most anxious to get an excuse to send him home. It was pretty clear that all he required to do to secure his release was to whisper two words, "Not guilty"—*thereby recognising the Court.* But no power on earth could have made Peter say those two simple words. And when Charlie hurled defiance at the Court-Martial before which the pair were brought for trial, telling them that he was a soldier of Ireland and would always do what in him lay to destroy alien rule in his country, the old man acclaimed his son's "treason" and bade them do their worst on both of them.

The Governor and officials in Derry in my time showed us every consideration and treated us as well as the rules would permit. The "Politicals" have broken down the old rigid system in all the Irish prisons, and ameliorated the conditions even for the ordinary convicts. I imagine that even in England, where large numbers of Irish prisoners have been, something similar has occurred—though, of course, to a much lesser degree. No matter what rules Home Secretaries and Chief Secretaries and Prison Boards may make, they have to take into account the human factor

in their application, and the ordinary warder simply could not, even if he were disposed to try, treat the sort of men with which Sinn Fein fills the jails as "criminals."

During my internment in Ballykinlar Dr. Hayes told me a striking story illustrative of the inroads that the Sinn Feiners were wont to make on prison rules. He was sent to Dartmoor after the "Easter Week" insurrection; and in the beginning the conditions there were dreadful. The discipline was of the sternest kind. You dare not speak to a comrade, your cell and person were subjected to the most degrading searches at frequent intervals, and everything was done with the regularity of clockwork. After the Irish prisoners had been about five weeks there, they were lined up one morning in the lower corridor, prior to being marched out to the exercise yard. There were fifty or sixty of them all standing in line, and De Valera was the last man. Warders paced up and down lest some prisoner should dare even to whisper. Suddenly at the gate of the corridor above them they saw Professor Eoin MacNeil, in convict garb and with his hair closely cropped. He was in charge of two warders and was about to be brought downstairs to be placed amongst the others. He had evidently reached the prison from Portland or some other gaol on the preceding night. The gate swung open, and the distinguished convict was escorted down the stairs. As his foot touched the floor of the corridor on which his former comrades stood, De Valera jumped out from his place at the rere of the line. He shouted: "Company, 'shun!" and the whole line of Irish prisoners at once sprang to "Attention"—MacNeil was still the Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Volunteers, and it was their tribute to him as such.

Dr. Hayes remarked that, if a German bomb had fallen on Dartmoor Prison that morning, it could hardly have created more consternation than De Valera's audacious

act. The warders seemed stunned for a few moments and hardly knew what to do. Was the British Empire rocking at its foundations that anyone should so dare to violate the century old tradition of iron discipline that had tamed and broken so many turbulent spirits?

An Irish prison is, of course, very different from a place like Dartmoor. The stern, unbending, cruel official of the old days has been largely superseded by a person, usually very human and genial. And, of course, an untried prisoner such as I was is not subjected to prison regime in the real sense of the word.

Still gaol is gaol, no matter how easy the conditions are. It dulls your brain, deadens your senses, and humiliates you, whilst the loneliness and helplessness of your position are galling. Though I, as it were, only got a peep at the inside of a prison, still that peep has been sufficient to awake in me what I believe will be an everlasting feeling of active sympathy with all to whom the grating of those keys at the evening "lock-up" brings such desolation of heart and spirit; and few of my petitions to the good God are more heartfelt than the one that is so apt to rise to my lips, when I lie awake at night with the peace and beatitude of my happy home enveloping me as an aura, and I pray Him to comfort all that turn uneasily on their plank beds and count with weary hearts the hours and the days, or the weeks, or months, or years that must elapse before that fair Moon can shine on them as freemen.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTMAS DAY IN DERRY GAOL.

WHEN the dreary prison bell woke me on Christmas morning and I realised where I was and the day that had come I confess that I really felt depressed and unhappy. Visions of a wild stampede of little ones in long white nightdresses to find out what Santa Claus had placed in the stockings, of the walk out to first Mass at Glen, bringing back to me memories of how wonderful and romantic it used to seem to me, as a child, to walk to the " chapel " in the dark and see it all lit up with big candles and shining in the distance like a radiant lamp hung between the ash trees, and to see the Fife and Drum Band, with their blazing torches, marching along the road playing " God Save Ireland " and " The Wearing of the Green " and then " Faith of Our Fathers " three times round the chapel before they went in to Mass, of all the kindly faces that would greet me that morning with their " A Merry Christmas to you ! " and of all that Christmas means and brings to us whom the good God has privileged to live in holy Ireland, crowded before my mind's eye. Though I thought that the fountain of tears had long since dried up within me, I found that a few stray drops had risen to my eyelids, when big, genial Warder Byrne unlocked my cell and with a hearty " A Happy Christmas and many of them, but not here ! " turned on my gas so that I might have light to dress for Mass.

I expect we all felt much alike that morning, but we kept

our feelings to ourselves ; and it was all fun and merriment and jokes with us when Commandant MacCartain called us to " Attention " in the corridor and gave us the " Left turn " through the iron gate, and down to the little prison church for Mass.

Though everything else was so different for us from what and ordinary Christmas would be, in the church, at any rate, we were at home—just as we would have been had we heard our Christmas Mass amid the pomp and grandeur of St. Peter's, at Rome, or in the candle-light of one of our own little country chapels ; and as line after line of us—the Governor, officials, political prisoners, convicts in their prison garb—knelt together at the altar-rails to receive the Bread of Life, one realised the full meaning of the catholicity of the Catholic Church, and how she is the same mother to the prince and the peasant, the Pontiff and the child, the governor and the governed, the jailer and the jailed. There were no tears once we knelt before that prison altar. It was all joy and thankfulness for us then. For of one supreme possession the tyrant could not deprive us ; and we knew that the prayers that would go up before the great White Throne from our little company that morning would be more potent, after all, than all the power and resources of the British Empire.

At the afternoon exercise that day we all gathered in a corner of the yard and had a concert ; and it was strange to hear those grim prison walls re-echo the rebel songs we sang and the fiery, patriotic poetry that we declaimed.

In the evening our Commandant got from the Governor an extension of " Lock-up " time to half-past seven ; and we had a concert in the " Condemned Cell," which is three times as big as an ordinary cell. The last man who had been hanged out of it was John Berryman from near my home and I made my companions laugh by a story that my friend

Willie O'Kane, the solicitor who defended him, had told me about his last interview with the unfortunate man.

John had lived on a little farm in County Derry with his brother and his brother's wife. He thought he was not being treated well by the others, and one day he murdered both the brother and the wife. He was found guilty by a jury at Derry Assizes and sentenced to be hanged, but a petition was sent up to the Viceroy asking for a reprieve. When the news came to hand that "the law must take its course," Mr. O'Kane went up to Derry to convey the evil tidings to his client, and was relieved to find that the latter took it all calmly enough, and appeared to be prepared to accept the inevitable in a proper spirit.

"This is the last time I'll see you, John," said the solicitor, "and I suppose I had better explain to you what I did with the money you gave me."

An ordinary person would think that if he was going to be hanged next week it would not be of much interest to him to know what it had cost to defend him. But John Berryman was what is sometimes called "an Ulster Scot," and we are always being told how practical these canny, hard-headed men of the North are. So my friend Willie, knowing the type well, thought it prudent to explain every item carefully.

"We had to pay a special fee of forty guineas to Denis Henry, K.C.," he went on, "on account of coming down to see the place, and the same to Patchell, K.C."

John made no comment, and Willie proceeded: "Besides we had to have a map made to explain the position of the house and the laneway for the jury, and that cost ten guineas, including the surveyor's expenses to Derry."

Then the explosion came. John who had received calmly the news that the petition for reprieve had failed and that he was going to be hanged the following week, at once

became wildly excited and indignant. "Surely to Goodness," he exclaimed in real distress, "Johnnie Campbell, *my neighbour*, wudn't charge me ten guineas for drawing out an oul' map!"

Well, if John's last hours in that cell were disturbed by the thought of having to pay Johnnie Campbell ten guineas "for drawing out an oul' map," we made up for them by our merriment on Christmas night. Before the week had closed Pat Brehney of the kindly heart and the winning smile, all brightness and fun and good nature, was to receive his savage sentence of seven years penal servitude for having been found in possession of ammunition, and most of the others who crowded the cell have since been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. But no Christmas party could have been merrier than ours was that night. We sang of love and Ireland, joined in gay choruses, told stories and made jokes, and listened to soul-stirring recitations.

Nobody entered more fully into it than my friend Smyth. He was a poor Orangeman who had drilled with the Ulster Volunteers, but he had been found trying to sell a revolver, and so was arrested by the military and put in amongst us. He was a soft, innocent, good-natured soul, with the usual "Orange" prejudices, and for a day or two he was very doubtful about his company. Then I took him in hands, supplied him with cigarettes and share of my parcels, and saw that he was made as much at home as possible. In a very short time he was all-in-all with us and used to march round the yard, leading the long line of prisoners that stepped to our Commandant's orders. "Mind ye," he said to me one evening proudly as we stood at the door of his cell awaiting the supper "Fatigue," "I'm not afeerd to walk wi' the Sinn Feiners."

"The Sinn Feiners are not as bad as you used to hear

them represented to be in Portadown, Smyth," somebody said. Whereupon Smyth exclaimed with great earnestness : " If anybody ivir says a word against the Sinn Feiners, or runs them down in my presence, by my sowl I'll—I'll——" he did not know what was bad enough to say in protest against such conduct—" I'll have him arrested." The threat was not a very appropriate one, but we knew what the poor fellow meant.

At our concert on Christmas night I recited some doggerel that I had written about the prison, and when we were going back to our cells Smyth made me promise that I would give him a copy of it. " Because," he explained, " they think in our place that there's nobody but corner-boys in gaol ; but I want to let them see there's larned men here."

Yet the hoary fiction is trotted out that there are two nations in Ireland, as if any other country could produce a type like Smyth !

We wound up our concert with " The Soldiers' Song " and we sang it as lustily as many a time we were wont to do at big Sinn Fein musters in hall or on hillside. Then we filed off to our cells and the warder came down the line and locked us up with a kindly " Good-night ! " In a few minutes the " Rosary" was re-echoing along the corridor—we used to say it in groups of five or six adjoining cells. Then the lights went out, and with a prayer on our lips that that was the last Christmas that any one would have to spend in gaol for loving Ireland, we tried to sleep and forget.

We had another extension on New Year's night and another concert, but it was not as merry as the first one. For we missed some of " the old familiar faces." Poor Pat Brehney had got his sentence in the meantime, and my friend. Pat Agnew, had also gone upstairs to the " Hard

labour" section of the prison, so that we missed his delightfully humorous rendering of the ballad, "Master McGrath." But we had a good deal of fun, too, and we laughed as gaily as ever. Four days later a number of us—MacDermott, Larkin, MacCartan, Bonner, the two Gallaghers, Haughey, Doris, Scott, my brother and myself—were suddenly called out of the exercise yard and told to be ready in the morning to travel to Ballykinlar Internment Camp. I realised that it was a heavy blow to me, as no doubt it was to all the others, for a long internment would probably ruin my business, and my financial position allowed no margin for such risks. But so many people had been praying for me that I knew that everything must be for the best. So I wrote to my wife, bidding her to fear not, and placing my family and home and business and fortunes in the keeping of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, I packed my bag and got ready to go forth. I knew that Our Lady would carry out the trust that I had imposed on her, and *She did*!

CHAPTER VIII.

BALLYKINLAR.

We left Derry Gaol in the dark of a cold Winter's morning and were taken by train to Belfast, and then across the city in a lorry to the County Down Railway Station, where we were entrained for Tullmurry Station, which is about four miles from Ballykinlar Camp. Our escort belonged to the Rifle Brigade, and they treated us very well. We were not handcuffed during any portion of the journey, we were allowed to visit the Refreshment Room at the C.D. Station, and when the Belfast mob sought to make a display of that fine sense of chivalry of theirs that in the cases of later batches of prisoners resulted in "heroic" attacks being made with showers of bolts and stones on defenceless, handcuffed men, the officer promptly turned his bayonets on the crowd. Whereupon they dispersed.

