

THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH BOY SCOUTS

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1917

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CHAPTER I

The Irish Revolution of Easter Week, 1916, was the outcome of the efforts of the various National organizations that had striven to revive the spirit of Nationality which foreign government and its offspring, constitutionalism, had done so much to destroy. The Gaelic League, Sinn Fein, the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Citizen Army, and the Cumann na mBan have all received some attention for the efforts they made on behalf of the cause of Ireland. There is one organization, however, which has been accorded very little recognition; an organization which, though small and composed of boys, has played a very important part in the National life of Ireland, and particularly, in the events of Easter Week, 1916. This movement is known as Na Fianna Eireann—the Irish national Boy Scouts—and the following is a short sketch of its activities from its inception to the Revolution of 1916.

The Anglicising influence of the so-called National Schools on the minds of the youth of Ireland, was such that they grew up ignorant of anything regarding their country. Irish history—where it was taught at all—was presented in such a fashion that it inspired no noble sentiments of patriotism, but rather left the impression that it was to England that Ireland was indebted for such civilization and progress as was in the country. Of Ireland as it was, they knew very little. Of Ireland as it is, they and the reasons why, they knew less. From their parents they learned little as a rule, for Parliamentarianism and the corruption that follows closely in its wake had sapped their National spirit. A flood of lurid literature for boys, in which the glory of the vast British Empire, the freedom that all races enjoyed in it, the great work for justice, civilization—for all mankind—that England had done and was doing, the great traditions the Union Jack represented, the valiant deeds of the British army and navy the world over, and what a paragon the British boy was of virtue, manliness, frankness, honor and so forth, enveloped the country. And then the establishment of the Baden-Powell Boy Scout movement in Ireland,

through the efforts of the garrison, aided by its tail, the seonini, completed the attempts made by England to make a 'happy English child' out of the Irish boy.

Some antidote was needed, if the Irish youth—the boys of Ireland—were not to be swallowed up in the tide of Anglicization engulfing the land. Something were needed if they were not to become entirely West-British, if not indeed English altogether. And the remedy was found in Na Fianna Eireann.

To the Countess de Markievicz, and Bulmer Hobson, belongs the credit of conceiving the idea of an organization to train and educate boys to work for the Independence of Ireland. They were ably seconded by Dr. Patrick McCartan, Miss Helena Molony, Seán McGarry, and others, as well as a few young men—youths rather, who entered into the project enthusiastically and wholeheartedly, taking upon themselves the work of teaching the boys to know, love and work for Ireland. Among these latter two names stand out prominently Cornelius Colbert and Padraic O'Riain. The former's whole life was devoted to Ireland. None loved Ireland more than he did, none worked harder. He was loved with an extraordinary affection by all who knew him. He lived only for his country and finally gave his life for it. He was one of those whose names will go down in posterity as the martyrs of 1916. Padraic O'Riain became Honorary General Secretary of the Fianna, an ardent worker in the Gaelic League and was prominent in the Volunteer movement, when it came to be established.

Those youths who helped to make the Fianna a success did not need to have National principles instilled into them. It was inherent in them, and by their faith, courage, example and teaching, inspired hundreds of boys to believe in and work for Ireland.

The Fianna was founded in September, 1909, in Dublin. Its principles were defined as follows: 'To train the youth of Ireland, mentally and physically, to work for the Independence of Ireland.' The methods through which this was proposed to be done was through the teaching of

the Irish language, history and traditions; physical and military training; the inculcation of national principles and ideals; the fostering of love of country and hatred of oppression. The name of the movement was derived from Ireland's heroic age; from the Fianna of Fionn MacCumhail, as being best likely to inspire chivalrous ideals and manly sentiments.

The movement had from the beginning a desperate fight for existence. It received no support or recognition financially or otherwise from the public except the then small body of real Nationalists who were striving to keep the spirit alive in Ireland; and they could do little, for their energy and resources were taxed to straining point working for the Gaelic League, the Sinn Fein, and other kindred movements through which their enthusiasm found outlet. Indeed, generally speaking, up to 1913, the National Ideal had a hard struggle to live and it was only by superhuman efforts on the part of 'the few' that it was not utterly swamped. Despite everything, however, thank God, it lived and waxed to its fruition in Easter Week, and as a result, Ireland is saved.

The Fianna was unlike other boys' organizations. It was not a 'boys' brigade'. These latter, wherever they exist in Ireland and whether worked in conjunction with the Church or not fail miserably to turn out real live, earnest Irish—rebel—boys, because firstly they do not try to make such out of them, and secondly, they do not understand the psychology of the boy. The Fianna was trained, taught, officered, and worked by boys who were elected by their fellow members. The movement was built up and maintained to a great extent by the subscription of the boys themselves.

For quite a long while it consisted of scarcely more than a few dozen members. These met and tried to train themselves and forward the movement under the greatest difficulties. None of them had money; all were poor. Some were at school, while others, like Con Colbert, had to work hard for a living. A hall was secured in Camden Street, the rent of which, by the way, the Countess paid for several years. With the possession of a headquarters, the movement began slowly to grow. The corrupt and venal press, masquerading as National, gave it no support,

while printing columns about the B.P.'s, as the English Boy Scouts were termed, and other boys' brigades that were anything but National. The few small papers that still stood for Irish principles, gave, of course, what publicity they could. The following appeared in *Bean na h-Eireann*, a little paper that in the short term of its existence, did an amount of good. Like nearly everything written about the Fianna this little article was written by one of the boys:

‘With the formation of Na Fianna Eireann the boys of Ireland have got a National organization of their own. Some Nationalists think that the boys don't count in the Nation, but the founders of *Na Fianna Eireann* rightly consider them of supreme importance. They are the recruits for the future armies of Ireland, and on them the future of Ireland must depend. All through our history, the boys of the country have played the part of heroes. In the old literature we have the boy deeds of Cuchullain and the youthful exploits of Fionn. In the Red Branch Cycle can we ever forget the story of how the boys of Emain Macha stayed the armies of Maeve and saved Ulster, and died fighting while their fathers slept.

‘In the days of Elizabeth the boy chieftain of Tirconnall came near to driving the English into the sea, and was poisoned by the English because they were afraid to meet his sword again. The lives of the boy heroes of '98 have still to be written, and would fill a large volume. Willie Nelson was hanged outside his mother's door in Ballycary when he was fifteen because he was a United Irishman and took the yeoman captain's horse to warn the United men that they must march to Antrim on the 6th of June. And there were many others who helped Ireland and did men's work for their country. In other countries it was the same. During the Boer War boys of twelve and some even of ten years of age were out on commando with their fathers and brothers, using their rifles with deadly effect on the English.

Now that Na Fianna Eireann has been started, the boys of Ireland will again come to the front working for Irish Independence. In their

headquarters, 34 Lower Camden Street, they drill every Tuesday and Thursday. Every Irish boy is invited to join. Other centres will be opened shortly, as the hall is already crowded with the numbers who have joined. As time goes on it is hoped to have branches of Na Fianna in every part of Ireland, so that the next generation of Irishmen will know their country and love her, and be prepared to assert their independence.’

During 1910 great progress was made in organizing new branches and in promoting schemes for the government and training of the boys. Sluaghte—the Irish word used by the Fianna to designate a corps or branch, for Irish terms were used on all possible occasions—were formed in several centres in Dublin, and in Belfast. Each Sluagh was named after some Irish Patriot whose life and deeds would be a source of inspiration to the members of the Sluagh. Regular programmes of work were drawn up and carried out. The different branches met usually twice weekly at their halls or meeting places at night time. There they underwent a short course of military and physical drill, followed by a short discourse on events in Irish history by one of the officers who, in his own words and in a simple unaffected way, using language that the youngest could understand, told the boys of the glories of Ireland and the noble heritage that was theirs. And the boys listened eagerly to such talks, drinking in with avidity the story of the gallant deeds done for Ireland.

Every Sunday marches-out were held and these were made the occasion of still further fostering a rebel spirit. To city boys in particular it appealed, and the Dublin Mountains was the goal of the Dublin boys every Sunday. Rations were brought and cooked, some of the boys developing great skill in the culinary art, while considerable ingenuity was shown in the way fires and cooking places were built and arrangements made for hanging pots over them.

Camping out was also attempted during this summer but with little success. Want of funds and want of experience were not exactly a combination conducive to success. Nevertheless, a few, headed by Con.

Colbert, heroically suffered all the discomforts attendant on camping in the most primitive manner, believing that it was fitting them to fight the good fight later on. But whether tired on the march or cold at night in camp, scorched by the sun or drenched by the rain, the boys always sung and laughed and joked. And the songs they sang—not the vulgar suggestive inanities from the music halls, vile importations from England that were perhaps the best proof of how far Anglicization had eaten into the national life of Ireland—were the songs of resurgent Ireland, ballads that breathed patriotism, love of country, rebellion and defiance. Ah! those merry hearts that sung as they trod the paths to freedom. Some are stilled in death by the bullets of the tyrant, some are being seared with the anguish of the captive in the penal cell, some are in exile and others are still in the land they love, still hoping, still working, still believing.

APRIL 14, 1917.

CHAPTER II

No boy became a member of the Fianna until he passed the Preliminary Test, and took the Fianna Pledge. He remained on probation for three weeks, during which time he was taught the subjects necessary to pass the test. These subjects were as follows:

1. Understand aims and objects and how the name of the organization was derived.
2. Know his name in Irish.
3. Be able to count up to twenty in Irish.
4. Be able to perform the few simple drill movements taught him.
5. Read and send the first circle in the semaphore system of signalling.
6. Have saved a small amount of money, according to his means, towards his uniform.

At the end of the three weeks having passed the test, he took the following pledge: 'I promise to work for the Independence of Ireland, never to join England's armed forces, and to obey my superior officers.' He was then a fully fledged member and entitled to wear the Fianna badge and uniform. The badge was a representation of the rising sun in gold on a green background with a white border on which were the words 'Cuimnige ar Luimneac agus ar fheall na Sasanac'—meaning 'remember Limerick and English faith.' The Fianna also wore the colors of the Irish Republic and carried the Republican flag in addition to their own flag. There were two uniforms. Kilts were originally intended as the only uniform, but as it required tremendous moral courage at one time in some parts of Ireland to appear in kilts, another uniform was authorized in addition. The present writer well remembers his first appearance in the old Irish dress. He was the cynosure of all eyes, and many and varied were the comments that greeted his ears on all sides, and being like most Irish

boys, self-conscious, it was a long while before he got used to wearing them. Nevertheless all who adopted the kilt uniform grew to like it very much. This consisted of a green kilt and green knitted woolen jersey with blue cuffs and collar, of Irish manufactured material. The second uniform was an olive green double-breasted shirt and knee pants, of Irish manufactured material also.

