

THE
SINN FEIN RISING:

A Narrative, and Some Reflections

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MUCH has been said, both in Parliament and in the Press, about the weaknesses of the Irish Government; but what has kept us in Ireland in a state of constant alarm, during several recent years, is not any mere personal or casual weakness, but the apparently intentional and deliberate suspension of all government. We have long known that we are living on the slopes of an active volcano, and that an eruption sooner or later was inevitable; but we had grown use to it, and, as we could do nothing to avert or delay the visible danger, we tried to console ourselves with the hope that, when the crisis should come, it would be found that the necessary precautions to over-come it had been provided. The Home-Rule Act was not passed till 1914, but long before that event it was a foregone certainty that such an Act would be passed; and in that anticipation the Castle administration has pursued an undeviating policy of *laisser-aller*, dating at least from Lord Aberdeen's accession to the vice-royalty, in the vain hope that by turning a blind eye, and a deaf ear, to all the signs of the times, by ignoring difficulties and evading responsibilities, things could be kept going smoothly, and "nothing would occur" until on "the appointed day," they should hand over reins of the brakeless coach to their Nationalist successors, and the Lord-Lieutenant and his Chief Secretary should retire, with banners flying and bands playing, amid the plaudits of the multitude.

The acute stage of the seditious operations which culminated on Easter Monday last was reached in 1913, when James Larkin with his still inchoate "Citizen Army" defied the Police at the foot of Nelson's Pillar. The Police were ready to grasp the nettle – had it in fact already in hand – and had they then been supported by the Castle in suppressing the syndicalist outbreak, and in the following year in preventing the gun-running exploit at Howth, it is safe to say that the Sinn Fein insurrection of 1916 would never have taken place; but to do this would have been to reverse the Castle policy, and instead of being supported, the Police were disavowed and humiliated, and their chief officers were compelled to resign.

I do not think the magnitude and the danger of the late affair have been realised by the English people, and very few are aware how near it was to being a great deal worse. Had the Sinn Feiners on Easter Monday not hesitated at the Castle gate; had they believed the incredible fact that there was no force inside capable of resisting their attack, they had only to march boldly in, and the whole establishment and its precincts were at their mercy, and Sir Matthew Nathan would have been a hostage in their hands. Once in possession of the Castle (which I suppose everyone knows is no fortress; only a collection of reception-rooms and offices), the insurgents would have controlled a large district of the city which, without it, was not within their range, whilst the prestige of such a capture would almost certainly have led to the spread of the insurrection throughout the country. It is probably known to but few persons in England that on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) there was a parade – in uniform and with fire-arms – of the combined Sinn Fein and Citizen armies, during the carrying out of which Sackville Street was occupied by them, and the tramway service suspended, with the calm acquiescence of the Castle authorities and the consequent inaction of the Police; whilst on a previous occasion a sort of sham fight was allowed in the streets in the neighbourhood of Dublin Castle, with the same acquiescence.

The whole affair affords a ghastly proof of the wisdom of the maxim, so vehemently decried by pacificists; *si vis pacem, bellum para*: one can understand, and some can perhaps excuse, the infatuation of a Government who could stand by and persuade themselves that all this playing at insurrection was only “pretty Fanny’s way,” and meant nothing; but they must have known that there was at least a chance, that before their graceful exit from the scene could take place, the play-acting might become a reality. Had this contingency been provided against by even a moderate force, properly distributed and efficiently armed, it is highly probable that the rising would never have taken place, or at all events, that it would have been promptly quelled. It seems incredible – though perhaps no absurdity should be incredible in Ireland – but it is positively asserted, that the whole force available for the defence of the Castle consisted of seventeen men, and that those seventeen men had only ten efficient rifles amongst them; and this was the state of things in face of the extraordinary fact that, from time to time, the movements of the Sinn Fein army were advertised in the newspapers beforehand. It is true that a belated notice appeared in the papers countermanding the full-dress parade which had been advertised for Easter Sunday. It is hardly credible that this was sufficient to lull the suspicions of so alert and efficient a body as the Dublin Metropolitan Police; but it seems to have been accepted by the Castle as a sufficient assurance that no disturbance was to be apprehended, and the officers of the garrison were allowed to absent themselves from the city on Easter Monday, at Fairyhouse races.