Our experiences were, therefore, a great deal pleasanter than those of most of the other prisoners whom we were afterwards to get to know in the Camp. Many a story I heard of what they had to endure, and I am almost as familiar with the voyage of the *Heather* from Cork as if I had travelled on her. For most of my fellow-hutsmen had been brought up from Kilworth Camp, penned like sheep in the "hold" of that vessel. They were two days on the journey, during which time they got nothing to eat except a few "dog" biscuits. When they arrived at the Belfast Docks, they were treated to a display of choice conduct and still choicer language from the Queen's Island

rivetters, and from what Tom Finnegan calls "'the Cumann na mBhan' attached to Harland and Wolfe's" that shocked these unsophisticated Southerners very much, although Ulstermen like myself would have taken it as a matter of course. They were brought by train to Ballykinlar Halt, and marched handcuffed and carrying their baggage over the two or three miles that separated the station from the Camp. Then, after a long wait and many formalities, they were sent into bare huts on a bleak December day and given for their bedding straw so damp that for several nights they had to sleep in portion of their day clothes. How some of the more elderly men survived all they came through seemed nothing short of a miracle. That fine old Irishman, Dan Fraher, of Dungarvan, who was almost seventy years of age, got weak on the march, but was forced on by a cad of a junior officer with some stupid, brutal jibe like that "if he were behind a ditch he would be active enough," and other frail men were treated quite as badly.

My friend Hasset, Surveyor to the Waterford County Council, told me how wretched his party felt, as cold and tired and hungry they neared the end of their two days' journey. At Belfast they had heard nothing but screams of hatred and curses, and the faces that scowled on them from the little stations on the C.D. Railway were as black as night. Then, as they stopped at one station before they reached the Halt, a priest got out from another carriage, and as he passed the prisoners' compartments he turned to them and said: "Dia 's Muire dhibh!" It was only a word, and he passed on; but, as my friend remarked to me, that quiet greeting and the smile of affectionate sympathy that accompanied it were as balm to a wounded man or a draught of clear, cold water to the parched lips of the traveller in the desert.

Our experiences were, of course, only fun compared with what these prisoners from the South had to go through; and they had already put up a fight for proper camp conditions. So that when we arrived things were going pretty smoothly, and conditions were tolerable.

One thing amused me very much on our arrival at the Camp. We were handed over by our escort to a camp officer in what looked like some sort of an old stable outside the wires. We had been driven to the station at Derry, had travelled in the train from Derry to Belfast, and then had made the journey to the Camp, all without handcuffs. But now, though we had only to be brought across a road to get us into what was called the "Cage"—that is the barbed wire enclosure in which the prisoners were kept—the officer spent, I suppose, half-an-hour putting handcuffs on us before taking us across. I feel grateful to that officer, because had it not been for him the Irish war might have ended without my feeling what handcuffs were like. A quiet, respectable solicitor like myself will probably never get the chance again; and I want to be able to thrill my grandchildren, when they come, with the story of my manacles.

Having been duly handcuffed, we were marched into the "Cage," where the handcuffs were at once removed. We were brought into an office where the colours of our eyes and the cuts of our noses were solemnly recorded and questions put to us as to whether we were married or single, and if married whether our respective wives lived with us when we were not in gaol, and so forth. Then, having been searched and deprived of such dangerous weapons as British currency and pocket scissors, we were allotted to the various huts to which we were to go, and were at length free to enter on the ordinary life of the Camp.

Our Camp consisted of four lines of huts with chapel,

cook-house and dining-halls, hospital, etc., in the centre. Pat MacCartan, Tom Larkin, John Bonner, Owen Gallagher and myself were sent to Hut 19 C Line. There were twenty other men in the hut already from Cork, Tipperary and Kilkenny, and our five made the full complement of twenty-five. The huts were zinc buildings ; our beds were composed of two wooden trestles about eight inches high with three boards laid on top, on which we placed our bedding, consisting of a mattress and bolster packed with coarse straw and four army blankets ; and the other furniture comprised a long table, three or four forms, some shelving, a few buckets, etc., and a stove.

I was very lucky in my hut, as my fellow-hutsmen were men with whom it was a pleasure to live. Some of them—such as Paddy Sullivan, the "hut leader," Jim Lalor, Tom Tracey, Tom Nolan and Jack Fitzgerald—had had a fairly extensive acquaintance with British prisons and had been through "hunger strikes" and such episodes, and most of the others had been very active figures in the national movement in one way or another. One of the most striking figures in the hut was Pat Rohan, County Councillor of Ballina (Tipperary), a man of very great ability and high ideals, whose constructive mind would be a most valuable asset in any normally governed country. I shall always be inclined to forgive Sir Hamar Greenwood portion of the score I have against him, inasmuch as, when it was deemed necessary in the interests of law and order in Ireland to lock me inside a barbed wire cage, he had me housed with men of such high character and kindliness as my friends, William Cleary, John Creed, Mick Dowling, Bill Condon, Jer. Mulvey, Paddy Guerin and Bill Sheehy, not to speak of my own Ulster comrades and the "Young Guard," consisting of Paddy Holmes, J. Keating, J. Egan, Jim Sharman, Andy Callaghan, Mick and Nick

Murphy. It is a trial to anyone, especially to a person who can so order his life that he can obtain at least the seclusion of a quiet room when he wants to work, or think, or read, or rest, to be forced to live in close intimacy with a large number of other people under conditions that never admit of a minute's privacy. The time you want to write or read will, perhaps, be chosen by some of your youthful companions for a game of "leap frog" or a wrestling bout in the hut, and fate may decide that when you seek to assuage the pain of an aching tooth by throwing yourself on your straw mattress somebody near you will feel the occasion opportune to learn the scale on the fiddle.

But though this sort of thing is a necessary concomitant of communal hut life and, though, no doubt the nerves of all of us were frayed by the irksomeness and uncertainty and monotony of our long internment, it was wonderful how well we all got on together in Hut 19. There were a spirit of give-and-take, a kindliness and generosity and unselfishness that made everything as easy as possible for us.

One impression was deeply marked on my mind by my experiences in Hut 19 and in the Camp, and that was the high standard of civilisation and idealism and spirituality of our people. The whole internment system is thoroughly demoralising. To take a thousand men from every walk of life and to lock them together in a cage, where they cannot pursue their ordinary work and duties, where everything is regulated for them like clockwork, and all the necessaries of life provided without anxiety on their part, would ruin most people, mentally, physically, and probably morally. But our Irish prisoners emerge from such ordeals unscathed.

The saving of them is, of course, first their religion, and then their sense of patriotism. The mass of the prisoners led lives of great piety in Ballykinlar. The prisoners'

chaplain, Father McLister, was most attentive to our spiritual needs, and was much beloved by everybody. We had Mass every morning and the Blessed Sacrament always in the Camp. The Rosary was said in the huts every night, and many of the huts—perhaps all of them—were in time formally consecrated to the Sacred Heart. The contrast between two civilisations could not be more strikingly illustrated than by a comparison of the writings on the walls, left by the soldiers of the British Army who had formerly occupied the Camp, with the knowledge that one might spend a twelve-month amongst the prisoners without ever hearing an unseemly word.

Then there was a general feeling that these months of internment and the enforced leisure they entailed were to be held in trust for the nation, and to be used as a preparation for the constructive work that we felt would be before us in a free Ireland. So that instead of allowing their brains and hands to decay from disuse, most of the prisoners sought to make themselves more efficient in some way. And the work thereby entailed was the saving of them.

CHAPTER IX.

CAMP CONDITIONS.

When we reached Ballykinlar on the 5th of January conditions were, as I have said, tolerable; but the other prisoners told us that during the first two or three weeks of the Camp the treatment they had received was very bad. The food was utterly inadequate. There was no canteen and the prisoners were not allowed to receive parcels. One man described to me his feelings when he first entered the "cage." He had come up on *The Heather* from Cork, and arrived at the Camp famishing with hunger and shivering with cold. They were kept for a very long time standing in the "stable" outside the wires, during which time a soldier who took pity on their wretched plight was forbidden by a mean little creature in the uniform of an officer to give them a drink of water. Then they were marched into the "cage"; and when my friend looked round and saw bayonets and barbed wire on every side and a crowd of starved-looking men, with incipient beards on their faces and mufflers round their necks, clambering round them to know if they had any cigarettes—or "e'er a butt," as the query was put by a chorus of Dublin accents—he turned to the man, to whom he had been handcuffed, and whispered: "Lloyd George is going to win this time!"

Well, Lloyd George did not win; and even inside the barbed wire cage that they had built his minions had to mend their manners. The prisoners soon set up their organisation, and under the spirited leadership of their Commandant, Patrick Colgan, ably assisted by Vice-

Commandant Dominick MacKay, of Clonmel, and the other members of the Council, they forced the military authorities to make concessions in the way of food and general conditions that enabled us to get through our period of detention fairly comfortably. Of course, there were complaints all the time about rations, and if we had not been able to supplement them by parcels from our friends and purchases at the canteen we might have been hungry enough at times. Personally I am convinced that I would have gone to pieces on the Camp ration; but on the other hand, as a matter of strict fairness, I wish to record the fact that the most energetic, hard-working and one of the most useful men in the Camp—my friend, Henry Dixon, of Dublin—never took anything except the allowance provided by the military authorities, and was still thriving when I left in May. I should say, too, that the British Commandant, Colonel Little, seemed really anxious to do the best he could for us and exerted himself, I am convinced, to secure for us every right to which as prisoners of war we were entitled by international usage. But he was hampered all the time by orders and limitations of his authority from the military G.H.Q. and Dublin Castle.

The same was true of Colonel Hely-Hutchinson, usually designated by the prisoners "Play the Game," who used to be in command of the area, and of Colonel Ennis, rather a fine old type of soldier, with a face for all the world like a statue of Julius Cæsar, who after some months was put in general charge of all the internment camps.

"Play the Game" got his name from what seemed to be his favourite phrase. When a new batch of prisoners arrived at the Camp, they were brought up before him and addressed somewhat thuswise: "Now, men, I understand that you are soldiers, and I intend to deal with you as such and to treat you as prisoners of war. It is my

wish that your time here should be pleasant as possible in the circumstances ; and if you play the game with me I'll play the game with you. If you observe certain rules and regulations in regard to the Camp and carry out certain duties, which are necessary for your own health and well-being, you will have no trouble from us." And so forth !

In one batch of prisoners that was treated to this address, there was an unfortunate member of the Plymouth Brethren or some such evangelistic organisation. He had, no doubt, been arrested by mistake owing to the faulty secret service work on which the military have had to rely since the old R.I.C. were put out of action.

On the day that he was to receive his lecture, the Colonel, after he had delivered the " Play the Game " portion of his speech, went on to say : " Of course, there may be individual cases of hardship amongst you. Perhaps some men are here who should not be here. But, if on the one hand you are soldiers of the Irish Republic you will be prepared to suffer for the cause to which you have devoted yourselves ; whilst, on the other hand, if you are loyal subjects of the British Empire you will also be willing to put up with the inconvenience of being here, knowing that this round-up has been deemed necessary by those responsible for the safety of the Empire."

Hereupon the distressed evangelic spoke out in solemn tones and said : " I am neither a soldier of the Irish Republic nor do I bear allegiance to earthly empires or monarchs. I only serve one Master and the only army to which I belong is the Army of God ! "

Upon which somebody else interjected : " Well, you're a devilish long way from your barracks here ! "—which observation so affected the risibility of the Colonel that he was unable to continue his speech and walked away in hearty laughter.

Colonel Ennis seemed to have a healthy contempt for that type of puppy that one so often meets with in the garb of a junior British officer; and it used to afford us a grim satisfaction to see some of the petty little bullies, that loved to parade their power before us, trotting after him on inspection as meek as lap-dogs. One day there was a fire in No. 2 Camp and a fire squad turned out in charge of a prisoner named MacInernay. Whilst he was standing by, directing operations, a junior officer came along with an escort and told him to take his hands out of his pockets and fall in with a bucket, like the rest of his men. MacInernay promptly told him to go to the devil; and was at once arrested and brought out before Colonel Ennis.

The officer made his charge, and the Colonel asked the prisoner what he had to say for himself. "Oh," rejoined MacInernay, "I have nothing to say for myself; but I want to put in a word for this young man"—pointing to the astonished officer—"He's young, Colonel, and he may have never seen a fire before, and so lost his head. But he'll come all right, Colonel, he'll come all right. Don't punish him."

The Colonel looked at his subaltern, and with a very amused twinkle in his eye said: "Take this man back to the cage!"

On the whole the senior officers with whom we came in contact were all right and comported themselves as soldiers and gentlemen, but some of the juniors were awful bounders and thorough cads. One officer, whom we used to designate "Judas" because it sounded like his real name, particularly distinguished himself in this respect. But even men of this type were soon put in their place, and in the end we had very little trouble with them. The prisoners made it clear that they were going to take no bullying from them; and both Colonel Little and Colonel Ennis showed themselves

really disposed to deal sternly with them, if they exceeded the bounds of duty and decorum. So that, on the whole, our relations with the enemy officers were fairly good.