Each Sluagh or branch was governed by rules in conformation with the general principles of the organization, with such additions as local circumstances demanded. One of the branch rules was that 'no Anglicizing influences will be tolerated'. Usually when a boy joined he knew nothing of Irish Ireland and the first song or air he usually whistled or sung was something not Irish. The method adopted by his comrades to correct his ignorance was effective if arbitrary. The first warning he received that he was transgressing the rules would usually be some rough handling by his fellows, who themselves perhaps had only learned better some months before. And the new member in turn was generally the hardest on the latest recruit. Of course such methods were not countenanced by the officers, but nevertheless they were of regular occurrence.

The first convention of the Fianna was held in July 1910. The attendance was small as the organization was only in its childhood. The Countess de Markievicz was elected President and Bulmer Hobson Vice-President and Pádraic Ó Riain, Hon. General Secretary. In November of this year, *Irish Freedom* was started. The paper was the strongest and best written national journal published in recent years. It appeared continuously until its suppression in 1914. Its columns were open to the Fianna, and through the publicity the movement thus received, became an important factor in its progress. That the Fianna well knew the seriousness and had counted the cost of the task they had set themselves, is apparent in the following which appeared in the first number of the paper:

‘To those of us who are growing up boys and girls will probably fall the task of finally settling the Irish Question. Now is the time therefore for us to consider the course we are to follow and the methods to be adopted to insure success. As we are not skilled enough in the use of platitudes we interpret Irish freedom liberally, and as we are not old enough to hide our cowardice behind a mask of so-called wisdom, we realize that Irish freedom must be won by one method by which it is won in every other part of the world—the sword and its allies.

‘In these days of practical patriotism we, of the Fianna, without any exaggeration, can justly claim to be the most practical element in the population, though we are but a small factor of it. We turn our eyes from the loaf, which in one form or another, we see on all sides held up as a standard of nationalism, and have firmly fixed our gaze and concentrated our attention on the dreary cell where Tone was base murdered; the gibbet which the blood of Emmet consecrated, and on the chains which the bleeding limbs of Mitchel and the Fenians turned into garlands. Not only that but we have set ourselves the task of preparing mentally and physically for the great day, on the eve of which those of us who have survived will see, with gladsome eyes, Cathleen Ni Houlihan launch Fair Freedom’s ship with the Republican colors at the mast in the blood of the Saxon.’

The movement made considerable progress during 1911. It began to extend to several places in the country. Clonmel, Listowel, Rathkeale, Maryborough, Athlone and Limerick fell into line. Through the generosity of the late John Daly a splendid hall was built in the latter place for the Fianna. Sean Heuston, who was afterwards executed in Dublin after the Easter Revolution, was in charge there and did herculean work in bringing the organization to a high state of perfection. In Dublin the number of branches increased from four to seven, while Belfast established six within a year.

On June 22, George V. was crowned King of England. A huge meeting was held in Dublin on this date to protest against his being crowned King of Ireland also. Twenty thousand people are estimated to have attended and the Fianna were strongly represented. The meeting was addressed by Sean MacDiarmada, Dr. Patrick MacCartan and several others.

A fortnight later occurred the 'Royal visit' to Ireland. Saturday, July 7, the day of George V.'s entry into Dublin was proclaimed a public holiday. The garrison strained every nerve to make the occasion appear as if the Irish people were intensely loyal. The streets were decorated on a lavish scale and night turned into day with illuminations. The school children were bribed with buns and lemonade to be present, while all the 'Peelers' from the country that could be spared were drafted up in plain clothes to Dublin to swell the mob as honest workmen and cheer as the King passed.

The whole reception was engineered and did not represent the Irish people at all. The Nationalists left Dublin that day in two special trains on a pilgrimage to Wolfe Tone's grave at Bodenstown. The Dublin Fianna, numbering about three hundred, with their pipers band formed an inspiring spectacle in the procession to the graveyard. There round the grave of Ireland's noblest dead all pledged their loyalty to the cause for which Wolfe Tone's life was given: 'To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government, to break the connection with England, the never failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the Independence of my country'.

Padraic Pearse, afterwards first President of the Irish Republic, took a deep interest in the movement. He gave the use of his grounds surrounding St. Enda's College at Rathfarnham, in the County Dublin, to the Fianna for camping and manoeuvres, and established a Sluagh among the boys of his school. Con. Colbert used to train these, cycling out from the city once a week for the purpose.

The second Convention (Ard Feis) was held in July and was much more largely represented than the first. It was a splendid success, earnestness being the distinguishing feature. It was decided to form an Executive (Ard Coiste), to meet every three months, to direct the organization during the year. A Constitution was drawn up as follows:

The Constitution of Na Fianna Eireann as drawn up by the Ard Feis, 1911.

Object—To establish the independence of Ireland.

Means—The training of the youth of Ireland, mentally and physically, to achieve this object by teaching scouting and military exercises, Irish history, and the Irish language.

Declaration—I promise to work for the independence of Ireland, never to join England's armed forces, and to obey my superior officers.

General—(1) Na Fianna Eireann (Irish National Boy Scouts Organization) shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Assistant Secretary, an Honorary Treasurer, an Ard Feis (Congress), an Ard Coisde (Central Council), Coisde Ceanntair (District Councils), and Sluaghte (Branches). The officers of the Ard Coisde shall be members ex-officio of all the Coisde Ceanntair, and committees of the organization.

(2.) Membership of Na Fianna shall be open to all boys who endorse its Constitution and make the Declaration of the Fianna.

The remainder of the Constitution dealt with the composition of the Ard Feis, Ard Coisde, Coisde Ceanntair and Sluaghte, and defined their work and powers.

The new Ard Coisde came into being immediately after the Convention and proceeded to outline Winter programmes for the branches all over Ireland. These included scout craft, signalling, knot tying, first aid

and ambulance work, Irish language and history. District Councils were formed wherever branches existed close to each other. These did great work in consolidating and making uniform the work of the organization as the following official report of the Dublin District Council, published in September, 1911, will show:

‘The Dublin District Council has, in response to the resolution passed at the Convention (Ard Feis), come into being during the last month. Captain C. Colbert (An Cheud Sluagh), was elected Chairman, Lieutenant M. Lonergan (Sluagh Emmet), Honorary Secretary, and Mr. Heffernan, Inspector for Dublin District. Since its inception the Council has been very active, and every Sluagh has been visited by the energetic inspector. Marches of the combined Sluaghte were arranged weekly to St. Enda’s College, Rathfarnham where the Fianna were taught field drill. The Council will present a tableaux entitled ‘Fainne an Lae,’ at Sunday’s Language Procession.

‘An Cheud Sluagh (First Dublin Company).—An elaborate programme is being arranged for the members of this Sluagh. It includes first aid, scout craft, signalling, map making and surveying.

‘Sluagh Michael Dwyer (Second Company).—A splendid series of camps were organized by the committee of this Sluagh in North County Dublin. Many members spent several weeks of the beautiful summer weather under canvas.

‘Sluagh Emmet (Third Company).—Notice: Boys wanted for the rebel manufacturing works. Apply Lieutenant Lonergan, Beresford Place.

‘Sluagh John Mitchel (Fourth Company).—Under the leadership of Seumas MacCaisir, this Sluagh is progressing favorably.

‘Sluagh Wolfe Tone (Fifth Company).—Meetings of this Sluagh are held twice weekly at Hall, 4, Lower Sandwith Street. Drill, knot tying, signalling, scout craft, are taught by Lieutenant Prionnsias MacRaghnaill, on Mondays and Friday evenings, from 8 p.m.

‘Sluagh Lord Edward (Sixth Company).—Leader Sean Keating is working hard to organize the boys of Blackrock for the Winter’s work. He

is being assisted by Captain C. Colbert (An Cheud Sluagh), who attends twice weekly.

‘Sluagh Owen Roe O’Neill (Seventh Company).—Jack Bisset is still urging the boys of Malahide to join the Fianna. Another Sluagh is being organized at Donabate.’

A Fianna branch of the Gaelic League for the Dublin Fianna was started in October. Padraic Pearse addressed the boys at the opening meeting and none of those present ever forgot his inspiring words. Quoting Thomas Davis, he said: ‘We want to win Ireland, and keep it; but to be able to keep it, and use it, and govern it, the men of Ireland must know what it is, what it was and what it can be made.’

APRIL 21, 1917.

CHAPTER III

The new Ard Coisde (Central Council) threw itself wholeheartedly into the work of training the Fianna in a systematic and serious manner. The organization was divided into three groups—first, second and third-class Fiannaidhthe. Tests were drawn up which all members had to pass. The tests covered a very wide field of activity and the work of 1912 was mainly taken up in preparation to pass examinations in these tests. Distinguishing cords were issued to the members to mark their proficiency in Fianna training: green for Third Class, green and orange Second Class, and green, white and orange First Class.

THE THIRD CLASS TEST.

Before a member of the Fianna was awarded his third class cord, he must have passed the preliminary test and have attended two-thirds of the classes and meetings of his Sluagh. He had also to pass in the following subjects:

Squad Drill—Understand the commands when given in the Irish language.

First Aid—Know how to perform artificial respiration in cases of drowning and shock. Make four bandages and sling with the triangular bandage.

Signalling—Send and receive a message in semaphore, ten letters per minute.

Irish Language—Standard of O'Growney, first half of Book I.

History—General knowledge of Irish History from 1782 to 1803.

Know the conventional signs and be able to read a scout's map.

Topography—Know the roads, woods, streams, etc., within a radius of two miles from Sluagh headquarters, or perform some equivalent selected by local committee.

Point out the north by means of the sun and stars without the aid of a compass.

Know how to pitch a small tent and light a camp (wood) fire.

Tie the following knots—Reef, bowline, sheepshank, fisherman's bend, two half hitches, and clove hitch.

THE SECOND CLASS TEST.

Before being awarded the second class cord the following subjects had to be passed in addition to those laid down for the third class test.

Elementary company drill.

First Aid—Application of triangular bandage to any part of the body; (2) various methods of arresting hemorrhage; (3) first aid treatment of fractures and dislocations; (4) first aid treatment in poisons; (5) first aid treatment of apparently drowned or otherwise suffocated, including Schaefer's method; (6) methods of carrying injured.

Signalling—Send and receive a message in either semaphore or Morse at the rate of fifteen letters per minute.

Irish Language—Standard of O'Growney, Book I. History, general knowledge of Irish History from 1782 to 1870.

Map Making—Be able to make a scout's map. Understand the uses of the plane table and be able to judge distances within 30 per cent. error.

Topography—Know the country within a radius of five miles in same detail as for third class test.

Know the sixteen points of the compass and point out a compass direction by means of the sun and watch.

