

THE VOLUNTEER GIANT

By Éamonn Ceannt.

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Born in the back room of a house in a big street in Dublin, the Volunteer Baby first made the acquaintance of the public in the Rotunda on Tuesday, November the 25th, 1913. From that hour it was clear he was no ordinary baby. His sponsors were people of all parties and of none. Some whispered doubts as to the respectability of his parents. Others thought they should like to adopt him as their own. But soon parents and sponsors and whisperers grew so proud of him, and he grew so amazingly, that now, at the age of nine weeks, the little giant is linking parties and people together as children do. To be sure he has childish ways, this Volunteer baby of ours. Sometimes he puts his little foot in his little eye, as he did in Cork. Sometimes he puts his little foot in somebody else's eye – as he did in Monaghan. These are baby's ways all the world over, and baby will grow out of them by-and-by.

What an immense child he has grown in so brief a space! A few weeks ago Dublin's biggest hall was too small for him. Then Dublin City became too tight a fit, and he must needs stretch himself out all over the country. To-day he sleeps. To-morrow he wakes up, a limb in Cork, a limb in Galway, one in Enniscorthy and another in Gorey. Now that he has begun to notice, what do you think but he's setting his eyes on Athlone and Sligo and Limerick and Strabane, and I declare he'll soon toddle from end to end of Ireland.

INNOCENT CHILDHOOD.

Sometimes he has such a cute look in his eyes. They seem to say: "Wait till I grow up and I'll pay off somebody!" At times again he looks so innocent that you'd say he wouldn't harm a living creature.

Now and again while helping to nurse him – he requires very little nursing, God bless him – I fall asleep and dream. On the National Service – TWO – I see my baby giant grow, grow, grow. His voice resounds from hill to hill. He stretches his great limbs, supple and

shapely. He buckles on his sword, that glistens in the sunlight. The tramp of his feet shakes the land, and he looks the Hope and the Hero of Ireland.

WILL HE FIGHT?

I do hope my hero won't have to fight. When there's a fight somebody always gets hurt. That's the great drawback of fighting. But maybe the very look of him, with his feet planted in the soil of Ireland, and his sword and his gun, will fill the enemies of our land with a wholesome respect for him.

God bless you, my Giant Baby. May long years be yours to work and strive. May you ever resist the blandishments of false friends and the threatenings of puny enemies. Likely enough, on your back will fall the burthen of the fight for Ireland a Nation. Keep your eye clear and your nerves steady. Be skilled in the act of war that so there may be no war. Live plainly that you may be strong and hardy. Be not given to vain boasting. Do not tarry long in taverns, nor take council with those who wish you ill. Keep your own council. Be simple, be efficient, be noble, and the world of Ireland is yours. Long may you live is the sincere wish of one of your earliest nurses.

ÉAMONN CEANNT.