After the Camp opened, there was some trouble over a demand on the part of the British officers to be addressed as " Sir " at Roll Call. Their contention was that they were treating us as prisoners of war and so were entitled to the courtesies usually extended to enemy officers in such circumstances. But the mass of the prisoners resented having to call people of the type of our friend " Judas " " sir." Eventually we got round the difficulty by answering the roll in Irish, " Annso." Whether it was that this was mistaken for " In, sir," or that they did not wish to press a fight on the subject, this was accepted and it was thus we used to answer during my stay in the Camp. Whilst the " sir " question was still a bone of contention, the roll was being called one morning in the hut in which dwelt my friend Hubert Wilson, of Longford.

" Wilson Hubert," the officer read out, and the answer was a plain " Here."

" Here—what ? " drawled the Lieutenant.

" Hear, hear ! " said Hubert solemnly. At which, to the credit of his sense of humour be it said, the officer laughed and passed on.

The way in which our men stood up to these subalterns pleased the poor " Tommies " immensely.

" These officers have the wind up," said a little Cockney soldier one day to a prisoner. " If we ask them for anything we get seven days in the clink for cheek, but you people can get anything you want. My shirt's in tatters, and I bet you, yours is not."

" Oh, no," admitted the prisoner, " I got two good shirts off them."

" Yes," continued the soldier, " and look at the good

boots you're wearing! All these hills are filled with Sinn Feiners according to the officers, and they're going to sweep down some night and clear the Camp. They're afraid to refuse you fellows anything; and we only get what you won't take. You are the prisoners. We're only the Tommies. The wind's up with the blighters, and be sure and keep it up."

It must have been rather an eye-opener to the "Tommies" to see defenceless men in a barbed wire cage, surrounded with guns and bayonets, able to keep in their own place the little bullies of officers of whom the soldiers were so much afraid. It should have had a stiffening effect on their morale; but I expect that the British army is very largely made up of types like that terrible fellow, the English workingman, who is always talking about the awful things he is going to do, but which he never does. I have been hearing all my life about the coming revolution in England, but I don't expect to live to see it. When the British Empire does break up, the blow will come from some place outside England.

CHAPTER X.

SOME CAMP NOTABLES.

INSIDE the barbed wire the running of the Camp was very largely in our own hands. We had our own government, our own military and police forces, our own courts, our own post office, and our own currency. In fact we had, as somebody put it, "Home Rule within the Empire." In addition to the Commandant and Vice-Commandant, other prominent Camp officials were the Quartermaster (Tom Meldon), the Adjutant (Seumas Ward), the Provost-Marshal (Hassett, afterwards Hickey), the Postmaster (Crowley), and the Court-Martial Brehons (Messrs. O'Dea and Nicholls). Other prominent figures in the Camp government were Dr. Higgins, of Maryborough; P. Hogan, of Loughrea, solicitor, who is now one of the T.D.'s for Galway; Tom Tracey, of Kilkenny; and the one and only Barney O'Driscoll, of Skibbereen.

The mention of Barney's name evokes so many memories that I cannot proceed with these discursive memoirs without devoting a paragraph to himself. One of the most firmly held of the convictions that I carried away from Ballykinlar was that, despite the popular fallacy to the contrary, there is far less humour south of the Boyne than there is in the North of Ireland. It used to amuse me to hear my dear friend, Henry Dixon, affirm in all seriousness that Ulster people had no sense of humour, whereas there was more fun in the wee finger of our fellow-prisoner, Daney McDevitt, of the Falls Road, Belfast, than in four-

score of Munster men. But Barney O'Driscoll might have been born in "the Six Counties," he had such an eye for the ridiculous. In fact, his sense of fun was liable to run away with him; and he introduced such hilarity into the proceedings of a Public Boards' Association, that had its origin in the praiseworthy desire of Henry Dixon and O'Grady, from Clare, to have the imprisoned members of public boards do some constructive thinking during their incarceration, that it came to an untimely end. He was a most ingenious debater, and was sure to liven up any discussion. Thus, one evening, that we were discussing a paper on Onion Growing that had been read at a meeting of the Camp Farmers' Union by a Mr. Hogan, Barney commented on the assertion of the lecturer that the skin of a vegetable is practically waterproof, in this fashion: "If, as Mr. Hogan says, the skin of a vegetable is waterproof, how the devil did all the water get into the potatoes that are served out to us in this Camp?"

In addition to being a humorist, however, Barney had a very short temper, and an awful command of explosive language. He used to be in charge of the distribution of parcels along with Messrs. Holt, Mooney, Bartley and Sinnott; and whilst the crowd of eager prisoners pushed and jostled each other in the distributing room and clambered round the sorters, Barney's language was what Bret Harte would describe as "frequent and painful and free." I never had the pleasure of meeting Barney outside the wires, and I don't know if he wears a beard in ordinary life, but he had one in Ballykinlar that suggested a certain Biblical character to a lad in my hut. My friend, Paddy Holmes, had evidently been the victim of Barney's wrath at a parcel distribution, for one night he remarked as we sat round our stove: "Wouldn't that Barney O'Driscoll mind you of Judas, although I never saw the man?"

The conversation took another turn, and about half-an-hour later we were discussing cinema pictures. Suddenly Paddy broke in on the discourse with the exclamation: "I knowed I saw him somewhere!"

"Saw who?" we inquired, in amazement at Paddy's sudden outburst.

"Saw Judas Iscariot," he responded. "I saw him in the pictures of the Passion Play at Mallow."

Another notable figure in the life of the Camp was Dick Davis, who was in charge both of the church and the bath-house. Dick was a most loveable character, very zealous and earnest, who had behind him a splendid record of service for Ireland. He was sentenced to death after "Easter Week" and endured the horrors of penal servitude for a time.

Like all men of intense sincerity he was liable to get very hot in argument, and the Camp idlers, of whom I was one of the many, used to enjoy hearing him engage in controversy with one of his protagonists. He had tremendous faith in the virtues of cold baths, Co-operation, and I think it was the South Dublin Union, of which he was a member; and all these objects of his love furnished fruitful themes for discussion.

We were supposed to get hot baths, but Dick was such a believer in cold ones that he was blamed for keeping the temperature of the hot ones he supplied as near to zero as possible. The satiric artists in our little community made great capital out of this fact, and all over the Camp you would see drawings of bathers with hatchets trying to break the ice on what was described by the artists as "Dick Davis's hot baths."

He was at his best as an advocate for Co-Operation and was always ready to break a sword in defence of that system. One of the pictures that I have stored away in that

portion of my brain in which I keep my mental images is that of Dick, with the chapel bell in his hand which he had taken out to ring for Benediction, engaged in animated discussion with little Daney McDevitt, the able and aggressive Belfast socialist—both talking at the rate of a hundred words a minute and each very excited—whilst the rest of us stood around and cheered impartially at every good shot that was landed from either side.

As for the South Dublin Union, its merits were so often recited for us at our Public Boards' Association meetings that, with that wicked human tendency to jealousy of superior virtue that is in us all, we used to rejoice secretly at the irreverent manner in which Barney O'Driscoll was wont to talk of the august body when he rose to controvert one of Dick's arguments.

The internal government of the Camp was entirely a military one. It had all the merits and some of the faults of military governments everywhere, but it did its work very well on the whole and enforced a discipline which, if stern, was really necessary for the well-being of the Camp and the advancement of the cause for which we all suffered. Like all governments, of course, it had its critics; and the civilian internees at times were inclined to chafe at the rigid discipline to which they were subjected.

"When a letter is stopped on you in this Camp," said a prisoner to me very indignantly on one occasion, "you don't know whether it was done on you by the English or by the Prussians." Thenceforth I used to distinguish between the enemy Commandant, and our own thus: One was the English Commandant and the other was the "Prussian."

In some respects our government showed itself lacking in vision, especially in the matter of propaganda, which was almost wholly neglected, its whole idea in that regard

seeming to be to prevent it being stated by any prisoner that conditions were even tolerable. As if the fact of three thousand men, untried and even uncharged, being taken away from their homes and avocations and kept in a barbed wire cage for months was not the real grievance, and as if our case was in any way weakened because we were not starved to death as well!

We were very lucky in our Commandants. Patrick Colgan held the office until the time of the Strike, about which I shall have something to say hereafter, and when he left the Camp Joe McGrath, T.D., assumed the office. Colgan was a very fine fellow, indeed—straightforward, brave, courteous and brainy. McGrath was not any abler, but he was a man of wider experience and riper judgment, and proved himself a great administrator in very difficult circumstances. What I liked especially about Joe McGrath was his moral courage. Once he made up his mind as to the propriety of any course of action he pursued it unflinchingly, whether it was popular or the reverse. He was never out for the applause of the crowd. In an Irish internment camp one might be tempted to indulge in cheap heroics in order to win the cheers of his fellow-prisoners, but McGrath never undertook a fight unless a principle was involved and unless he was satisfied that it was in the best interests of the men and the country. When firmness was really required nobody could be firmer; but if diplomacy appeared to him to be the most effective weapon in the particular circumstances he was always ready to use it. In short, he was a strong man in the real sense of the word, not the sham sort of strong man—and there are many such in Ireland—that acquires the reputation by reason simply of big talk and bad manners. "Civility costs you nothing," as the sergeant-major in the Cork Dentention Barracks used to say with truth. A man can be quite courteous without being

any less firm and determined ; and even when you are dealing with an open and avowed enemy you are in much stronger position if you adopt towards him a dignified attitude.

I shall always have great confidence in the sound sense of any Irish government of which Joe McGrath is a member.

I cannot close this account of prominent Camp Officials without paying tribute to Dr. Hayes, T.D., who was in charge of the hospital for us during the greater part of my internment. Hayes is a man of beautiful character—as kind as a mother, as simple as a child, and as humble as a saint. There is no need to refer to his courage and his ardent patriotism, for his "Easter Week" record speaks for itself. But the man is so unassuming, that one might spend his life with him without discovering, except by accident, that he had ever done or risked anything out of the common. It meant a great deal for the health and happiness of the Camp to have a man of his type in the hospital ; and whatever other grievances we may have against our old friend, Sir Hamar Greenwood, we must, at least, be thankful to him for that, when he rounded the rest of us up, he took care to arrest Dr. Hayes and lock him in along with us.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR LINE CAPTAINS.

THE most important executive officers of our government were the Line Captains. Each line constituted a Company and had a captain in charge of it. I belonged to Line or Company " C," which comprised ten huts in each of which there were supposed to be twenty-five men. Thus, our Company included about two hundred and fifty prisoners.

The Line Captain was responsible for the discipline of his line, and had to see that the huts were kept clean and that the hut leaders carried out the duties imposed on them and their hutsmen both by our own Commandant and by the military. The line letters went through the Line Captain to and from the Postmaster who received or handed them, as the case might be, to the proper military official. All complaints and applications also went through the Line Captain to the military officer in charge of the Line. Each day we were inspected by the British Line officer, and our Line Captain accompanied him on his round. He also accompanied both the British and our own Commandants when they made their periodic inspections.

We were not allowed British money in the Camp—for fear, I suppose, that we might get too friendly with " Tommie." Instead we were given " chits " for the cash that was taken from us—that is, printed slips with the values of various coins marked on them. These were negotiable in the Canteen and passed current inside the " cage " ; and on release they were exchangeable for money

of an equal face value. If cheques or postal orders were sent into the Camp, the military had them cashed, and "chits" to the amount were given to the prisoners entitled. These distributions of money took place at regular intervals at the Line Captain's hut; and he and the "khaki" Line Officer checked the figures together on these occasions. In the beginning a penny for each book of "chits" (worth 5s.) was deducted from our moneys to pay for the printing of the books; but after a long controversy between the English and what my comrade, John Bonner, called the "Prussian" Commandants this practice was abandoned, and we were paid in full.

The four Line Captains were Messrs. Nolan, Fitzgerald, O'Mahony and John Cooney. They all did their work very well; but I liked our own officer best. P. C. O'Mahony is a man of culture, with a wide knowledge of the world, and a great deal of natural ability. He is a fine Irish speaker and is widely read in both languages. He has a constructive mind; and having a keen realisation of the real and difficult work that lies before us in Ireland when we do achieve our freedom, he exerted himself in the Camp to secure that our enforced leisure should be availed of to make us more efficient both as soldiers and citizens. He combines very largely the qualities both of a good fighting man and a good negotiator, and it was, perhaps, due to his tact and diplomacy that no serious trouble of any kind ever developed in our Company. We lost him after a time, as he insisted on following his own hut down to No. 2 Camp, when it was removed thither; but he was replaced by a man no less popular than himself—namely, Joe Murtagh, from Dublin, a fine chess player and in every way a charming fellow with a good sense of humour.

I have only one grievance against Captain Murtagh, and that is this. In the early days of the Camp we were only

getting a limited number of newspapers, and it would sometimes be a whole day before you could get a peep at the *Freeman* or *Independent*. Owing to my grave and revered character and widening girth and advancing years, I had been getting off with all " fatigues " in my hut. One day Murtagh came along and said : " I want two men to volunteer for paper fatigue."