Know how to pitch a bell tent and cook satisfactorily in the open two out of the following dishes as may be directed: Porridge, Irish stew, rabbit, bacon, rice pudding, or bread.

Track half a mile in twenty minutes and be able to swim thirty yards.

THE FIRST CLASS TEST.

This is the highest order of the Fianna and requires a very high all-round proficiency to attain it. The subjects were, in addition to those for second class test:

Company and ambulance drill.

Advanced first aid.

Signalling—Send and receive a message in Morse and semaphore, twenty letters per minute.

Irish Language—Standard of O'Growney, Book III, History, general knowledge of Irish History from the coming of St. Patrick; also the Cuchulain and Ossianic Cycles.

Field Sketching—Sketch a piece of country showing the contour lines, etc., within 15 per cent. error.

Topography—Know the country within a ten-mile radius in same detail as for third class test; also a general knowledge of the geography of Ireland.

Know four constellations.

Swim 100 yards and know how to save life in case of drowning.

Know how to pitch and strike two kinds of tents; be able to make camp kitchen and latrine.

The Fianna made considerable progress in many ways during 1912. There was more intercourse between officers of the movement from different parts of the country, which led to the formation of many friendships between boys who were to become veritable brothers in the same cause, actuated by the same motives and inspired by the same ideals. A splendid spirit of camaraderie pervaded the movement, which was rapidly becoming a boys community, the embryo of the Republic. It was

remarkable what a few years had done in forming the character of the members. No longer were they mere boys. They felt men, if not in years, then in strength of purpose. They knew that no matter how the older generation went, the future of Ireland was in their hands, and they believed that a day would yet come when their faith would be justified and their efforts crowned with success. And another thing was noticeable about the Fianna. They felt like their prototype, the Fianna of old never boasted of their prowess or their achievements. No boy talked of what he did:

‘He spake not a boasting word,
Nor vaunted he at all,
Though marvellous were his deeds.’

It was not for themselves they worked, it was for Ireland. Their sole ambition was their country’s freedom; for themselves they had none.

The movement began to make itself felt in Nationalist circles and attracted attention from several quarters. The police—who in Ireland are spies and hired assassins of the British Government—began to keep their eye on prominent members. One of the ‘G’ men was constantly posted outside the Headquarters of the Dublin Fianna in Camden Street. One Sunday evening a small group of lads were leaving the hall after returning from a route-march. They loitered round the door ere parting their different ways. The ‘Peeler,’ seeing it this an opportunity of asserting his authority, majestically ordered them to ‘move on!’ The whistling of ‘The Peeler and the Goat’ was the only notice he received, whereupon his ire was roused and he roared at the boys to ‘move on ou’ a’ that an’ not be obstructin’ the way.’ Immediately one of the lads with that ready wit so characteristic of the Dubliner, replied ‘that if he took his small fifties of feet in off the footpath there’d be no obstruction.’ The Peeler beat a hasty retreat, his discomfiture being increased by the paeon of victory raised by the irrepressibles, the chorus of which ran ‘Meg-a-geg-geg, let go of my leg!’

But others beside the police took an interest in the movement. The following beautiful poem appeared in *Irish Freedom*. It was written by a talented young lady—Miss Elizabeth MacCarthy (Ειλίρ Νί Κάριτσις) of Dungarvan.

ΝΑ ΨΙΑΝΝΑ ΕΙΡΕΔΑΝ.

Dauntless offspring of heroes,
Sons of the true and brave,
Hail to the cause you champion
And the flag you have come to save!

Children with life's young glory
Crowning your radiant brow,
Lift up your hearts in gladness
To the task that awaits you now.

Smiling and sweet is the valley
In the glow of life's fair spring-time,
And lonely the rugged pathway
That your conquering feet must climb.

Yet from Eire's breast you will gather
The strength of her guarded pride,
Since the days when the first Fianna
Camped on her mountain side.

Down from those distant ages
To you has the bright call come;
From the flash of their swords unsheathing
And the beat of the battle-drum.

From the echo of warrior footsteps
 Whose path you must follow far,
Till you reach their splendor of daring
 In the matchless work of war.

Fianna! Name of all others
 To rouse your passionate fire,
To kindle your proud ambition
 And strengthen your soul's desire.

Fling on the breeze your banner,
 Let its folds float far and high,
While you march on your way to glory
 Neath the blue of an Irish sky.

And though shadows gather round you,
 And the road seems long and drear;
Though alone you must sometime struggle
 When no friendly hand is near.

When weary of a patient striving
 For a triumph so far away,
Remember—the darkest hour of night
 Is nearest the dawn of day.

Yours not the hours of leisure
 To squander in idle dreams;
Yours not the flowers of pleasure
 To cull by life's sunlit streams.

But yours the unflinching purpose
Of the patriots fearless
With the tireless will and the ready skill
That will lead to victory's goal.

Many a long night's waiting
May be yours through the Winter's cold:
Many a fevered marching
In the glare of the Summer's gold.

Many a lonely furrow
To plough with a generous hand,
And many a seed to scatter
That will spring at your bright command.

But for you will the heart Eirinn
Her secrets sublime unfold,
While her wandering winds will waft you
A song from the days of old.

For you will her blue seas sparkle
And laugh in the beaming sun;
And her breezes lull you to slumber
When the hurrying day is done.

Oh! the grass will surely be greener,
And the heather will brighter bloom;
Where your feet have trod from the summer's dawn
Till twilight's gathering gloom.

While the birds in their joy will sing you
 A paean for every hour,
And the angels from Heaven will bring you
 A dream of your future power.

Then fear not, oh happy children,
 To answer the glorious call,
Of her to whose royal service
 You must offer your lives—your all.

Think not that your fight will be fruitless,
 Or your sacrifice unatoned
When Eire will rise mid the nations—
 A Queen—by your hands enthroned.

And on through all future ages,
 Round many a fireside glow,
Shall the tale of Na Fianna Eireann
 Who fought 'gainst her treacherous foe.

Be told to the listening children
 In a land by your love made free;
When the seeds you have sown shall bloom fully grown
 In the sunshine of liberty.

APRIL 28, 1917.

CHAPTER III—(*Continued*)

The Year 1912 saw the Fianna firmly established as a power for good in the land. Several incursions had taken place to the country and new branches were established in Wexford Town, Donegal, Cork and Newry, as well as several new Sluaghte in Dublin and Belfast. The training went ahead very well and the Summer was used to the greatest advantage for camping. The freedom and joyousness of the outdoor life appealed to the boys, who by now had reduced camping-out to a fine art. By experience, that greatest of all teachers, they had picked up many tips for making themselves comfortable. They had become adept at lighting a fire under the most adverse circumstances, and the methods—and ingredients—of cooking were much improved. Many a rabbit, hare or bird found its way into the pot. Need it be said by what means they were secured? A good scout is necessarily a good poacher.

To give an idea of the routine of camp life, the following would represent a daily camp programme: 6:30 a.m, turn out and bathe; 7 a.m., breakfast; 8 a.m., air bedding and clean up camping ground; 9 a.m., scouting exercises; 11 a.m., swimming; 12 noon, dinner; 2 p.m., lecture on woodcraft or other subject; 3 p.m., drill, skirmishing or scouting; 6 p.m. supper; 7:30 p.m., camp council. The remainder of the night up to 'lights out' at 9:30 was usually spent in an impromptu ceilidh.

Once again Fianna were encamped on the mountain side, and the places made historic by Fionn and his companions were fitting spots for the new soldiers of Erin to train themselves as champions of freedom. Howth and Glen-na-Smole were the rendezvous of the Dublin boys. The Clonmel Sluagh breathed freedom on Slievenamon, and on historic Cave Hill the tents of the Belfast lads were pitched.

The green kilted bare-kneed lads were now familiar figures at all Gaelic gatherings. They sold *Irish Freedom* at football and hurling matches. They were ubiquitous in giving out handbills, announcing Feisanna and Emmet, Manchester Martyrs and other great

commemorations, and advertising these events by marching through the streets with their pipers' band. They collected for the Gaelic League, the Wolfe Tone Memorial, and other national institutions for which money was needed.

The third annual convention or Ard Fheis was a splendid and most representative affair. It marked an epoch in the history of the movement, inasmuch that it showed that a great deal had already been accomplished in work that many wiseacres and sceptics had prophesied as being impracticable and unfeasible. It was held in the second week of July, 1912, in the Mansion House, Dublin, and was well attended by a throng of earnest and manly boys from the four provinces of Ireland.

Countess Markievicz presided and Dublin was strongly represented by twenty delegates. Among the delegates from Belfast, which showed up in great strength, were Joe. Robinson, one of the most enthusiastic members of the Fianna, and who is now in a British prison; Alf. Cotton, afterward a Volunteer organizer, who was deported from Kerry in 1915; and the Misses Nora and Ina Connolly, and several other girls representing a girls' branch which had been established there a short time previous. Sean Houston was the principal Limerick representative. Cork City sent Sean O'Suillabhain, and Kerry Edmund Leahy of Listowel. 'Paddy' Ramsbottom, known as 'An Fear Mor' on account of his stature, voiced Athlone and Willie Langley was delegate from Tuam. Dozens of other places were well represented as well.

Some idea of the amount of business transacted will be gathered from the fact that there were forty notices of motion on the agenda. The proceedings lasted without an interval from 12 noon till nearly 6 p.m.

The Dublin Fianna gave a great display in August. It was held for the purpose of displaying to the public the practical work the boys were doing and also to raise funds for the movement. Exhibitions of company and ambulance drill, skirmishing, bayonet-fighting, signalling and first-aid were given. A splendid camp scene was presented showing how things were managed when out under canvas. This was followed by an

aeridheacht, in which a first-rate programme was gone through, most of the songs, dances and recitals, etc., being contributed by the boys.

Perhaps, however, the greatest work done by the boys was their active participation in the vigorous anti-enlistment campaign. In the evidence before the 'Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland' the Fianna are mentioned: 'The anti-recruiting campaign was continued during this year, the Irish Boy Scouts being used for the purpose a good deal. They were being organised and drilled evidently to enlist in the campaign of promoting seditious views.'

The Fianna are also mentioned in the report as 'a thoroughly disloyal movement—which eventually became a training school for young rebels.' No higher tribute can be paid to the movement than the opinion the British Government held of it.

MAY 5, 1917.

CHAPTER IV

The next year was the brightest in the history of the movement, as it was also the brightest in the history of the country for many years. It witnessed a great change in opinion among the people. At long-last some result was seen of the years of drudgery and 'spade work' on the part of the small minority who had stood true to Ireland through thick and thin. Slowly but surely the country was being roused from the lethargic and disorganised state into which constitutionalism had thrown it. The tide was beginning to turn.