It is worthy of notice that, a short time before the outbreak, there was circulated through the country – in the now familiar German manner – a bogus circular, alleged to have been surreptitiously abstracted by the Castle, purporting to convey a set of instructions for the purpose, as was alleged, of disarming the Volunteers, and for the seizure and occupation by the Police and Military of a number of points of vantage in and adjacent to the City, and so “depriving the people of their liberties.” The preposterous character of this publication may be judged from the fact that amongst the places named were the Mansion House of the Nationalist Lord Mayor and the Palace of the Roman Catholic Archbishop, Dr. Walsh. Presumably the inmates were in each case to be kept in during as hostages. This absurdity was no doubt intended to inflame what may be called neutral opinion, and Mr. Ginnell, M.P., at any rate, affected to accept it as genuine, and drew attention to it in the House of Commons.

The plan of the insurgents, which seems to have been carefully thought out beforehand, was exactly of the kind foreshadowed in the bogus circular just referred to as a Castle plot. They were to have occupied, at the outset of their operations, by simultaneous surprise attacks, the Castle, the Post-Office, the Four-Courts, and the five terminal railway stations in the City; and at the same time to entrench themselves in Stephen’s Green Park, a central space of upwards of 22 acres, the gift of Lord Ardilaun to the City in 1877. The attempt on the Castle failed for the reason already mentioned; but those on the Post-Office and the Four-Courts were at once accomplished, such employees of the former as were not already in complicity with the insurgents being turned out, but without any violence. Supplies were procured by raiding hotels and provision shops in the neighbourhood, promissory notes, at least in some cases, being given for the value of the goods taken, in the name of the Irish Republic; and it is said that when the Law Courts were repossessed by the Military, live sheep and goats were found in the enclosure. The flag of the Irish Republic was hoisted over the Post-Office, whence proclamations and general orders were from time to time issued.

Punctually at noon on Easter Monday the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway Stations, at Westland Row and Hartcourt Street, were occupied by a small force armed with rifles and bayonets, who ordered the immediate discontinuance of all trains. The terminus at Hartcourt Street was soon abandoned as not being adapted for defensive purposes; but the Westland Row Station, which controlled the arrival of passengers and military from the mail steamers at Kingstown, was held for a week. The railway works, about three-quarters of a mile away, were at the same time seized, and continued in possession of the insurgents for somewhat longer. No attempt to occupy the Broadstone Station of the Midland Great Western Railway was made until Tuesday afternoon, when to their disappointment, the insurgents found that they had been forestalled by the Military by just half-an-hour. Those of the Great Northern and Great Southern Railways were not captured. A bridge on the Northern line a few miles from Dublin was, however, blown up; but ineffectively, only one line of rails being cut, so that the traffic was continued by working the single line. On the Midland Line a bridge was more effectively damaged, making it impossible for the crowds who attended the Fairyhouse races, including several officers of the garrison, to return to town by rail. On the Dublin and Kingstown Railway the use of the line, was prevented by the removal of rails, at a point about a mile from Westland Row.

Simultaneously with these strategic operations a number of houses situated so as to command the streets by which military reinforcements might be expected to arrive were occupied by select detachments of snipers. In some cases empty houses were seized for this purpose; in others the residents were either turned out or confined in the basement rooms. Amongst the premises thus occupied were the two corner houses at the foot of Sackville Street, East and West, which commanded the principal bridge across the river, and several corner houses, and others, on the line of march from Kingstown to the City, as well as some which overlooked Beggars's bush barracks, the Branch of the Bank of Ireland at the North-East corner of Stephen's Green, and many others. The college of Surgeons, on the west side of Stephen's Green, was occupied by a strong body of insurgents, as were also the offices and bakery of Jacobs' Biscuit Factory; and both these were held as fortified posts till the final surrender of the leaders in the G.P.O. Liberty Hall, a large edifice in Beresford Place, facing the west side of the Custom-House, and the head-quarters of the Citizen Army – the grandiloquent title of Larkin's syndicalist union, in which Conolly, one of the ablest, most determined, and least scrupulous of the leaders, was the moving spirit – was another fortified post. For weeks before the outbreak it had presented the strange spectacle of a guard in the republican uniform, and fully armed, parading before the doors, under the very noses of the Police, whose Store Street Station was only a few yards away. From the beginning of hostilities the general head-quarters were in the G.P.O. in Sackville Street.