The name sounded attractive and I offered my services at once. " This will give me a fine chance of showing the lads that I am ready to do my bit as well as anybody else," I said to myself, " and this is the very job for me ! " I thought the duty would be to get the newspapers, when they came in, and then distribute them round the huts. Tell it not in Geth, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon ; but what was at the back of my head was the idea that I would get first read of the *Independent !*

When I reported at the place assigned, I found that " paper fatigue " consisted in going over the whole Camp to pick up pieces of paper, butts of cigarettes, and old match-boxes, etc. Jim Lalor had volunteered along with me for the duty, and we confessed to each other in our tribulation that we had been both under the same impression as to the nature of the duty expected from us. To complete our discomfiture, we were received with roars of laughter when, as sore from stooping as if we had been pulling flax, we returned to our hut ; and Jerry Mulvey finished us off by the exultant exclamation : " It was great to see the two cutest men in the hut done ! "

I determined never to volunteer for any other " fatigues " until I had learned the real character of the work.

Captain O'Mahony dwelt in Hut 11, which we used to call in our Line " the Headquarters." A lot of other very important functionaries were housed there, too—Hassett, the Chief of Staff ; Seumas Ward, the Adjutant ;

MacLoughlin also of the Commandant's Staff, and various police and other officers. Lukeman, of the Kilkenny Gas Works, a great talker, was the "Hut Leader."

Human nature is very much alike, both inside and outside barbed wire cages, and, as might have been expected, humble denizens like myself of other huts envied the exalted position of Hut 11 and its inhabitants. We made all sorts of unjust accusations. We said that they never passed on the newspapers until every man in their own hut had read them; and that in the distribution of the clothes, etc., that were handed out by the military, the Staff always looked after itself first. A lot of the Hut 11 men were from Dungarvan, where the Cumann na mBan girls must be great cooks and cake-makers; and it used to make our mouths water, as the saying is, to hear the tales that circulated along the line about the sumptuous feasts that were wont to take place at the "Headquarters." To play up to the jealousy of the underdogs I wrote the following doggerel, which was sung in fine style to the air of "Cockles and Mussels" by my fellow-hutsman, John Creed, and became very popular in our Company:—

I.

In sweet Ballykinlar,
If you are a "Shinner,"
And the Fates they are kindly—or even so, so,
In famed Hut Eleven,
You're almost in Heaven
With the Senior Line Captain, alive, alive, oh!

Chorus:

With the Senior Line Captain, alive, alive, oh!

II.

It's " P.C." we greet him,
That shows that we treat him
With kindly affection, I'd have you to know.
He's martial and zealous,
And makes " Kiltie " jealous,
When he comes on inspection, alive, alive, oh !

III.

In huts more plebeian,
Perhaps you'd be seein'
Things done in a manner unseemly and low ;
But at " the Headquarters,"
Where dwell " C.'s " true martyrs,
It's all style and finish—alive, alive, oh !

IV.

You don't go to the rooms
Where the commonplace coons
Get dinners of beans interspersed with pig's toe ;
But you dine *a la carte*
In a style that's quite smart,
Whilst you toast the bold Captain—alive, alive, oh !

V.

It's in that famous hut
That your money you get,
And the rate of exchange is exceedingly low.
And when the Staff's dressed
In pants of the best
A few pass to others—alive, alive, oh !

VI.

For the papers each day
You have nothing to pay;
For all the Line journals are there in a row.
And not till you're done,
Are they ever passed on,
To the other poor devils—alive, alive, oh!

VII.

In that hut there's a Yankee
And teachers quite swanky,
A town clerk and draper and hard-working Crowe.
There's a Staff Chief and Ad.
And sergeants—a squad—
Are there, thick as midges—alive, alive, oh!

VIII.

And Lukeman, that lights
The Cats' Town at nights—
It's he, the Hut Leader, which gives it a glow.
For though closed in—alas!
He's still full of gas,
And he gives it out freely—alive, alive, oh!

IX.

Then here's to Eleven,
That wee bit of Heaven,
That lightens the gloom of this "compound" of woe;
And when under arrest,
You should all do your best,
To live with Line Captains—alive, alive, oh!

CHAPTER XII.

A TRAINING CAMP.

THE nature of the " round up " that filled Ballykinlar was such as to demonstrate in a very striking manner the stupidity of the British military authorities in Ireland and the utter helplessness of their Intelligence Department. It would be idle to deny that they got a number of very good men in the course of their arrests ; but if their sole objective was, as they said, to break up the I.R.A., they had a lot of us in custody that were not worth the expense involved in our capture and maintenance and guarding.

A large number of the prisoners were unfit for military service of any sort owing to age and infirmity ; and quite a number of those interned had never been anything but politicians.

Some of the mistakes that had been made during the " round up " were ludicrous. Thus, take the case of the Belfast man, whom I shall call " John Graham " to conceal his identity. The military had been looking for " James Graham," who was an active Volunteer ; and one night a lorry stopped at the house of the good, loyal citizen, " John Graham," who has a job in the Belfast Tramway Service.

" There's the military ; " said his wife, " and I had better go down and open the door. For they won't shoot a woman."

" Shoot me ! " exclaimed her husband. " Shoot me, that fought for them all through the war ! I'll show them my Mons ribbon and my discharges, and that will settle them. They'll know I'm no ' Shinner.' "

Whereupon he attired himself in his tramway uniform and went down and opened the door. An officer and a number of soldiers rushed in and held him up.

"You're James Graham," said the officer.

"No, I'm not," was the answer. "I'm John Graham."

"Hello," cried the officer, turning his flashlight on the tramway buttons, "why, here you have the I.R.A. uniform actually on you!"

The officer had evidently dined that evening—not wisely but too well—and he lurched up against a barometer in the hall. He pulled himself together, and with the instinct of a man in such a condition to try and appear natural, he drawled: "That's a useful thing."

"Yes," replied Graham, "it tells the truth. It says 'Change,' and there's a change here to-night."

"None of your dry, Irish wit, Paddy," was the unsympathetic response. "Get into the lorry!"

So the Mons hero was forthwith lifted into the waiting motor, and bundled off unceremoniously to Holywood Barracks.

When, some weeks later, he was handed his Internment Order in Ballykinlar, it was made out in the name of "James Graham," showing that it was clearly the wrong man they had.

"That's not for me at all," he said to the Line Officer. "My name is not James Graham."

"And what is your name?" demanded the other.

"John Graham."

"All right."

Upon which the officer took the Order, scored out "James" and wrote "John" above it, although it was supposed to be a copy of an original document signed by Lord French.

Then he handed it back to the prisoner.

How the unfortunate Belfast man used to con that document! He would put down his bed in the middle of the day, and, throwing himself on it in tribulation of soul, he would read again and again the stern rebuke addressed to him by the gallant old gentleman whom he had once followed with such alacrity on the memorable retreat from Mons :—

"Whereas you are suspected of acting, having acted, or being about to act in a manner prejudicial to the restoration and maintenance of order in Ireland!"

"Speak not of grief till thou hast seen the tears of warlike men," says the poet; and hard, indeed, would be the heart that would not be riven with sympathy at poor Graham's wail of desolation :—

"Think of me lying here, and the other b—— ruffan drinking pints outside!"

Afterwards he was brought out before the Advisory Committee.

"We observe, Mr. Graham," said Judge Ross across the table, fumbling amongst a bundle of police reports that evidently related to the elusive James, "that you are a member of the Patrick Pearse Club and are a Captain."

"Sowl," was the rejoinder, "that's quick promotion!"

In addition to utterly grotesque cases of this sort, the military sent to Ballykinlar quite a number of men who could hardly have been described as Sinn Feiners at all There they were brought into contact with men of the most advanced national views, subjected to the influence of Sinn Fein propaganda in its most enticing form, plunged into a Sinn Fein atmosphere, disciplined, educated, drilled by Irish Republican Army officers, and generally made good Irishmen of by their internment.

The grand thing about all this was that it was done at the expense of the British Treasury; and the wasteful way

in which the Camp was run—though the wastefulness did not result in any direct benefit to us—was a great consolation to me during the period of my incarceration.

In short, the British taxpayer provided the I.R.A. with a training camp and fed and clothed our soldiers during their stay in it.

For five months we drilled and went through evolutions for which we would have got two years' imprisonment outside the wires. Then the military G.H.Q. wakened up and forbade company drill; but they could not prevent our officers' special classes nor the teaching of the various technical subjects that helped to make our men more efficient soldiers. The very discipline to which the military themselves subjected us was a valuable training in itself; and some of the stupid junior "khaki" officers, who were most rigid in having the Camp regulations complied with to the letter, would have been surprised, and probably disgusted, had they learned that they were doing the very thing that the prisoners' leaders were most anxious should be done.

The stories of high emprise and daring deeds and splendid courage that circulated round the hut stoves at night, between "Lock-up" and "Lights-out," were in themselves calculated to make soldiers of the young men who came from districts where as yet there had been no active fighting.

We heard most amazing narratives from the men from Cork and Tipperary and Clare; and amid the seriousness and grimness of it all you always found the touch of comedy. Thus the story of the police barracks captured by the ass; for the truth of which Mr. O'Grady of the Clare County Council vouched to me.

It was a wayside barracks and the donkey had been meandering along the road at night. Probably feeling itchy, as even donkeys sometimes do—although they are never

sent to jails or internment camps—the poor brute got up against the barracks door and began to rub himself.

We all know the conditions of nerves in which the bulk of the Irish police lived after the attacks on the country barracks began; and in this case the guard, possibly awakened from a sleep, assumed that the noise at the door meant an assault. He, therefore, aroused his comrades, and they, seizing their rifles, began to fire wildly out of the windows, and sent up signal lights to summon aid. The military rushed out on a lorry from the neighbouring town, and, when they got in sight of the barracks, the police were still firing from it. The relieving party thereupon assumed that the barracks had been captured, and that it was the Volunteers who were firing from it. They, therefore, opened fire on the building themselves; and between them and the police they demolished it.

Whatever men were, therefore, when they went into Ballykinlar Internment Camp, very few of them, I think, but have been transformed into Sinn Feiners by their stay there. And the grand thing about it was, I have said, that the British Treasury paid for it all. Those who control the old Empire's policy do such stupid things that one can only marvel at how they muddle through in spite of everything. And yet they do—only they are not going to do it in Ireland this time. They have never been up against a proposition like Sinn Fein.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDUCATIONAL WORK IN THE CAMP.

No doubt part of the object of the British Government in locking us in a cage was to demoralise us ; and the internment system is well designed for that purpose. It is admirably calculated to turn useful, energetic citizens into lazy, spiritless, good-for-nothing creatures, without initiative or sense of responsibility, and utterly selfish.

From this fate our men were saved, first through the divine influence of our religion, and secondly by the human agency of the educational and other useful work that was carried on in the Camp.

I have already spoken of our chaplain, Father McLister, and how he worked and spent himself, day in, day out, to provide us with facilities for advancing in the spiritual life. We shall not readily forget his thoughtfulness and kindness and abiding interest in us ; and when we come to the Great Accounting it may be well that, for the most of us, the period in our lives for which we have most to show and least to answer will be the months we spent under his pastorate.

The splendid educational work that was carried on in the Camp was due largely to the zeal and energy of Henry Dixon, of Dublin, backed wholeheartedly, as he was in his schemes, by the Commandant, Joe McGrath. Mr. Dixon saw very clearly the necessity of countering the enemy's design in our regard by using the period of leisure, which was given us for our demoralisation, as an opportunity for

our mental and physical improvement. These jottings are nothing if not candid ; and so I have no hesitation in saying that, had it not been for Mr. Dixon's zeal and persistency and vision, the time of a lot of men in Ballykinlar would have been for all practical purposes wasted. For the Camp Council showed no capacity to understand the value of educational work for the prisoners, and made no effort to provide facilities for their mental improvement. Thus, we had no reading room ; and it was utterly impossible to work properly in huts which were each used for all purposes by twenty-five men. I am convinced that, had sufficient pressure been brought to bear on the military, a room for reading and study would have been provided. I understand that there was one in No. 2 Camp. But though some of us brought the matter before members of the Council more than once they never seemed to advert to the importance of it.

Mr. Dixon's boundless energy, however, more than made up for the Council's lethargy, and, as I have said, the Prisoners' Commandant gave him every assistance in his power. The result was that in a short time we had Irish Classes for men of every province and every stage of knowledge, Shorthand and Book-keeping Classes, conducted by Professor Tracey, of Sligo ; Singing, Fiddle, and Piano Classes, and little circles for the study of French and Classics.