A census of the movement was taken early in the year, and it was found to number over a thousand members. An excellent handbook covering every phase of Fianna activity, written by officers of the movement, was put on the market and sold at one shilling. It contained lucid and instructive articles on drill, first aid, knot-tying, rifle exercises, camping, signalling and swimming. The constitution, and hints on the management of Sluaighte gained by hard experience were given. An introduction was written by the Countess, a few passages of which are given here:

'As President of the Fianna I am glad of this opportunity to pay tribute to those boys who have built up the Fianna with their brains and their self-sacrifice, their courage and their energy. I know what it has cost them, how hard the work has often been and how many discouraging failures have been faced, and how our success has grown up out of the ashes of dead hopes and buried illusions.

'It will take the best and noblest of Ireland's children to win Freedom, for the price of Freedom is suffering and pain. It is only when the suffering is deep enough and the pain almost beyond bearing that Freedom is won. Through the long black record of England's tyranny and oppression, empire building and robbery, many names stand out of noble souls whose lives were given in a passionate protest against their

country's wrongs. France won free, but many suffered and died nobly before the conquering sacrifice of Joan of Arc turned the tide against the oppressor and the English were swept by a flood of national love and indignation out and across the Sea.'

Prophetic words these, 'the price of freedom is suffering and pain.' She, Ireland's Joan of Arc, at this moment is paying the price of our freedom.

P.H. Pearse contributed to the handbook a splendid article on the 'Fianna of Fionn' and Roger Casement wrote on 'Chivalry.' The latter was deeply interested in the movement and contributed to its funds in a generous and anonymous fashion. Padraic O'Riain edited the book; indeed, a great many of the technical articles were his and the illustrations throughout were done by Michael Lonergan, another prominent member.

The rapid growth of the organization now demanded an organiser should be appointed, to devote his whole time to the work of inspecting and instructing sluaighte and forming new sluaighte all over Ireland. The want of proper instruction was keenly felt in most parts of the country outside Dublin, and the appointment of an organiser to instruct and push propaganda was a big step forward. A guarantee fund was opened to enable the Ard Coisde to meet the strain this imposed on it.

The services of Liam Mellows were secured for the position. He was at this time in charge of two branches in Dublin—Inchicore and Dolphin's Barn. He started off through the country full of enthusiasm and ere a month was over had got Enniscorthy, Ferns, Waterford and a few other places going, as well as visiting and instructing the branches already existing in South Leinster.

A great anti-enlisting crusade was carried on all over the country during this year, and the Fianna did their share of this holy work of keeping the young manhood of Ireland out of the clutches of the Government that ground them down. There was a special reason why the crusade was so vigourous. The British Government were busy conducting

a tremendous recruiting campaign in Ireland. They were feverishly enlisting and training an army in view of a struggle with Germany. And the following year, when war broke out, England had the gall to say that she was unprepared and that the war was sprung on her.

No methods were too mean or low or despicable to induce the Irishman to enlist. Airs associated for generations with the Irish cause were played by British recruiting bands. Fancy England ordering her paid murderers to stimulate the circulation of the Irish fighting blood by rendering 'O'Donnell Aboo,' 'The Wearing of the Green,' and 'The Boys of Wexford.' A few years back and the playing of such airs was a treasonable offense. Irish warpipe bands, with the 'swaddies' decked out in Irish kilts, was another feature. All this, of course, was done in order to impress the Irish with the 'toleration' existing within the bounds of the British Empire.

Posters and bills appeared frequently on the walls and telegraph poles all over the country, warning young Irishmen of the dangers, both nationally and morally of joining the British Army. During June, the whole of Ireland was placarded in one night. The authorities instituted a vigorous inquiry, but failed to arrest anyone for it.

In some places the anti-recruiting crusade was carried beyond this line of action. In Athlone, two military bands were busy playing for dupes. The local Irish Pipers Band and the Fianna marched out one night as a counter attraction. After a good deal of jostling the soldiers at last had to fly to their barracks followed by the victorious lads, who had now been joined by the populace, who demonstrated their hatred by booing and shouting. A meeting was held outside the barracks and a vast crowd was addressed by several speakers, who applauded denunciatory statements against the British army. The soldiers were removed from the town by special train next morning.

MAY 5, 1917.

CHAPTER IV—(*Continued*)

In Limerick matters were going ahead very well, thanks to the energy of Sean Heuston and the fatherly interest taken in the movement by the late John Daly, the grand old Fenian veteran. There were now 250 boys in the Sluagh. In May competitions in the various branches of Fianna work were held. In presenting the prizes, John Daly, who presided, said that fifty years had elapsed since he joined the Fenian Brotherhood. In 1863, his comrades and he believed that they were about to go into a fight which would leave the present generation an inheritance of a free Ireland. They had succeeded in attaining their ideals, and many had paid the penalty of not succeeding, but thank God, the country was not conquered yet. He well remembered the days of his boyhood, and knew that it was not always pleasant to spend the evening hours after school in study, but he appealed to the Fianna of Limerick not to rest content with physical exercises. He asked them to remember that mind must be trained as well as muscle, and urged them to endeavour to acquire a thorough knowledge of the history of Ireland, for unless they knew the story of their country they could never love her as they ought. They should learn the language of Ireland. When Ireland spoke Irish the days of the British Government in this country would be numbered.

In the meantime it was their duty to assert their right to the ownership of their own country and to protest by every means against foreign usurpation. He had protested, and English brutality had paralysed his limbs, but England had failed to paralyse his mind or his heart, and he still defied her.

Is it any wonder that with such a splendid patriot as John Daly in their midst, Limerick's boys were intensely national, and that the story of his sufferings and faith enkindled in many a young breast feelings that will yet express themselves on that day when all the pent up love and hatred will hold sway in the last and winning fight for freedom?

The Rathkeale branch suffered a heavy blow in their death of their young captain, Bruno Whelan, in March. His valuable services were sadly missed by the members. At the funeral of their dead leader the scouts formed a bodyguard and laid a wreath on his grave as a slight token of their appreciation of his services to their little branch of the Irish Boy Scouts and to the Cause he loved.

In the meantime, the newly-appointed organiser had been busy. It was hard work trying to get branches of a boys' movement like the Fianna started throughout the country, when no one outside the ranks of the Gaelic League took an interest in anything Irish, or, for the matter of that, in anything but what concerned their individual selves. Very few, indeed, realized what an asset to Ireland the boys were. He had many rebuffs from people who were held up as great Nationalists and who posed as such. Very few of the clergy gave the movement any support, and those who did were nearly all what Canon Sheehan described as 'the young bicycle riding curates' who had been influenced in Maynooth by the Gaelic League. Indeed, it was the one small group of men and women upon whom all National work fell. The Gaelic League carried the cross of Ireland on its shoulders for many years.

Some of the would-be nationalists whom the Organizer interviewed and appealed to to help, spoke of the movement with sarcasm and pointed out how, in *their* worldly wisdom, it was doomed to failure. 'What can a handful of boys do against the great British Empire?' was the question frequently put. Oh! ye of little faith, did you dream then that a time would come when you would eat your words and talk instead of the decadence of the Empire, not because you believed in Ireland but because it was the popular thing to do. Others, notwithstanding the pledge that every boy took never to join England's armed forces, said that the boys were only being trained for the British army, that they would get a taste for such a life from the military exercises and that no pledge would keep a boy from indulging his desires in that line. Oh! God, to such a pass had things reached in Ireland when men no longer believed in honour or principle.

They could not understand the triumph of mind over matter. Eighteen months later a great many of these people were on the recruiting platforms appealing to the young men of Ireland to join the British army and fight England's battle against Ireland's friend. There were some, too, who said the movement was 'too strong,' meaning by that, that its principles were 'too Irish' for their tastes. Something with less milk and more water suited their palates, but the boys would not deviate. Today, all such are separatists, extremists and Sinn Feiners; nothing is 'too strong' for them now.

Appended here are some extracts from the Organizer's reports, which may be of interest as showing how the work went on. Nearly all his travelling was done on an ordinary bicycle and even then, 1913, the police took a rather warm interest in his welfare.

WITH THE ORGANIZER.
(EXTRACTS FROM HIS REPORTS.)

Sunday, April 27, 1913.—Went to Wexford, arriving at 1:30. Was met by a bodyguard of Sluagh Father John Murphy. Employed afternoon drilling the Sluagh in preparation for the Wexford Feis. In the evening, from 7 to 10:30, taught bayonet exercise.

Monday, 28.—Proceeded to Killurin, six miles, to see what could be done there. Made appointment to meet local band committee at 9 p.m. Went to Enniscorthy and arranged meeting to revive defunct Sluagh Vinegar Hill on Tuesday 8 p.m. Returned to Killurin. Nothing tangible resulted.

Tuesday, 29.—Shocking wet day. Went to Ferns. Returned to Enniscorthy. Very poor attendance owing to weather, but drew on all my oratorical powers and once more got a move on the Sluagh. The officer in charge is Sean Moran, and rooms have been secured for the Sluagh in the Gaelic League premises.

Wednesday, 30.—Went to Gorey and Courtown. Saw ——, who also promised to do all he could to start a Sluagh. Made appointment to see him at Feis. Went to Arklow but could do nothing. Returned to Wexford.

Thursday, May 1.—Rode to New Ross and thence to Waterford. Arranged meeting to start Sluagh in Waterford for the following Tuesday. Christian Brothers promised to help.

Friday, 2.—Rode to Clonmel via Carrick-on-Suir. Made appointments for next day.

Saturday, 3.—Clonmel Sluagh *non est* owing to not being able to get rooms. They hope, however, to reorganize Sluagh Kickham very soon.

Sunday, 4.—Rode to Cashel. Everybody away at hurling match in Dublin. Distributed literature and returned to Clonmel. The weather all week has been most miserably wet and so have I.

Monday, 5.—Rode to Kilkenny, from Clonmel, 31 miles. Arrived late at night wet through. This was a terrible wet day—one of the worst I ever experienced. Could do nothing that night. Heard that a body of scouts existed in the town but could obtain no definite information regarding them.

Tuesday, 6.—Wet! Returned to Waterford for prearranged meeting. Arrived at 1:30. Interviewed Christian Brothers in afternoon, who promised to help. Held meeting at 8 o'clock; thirty boys were present. Explained aims and objects of Fianna and arranged for further meeting on Wednesday, 14th inst.

Wednesday, 7.—Wet! Saw two teachers, who promised to see what they could do for Fianna during coming year. Returned to Kilkenny. Visited Gaelic League premises and heard that scouts existing at present in Kilkenny were now acting independently as 'The James Stephens Boy Scouts.'

Thursday, 8.—Very wet. Busy all day in Kilkenny. Arranged meeting for next (Friday) evening.