It does not appear that, in any case where inhabited premises were taken possession of, any violence or insult was offered to the inmates, nor was any wanton damage – that is to say any damage not intended to serve some military object – done to the premises or their contents. Provisions, and sometimes money, were commandeered; but there was no making hay of the furniture and ornaments, such as would have been done by a German army in a like situation. The indiscriminate looting which prevailed extensively in Sackville Street and its neighbourhood, and sporadically in some other quarters, was not the work of the Sinn Feiners, who endeavoured throughout to maintain an effective discipline. On the other hand, there is no doubt that in pursuance of one of their avowed objects, the extermination of every vestige of British Rule in Ireland, they systematically fired on every wearer of naval or military uniform, armed or unarmed, who came within their range; and, of course, as always must happen in this sort of promiscuous street firing, many quite unoffending non-combatants lost their lives by inadvertence.

Perhaps the worst thing alleged against them, as being the most treacherous, was that of firing from the Post-Office on the officers and men of the Fire Brigade when they endeavoured to cope with the conflagration in Sackville Street.* Considering that to the Syndicalists, who formed the left wing of the allied army, violence, as an instrument of terrorism, is an end in itself, perhaps the self-restraint that was exercised is more to be wondered at than the want of it. Once the serious nature of the outbreak had forced itself on the apprehension of the Castle the military measures taken were prompt and effective. By Monday evening troops had begun to arrive from the Curragh and Newbridge, and throughout Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, regiment after regiment, chiefly of Territorials, continued to pour into Kingstown from a succession of transports, until by the end of the week some fifty thousand men, with artillery and full campaigning outfit, had arrived in the city and suburbs, and the Commander-in-chief was invested with ample powers for the suppression of the rebellion.

Dublin is practically almost surrounded by two canals; so that, except on the western side, there is no entrance or exit, to or from the city, without crossing a bridge. These were promptly occupied by military forces and no one was allowed to enter or leave the city without a permit. One unavoidable consequence of the limitation of road traffic thus necessarily caused, in addition to the restriction of railway operations, – partly brought about by the interference of the insurgents, and partly by military regulations – was that, by the end of the first week, there began to be a serious deficiency of food supplies in many places, particularly in the suburban districts which were accustomed to receive their daily supply of bread from city bakeries, and where the shopkeepers, especially provision dealers, depended largely on wholesale merchants in Dublin for the replenishment of their stocks. The task before the military authorities was an exceptionally onerous and difficult one. British soldiers are not habituated to the Prussian doctrine that in the service of the Kaiser they should be cheerfully ready to fire upon their nearest and dearest relations; they do not take kindly to the sort of fighting called for in the suppression of civil disorder, and the psychological effect of this reluctance is to produce a kind of nervousness which, paradoxical as it may seem, often leads to serious irregularities, sometimes with deplorable consequences. Moreover, a large proportion of the troops employed were Territorial levies, who had never been in action before.

Again; only a small proportion of the rebel forces were in uniform; many of them only wearing at most a brassard or some such trifling distinguishing mark, (easily discarded at short notice), and, it need hardly be said, having no such alien aspect as would mark them at sight as obviously belonging to the forces of the enemy. Furthermore, the very nature of the street fighting, of which almost the whole operating consisted, is disconcerting and puzzling in an extraordinary degree. Every house along the line of march, inhabited or uninhabited, may contain a company of practised marksmen, who fire from behind protecting walls and breastworks; whilst the soldiers are in the open. In this way, some of the regiments arriving from England were met immediately on their entrance into the city by murderous fire from houses carefully selected beforehand, by which the Sherwood Foresters, in particular, lost, in a few minutes, about as many officers and men as the number of the insurgent leaders executed at the close of the rebellion by judgement of Courts Martial.

*It is possible that the firing at the members of the brigade was due to a misconception as to their function, the snipers supposing the uniform to have a British or military significance. A railway messenger in uniform was fired at on one of the early days, but when sent out afterwards in plain clothes he passed to and fro unmolested.

Another source of extreme embarrassment, which doubtless lengthened the period during which the insurgents were able to hold out, was in the reluctance to demolish the buildings infested by Sinn Fein snipers. Liberty Hall was very properly destroyed by bombing at an early stage, and at a later period the Post-Office was cleared out in a similar manner, being finally burnt out, leaving the façade and the portico and the side walls standing, so that it can perhaps be restored; but in the case of the College of Surgeons such treatment would only have been justified by absolute necessity, and a continuous rifle and machine-gun firing seems to have been kept up, on both sides, with probably considerable more casualties to the soldiers than would have occurred had they been free to demolish it by shell or bombs. In the same way the loss to the nation by the destruction of the contents of the Law Courts would have been so great that only in the last resort could it have been contemplated. Jacobs' biscuit factory was saved by its very close proximity to the Adelaide Hospital, in which, besides the ordinary patients, there were a large number of wounded soldiers. It is pretty certain that in adopting the Bakery as a stronghold, the immunity to be expected from the proximity of the hospital was counted on as a valuable asset. On the other hand, so galling was the Sinn Fein firing from the corner houses at the foot of Sackville Street, making the passing of the Carlisle Bridge, impracticable without risk of great loss, that it became a military necessity to destroy them, which was accomplished by gunfire from points at some distance on the south side of the river. It is probable that it was this operation, together with the destruction of the Post-Office, that started the fires by which so terrible a devastation was suffered in Sackville Street and the adjacent streets.