As regards the Irish Classes, it must be confessed that, though nothing could surpass the zeal of that splendid Gael, Sean O'Hea, and of Messrs. Dolan, Bannon and the other teachers, the classes were not as well or as regularly attended as one would have desired. It is an indisputable fact that there are plenty of good Irish Republicans who have not yet grasped the full scope and significance of Irish Nationalism. When we have secured our political freedom, the real work of freeing Ireland will only have begun. For we shall then

have to set ourselves to the task of freeing our hearts and souls and minds from alien influences. I met many young men in Ballykinlar who, undoubtedly, would have died for Ireland without a moment's hesitation, and yet who could not be induced to give a few hours every week to the study of their country's language and literature. I always felt that there was too much force in the clever taunt of my Unionist friend, H. W. Leech, solicitor, of Coleraine, who once said to me: "I would soon settle the Irish Question, if I were in power. I would give you your Republic on condition that everybody in Ireland would have to learn Irish within two years. You would find what a slump there would be in your Republican stock then."

I do not wish to convey the impression, of course, that this slackness in regard to Irish was universal amongst us. On the contrary, there were a very large number of very earnest and very self-sacrificing students. Nobody could have worked harder to acquire a knowledge of the national language than my fellow-hutsmen, Mick Dowling and Tom Nolan; and even men of more mature years, like Mr. Brett, of the Westmeath County Council, displayed an earnestness and an enthusiasm in the matter that must have been an inspiration to many of the young. But when all was said and done, there might have been more of that sort.

Mr. Dixon's zeal did not stop merely at providing classes for the study of special subjects. Indeed, his energy was rather terrifying to lazy people like myself, because you never knew into what fresh ameliorative field of effort he was going to land you. He was constantly appearing on the horizon, pencil and note-book in hand, and ready to take names for some new class. At one time so many fresh educational schemes were being launched that the wicked brains of Jerry Mulvey and myself conceived the idea of getting a list of names for a class for "Pelmanism." We

had a great little lecture prepared for the huts, in the course of which we were going to point out that all the successful men and women of the age, from Mary Pickford and Lloyd George to our distinguished fellow-prisoner, Paddy McCrann, of Lanesboro', owed their success in life to their study of "Pelmanism." But the "stunt" fell through because we could get nobody to father it. Jerry and I had such a bad reputation in the Camp that our appearance in connection with it would have damned it right off; and though we tried to get Seaghan McGrath of London, when he arrived amongst us, to carry through the idea, he did not rise to the occasion.

I have already said that the foundation of our Public Boards' Association was due to the suggestion of Mr. Dixon and Mr. O'Grady. It did not last as long as was hoped; but during its existence we had a fine paper on the duties of a Chairman from one of the brainiest men in the Camp, my witty and interesting companion of many walks inside those wires, where he and O'Dwyer of Omeath and Tipperary and myself traversed so many weary leagues together—Mr. Joe McKinley, of Dundalk. This provoked a long and lively discussion; and then we had another very useful and informative paper on the Amalgamation of Unions and the general reform of the whole Irish Poor Law System from Mr. Bartley, Clerk of the Oldcastle Union.

Another of Mr. Dixon's ideas, the formation of a Camp Farmers' Union, worked out better still. Mr. P. J. Hogan, solicitor, delivered a very instructive lecture at one of its meetings on the dead meat trade in its relations to Ireland. At another meeting my brother, John, read a paper on Co-operation in Farming; and Mr. Hogan, from Dublin, delivered a very instructive address on Horticulture.

These lectures were followed by interesting and sometimes very lively discussions. Eamonn Cooney, of Belfast, a

disciple of Daney McDevitt's, sought to use the occasion of these debates as an opportunity to preach Socialism; and those ill-informed outsiders in England and elsewhere, who regard Sinn Fein as another name for Bolshevism, would have their eyes opened had they been there to see how unpopular friend Cooney's doctrines were inside that cage. Of course there is no place in the world where Socialism would be likely to make such little headway as in agricultural Catholic Ireland, out of which the bulk of our prisoners came.

In dealing with Mr. Dixon's work for the well-being of the Camp it should also be stated that, beside providing educational facilities for the prisoners, he was very good in seeking to secure for us means of amusement. He procured medals for football competitions, got in sets of chessmen, and arranged chess and draught competitions that enabled us to pass with interest what would otherwise have been many a weary hour. In addition, he arranged for a Camp Library, which he managed with the assistance of Mr. Dillon, of Hut 18.

Thus did the "Murder Gang," as Sir Hamar Greenwood loved to call us, pass their leisure hours within the cage where he had locked us for our country's good.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SHOOTINGS.

We were amongst the last batch of prisoners to arrive at No. 1. Camp ; and a few days after our coming No. 2 Camp was opened and began to fill up rapidly. Portion of this camp adjoined ours and was only separated from us by a barbed wire fence. Along this fence on our side was a macadamised road, which we used as a promenade. As was naturally to be expected, we were in the habit of talking through the fence to our acquaintances on the other side, and at first no objection was made to this practice. Sometimes, however, groups would gather on each side, and in their eagerness to get talking with each other prisoners would occasionally get very close to the wires. We were forbidden to approach within arm's reach of the fence ; and when they considered that we were too near, the sentries would order us back.

In the beginning the thing was done in a good-natured sort of way ; but then we noticed that the sentries were getting rather aggressive. We believed that they were acting under the inspiration of some of their junior officers, as somebody overheard one of these say to a sentry, who complained to him that the prisoners were coming too close : " You have your rifle and you know what it is for ! "

Finally, two or three shots were fired by sentries on different occasions ; and one of these, at least, was fired at a time when there was nobody nearer the wires than the middle of the road. Our Commandant, Patrick Colgan, complained

to the British Commandant of the action of the sentries; but the latter pooh-poohed the idea that the shots were fired to hit. Mr. Colgan said that, if it was not permitted to the prisoners to speak into the other camp, or even to use the road, Colonel Little had only to say so, and an order would forthwith be issued by the prisoners' Commandant to that effect. But the Colonel said that he did not wish any such thing, that he did not expect impossibilities, and that the prisoners were quite at liberty to use the road for any purpose so long as they did not approach any nearer than within *three feet* of the wires.

On Sunday evening, the 16th January, we learned that a prisoner was going to be executed in Cork Gaol the following morning. We had a special Rosary for him that evening in the Church and special prayers for him at Mass the following morning. Amongst those who offered up their prayers for him on that morning were Patrick Sloan and Joseph Tormey; but, all unknown to themselves, it was at their own Requiem they were assisting. For the prisoner in Cork was reprieved, and before the sun had set they themselves had fallen to a British bullet.

Just about mid-day on that day (Monday) I was in my hut when I heard a shot ring out. I paid no attention to it at first, for shots from sentries were beginning to get common, as I have explained. Then, I saw somebody running, and the news came along the line that two men were killed. When I got up beside Hut 11 I found that practically the whole camp had gathered and that the men were on their knees saying the Rosary. It was a moment of terrible excitement and deep emotion; and the sight of our two comrades lying in their blood was something calculated to sweep off their feet the calmest of men. I never heard that during the great European war was the allegation made in respect of Germans, Turks, Bulgars,

Frenchmen, Englishmen, or anybody else that they had shot, out of hand, unarmed and defenceless prisoners behind barbed wire ; and everybody was so stirred by the brutality of the affair that anything might have happened that day.

The situation was saved by the careful handling of Commandant Colgan, and possibly a greater tragedy averted. With a fine instinct for leadership which he showed, he brought us through the first critical minutes, that succeeded the tragedy, with dignity and calmness. Father McLister, who was fortunately at hand when the shot was fired and who had rushed immediately to the assistance of the dying men, gave out the Rosary when the last of them had expired, and then the two corpses were carried on a stretcher to the temporary camp morgue. It was a sad sight to see those who a few minutes before had been so full of life, with all the bloom and glory of their radiant youth shining from them, now lying stiff and stark ; and our hearts were sore for their relatives, knowing what anguish would be theirs when the news would reach them. Especially did we feel sorry for Patrick Sloan's young bride, for he had only been married a week before his arrest.

But tragedies of the sort were then the commonplaces of Irish life. Our Commandant and Council promptly took the steps that the occasion required. They demanded an inquest and prepared telegrams for despatch to the relatives of the deceased, to one or two people in Dublin, and to Mr. T. M. Healy, whom it was intended to retain to represent the next-of-kin at the inquest. Our fellow-prisoner, Mr. P. J. Hogan, was nominated solicitor to act for the next-of-kin and the prisoners.

It was clear, however, that the military were going to make a most determined effort to hush up the whole awful business. A report, obviously inspired, appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph* to the effect that the men had been shot

because they had got too near the wires—the inference being that they had been trying to escape. This went the round of the other papers and created an entirely false impression outside.

Furthermore, our demand for an inquest was refused although the district was not a "Martial Law area" and the holding of inquests had not yet so far as I was aware been prohibited anywhere within the Six North-Eastern Counties. Practically all the telegrams that we tried to despatch were held up, although the British Commandant had promised that they would be sent, and Mr. Hogan was refused permission to communicate with Mr. Tim Healy or any other Counsel. There we were, then, held in the grip of a rigid censorship; and it was absolutely impossible for us to make clear to the public what had really happened.

All that the Camp authorities proposed to do was to hold a military inquiry. But as this was not open to the Press, and as Mr. Hogan's application to communicate with and instruct Counsel in the matter was not acceded to, he very properly refused to have anything to do with such a farcical proceeding.

Of course the shooting could not be justified in any way; and the military knew that. I did not see the men actually fall; but I saw the pools of blood where they had been lying, and it was clear from the position of these and from the statements of other prisoners that they had not been near the wires when they were shot. One of them was standing at the back of Hut 11 well over on the grass on the camp side of the road. The other was either on the grass or at the edge of it; and the breadth of a fairly wide road separated him from the fence. Dr. Higgins told me that when the shot rang out he and Major Kyle, of the R.A.M.C., were in the Hospital. On hearing the report the Major looked out of the window at which they were

standing and which commanded a view of the road and remarked : " Well, there's nobody on the road, at any rate."

Even had the two deceased men been at the wires there would have been no justification for shooting them. For obviously the only cause that might justify the shooting of an unarmed prisoner would be an attempt to escape ; and this element could in no circumstances enter into this case. For even by crossing the wires at the place in question the prisoners would in no way be facilitating their escape, as they would only be getting into another " cage " equally strongly guarded as the one they had left.

As a matter of fact the plea of being too near the wires was abandoned once it had served the purpose of creating a false impression in the beginning ; and in the official report issued by Dublin Castle and published in the Irish daily papers of the 9th February, 1921, there is not a hint of it. This official report shows so clearly the unjustifiable nature of the shooting, and is so illuminative of the mentality of the British militarists and of their methods in Ireland that I quote it in full, so that they may be condemned out of their own mouths. It is as follows :—

" A court of inquiry, in lieu of an inquest prohibited by Regulation 81, D.O.R.R., assembled at Ballykinlar Camp on the bodies of Patrick Sloan and Joe Tormey, who were killed on January 17th, 1921.

" Several military witnesses deposed to the fact that a number of men in two adjoining cages persisted in communicating with each other, despite the repeated warnings of a sentry.

" They eventually dispersed, only to collect after short intervals and to continue to disobey the orders given by the sentry, who considered himself forced to

fire one round in the execution of his duty in order to ensure their dispersal.

"Medical evidence showed that the bullet hit Tormey on the right side of the head, and passing through hit Sloan in the neck.

"The Court found Joe Tormey and Patrick Sloan died from shock and hæmorrhage caused by gunshot wounds inflicted by a sentry in the execution of his duty, and was a case of justifiable homicide.

"Every facility was extended to any of the internees who desired to give evidence before the Court, but none availed themselves of the opportunity."

From this it appears that the military case was that the men were shot—not for attempting to escape or for even approaching the wires, for these pleas could not be sustained—but *for talking with comrades in the other camp.* Now, if there was a technical camp rule against this, it had fallen into disuse, and there was the express statement of the British Commandant to ours that he did not object to conversation between the camps, so long as the prisoners did not get too close to the wires. But even assuming the full force of the rule, the violation of it would only be the breach of a camp regulation, and the maximum penalty for this according to these same regulations was fourteen days in the cells. Shooting an unarmed prisoner out of hand for the breach of a rule for which a man could only be awarded fourteen days' imprisonment—and this after a fair trial—was, therefore, in the view of a court of British officers a case of "*justifiable homicide.*" Nay, this was also the view of the British Government, for the *Freeman* of February 17th, 1921, contained the following instructive item :—

" In the House of Commons last evening Mr. McVeagh asked whether any action had been taken in the case of the soldier who shot two interned prisoners at Ballykinlar Camp.

" Sir H. Greenwood : A Military Court of Inquiry, held in lieu of an inquest, found *that no blame attached to the soldier who fired in the execution of his duty.* No action of a disciplinary character is, therefore, called for, and *none has been taken.*"

All of which lends force to Tolstoy's dictum, that the English are the most barbarous of all peoples calling themselves civilised !