Friday, 9.—Rode out to Castlecomer, 10 miles. Roads deep in mud. Met several local Gaelic Leaguers but could get none of them interested in Fianna. Returned to Kilkenny to keep appointment. No meeting, but arranged one for following Friday, 16th inst.

Saturday, 10.—Left for Wexford 6 p.m. On arrival found boys getting ready for Feis.

Sunday, 11.—Wexford Feis. This was a great day here. Tremendous crowds. Met a number of people interested in movement who promised to get branches started. Wexford Fianna gave a display of drill, signalling and skirmishing as part of Feis programme, and acquitted themselves very favorably. Crowd much impressed. Most of them never knew of the movement before. Con. Colbert, Eamonn Martin, Garry Holohan and several others of Dublin Fianna down for Feis.

Monday, 12.—Wexford Feis.

Tuesday, 13.—This was a holiday in Wexford, so I took advantage of it in instructing Sluagh Father John Murphy in drill, signalling, first-aid, bayonet and physical exercises, till 3 o'clock. At 5 we marched through the town, headed by St. Brigid's Band, and proceeded to the Aonach and Exhibition Hall, Bull Ring. Here the boys were treated to a lecture on 'Ninety-eight by Miss Browne.* The lecture was rendered the more interesting because of the exhibits of relics of 'Ninety-eight, which the boys were allowed to handle and examine. At 8 o'clock we again met, when I gave a little chat about the 'British Empire.' I should have stated that earlier in the day we made arrangements to start a new Sluagh at Castlebridge, four miles from Wexford on the following Sunday.

Wednesday, 14.—Rode to Waterford, 33 miles, to keep appointment *re* meeting. Owing to some misunderstanding this did not take place. Disgusted!

* The Miss Brown referred to above was afterwards among those women of the Cumann na mBan who were arrested after Easter Week and held for some time before being released.

Thursday, 15.—Still in Waterford. Held meeting at 8 o'clock; 26 boys present. Harangued the multitude till 9:30 and sent them home. Arranged for next meeting on Monday, 19th inst.

Friday, 16.—Rode to Kilkenny, 28 miles. Held meeting of James Stephens Boy Scouts; twenty boys present. Drilled and inspected them and spoke about the 'British Empire and Ireland.' Made arrangements to visit Goresbridge at some future date.

Saturday, 17.—Rode to Gowran, County Kilkenny; thence to Dungarvan. On to Borris where I met Dr. Dundon, who thought a branch could be started there and promised to help. I promised to return there on Tuesday. Left Borris at 8:30 to ride to Wexford, 38 miles, across the Blackstair Mountains via Sculloge Gap (shades of Father Murphy and Myles Byrne). Rode through the night, arriving in Wexford at 12:10. Mileage covered during day, 62 miles.

Sunday, 18.—Marched with Sluagh Father John Murphy to Castlebridge. Found most of local people away at hurling match. Disappointed! Gathered together all of the boys of the village we could find. Delivered an oration. Wexford Sluagh gave a display of skirmishing, etc. in the village street. Returned home a sadder and a wiser, etc. At 8 o'clock we had another little history chat with Wexford Sluagh. There was great enthusiasm and proceedings terminated at 11 o'clock with singing the National Anthem.

In June a great fete in aid of Padraic Pearse's school at Ratherfarnham was held. It was known as St. Enda's Fete and lasted a week. The school, run as it was on such Irish lines, was greatly handicapped for want of funds, and of course it was only from the Gaedheals that help was forthcoming. The Fianna did what they could to make the fete a success and gave a very fine display which made a great impression on the onlookers. At the end of the week a fire occurred on the grounds at Jones's Road, where the fete was held, and the Fianna showed the value of the training and discipline imparted them by overcoming the flames. They kept their heads while everything was in a state of confusion

and uproar and by their steadiness and courage saved the situation. Another display was given at this time at an Aeridheacht organized by the Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee. Everywhere the services of the Fianna were in great demand at this time and they were always ready to help wherever the Cause was at stake.

The pilgrimage to Wolfe Tone's grave at Bodenstown this year, on June 22, showed how great was the revival of the old spirit. No longer was it the few faithful souls who yearly went to pay their devotion to the ideals of Ireland's apostle of Freedom. How the hearts of the old Fenian veterans beat high with the old hope this year when they saw rank on rank of the young manhood and youth of Ireland marching to the holiest spot in the land. There were pipers' bands from Dublin, Tullamore, Athlone and Brownstown. The Fianna numbered several hundred and at their head a big banner on which was inscribed 'Boys will you enlist? Not in the English army, but in the Irish one. Join Na Fianna Eireann'. They formed a guard of honor round the graveside while P.H. Pearse delivered the oration.

The fourth Ard-Fheis (Convention) was held on July 13. It was the largest and most representative yet. Delegates were there from all parts of the four provinces. The Countess as usual presided. The Hon. General Secretary, Padraic O'Riain, in his annual report remarked: 'Perhaps the surest sign of the progress made by our movement during the past year is the fact that our organization has now (with the full recognition of all political and non-political adult organizations) taken an important place in the national life of our country. A large section of our people look with hope and confidence to us to win that achievement for which so many generations have worked and for which we have all pledged ourselves to continue to work.'

A report was read by the Organizer giving an account of his work since his appointment, extending over the counties of Wexford, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Kings County, Kildare, Westmeath, Roscommon, Galway, and Louth. One good sign of the times

was that several of the delegates spoke Irish only in addressing the Convention. The Ard-Coisde for the coming year was as follows: President Countess de Markievicz; Vice-Presidents, Bulmer Hobson and Joseph Robinson; Hon. General Secretary, Captain Padraic O'Riain; Assistant Secretary, Lieutenant A. White; Treasurer, Lieutenant Frank Reynolds; Organizer, Captain Liam Mellows; other members, Sean Sinnott (Wexford), Captain M. Lonergan (Dublin), Captain Con. Colbert (Dublin), Lieutenant Sean O'Kelly (Belfast), Edmund Leahy (Listowel), and Lieutenant Sean Heuston (Limerick).

A camp for the delegates who cared to spend their vacation in the Dublin Mountains under canvas, was held on Three Rock Mountain after the Convention. The Organizer was in charge and many availed themselves of the opportunity and spent a really splendid holiday amid such beautiful surroundings. Matters were anything but dull where a group of such lads congregated. The Countess had a cottage on the mountain and had several members of the girls' branches from Belfast staying with her. The troops of the Dublin garrison carried out extensive manoeuvres in Carlow and South County Wicklow this Summer. Several battalions returned to the city through South County Dublin, passing close to the Fianna camp on their march. They got a very good reception from the boys as they marched by. Booing and jeering them, they were followed by crowds of the lads down the road. Several soldiers fell out of the march, and approaching the Countess's cottage, handed in their canteens asking for water. Some of the girls inside took the canteens, but instead of filling them with water, put anti-enlisting bills in them and handed them back. The soldiers must have been greatly astonished when they opened the lids to take a drink and found something not to their taste at all.

A sad drowning accident occurred before the camp broke up, in which the Fianna boys gained considerable notoriety. The boys went every day to bathe in a very deep and big quarry-hole near the camp. One Sunday afternoon, a young man from the neighborhood, named

Doyle—not a member of the Fianna—got in to bathe. He was unable to swim and getting out of his depth went under. A companion brought word to the camp and immediately all hands rushed to the scene of the accident. By this time the poor fellow had disappeared. Immediately a number of the boys started diving for him, but without success. This continued for a couple of hours until all were exhausted. Then a raft was built and four took it in relays to search for the body. By this time several police had arrived and immediately produced note books and proceeded to ‘investigate’. They were reminded of their duty, however, but none of them showed the slightest anxiety to aid the search. They were taunted with cowardice and one of them, in desperation, after admitting he could swim, actually went as far as to take off his pants—and promptly stopped there.

At length the body was recovered and artificial respiration was applied but without avail. The police officiously then interfered but were repudiated by the boys, who carried the body home across the mountain in their own stretcher to the grief-stricken parents.

At the inquest, the jury highly commended the action the Fianna and paid a compliment to the efficiency of the boys. An intimation that the Royal Humane Society was about to bestow medals on some of the lads for their bravery was received, and it was decided that the Fianna could have nothing to do with anything to which the word ‘Royal’ was appended. The people round the district where the fatality occurred took the matter up themselves, however, so struck were they with the conduct of the scouts.

A very interesting meeting was held at Balally, Sandyford, County Dublin, on August 10, when Harry Walpole, Thomas Crimmins, Edward Murray and Thomas McCabe, four members of the Fianna who particularly distinguished themselves, were presented by the people of Barnacullia with gold medals and certificates for bravery in their unsuccessful efforts to rescue Peter Doyle.

Mr. Charles Hanlon of Dundrum, who presided, said that the people of the neighborhood who had witnessed the sad death of Peter Doyle and the gallantry of the Boy Scouts were anxious to pay tribute to these boys for their manly and courageous conduct. The people, he assured the boys, had nothing but esteem for the Boy Scouts. Mr. Joseph Campbell, the poet, who made the presentation, read an address, and drew a very interesting analogy between the Fianna and their old time prototype.

Countess Markievicz returned thanks on behalf of the Fianna Eireann, and thanked the people of Barnacullia and the Three Rock Mountain for their kindness in permitting the National Scouts to use their lands for scouting and camping purposes.

Mr. Tom. McCarthy pointed out the extreme 'usefulness' of the police—how they were ever to the fore when there were families to be evicted or strikers to be batoned; how with their endless notebooks and informations they haunt us. 'But,' said he, 'when it comes to a really dangerous job, they are content to watch while four boys risk their lives.'

A vote of sympathy was passed with the parents of Peter Doyle, who attended at the presentation.

Mr. C. Mulligan, of Balally Cottage, suggested to the meeting that they ought to start a troop of National Scouts among the boys of the district. The suggestion was greeted with applause, and over twenty boys promptly handed in their names.

Another fatality, in which a member of the Fianna lost his life occurred in Limerick at this time. A number of small boys were fishing in a pond near the railway when one of them named Killeen fell into deep water. A Fianna boy named Willie Davern, aged thirteen, jumped in to rescue him and succeeded in getting his comrade into safety, but fell back exhausted himself and was drowned.

Two of the boys in Belfast, James Toomey and Patrick Dempsey were arrested soon after this on a charge of posting up anti-enlistment notices. They were brought before the Resident Magistrate at Belfast

Court, who returned them for trial at Belfast Assizes. When the case came up, it fell through for want of evidence and the boys were dismissed.

MAY 12, 1917.

CHAPTER V

It must not be supposed that the movement progressed all this while uninterruptedly. The Castle authorities viewed with alarm the growth of a boys' organization, the spirit of which was rebellious. They knew that in a very short time boys became men, and if when men they lived up to the teachings and ambitions of their boyhood, why, the work and plotting of centuries to reduce and subdue Ireland was undone. None knew better than they the effects of early training on the minds of the youth of the country. The system of education in Ireland proves that. Here, then, was an educational movement that threatened to upset the carefully planned results of their 'National Board.' It must be got rid of. Therefore, while officially ignoring the Fianna they went further than instructing their police to keep an eye on it.

The Baden-Powell Boy Scouts, as has been mentioned before, had got a foothold in the country previous to the Fianna being started. The latter had left them without a leg to stand on, but now a very determined effort was made to revive them. A council for this purpose was formed with the Earl of Meath at the head. Lord Powerscourt and several other 'noblemen' and 'gentlemen of influence', including several 'Catholic' gentlemen, were identified with this council. Letters appeared frequently in the press from these gentlemen pointing out the advantages the boys would derive from membership in the Baden-Powell organization. One note pervaded all these effusions—that their movement was open to Catholic as well as Protestant boys, and in this they demonstrated their ignorance of the reason of the Irish Question; that it was not a case of Catholic versus Protestant, but Irish against English.

Money and patronage were lavishly bestowed on this new form of political souperism. No expense was spared in order to induce the Irish boy to join. Everything that would appeal in a material way to the average boy was there. The gymnasiums in the barracks were at their disposal, as were also the instructors. The boys were at no expense whatever.

Uniforms were issued free and regular attendance was sought by means of tea-parties (or bun-fights, as the Fianna contemptuously called them), outings and excursions and the entree to all sports and amusements of the military. The older boys were called Cadets and eventually were drafted into the Officers Training Corps. In fact the whole system had a twofold object—to make Irish boys English and entrap them in the British Army. But the game did not work.

Conflicts between the boys of the Fianna and the enemy—the Baden-Powell's—were of frequent occurrence. It was indeed a rare occasion on which the former returned from a march without bearing khaki hats, badges, poles or other B.-P. equipment as trophies of the fray. Victory lay usually with Fianna in these 'scraps' because the B.-P.'s found recruits only among the sons of 'seoinin' and 'respectable' people and the genteel, and naturally were no match for their hardy opponents.

In August of 1913 a big effort was made to draw attention to the B.P. movement. A big camp near Dublin was planned and several hundred English scouts from Lancashire and Yorkshire were to come over and wake up the Irish. The advance guard of these landed at the North Wall. They numbered about two hundred and were equipped with all the up-to-date scout outfits and camping paraphernalia that money could buy. The rotten Dublin press that would not give the Fianna any show, devoted considerable space to these visitors; described the fine training they received, their smartness and spic-and-span appearance, their wonderful equipment and a minute description of the splendid cooking apparatus and electric light installation they brought over for the camp, and wound up by hoping that the Irish people, with their proverbial hospitality, would bid them a hearty *cead mile failte*.

This galled the Dublin Fianna. To think that they, an Irish organization with Irish principles, could get no support from the so-called Nationalist press while a subsidized gang of English boys were boomed so much! And then the wonderful camp equipment! It made their blood boil when they remembered the rough and ready way they camped, the

hard struggle to pay expenses and the little encouragement they got. They shouted for action, but it was officially decided that none would be taken.

This did not suit a crowd of the younger boys, known as the 'hard skins'. They decided on action; prompt, decisive and very much unofficial. Under the leadership of three of the best lads among the younger members, Edward Murray, Patrick Sarsfield Smyth, and Tom, otherwise Brian Boru, McCabe, twelve of them, with vengeance in their hearts, marched one Saturday afternoon on the B.-P. encampment, which was situated at Kimmage, just outside the city.

Arrived at the camp they found it was occupied by only about twenty scouts, the remainder being away in the city seeing the sights, but those who remained behind were all older than the Fianna boys. Murray bumped into the first B.-P. he met, a fellow much bigger than himself, and was surprised that the deliberate insult was not instantly avenged by a blow. He could not understand this, knowing what would happen if the case was reversed and he had been insulted. The jostle was followed by another with the same result and Murray, very much disgusted, marched into the nearest tent and commenced throwing outside the equipment it contained. His example was followed by the others and the camp was speedily wrecked. The tents were unpegged, the equipment, including the electric light installation, was thrown round the place and hedges decorated with pots and pans. The B.-P.'s offered no resistance at the start, but some of them hurried off for reinforcements. These arrived just as the attacking party was about to leave and a battle royal ensued, from which the Fianna emerged victorious. They carried away as trophies a tent pole and a Union Jack.

This killed the attempt to revive the English Boy Scouts in Dublin. The main body of the visitors from England whom the *Freeman* hoped the Irish people would give a hearty *cead mile failte* to, never came over, evidently thinking discretion to be the better part of valor.

Singing was the general way in which the boys amused themselves in camp or on the march. The favorite marching songs were: 'The

Soldier's Song,' 'Step Together,' and 'The Green Flag.' Brian O'Higgins, the well known and popular Irish-Ireland poet, wrote a marching song specially for the Fianna. It was set to music and published in *Irish Freedom*. The words are given here:

MARCHING SONG OF THE FIANNA EIREANN.

By Brian O'Higgins.

Hark to the tramp of the Young Guard of Eire!
Firm is each footstep and erect is each head!
Soldiers of freedom, unfearing and eager
To follow the teachings of her hero dead.

CHORUS.

On for freedom Fianna Eireann!
Set we our faces to the dawning day,
The day in our own land when strength and daring
Shall end for evermore the Saxon sway.

Strong be our hands like the Fianna Eireann
Who won for her glory in the days that are gone
Clean be our thinking and truthful our speaking
That we may deserve her when the fight is done!

Soldiers and champions of Eirinn, our Mother,
Fear we no Sasanach, his schemes or his steel,
Foes of the foeman! but comrades and brothers
Of all who are striving for our Eire's weal.

During all this time the political situation was changing rapidly. The Home Rule controversy, the formation of the Ulster Volunteers, the Curragh Mutiny and, above all, the growing National spirit in the country

as a result of the teachings of the Gaelic League, paved the way for the foundation of the Irish Volunteer movement. Here the utility of the Fianna movement was demonstrated. It was represented on the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers by Con. Colbert, Padraig O'Riain, Eamonn Martin, Michael Lonergan, and Liam Mellows. The latter acted as Honorary Assistant Secretary to the Volunteers for the first three months and later, when the post became a permanent one, was elected to the position. The Fianna acted as instructors to the Volunteers and many afterwards rose to important commands in the new movement.

Later on in the following year, when Redmond, at the bidding of his Imperial taskmasters, got control of the Irish Volunteers, of the nine who voted against his interference, three, Con. Colbert, Liam Mellows and Eamonn Martin, were of the Fianna.

JUNE 2, 1917.

CHAPTER VI

The Bodenstown procession of 1914 was a sign of the times. It was not a mere procession like that of previous years. It was a military demonstration. Ireland's New National Army was represented by the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Citizen Army, the Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Eireann. It was a great day entirely; a presage of the Revolution. Three generations of militant Nationalism were represented there; the old Fenians, the newer Volunteers, and the younger Fianna, with Tom. Clarke, the embodiment of both the old and new spirit of Ireland, the inspiration of all.

Tom. Clarke's great part in the salvation of Ireland has yet to be recognized. In comparison with most of those whose lives were given for their country during Easter, 1916, he receives little mention, yet it would be safe to say were it not for Tom. Clarke, there would probably have been no Easter Week. Great sacrifices were made by all who took part in national work during recent years, but none like that of Tom. Clarke. His life was a living sacrifice. There were more intellectual men than he in the last effort to free Ireland, but none had greater faith. His enthusiasm and optimistic outlook were wonderful. Everything centered around him and it is greatly due to him that the fight was kept on through years when all effort seemed vain and hope a delusion. His hatred and scorn of England was only exceeded by his love for Ireland and his death was a fitting end to such a career as his. Viewed in the perspective of time, Tom. Clarke's name will shine luminous on the role of Irish patriots.

The next great event in which the Fianna played a conspicuous part was the now famous gun-running at Howth. This took place on Sunday, July 26, 1914. It had been planned with the greatest secrecy several months before, and the organizing and general preparations for the coup were going on for some weeks before it occurred. Several officers of the Fianna knew what was coming off some time before as they had an important part to play. It was their duty to bring a number of big heavy

oak batons out to Howth for the use of the Volunteers in case of trouble with the police before the arms were received. This was done surreptitiously, the batons being carried in the trek-cart of the boys, covered closely over with tarpaulin sheet, so that none of the Volunteers knew what was there, except a small number of picked men who had various special jobs in connection with the work on hand assigned to them.

The Volunteers and Fianna were mobilized at Fairview at 9 a.m., ostensibly for an ordinary route-march. They set out at 9:45 for Raheny, no more interest being taken in their movements than usual. Their march was exceedingly rapid, the pace being forced and as the distance from the city increased, the rate was accelerated to the surprise and disgust of the men. The Fianna were much better marchers than the Volunteers, many of them having several years' experience, and did not suffer near as much from fatigue notwithstanding that they had to drag their trek-cart as well. At Raheny a halt was called, but after a few minutes rest the march was resumed, this time, the direction taken being the village of Howth.

In the meantime a small crowd of picked men—of whom the present writer was one—had been out at Howth from an early hour. Each one was armed with a revolver or automatic pistol, and they loitered around sight-seeing till 11 o'clock. They then boarded a motor fishing trawler, which had been hired as if for a sail, and set out to tow in the yacht with the arms, which had been lying off Ireland's Eye with a supposedly pleasure party aboard, but the engine broke down before the trawler got out of Howth harbor and the crowd had to put back. This did not upset arrangements, however, as the yacht had instructions to be in at 12 o'clock, whether helped by the trawler or not. So right enough, soon after this it emerged from behind Ireland's Eye and tacked inshore. Nearly to the minute it drew alongside the pier and was immediately surrounded by the small crowd of anxiously waiting men, who nervously fingered the weapons in their pockets, cast impatient glances across the harbor to the road for the appearance of the Volunteers and kept a lookout for police and coast

guards as well. Two messengers, Archie Heron and Barney Mellows, members of the Fianna, were despatched to hurry up the Volunteers and at length the head of the column was seen coming through the town. At the foot of the pier the command to double was given. This was done with a bad grace, as they were all tired from the forced pace that had been maintained all along, but when the word 'guns' went around, all fatigue was forgotten and the double became a charge.

The scene that followed is indescribable. At the sight of the rifles as they were unloaded a cheer went up that shook the heavens. All discipline was forgotten for the moment and the utmost confusion reigned. At length through the efforts of the officers order was restored and the work of unloading proceeded rapidly. A small body of selected men, armed with the batons brought out by the Fianna had formed a cordon across the entrance to the pier as soon as all the Volunteers had passed along, to prevent any attempt by the police or other authorities to interfere.