CHAPTER XV.

THE STRIKE.

After the shootings and the controversy about the inquest, relations became very strained between our Staff and the military. Colgan and Hogan held on to the British Commandant like leeches with their claim for a full and public investigation of the circumstances under which our two comrades were done to death ; and their demand was pressed with such skill and pertinacity that the Camp authorities were obviously becoming worried as to how they were going to resist it.

Eventually, they seem to have decided on a counter-attack. Hogan was arrested one day on the charge of having British currency in his pocket ; and though he was only detained a few hours in the cells, and his arrest may not have been made as part of a deliberate policy, still it proved to be an indication of what was to follow.

Shortly after the opening of the Camp Dr. Higgins had, as the result of an arrangement between the prisoners' officers and the military, taken charge of the Hospital for us. Some differences had arisen between him and the R.A.M.C. staff ; and on the very morning after the shooting he was directed by the British Commandant to leave the Hospital. Apart from the merits of the dispute between Higgins and the R.A.M.C., about which I know nothing, it seemed a natural thing for the military to try and get him out of the Hospital, if their policy of hushing up the shooting was going to be completely successful. He had rushed to the

assistance of the men when they were shot, and had taken part in the post-mortem examination of their remains. Therefore, he was the most essential witness that could be called in regard to the tragedy ; and if he remained on as the Doctor in charge of the Hospital the Camp authorities could not very well get over, at least, bringing him before the Military Court of Inquiry, if it was not going to be an utterly farcical investigation. Of course, I am not saying that Dr. Higgins would have given evidence before a court of inquiry so constituted and conducted. But it was the duty of the Camp authorities to bring him before it, at least, if it was going to be taken seriously by anybody.

About eight or ten days after Dr. Higgins's leaving the Hospital, a prisoner from No. 2 Camp, Dr. Leonard, was brought over and ordered by Colonel Little to take charge of the Hospital. He obeyed the order ; and on the morning after his arrival his presence in the Hospital was reported by some of the prisoners to our Council. This was an issue on which a fight would clearly have to be put up as, of course, the military had no more right to order an untried prisoner to do medical work than they would have had to take me out and ask me to prepare, free of charge, a conveyance of a piece of property they had bought. Commandant Colgan, therefore, ordered Dr. Leonard to cease work, and he wrote a letter to Colonel Little in which he said that as Dr. Leonard had not been appointed by the prisoners' Commandant he could not be permitted to remain in charge of the Hospital. That letter went out on a Monday Evening.

On the same evening Hut 12 had been ordered to pack up and be ready to move on the following morning. Thereon hangs another tale. Some weeks before this the military had intended to take out of this hut a prisoner who was wanted, I think, in connection with a capital

charge. It may seem incredible to anyone who has had no experience of army stupidity that it should be possible to lock inside a barbed wire cage a prisoner, and then lose him there. But that is exactly what happened in this case. In some mysterious way the "wanted" man disappeared inside the Camp, although the total number of prisoners remained the same; and the military took out for trial a different man against whom they could make no charge of any kind.

When it was announced that Hut 12 was under marching orders, it was assumed that all the men in it were going to be brought up to Dublin for identification, in the hope of finding amongst them the lost man, although he was not in the hut at this time at all. This assumption proved to be incorrect, because it was some weeks later before they really discovered in Mountjoy that the prisoner who had been brought up from Ballykinlar—an exceedingly plucky lad named Slowey, who might easily have been hanged by mistake—was not the man intended; and, as a matter of fact, as it afterwards transpired, it was only proposed to remove the occupants of Hut 12 down to No. 2 Camp, as the hut was going to be used as a dispensary.

However, we all thought that Hut 12 was in for a bad time, and at Mass that morning we offered up a special joint prayer for a "safe journey for Hut 12."

When we came out of the church the sensational news passed round amongst us that our Commandant had been arrested during the night. The counter-attack had opened.

The Council met hurriedly after breakfast. It was learned that Colgan had been arrested on account of his action in ordering Dr. Leouard to cease work and by reason of what the enemy regarded as his "impertinent" letter to the British O.C. The Council very properly decided that the occasion was one for an effective protest, and it agreed that a fight should be put up.

The intention of the military to remove Hut 12 seemed to offer a favourable point on which to open the struggle.

"They have arrested our Commandant," said the leader of the War Party on the Council, "and we are all agreed that a protest should be made. Here's an opportunity to hand. Let us prevent them removing Hut 12."

His idea was adopted, and an order was issued that Hut 12 should go "on the run."

Then we witnessed an amusing sight. You would see a fellow peeping out of the door of Hut 12 to see if any sentries were watching; and if there were none he would dash out of the hut with his bag in his hand and race across the "compound" to another hut. A few minutes later you would see his bed-boards and blankets being taken out of one of the windows at the side of the hut and hurriedly removed out of sight. It seemed the very acme of comedy to see twenty-five men go "on the run" inside about ten acres of a "cage." But before the week had closed there was even more ridiculous developments.

At 11 o'clock each day we had "Inspection." On these occasions the British Line Officer used to be accompanied by a sergeant and escort of two men. As they came to the door of each hut the sergeant would shout in strident tones, "Stand to your cots." And we stood beside our beds whilst we were being inspected.

On this memorable morning the Line Officer and his escort of bayonets came to the door of Hut 12.

"Stand to your cots!" shouted the sergeant.

"But," as he told the tale afterwards in a Cockney accent, adorned with soldier expletives and adjectives that my chaste page will not receive, "when I looked round the blooming show, there was neither cots nor men. The blighters had disappeared."

It was great fun to watch the amazed crestfallen face of

the Officer as he came out of the hut. Where, oh where, had Hut 12 gone?

In order to cover the tracks of the twenty-five men "on the run" our Council had to take another step that was a corollary to the first one.

They issued an order that all prisoners were to refuse to answer their names either at roll call or otherwise. The military had only got to know a few of the more prominent figures in the Camp by sight, and if there was a general refusal to answer names it would be impossible for them to discover the whereabouts of the missing men. They might find twenty-six men in a particular hut, but if everybody refused to give his own name or that of anyone else it would be impossible for the British Officer to say which man did not really belong to the hut.

At the same time all our Executive Officers—Line Captains and the rest—resigned their positions so far as their relations with the military and their co-operation with them in the running of the Camp was concerned.

So the issue was fairly knit. We said: "Until our Commandant is restored to us, we refuse to allow you to remove Hut 12, and our officers will not co-operate with you in running the Camp. Furthermore, no prisoner will answer his name for any purpose."

It was a daring attitude to take up, considering that there we were, unarmed and utterly defenceless, inside a cage surrounded with bayonets and machine guns, and at a time, too, when it had been clearly demonstrated by the burning of Cork and the numerous murders by the armed forces of the King of England all over Ireland that the British Government might commit in Ireland any villainy it pleased without being hampered by any really effective protest from world opinion. But our leaders had led us into a fight, and we made up our minds to stand by them, come what may.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIGHT AND THE PEACE.

It was clear from the start of our struggle that the military were not very keen on a fight. They must have known that they were fighting on an issue that put them in the wrong, as they could not claim to conscript the services of a professional man. Furthermore, they were in this difficulty. Any sort of trouble in the Camp would inevitably attract outside attention to it and be connected in the public mind with the recent shootings, the memory of which the Camp authorities were so anxious to efface. All day on Tuesday, therefore, all sorts of unofficial feelers and negotiations went on; and Captain Newton, the Chief Censor, who was an exceedingly able man and a very skilful diplomatist, was active in trying to effect a settlement. But our officials stood firm. We must get back our Commandant, or the fight would go on.

Evening came, and found us still at war. The military did not know how far we were going to go, and when the time for "Lock-up" arrived they made the most elaborate preparations to deal with what they termed "the Mutiny." Of course, our officers were too good soldiers to allow us, unarmed and defenceless men, to do anything that would give the enemy an excuse for shooting us. We were to go to our huts at the proper time, and to obey every order except the one to answer our names. But the British Commandant and his Staff did not know to what length our resistance was likely to proceed; and we were greatly

amused to see the careful military arrangements that were made to round us up and get us into our huts when the time for retirement came. It was a fine piece of comedy to see the soldiers in "extended order" coming down along our line of huts and watching to see where our attack would come from. All the weapons that we had were our knives and forks; and we were not such simpletons as to try their effectiveness against rifles and bayonets and machine guns.

When the task of locking us up securely had been completed, the Line Officers, heavily escorted, made their rounds of the huts. They were evidently instructed not to force the fight. For in most of the huts they did not call the roll at all. They simply counted the men to see that they had the full number; and then they read us a proclamation addressed to us by the Military O.C.

It was a weak document, couched in the style of the famous "Oh, People of Bagdad" proclamation of the Great War. The writer wished us to understand that he had only been thinking and planning for our comfort. Finding that the mass of us were disposed to be well conducted he had secured for us many privileges—the right to receive unlimited letters and parcels, extension of the "Lock-up" time, a canteen, etc. In pursuance of his desire for our welfare he had brought over a doctor of our own from the other camp to look after our health. But this doctor, though quite willing to work for us, had been prevented from doing so by one Patrick Colgan. "The said Patrick Colgan" had "on different other occasions" obstructed the military in their management of the Camp, and the O.C. had been reluctantly compelled to place him under arrest. Some evil disposed persons had taken advantage of the occasion to foment a mutiny and in consequence, though he regretted having to punish the innocent with the guilty, the O.C. had to withdraw all the prisoners' privileges. The Canteen had, therefore, been

closed, and letters and parcels would be cut off. Furthermore, the *offices of Commandant and Vice-Commandant were abolished for all time.* But, of course, once we returned to a better frame of mind and threw over " the said Patrick Colgan " and the other evil disposed persons, who had constituted themselves our leaders, all our other privileges would be restored to us.

The only effect the proclamation had on us was to give us a good laugh when the officer had retired and locked us in. It was about as silly an attempt to influence public opinion as the messages they used to drop from aeroplanes, with a view to inducing the rank and file of the I.R.A. to turn on their leaders. When will English statesmen and publicists learn that the yearning for nationhood is an instinct in the Irish heart that neither argument nor propaganda can eradicate ?

If we had men " on the run " in the Camp during the day, we had further replica of outside conditions during the night. For there were a whole series of " raids." Several huts were entered during the night by armed soldiers, and men who were supposed to be leaders of the " mutiny " were arrested and taken out to the cells. Some of the officers conducted themselves very badly during these raids. They were not sure of the men whom they were arresting, and the refusal of everybody to answer questions exasperated them very much. In some cases they arrested the wrong men, and generally made a mess of things.

The following morning very elaborate searches were made in a number of the huts, and we were kept in till long after the usual time.

When our Line Officer got our length he was accompanied by the lieutenant whom I have already referred to by his camp name of " Judas." The latter had evidently been raiding during the night, and from want of sleep and

indignation at the calm way in which the prisoners were refusing to answer names in spite of threats and assaults, he was in a vile temper. He pulled down a few books from our shelves and threw them on the floor. Then he made a drive for John Creed's bag, opened it and scattered its contents on the floor, for all the world like the way my eighteen months' old baby was wont to throw her doll from her if you sought to divert her attention by it when she was crying for something she could not get. Later on in the morning I saw the shocking condition in which Hut 2 had been left by "Judas" and his friends. It was a great object-lesson to me of the present condition of the British Army when it has to depend on officers of that type.

Through Wednesday and Thursday the struggle went on. Each night there would be some further arrests designed, no doubt, with a view to getting the leaders and breaking the *morale* of the men. On the whole, however, the military were not forcing the fight very much, and instead of calling the roll, they contented themselves with counting us at night and in the morning.

All the time peace feelers were being tried. The Line Captains were brought out on several occasions for consultation, and terms of settlement were offered and discussed. Inside the wires opinion was divided on the question of an arrangement. Soon the whole Camp had divided itself into two parties; and we abused each other with all that easy facility that comes so naturally to Irish parties always. One body dubbed its opponents the "Suicide Party," whilst the latter retorted by calling the others, "The Peace-at-any-Price Men." In spite of differences of opinion, however, we were all determined to carry out the orders of our Council, no matter how we regarded them. But, of course, each party tried to influence the Council as much as possible, and "lobbying" went on as

vigorously as at Westminster or Washington or at the Clogheen Board of Guardians where my good friend, Tom Gorman, sits.

On Friday the Council determined to force the fight. So an order was issued that the locks were to be taken off the doors quietly that day.

When the officers came to lock us up in the evening they found they could not do so ; and they were obviously astounded at this development. Hastily they consulted together, and then they retired outside the wires to report.

For an hour or so we waited in our huts for developments. Then we saw a large force of soldiers, fully armed and accoutred, marching towards the entrance to the cage. It was pay night with them and many of them were under the influence of drink. They sang and shouted in a threatening manner as they came along, and it looked as if we were in for trouble.