A small force of the local police tried to force their way on to the pier, but the baton brigade was too formidable to tackle and they had to remain contented where they were. The ammunition was hoisted from the hold last and loaded on automobiles which were there for the purpose, and dispatched to various places previously fixed on. While this was being done a boat with a few coastguards in it rowed toward the yacht, but sheered off when threatened with revolvers by those unloading the vessel. The Harbormaster landed at a slip halfway along the pier and demanded to know what was going on. He was told to go away but, saying he was going to do his duty, he tried to burst through the Volunteers. Someone hit him around the belt-line with the butt-end of a rifle and his interest in proceedings became wonderfully less and he was held a prisoner till the work was finished. All the rifles could not be carried by the men and some were put in the Fianna trek-cart along with a small amount of ammunition and the remainder piled in a horse cart.

When all was finished the march back commenced. All were in jubilant spirits and singing and cheering was the order of the day. By this

time word had reached the city of what was going on and a force of police was sent to Raheny to intercept the Volunteers. Nothing happened here as the police were totally outnumbered, and they just marched quietly beside the Volunteers. At the end of the Howth Road the way was blocked by a couple of companies of military, with more police and Royal Irish Constabulary. Perceiving this the Volunteers turned into a road to the right and then to the left into the Malahide Road. The military saw the move in time and managed to reach the end of this road in time to block it also. The Volunteers were halted and a slight scuffle ensued between the head of the column and the police and some shots were fired. Then quietness reigned while an altercation ensued between Bulmer Hobson and Commissioner Harrel. The former was waived aside and the police ordered forward. A great scrap followed. The D.M.P. were armed with batons only, but the R.I.C. had rifles with fixed bayonets. The police got by far the worst of it and withdrew. The Fianna were to the fore in this melee, one of them, Garry Holohan, laying one of the police low with a tremendous crack on the head with a butt of his rifle. Another onset occurred in which the Volunteers lost ground for a while and the horse and cart filled with rifles was left standing between the military and the Volunteers. The former were running forward to catch it when Cathal Brugha, of the Volunteers, rushed back and kicked the horse unmercifully, so that it galloped madly forward into safety, but some of the rifles were jolted on to the road and fell into the hands of the soldiers. A desperate fight now ensued around the Fianna trek-cart containing the ammunition. As orders had been given that this was not to be served out, the butts of the rifles had to be opposed to the bayonets of the police and military. The Volunteers became for the moment disorganized and the boys were left by themselves except for a few men to defend the ammunition, but they fought with wonderful courage and eventually succeeded in getting the trek-cart safely away. One of the Fianna mounted a wall, opened fire on the attackers with an automatic pistol and wounded one of them. Eamonn Ceannt, of the Volunteers, also fired and hit one of the military in the

ankle. The Volunteers now rushed up to support and the military and police retired. A cordon of Volunteers was then drawn across the road and under cover of this the men with their rifles got quietly away. Several boys got hurt in the encounter but they had the satisfaction of capturing five rifles off the soldiery and retaining possession of them. The Fianna received great praise everywhere for their conduct, one paper even saying they were pluckier than the men. They were commanded this day by Pádraig O'Riain and Eamonn Martin.

Later on that evening occurred the massacre at Bachelor's Walk. The military passing through the city on their way back to barracks, actuated evidently by a spirit of revenge for the defeat they suffered from the Volunteers, charged with fixed bayonets peaceful citizens at the North Strand and further on, at Bachelor's Walk, fired on a crowd mostly of women and children, killing seven and wounding a great many, some of whom died afterwards.

Nine days later England declared war on Germany in the interests of civilization and humanity, and for the suppression of militarism, but Ireland did not believe England's claims, for had they not in their own capital city an example of British militarism that found no parallel with the alleged atrocities of the Germans? Bachelor's Walk sounded the death-knell of the British Empire, for it kept Dublin nationally right; Dublin kept Ireland straight, and Ireland is the rock on which England will yet perish.

A week after the Howth sensation a second consignment of arms was landed at Kilcool, in the County Wicklow. It was one of the best planned affairs ever brought off by the Volunteers. Only fifty-one picked men were engaged on this job and eleven of these were members of the Fianna. The work was divided into four departments, each in charge of selected men, who chose the ones acting under them, viz., the transferring of the rifles and ammunition from a yacht to the shore, the landing and scouting arrangements, the transportation facilities, and the distribution. Everything went off without a hitch and an exceedingly hard night's work

saw 600 more rifles and 20,000 rounds of ammunition into the country. Two police were kept prisoners while the work was going on, but were released when it was finished. One of the motor-trucks broke down near the town of Bray early in the morning through being overloaded. A messenger was immediately dispatched for aid to Rathfarnham where a fleet of automobiles was in readiness for the distribution. These were hurried to the scene and inside half-an-hour nothing remained of the breakdown but the disabled motor on the road.

On July 12 a great Feis was held at Castlebar. Competitions of boy's organizations was a great feature of the day and in these a body of Dublin Fianna under Lieutenant Eamonn Martin carried all before them.

JUNE 16, 1917.

CHAPTER VII

The outbreak of war had an immense effect on the country. The objects for which England had declared hostilities on Germany were carefully concealed under a tide of hypocritical but high sounding self-righteous shibboleths. Suffering Catholic Belgium—particularly the ‘Catholic’ part of it—was held up to the gaze of suffering Ireland as an example of the horrors of German militarism and the Irish were informed that such would also be their fate if England’s enemy landed in Ireland. The war had only been in progress for a couple of weeks when stories of German atrocities, horrible to read, were advertised, free gratis and for nothing. The press, subsidized by the British Government, printed horror after horror, culminating with the outrages and sacrileges perpetrated on the Catholic Church in Belgium by the terrible Huns. And these atrocities were for the most part conjured up in the fertile imaginations of the scribes of Fleet Street, London. The Irish, credulous, ill-informed and sympathetic towards any tale of human suffering, for the most part, believed for a while these fabrications which England knew so well would stir the Celtic mind.

This was particularly so when Redmond, after dilating on the woes of Belgium and re-echoing parrot-like the platitudes of British Premier that England was fighting for the small nations, announced that Ireland was heart and soul with England in the war and that the duty of Irishmen was to avenge the wrongs of Belgium. This was followed up when, at a review of Volunteers at Woodenbridge in the County of Wicklow, he stated specifically that they, the Volunteers, had a twofold duty to perform. One was to defend the shores of Ireland at home and the other was to defend it abroad in Flanders. The people were unable for a long time to grasp the issue and the bulk of them followed Redmond blindly until their eyes were opened to the precipice to which he was leading them.

Coincident with the war the infamous Defence of the Realm Act was passed. This Act purported to be for the protection of the people of Great Britain and Ireland against the machinations of Germany, particularly in the matter of espionage. As such it was administered in Great Britain, but in Ireland, it was used, not for the purpose ostensibly intended, but for the suppression of the last sparks of national feeling. In other words, under the cover of war, while the eyes of the world were turned on Europe, England was continuing her age-long war on the Irish Nation. In the face of this how hollow her claim is that she was fighting for the rights of small nations, and how shameless her hypocrisy in proclaiming herself the champion of civilization.

All the Irish people did not forsake Ireland. A minority, composed for the greater part of those who had held the gap all along still stood true. This minority was found only in the ranks of the remnant of the Volunteers, the Citizen Army, Cumann na mBan and, last but not least, the Fianna. It is to these, who in the first instance, considering neither their size nor their influence, nor shrinking from the terrible outlook that confronted them, stood out for principle first as against 'safety first', that Ireland is indebted for her salvation as a Nation. Had they, acting along the line of least resistance, adopted an attitude of expediency, no matter with what ulterior motive, all would have been lost and the final object of England's Irish policy accomplished.

Under the Defence of the Realm Act, a veritable reign of terror governed Ireland. The corrupt press was in the power of the Government and daily poured forth the vile calumnies and horrid blasphemies that their employers dictated. The few newspapers that still retained some spark of national sympathy, were quickly brought to book or suppressed. Free speech became a thing of the past. The jails were filled with men and women who were sent there, not for pro-German expressions, but for voicing Ireland's aspirations as one of those small nations whom England was supposed to be fighting for. Even the Gaelic language was attacked and people were imprisoned for speaking Irish.

A vast recruiting campaign for the British army was launched. The reasons and pleas put forward as to why Irishmen should enlist were specious and ridiculous in the extreme. The walls and billboards of the cities and towns were decorated with invitations to join in the grand international war game. Such soul stirring appeals as ‘Kitchener Wants you;’ ‘Your King and country need You;’ ‘What John Redmond says about the war’ met the eye at every turn.

From press and platform, aye and even from the pulpit that one would think would be safe from the unholy influence of England, a vast cry resounded through the land calling on Irishmen to join the British army—to give their bodies to England and their souls to the Devil. And all this on the plea that war against Germany was Ireland’s war as well as England’s, whereas, on the contrary, it is an established precedent in Irish history, that whoever is England’s enemy, must of necessity be Ireland’s friend. It was wonderful how suddenly England discovered what a splendid fighting race the Irish were. The pains they took to prove it, too! It was recalled how the Irish Brigade won the battles of France, particular attention being devoted to Fontenoy. England suddenly remembered Ireland had a history and proceeded to make use of the passages that suited her purpose, but she did *not* recall the reason why the Irish Brigade fought on the side of France, nor whom they defeated at Fontenoy. It would be very inconvenient to recall that when Ireland helped France and France helped Ireland, it was at a time when France was England’s enemy and not her friend.

But the recruiting campaign did not get everything its own way. It was attacked right, left and centre with every means short of open hostilities. The Fianna were active in combating this and other forms of British propaganda. Anti-recruiting leaflets and posters were distributed by the thousand. Many of these were written by the Countess Markievicz, others by some of the boys. Many of the latter worked night after night printing these leaflets, giving their spare time to the work, which was done with the greatest secrecy, as it was risky in the extreme. The work of

distributing and posting them up had to be done with great caution, too, the boys in different parts of the country were frequently apprehended for it and fined or sentenced to short terms of imprisonment. Recruiting posters were torn down at every opportunity or tarred over. For tearing down a poster, Eddie Murray, mentioned before in connection with several events, got a month in jail. He didn't mind, taking it all as part of the day's work. Tearing down Union Jacks was a great sport of the boys. Day after day this was done, the automobiles of the seoinin element, who sported this emblem of their enslavement, receiving particular attention.