We heard afterwards that the plan was to drive us at the point of the bayonet into the dining halls and to keep us there for the night. But, of course, we did not know what they were up to, and I confess that I felt far from comfortable at the thought of having these armed men, under the influence of drink, turned loose amongst a camp full of defenceless prisoners towards whom they had been taught to cherish the most bitter feelings of animosity and ill-will.

I am still convinced that we were in grave peril and that anything might have happened had either the soldiers or even some of the prisoners got out of hand. But the Sacred Heart and the Mother of God and, on the human side, the good sense of Joe McGrath, saved us that night.

Joe was a prisoner in the cells and saw the preparations of the soldiers, and realised how easily a tragedy might result. Accordingly he got in touch with Colonel Little

or Captain Newton and fixed up the basis for a Conference on the following day. The soldiers were, therefore, turned back at the gate of the "cage"; and Colonel Little himself went round every hut in the compound to warn us that we were in danger of being shot if any of us took advantage of the unlocked doors to come out during the night. He made a very good impression by the way he did this, and helped the creation of a "peace atmosphere." On the following day we had a further instalment of comedy. For Joe McGrath and the other prisoners were "released" out of the cells and sent in to the "cage" "on parole" to return to the gate at five in the evening.

We had thus during the week men "on the run," "raids," and releases "on parole"—all inside an enclosure of about ten acres!

Before the "parole" had expired peace terms had been definitely arranged. Colgan was to go to the other camp on the expiration of his sentence; but the offices of Commandant and Vice-Commandant, which had been abolished with such a flourish, *were restored*, and we got back our privileges with a promise that some of them would be extended. We also secured other concessions and generally strengthened our position. Joe McGrath was elected our new Commandant and T. F. Fitzpatrick the Vice.

One joke of the strike deserves commemoration. A prisoner got ill on one of those days, and presented himself at hospital. According to the usual routine the R.A.M.C. Captain asked him his name, his number, his hut, and company, but faithful to the Council's orders he refused to answer any of these questions. The Captain, however, saw that the man was very ill, so he said to the orderly: "Take this man into the ward and enter him up in the book as an *Unknown Warrior*!"

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING IN OUR TIME.

After the Strike there were no great causes for excitement in the Camp, and day followed day and week followed week with painful monotony. I played chess, and tramped my weary rounds of the "compound," and tried to see all the fun that was going, and circulated all the sensational stories I could pick up, including all the "wonderful" wireless messages my imaginative friend Pat Dempsey use to receive, and scrubbed my clothes when washing day, with all its horrors, arrived, and read, and talked, and idled. But it was all a dreary business, and it was hard to keep oneself from depression at times.

For the mere physical discomforts of camp life I cared nothing, and I had no sympathy with those who were constantly complaining about the food and the bed-boards and such things. Personally I left the place greatly improved in health. The official ration was not, in my opinion, sufficient in itself to keep a man quite fit ; but the general conditions in our camp were such that soldiers, at least, could not complain of them very much, though they were unduly hard for the elderly men and for some of the civilian internees, many of whom were in delicate health.

But apart from physical discomfort internment involved terrible mental suffering for a lot of the prisoners. Most of us had dependants, and the uncertainty as to the duration of our detention and anxiety about the fate of our families, if our resources should become exhausted, must have kept

many a man awake at night as he lay on his hard bed and listened to the sentries outside the wires shouting from one to another in wearisome monotone their cry of "All's well."

Then there were the loneliness and the heart-hunger and the yearning for one's home and for the grasp of friendly hand and the sound of a loved one's voice. I recall how easily one was affected by some simple reference ro home and dear ones. One of my sisters wrote me once and told me how my little boy had awakened from his sleep wildly excited one morning with the cry: "Oh, auntie, I dreamt my father was home!" And I shed tears over that letter, because it revealed to me so vividly the aching loneliness of those to whom my presence was necessary to make that sacred thing called "Home." I was suffering very little compared with some men in the Camp; and our sufferings, on the whole, were nothing compared with those of the men and women who were enduring the horrors of penal servitude and long terms of imprisonment; whilst even they were getting off more easily than many who were being tortured outside, and who saw their houses burned to the ground and their sons shot like dogs almost before their eyes. What an arithmetician he would be who could tot up the sum of all the sufferings that the people of Ireland have had to endure at the hands of the British Government even in the short term since Sir Hamar Greenwood assumed office. But it is recorded somewhere, and atonement must always be made for sin!

We did our best to vary the monotony of Camp life with games and concerts and every other form of recreation that was open to us. We had a very fine concert for the Emmet Anniversary. There were one or two very good musicians amongst the prisoners and some fine voices; and these raised both this concert and the one we had on St. Patrick's Night to a very high rank, indeed.

St. Patrick's Day was celebrated with all proper solemnity. In the morning we had a great parade. We were formed up in companies and reviewed by our Commandant. Then we marched round the Camp in columns of four. It was fine to hear the tramp of our eight hundred men as we swept along. For me it was at once exhilarant and sad. Exhilarant, because it was good to feel myself still young enough to march with firm step and head erect ; sad because I felt, with strange poignancy, that my youth would be " dismissed " with myself when we had got back to the parade ground and saluted the flag. For I believed that I would soon be returning to a peaceful Ireland in which, as a hum-drum country attorney, I would draft my conveyances and draw my bills of costs and slip quietly down the years into the shadows.

That would be the last time I would step to time as, with soldier mien and proud bearing, we " moved to the right in columns of four."

One has to have reached forty, as I have now done, to appreciate what a glorious privilege is Youth.

I may remark that one of the minor joys of our St. Patrick's Day Parade was the reflection that Ballykinlar was about the only place in Ireland, at that time of intensive coercion, where such a display could have taken place in peace. We might each have got two years' imprisonment outside the wires for what we did that day with impunity inside them.

On Easter Sunday we produced two plays—a touching little curtain-raiser entitled " The Four Provinces," which was played with superb skill by George Nesbitt and Tom Meldon and the rest of their little company, and my own comedy, " The Pope in Killybuck." It is an interesting illustration of the amount of humour and humanity that lurks beneath even the bitterest of our controversies in the

North-East Corner, that "Killybuck" has been played twice in Ballykinlar Camp—once during the war for Carson's Ulster Division, and then for the Irish Republican Prisoners on that Easter night; and on each occasion it was enthusiastically received. The insight into Ulster life that it reveals seemed of great interest to our fellow-prisoners from the South, and some of the comments were amusing to me as showing how little the real Ulster is known on the other side of the Boyne. Thus, one Munster man, in discussing the final bar parlour scene, could not believe that in real life Orangemen and Nationalists would drink and make merry together under any circumstances. Whereas, of course, in rural Ulster the best and kindliest neighbours one often has are the people of the opposing party. When I was in Ballykinlar none of my clients showed more consideration for me or exhibited more patience about their business affairs in my office than my Protestant Unionist ones, and some of the most touching evidences of good-will I received were from Orangemen. During my internment I think only one important client took his papers out of my office, and he was a man who in our student days together was quite a "fire-eater" and, in fact, was, I believe, the man who made me a regular reader of Arthur Griffith's paper!

If Belfast, with its wicked Press and its hate-breathing pulpits and its pagan philosophy, could be lifted some night by the same witch, that took the Isle of Man out of Lough Neagh, and dropped by her at the mouth of the Clyde, there would be soon nothing but peace and good-will and fine fellowship all over rural Ulster.

The caste for "Killybuck" was filled from my Ulster friends, Frank Doris, P. MacGartan, Tom Larkin, John Bonner, E. Cooney, Hugh Bradley, Georgie Goodman and F. Kearney, with Jim Lalor, from Kilkenny, as the auctioneer. They all played their parts very skilfully.

Henry Dixon acted as stage manager and threw himself into the work with his usual zeal and thoroughness.

Thus we tried to get in our time as best we could ; but though there were very few complaints, everybody felt the irksomeness and monotony of it all very much, and every whisper that might suggest an early release was repeated and exaggerated till it lost all resemblance to its original self. But there was no thought of surrender amongst the prisoners. The mass of them refused to purchase their freedom by the smallest act that might be interpreted by anybody as a giving away of a principle. They knew that the honour of the nation was in the keeping of even the humblest prisoner in the camp ; and they also felt instinctively that victory was at hand.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STRATEGY.

Sometimes the monotony of Camp life was broken by some —usually stupid—performance on the part of the military.

Thus, one night we had read for us a special routine order directing us to betake ourselves to our huts when we heard the big horn in one of the sentry boxes blown. This happened the following day; and we all made for our respective huts, wondering what was afoot.

We assumed that there was going to be an elaborate search for documents or such contraband as money, penknives or scissors, and we made our preparations accordingly. I took the trouble of wrapping in brown paper a pound note, which I had, in order that I might bury it in a heap of sand.

But I might not have bothered myself, for no search was intended. Instead of that we were taken out, hut after hut, and escorted by strange paths to the football field. When it came to the turn of our hut, we were marched in single file through a long line of soldiers to the Quartermaster's stores. Here we were halted, in succession in batches of eight, opposite one of the windows of the stores. All sorts of officers, some of them with red tabs on their head gear or uniform, were buzzing about, and Colonel Hely-Hutchinson himself was standing facing us where we had been halted. There, too, I think, was an old friend, the Adjutant, whom we used to nickname " Got me ? " as that was a favourite phrase of his to make an impressive ending to any admonition that he found necessary to address to us.

I was the first man of our batch of eight, and as we faced

him, the Colonel asked me : " Have you got your Internment Order ? " I said I had.

A similar question was put to each of the others, and in the case of those who replied in the negative, their names were taken down in a note-book. Then we were told to move on " at the double " ; and we trotted in single file through lines of soldiers that stretched into the football field. Here we were all herded together in a corner of the field for about two hours until the whole Camp had been subjected to the same process which we had gone through.

Whilst we waited in the field we made all sorts of conjectures as to what could be the meaning of the manœuvre. It seemed absurd that they should adopt this elaborate procedure in order to find out the number of men who had been served with Internment Orders. Surely, they must have some records in their books to show who had been interned and who not, we said ; and at any rate would it not be much simpler to instruct the Line Officers to find out the required information by inquiry in the huts at Roll Call or Inspection. Clearly, there was something else behind the business ; although Henry Dixon argued that the military did such queerly stupid things that it was quite possible that the performance had really for its object what purported to be it.

When we were released out of the field, however, we saw at once what they had been doing, for two spy holes had been bored in the whitened window, opposite which we had been halted in small parties ; and clearly the reason for our being kept standing facing it for a few minutes was to enable some person or persons inside to inspect each prisoner carefully without the danger of themselves being seen.

Then we knew that they were after the lost man of whom I have spoken in the chapter dealing with the origin of the

strike; and we discovered before the evening was over that the "spotters" had been two women who had been brought into and out of the Camp in a covered Red Cross lorry. Evidently the whole military staff had cogitated long and deeply as to how they were going to have us inspected for identification purposes without our suspecting what was being done; and the elaborate performance through which we had been put was intended to put us off the scent. Poor innocent creatures that we were, we would think that we had only been brought out in this way in order that the officers might learn how many men had still to get their Internment Orders!

The missing man was not found, and to show the military what a complete failure had been their plan to keep us from guessing what they wanted, some wag that evening chalked in big letters on the window beside the peep-holes: "If you play the game with me, I'll play the game with you. Got me?"

A short time after this incident I was much grieved at the sudden breaking-up of Hut 11. It was required for an isolation hut; and one evening, just before "Lock-up" the Scotch Line Officer, whom we used to call "Kiltie," ordered all the occupants to pack up and remove to the other camp, except the Line Captain, P. C. O'Mahony, and another prisoner named Crowe, who were to be quartered in one of the other huts on the Line, out of which there had been releases. I wrote another doggerel as a lament for the occasion to the air of "Slievenamon," and the following are some of the verses:—

I.

Alone, all alone, by the barbed wire fence,
And alone on the football ground:
The talk may be fine and the playing superb,
But my heart's in the other "compound."

Through the barbed wire it burst on that black night accurs'd
When " Kiltie " his shrill whistle blew,
And the Headquarters Staff to the East Compound passed
Without time e'en to bid us adieu.

II.

No more—ah, no more !—where the " C " huts stand
Shall bold Hassett his views propound.
No longer amused by his yarns and his views
Shall I wander the Camp around.
Full many a trick the same Hassett did play,
And his satire was caustic and keen.
Whoe'er felt the dart that his tongue could impart
Won't be sorry his heels to have seen.

III.

No more Brunnock's form shall this compound adorn
And Dan Fraher no more we'll see,
While Mulcahy's smile will no longer beguile
The heart of each sad internee.
For our " polis " so fine we will sigh and repine,
For the sergeants have gone with the Chief.
If a bowl disappears or a slander one hears,
Where—ah, where !—shall we turn for relief ?

. . . . . .

Alone, all alone, by the barbed wire fence,
And alone by the dry canteen,
I walked in my grief and I sighed for relief,
As I thought of the days that had been.
But comfort I found when the news passed around,
And at length it was wafted to me :
Though the others had fled as released or like dead
That, at least, they had left us P.C.

Alas! My comfort was short-lived. For P.C. pined away for the companionship of his friends, and he yearned for the luscious cakes that had been wont to come from the girls of the Dungarvan Cumann na mBhan. We besought him to make his home with us and to remain still at the head of the Line that he had governed and led so skilfully and well. But he could not be induced to stay. So he made a special application to be allowed to follow his comrades to the other Camp; and thus he passed out of our lives, and his name and fame became but a memory in the compound in which he had once been such a notable figure. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* Thenceforth Captain Murtagh was our chief.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOME.

I HAD been ordered by our Commandant to hold a Commission of Inquiry into allegations of ill-treatment received by prisoners in the Camp between the times of their arrests and their arrivals at Ballykinlar. In pursuance of this order I had taken a large number of depositions from men from all parts of Ireland; and I was busily engaged in arranging these documents so as to hand them, with my report, to Joe McGrath on the morning of Monday, the 9th May, when a sergeant came into my hut.

"Pack up, Walsh," he said, "and be at the entrance gate in ten minutes."

Hurriedly and joyfully I got my few belongings together, shook hands with my fellow-hutsmen and as many of my friends as had gathered to see me off, and presented myself at the gate.

All of us who were candidates at the elections, that were then approaching, had made formal applications for "parole" in order to be in a position to conduct our campaigns; and I was not sure whether my release was going to be on "parole" or for good. My mind was, however, soon set at ease on that point. For I was at once brought before Colonel Ennis and informed that my release was unconditional.

Then I was escorted along the outside of the barbed wire to the Censor's office for my railway voucher. The news of my release had by this time spread through the "cage,"

and my late comrades were crowding along the inside of the fence to give me a parting cheer, and to wish me good-luck. It was strange to feel myself once more a free man. But my joy was tempered by sympathy for my brother and the other prisoners who were still in that hated "cage."

Then I got my voucher, sent a wire home from the Camp Post Office, and was finally brought outside the Camp with two other prisoners. For a few minutes we could hardly realise our position. It was wonderfully thrilling to walk between green hedgerows; and my heart seemed to re-echo the joyous notes of the clear-throated bird on the tree above us, that appeared to be welcoming us back to life and liberty.

Was it but a dream, or did I really see no barbed wire around me, and were there no bayonets to drive me before them? Our road led to the top of a hill; and from the summit of it I could see the Camp, with its defences and patrols and sentries, and there came to me an acute comprehension of all the pent-up misery that it held. I turned away, and allowed my eyes to feast themselves on stately Slieve Donard and the fair Mountains of Mourne and the wavelets breaking on the shores of Dundrum Bay; and from my full heart came the joyous cry:

"Lord, it is good to be here!"

My wife hurried, in response to my wire, to meet me at Belfast; and, as we planned and talked about our new life in our re-united home, I saw ourselves as boy and girl again dreaming those glad day-dreams of our radiant morning.

Next evening I was home and surrounded by the dearest friends, and welcomed by all the kindly neighbours, and overwhelmed with caresses from little ones that clambered round my knees, with eyes shining like bright stars in their joy, and demanded to hear all about jail and about the "loldiers" and "the bad peece men" that had taken me

away and " the B'ack and Tans." " I told God about them," Eilis said gravely. It was good to live through moments of such exquisite happiness.

I found it sweet, too, to get back to my office and to be welcomed home by my faithful clients, especially those who had learned to look to me for help and guidance in all their business affairs, and to whom I had really been of service. The heartfelt sympathy of my Unionist clients touched me especially. For they could not understand how much sweetness and consolation are mixed with any suffering for Ireland that a believer in her right to freedom may be called upon to endure.

" You don't know how vexed I was, Mr. Walsh," said a Protestant and Unionist woman whose family and self I had helped through a difficulty, " and there was more than me vexed. For you have no enemies among our neighbours, although you may think you have."

Another woman of the same creed and politics gave me as a token of esteem and sympathy a gold half-sovereign out of her dead son's " wee purse " which she was keeping with its contents as a precious memento for her lonely mother heart to cherish.

And the exuberant joy that was mine when I would climb one of our Derry hills and gaze with rapture on all the fair stretch of tillage and meadow and woodland, watered by winding streams and adorned with comfortable homes, that lay beneath, and drink in great draughts of the fresh, pure air that came to me from the cloud-topped mountain peaks. One has to be deprived of these things before one can appreciate the bounty of God in giving them to us.

When I left Derry Gaol I had placed myself and my family and business in the keeping of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, and I knew that she would fulfil her trust. She had brought me through all the troubles up to then with

the minimum of suffering and loss, because I trusted in her; and I had always the firm conviction that I would escape arrest until the struggle would be almost over. Therefore, when I found myself in Ballykinlar I believed that the end was nigh, and when I left it I felt confident that I would never have to endure imprisonment again. As I write we have only got the Truce; but nothing will convince me that the Peace is not in sight—although some further national suffering may still be demanded of us.

Now, humanly considered, I should have been ruined by my five months' imprisonment. My business was a personal one, dependant on my own exertions and conducted in all essentials by myself. I had no financial margin or resources to cover such risks as I was called upon to face. But so generously had my Patroness discharged her trust that I came back to find my home and business intact and my prospects, if anything, improved. My clerk, Frank Stronge—a brave, good young Irishman, and one of the best and most faithful of friends—had managed my business wonderfully well in my absence and shown a resourcefulness and capacity that were surprising. Of course I lost heavily, and my bank account went further to the wrong side. But, with God's help, I shall get over that. My clients were nearly all retained and new ones acquired; and though I felt my memory slightly impaired for a time and my brain sluggish, I left the Camp improved in health. Wherefore do I feel bound to offer this public expression of gratitude to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour for the way in which she protected me.

Except for the immediate financial loss, my imprisonment has been a great gain to me. For one thing, it gave me time to pray and lay up treasure against the time of need. It has also taught me a great deal—amongst which is the realisation of what a priceless possession is a quiet, simple

home. I had, whilst in Ballykinlar, been nominated as a candidate for County Antrim at the election for the new Dail. Though I felt disappointed on account of the cause that the seat was lost, still it was a source of certain personal satisfaction to me that I had not been selected for a constituency that was going to be won. I have had my ambitions and my bright-tinted dreams, and, of course, in one way I would have liked to be a member of the body that will set Ireland on her new path of peace and freedom, and to have taken a hand in the work of reconstruction and national up-building that requires to be done after the long centuries of war. But the lonely hours in my little cell in Derry Gaol and the heart-hunger of those weary months in Ballykinlar have made clear to me that the good God is giving me much greater happiness than could ever be mine in public life.

I have learned, too, the joy of simple tasks. Sometimes I used to weary of the monotony of attorneydom and the daily drudgery of my office. Now when I think of how my fingers itched for the touch of my old typewriter and my soul sighed for all the laugh and banter of a country auction, I know that, all unknown to myself, my work has come to mean a great deal to me, and that there is a supreme joy in feeling that one is helpful to somebody. It is good to feel that you are trusted, and that there are some who will turn to you with confidence in every difficulty that confronts them on life's highway. And, then, the humour that one encounters, and the glimpses that you get into people's inner lives, and all the goodness and unselfishness and courage and nobility and faith of our peerless peasantry that are so manifest to anyone who is privileged to hearken to their intimate stories of joy and sorrow and to plan with them for their betterment and to help them through difficulties and to sit by their deathbeds. Truly a country

attorney's life would be a delightful one if those hated things "Costs" could be abolished, and one was not under the hideous necessity of taking money for one's sympathy and good turns.

Thus, then, do I visualise the future. I see the fight won—or almost won—so that politics are no longer a duty for such as only wished to see their country free. So I step back out of the limelight and the turmoil and retire to my little "dug-out" amid those hills of Derry that I love so well; and in a home full of love and laughter, I glide down the years with a keen eye for all the beauty and goodness and fun and joy and sorrow in the life around me, doing my best for those who entrust their affairs to my keeping and winning the rich guerdon of their confidence and gratitude; watching my little ones grow and develop, sharing their interests and superintending their education; reading the books I love and writing an odd one myself in the few hours of leisure that I can snatch wherein I can give scope to my fancy and my dreams; seeing, perhaps, one of my boys fulfil in a free Ireland some of those boyish ambitions that now, at forty, I have to put from me for ever; telling the children of a newer generation, when they come, thrilling stories of the great fight for Freedom and, with the pardonable vanity of an old man, exaggerating my own little part in the struggle and pretending that I really achieved and suffered something; saying my prayers and trying to make some preparation for the great Accounting.

So, if I live long enough, I may in time win for myself that description that an Ulster village only bestows on one who has secured for himself a very special place in its affections and esteem; and as the neighbours walk behind the hearse that bears me to the graveyard among the ash trees where so many of my

dear ones already sleep they may refer to me as " wan of the good, oul' residenters " ; and somebody with a longer memory than the rest may even recall that in the day of trial I was singled out for persecution ; that if I did not do very much that, at least, I never lowered the flag ; and pointing to the mountains of my childish dreams and heart's desire he may tell the eager listeners, who shall have only read of these turbulent times in which we live, how once I walked them as a hunted man " ON MY KEEPING."

LOUIS J WALSH.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION,

August 15th, 1921.

APPENDIX.

As Pat Agnew and myself are the only two members of that highly respectable body of men, the South Derry solicitors, that ever were or are ever likely to be in gaol, I think it well to link our colleagues' name with this book which records some of our experiences. I, therefore append an Ode which I addressed to them from my little cell in Derry Gaol. For the benefit of readers in Terra Del Fuego and other more remote parts of the world who may never have heard of the name and fame of James Brown, one of the ablest registration experts and electioneers in Ireland, I had better explain that James is the leading Orange solicitor in the county and the Unionist organiser of victory in South Derry. I may also add for the enlightenment of those outsiders who do not realise how much fraternisation goes on between the trenches in North-East Ulster that when my business was struck at by the British Government, one of the first men to offer my clerk his help in keeping it going was this same violent political "enemy," the kindly and genial James Brown. The ode was, of course, written at the time when the newspapers were full of hints of the "Archbishop Clune negotiations."

An Ode to the Attorneys of South Derry.

I.

To our learned attorney colleagues of Coleraine and
Magherafelt:
To big Bob and Jamie Brown and witty Sam,
To honest John and Harry, long Liddle and the Moones,
The MacLoughlins, dear old Leech and Cunningham,
To the Andersons and Hunter, Martin, Larry, Hughes,
O'Kane,
Willie Smyth, and Warrior Gault, and friend James J.:
From behind these walls so splendid, where my "run"
at last has ended
Pat Agnew and I send forth this simple lay.

II.

'Twas the Dorset boys that got us, and no grudge we bear
the same,
For they did the job with all due courtesie.
They told us that poor "Tommy" has no stomach for
such work,
And 'twere better left to stolid R.I.C.
And when we got to Derry our escort was quite merry,
But sorrowfully the sergeant bade adieu,
And he said, "Your princely ration of rum at Coleraine
station
Makes me sorry you're in gaol, my boul' Agnew."

III.

Agnew's in the Condemned Cell, beside the gallows tree,
Where he hunger-strikes on three full meals a day;
And I'm in Number Fifteen, a little down the line,
But near enough to hear the fine display

Of his vocal powers he gives us each night when lights
go out,
And he sings about the dog from Lurgan Town,
That from the English champions did carry off the Cup,
And brought to poor old Ireland such renown.

IV.

They say that Lloyd George wants us to negotiate the
Peace,
And that is why he kindly brought us here.
"For Pat Agnew and Walsh can surely bring the *Goods*,"
He says: and so he likes to have us near.
But I think he is mistaken in the notion he has taken,
And his judgment in the matter is not soun'—
If he wants things settled right and the contract watertight
He will also have to send for Jamie Brown.

Now gaol's not half a bad place, and none of you need fear
If the whirligig of Fate should bring you in.
For it's pleasant to be free from the importunitie
Of many a greedy client wanting tin.
Well supplied with Keating's Powder, to keep off the
"black and tans,"*
You can sleep at night as quiet as a snail;
And the noise of motor lorry, your slumber need not worry;
For, at least, they can't arrest you while in gaol!

LOUIS J. WALSH.

DERRY GAOL,
December 19th, 1920.

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*A polite gaol phrase, to describe certain insects the existence of which good society is supposed to ignore.