Speakers at recruitment meetings were interrupted with apt illusions and witticisms. At one of these meetings one of the speakers—a British non-commissioned officer—using one of the inane Jingo slogans common in England, 'Are we down'earted?' 'No,' shouted the crowd, composed for the greater part of Fianna and Sinn Feiners. Encouraged by this he bawled, 'Are we going to win this wah,' and was nearly staggered by the roar of 'No' that came from the crowd. Eventually, as a result of the persistent efforts of real Nationalists, the recruiting campaign became a failure and enlistment stopped. England, with the help of Redmond, and the Parliamentary Party, had played her game in Ireland and lost.

With the advent of Conscription in England and the imminence of it in Ireland the Irish Volunteers began to grow in numbers and influence and wherever they got a foothold the Fianna were quickly established. The two movements went hand in hand, the Executive of the Volunteers recognizing the Fianna as the official 'scout' organization and commending them time after time in their manifestoes. At length the Government, getting seriously alarmed over the growing strength of National feeling, determined to limit the activities of the Volunteers, and so, in July, 1915, they order four men, Herbert Pim, Denis MacCollough, Liam Mellows and Ernest Blythe, to leave Ireland and intern themselves in England. This they refused to do. They were arrested and after a farcical trial, got short sentences of imprisonment. Of these four the latter two, who were the chief organizers of the Volunteers, had been prominently

identified with the Fianna previous to the starting of the former movement. Later on, in March, 1916, these two were again arrested and, without any charge whatever brought against them, were deported from their country to England. So that the Fianna had the honor of having two of its members subjected to treatment such as England had not attempted since the days of Cromwell.

The work of the Fianna in the anti-recruiting campaign evoked many questions and was the subject of debate in the British Parliament. Members described it as a most seditious organization and attention was called to the Declaration each boy took: 'I promise to work for the Independence of Ireland, never to join England's armed forces and to obey my superior officers.' Even before the war, rule after rule of the Constitution of the Fianna was discussed in the House, Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland, said: 'The Irish National Boy Scouts organization was a bee-hive of rebels and a menace in the country. There was nothing ambiguous about the Constitution of the Fianna. Its object and means were plainly stated and could be read with but one meaning; the straight issue for an Independent Ireland.'

The Fianna now boasted a paper of their own, called after themselves *Fianna*. It was a venture on the part of two of the Dublin boys, Pierce Reynolds and Patsy O'Connor, aided by the Countess. It came out first as a special Christmas number in 1914, but began to appear regularly monthly from the Spring of the next year right up until the Revolution. It contained articles, poems and stories and written for the most by the boys themselves. A splendid serial story ran in it, written by Padraig Pearse, dealing with the Fenian days and centering round a group of boys in a Saint Enda setting. It is to be earnestly hoped someday this story will be published in book form, as it is one of the best things in lighter vein written by the first President of the Irish Republic.

Poor Patsy O'Connor died very suddenly toward the end of 1915. During the great Dublin strike in 1913, Patsy received a severe blow on the head from a police baton while trying to administer first aid to an old

man who had been badly hurt during one of the baton charges. After superficial treatment at a hospital Patsy thought he was all right as the wound healed up rapidly. But two years later he arrived home one evening complaining of a pain in his head and after drinking a cup of tea suddenly collapsed and died almost immediately. A clot of blood had congealed on the brain and two years after the blow had burst.

His comrades felt Patsy's death badly. He was a most promising boy and had been in the Fianna since he was twelve years old. Full of fun and laughter, but brave as a lion and true as steel, his whole heart was bound up in the cause of Ireland and his death robbed it of one whose only thought was of The Day he never lived to see. His comrades gave him the first Fianna military funeral and marched with sorrowing hearts behind his coffin draped with the Irish Republican colors to Glasnevin.

JULY 7, 1917.

CHAPTER VIII

The part the Fianna took in the Easter Week Rebellion is now generally recognized. They had been doing all they could in their own way to prepare for the great event their lives were devoted to. To this event the system of organization underwent many changes; it was put on a regular military basis. The Executive Council was dispensed with and a Headquarters Staff formed, making one person responsible for a particular branch of work. Padraic O'Riain became Chief Scout; Bulmer Hobson Chief of Staff; Eamonn Martin Director of Organization and Recruiting; Barney Mellows Director of Finance; Sean Heuston Director of Training. Volunteer companies throughout the country began organizing branches of the Fianna and the Volunteer organizers lent a helping hand. The Dublin Fianna were officially recognized as a unit of the Dublin Volunteer Brigade and the same with the Fianna in Belfast, Cork and Limerick, as regards the Volunteer Brigades there. They accompanied the Volunteers on all route-marches as reconnoitring sections and were used as signallers and despatch bearers. Rifle ranges were erected and rifles purchased by the Volunteer Executive for the Fianna. 'Specializing' classes were conducted for technical instruction in mechanics, engineering, wireless telegraphy, the making of hand grenades, cartridges, etc.

The Fianna all over the country were prepared to actively participate in the Rising planned for Easter Sunday night. As it was, owing to the circumstances that prevailed, only the Dublin boys got the opportunity of fighting, and well they lived up to and died for the principles they imbibed and cherished.

The part the Fianna took in the Revolution of Easter Week would fill volumes. Acts of heroism, daring and self-sacrifice there were that are on a par with the most chivalrous deeds of any country in any age. It is not within the scope of the present writer to write the history of the Fianna in relation to the revolution. That must be left to an abler and more gifted pen. The present short sketch will deal with only the outstanding features.

The capture of the Magazine Fort in the Phoenix Park and its partial destruction by fire is looked upon as one of the most clever and daring incidents of the revolt. Many accounts have been written of it, ascribing it to one section or another of the Volunteers, some of them fanciful, some of them garbled, none of them accurate. The actual facts are presented here for the first time, by one who took an active part in the affair, whose name cannot be given at present for obvious reasons. Those who carried out this brilliant coup were all members of the Fianna, some of them mere boys.

The Magazine Fort is situated in the Phoenix Park, on rising ground commanding a splendid view of the city and county of Dublin and about two miles west from the center of the city. Here, the leaders of the insurrection determined, must be struck one of the first blows, coincident with the attack on the General Post Office, the Four Courts, the Castle, and other points. Much depended on the success of this undertaking. Failure was to be guarded against at all hazards. Were there men ready to risk their lives in this endeavor? Their own lives would very probably be the price of success. There was no need to look for long. The courage and willingness was found in the hero-souled boys of the Fianna.

So it happened that, on Easter Monday morning a small party, twenty in all, some on bicycles, others on cars, wended their way towards the Phoenix Park. The football team, for such to all appearances was this party, met at the main gate entrance, and proceeded leisurely to the recreation grounds, a large portion of the park set aside for games and athletics. In close proximity to and in full view of the Magazine Fort, they divested themselves of their coats and started practising with the ball as if waiting for the opposing team. The ball was kicked from one to the other and the practice maintained until the players drew close to the sentry at the gate. As if by accident the ball was kicked towards the gate and three of the strongest of the party, previously detailed, ran to follow it. The sentry was standing at ease and looked at all this with mild indifference. Suddenly his rifle was seized and in a trice he was overpowered and

covered with two pistols. Then the whole party rushed in and in less than two minutes every one of the fifteen soldiers guarding the place was a prisoner. They were put in the guard-room and carefully watched by a few of the lads with loaded revolvers. There was one other soldier left to deal with. He was on sentry duty on the balustrade. Four of the boys mounted and went towards him. He offered no resistance, but instead started an abject, cringing, crying appeal for mercy. He was assured of his life and ordered to march to the guard-room. Seemingly complying with this, he made as if to descend the steps preceded by one of the boys. Suddenly this soldier made a cowardly attack on the boy, making a thrust at him with his fixed bayonet. The boy quickly turned and without a moment's hesitation shot him. He was not killed, but died soon after through the neglect and cowardice of his comrades. His wound was superficial and need not have been fatal. His fellow-soldiers in the guardroom were informed of what had happened and advised to see to it, but they did nothing for him, and when released later by the boys, fled in a panic from the place leaving the wounded man to bleed slowly to death.

Three of the boys took charge of the residence of the officer in charge, a private residence within the enclosure of the Fort, from whence there was telephonic communication with Island Bridge Barracks, which is only a few hundred yards distant. In the house were the Commandant's wife, her two daughters, and two sons. They were treated with every consideration and before any damage was done to the place were released and allowed to leave the fort. This leniency was ill-repaid as will be seen later on.

Preparations were then hurried forward for the destruction of the fort. Explosives and ammunition were heaped together and the fuses (four) were sparked. The soldiers were warned that if they attempted to leave the place until ordered, they would be shot. The boys then left the fort taking the garrison's rifles with them. The four last to leave mounted a side car, gave the orders to the soldiers to quit and drove off.

One of the boys, coming out of the park by the Island Bridge Gate, observed one of the Commandant's sons, referred to above, running to apprise the troops garrisoned at Island Bridge Barracks, of what had happened. He immediately gave chase, and catching up on him, shot him dead. This incident has attracted a good deal of comment, the newspaper accounts describing it as a most cold-blooded murder and referring sympathetically to the victim 'as a young boy'. This young *man*, for such he was, was old enough to be out fighting with his countrymen in the trenches of Flanders, and should have been there if there was such a thing as consistency in the English character. He was engaged in an act, which if it had succeeded, would have brought the Island Bridge garrison down on top of the little band of Rebels. It was their lives or his. To ensure his safety the boys had endangered their own by letting him leave unmolested the Magazine Fort. He repaid their kindness with treachery. His death was an act of war which the boys deplored, but looked on as a necessity. War is not a parlor game, and when England is involved, it certainly is Hell.

Before the party of Fianna reached the Main Gate, the explosion occurred. There were four successive reports followed by a thunderous rumble that shook the earth. A dense cloud of black smoke rose in the air that obscured the scene for a few moments, followed by spurts of fire that licked up round the building, and in a few minutes the Magazine Fort, with its quantities of ammunition and explosives was a mass of roaring flames. All sections of the Fire Brigade from different parts of the city were called out, but were intercepted by the Volunteers and forced to return. Great damage was done to the Fort, but it was not entirely gutted as the military, who arrived hot-foot on the scene, managed after long and desperate efforts to bring the fire under control.

When the boys reached Kingsbridge, the soldiers were already occupying the streets, but no direct attack was made by them on the boys. The latter had to pass by the Royal Barracks, but escaped through unscathed and succeeded in reaching the Four Courts with little difficulty.

Here a despatch from the Republican Headquarters reached them commending them in the highest terms for their daring action.

It is remarkable, but characteristic of the whole Rebellion, that the members of this expedition did not suffer the slightest casualty. Everyone of this heroic band went creditably through the following week's fighting side by side with their comrades of the Fianna and the men of the Volunteers and Citizen Army.

AUGUST 4, 1917.