One serious blunder was made by the insurgents in not taking possession of the Central Telephone Office. By their failure in this respect they lost an opportunity of breaking the connection between the military authorities in Dublin and those at the country depots and in England, and so delaying the reinforcements which at once began to pour in. This oversight is remarkable, inasmuch as they were prompt in cutting, both at the Post-Office and the Railway station, the main telegraphic connections with the cross-channel submarine cables; an operation evidently carried out by expert telegraph artificers in the Post-Office service, the main wires specially concerned being selected unerringly. It has been suggested, to account for this strange neglect, that the General Staff in Berlin, when drawing up the plan of operations, assumed that the telephone system, like that of the telegraphs, was centred in the General-Post-Office, and would be dealt with there. A simpler explanation had been offered, that the detachment charged with the capture of the telephone exchange were misled, by false information that the soldiers were already in occupation, and feared to attempt to storm the building. As a matter of fact the operators remained at their posts day and night for several days and rendered very efficient services in aid of the military.

Whether the plan of operations was in fact arranged in Berlin or not, the complicity of the Germans in the whole scheme is undeniable. The mode of Sir Roger Casement's landing from the emblematic "collapsible" boat, while the shipful of arms and ammunition by which he was to have been supported went prematurely to the bottom, seems to give a ridiculous aspect to his adventure, but there is no doubt that the rank and file were led to believe that not only was Sir Roger provided with a supply of munitions, but that German troops had already effected a landing in Kerry; and they were further fully persuaded that the Island was so surrounded by German submarines that reinforcements could not be brought across the Channel, so that they had nothing to fear except the small force already in the country. It is said that many of them believed that in this state of things they would not even have to fight; that once they were in occupation of the strategic points laid out, the Castle authorities would accept the situation and leave the Irish Republican leaders in possession of the administration. Besides these illusory hopes of German co-operation there can be no doubt that assistance was afforded from Germany both in money and in arms.

That these latter were of little value was only to be expected; but they brought additional, and perhaps not wholly deserved, reproach on the Sinn Fein leaders; for the ammunition furnished for the discarded mauser rifles with which they had been supplied was, according to the evidence of Major Price, “of a terrible character. There were flat-nosed bullets, split bullets; and, in the Post-Office, reverse bullets were found.” There are all inhuman devices, calculated not to stop or kill their victims, which is the legitimate function of bullets, but to aggravate the wounds inflicted by them, to render them more painful and more difficult of cure; their use had been condemned by the Hague Conventions, and is even admittedly illicit by German professions; yet they did not hesitate to supply their Irish dupes with them. Is it to be hoped that their horrible character was not known to those who used them; but the Sinn Fein leaders, who were mostly intelligent and instructed men, are not entitled to the benefit of such a plea of ignorance. If they knew the character of these missiles they were guilty of intentional and wanton cruelty: if they did not know, they are *ipso facto* disqualified as leaders of any legitimate operations of either war or peace.

Except in the City of Dublin, serious risings occurred in only three districts; in the County Meath near Ashbourne, where a body of Constabulary fell into an ambush, and the County inspector, the District Inspector, and six sergeants and constables and some other persons were killed; in the County Galway, between Galway and Athenry and Loughrea; a district which has long been a notorious centre of sedition and agrarian disturbance, where also, at least one constable lost this life; and in the county Wexford, around Enniscorthy, where a railway bridge was damaged, and the permanent way cut, and the town was partly occupied by the Sinn Fein volunteers. It is said that an actual outbreak was prevented by a delay in the delivery of a message from the Dublin head-quarters, through which the Military were enabled to arrive on the scene before the local leaders had received the instructions, without which they hesitated to act.

In its motives, its purposes, its methods and its results the whole émuté closely resembled the rising of the Commune of Paris in 1871. Both were undertaken at a time of great national difficulty; and, in both cases, a speedy suppression was essential to prevent a dangerous and destructive prolongation of the struggle. If we compare Sir John Maxwell’s methods of those with those of M. Thiers, we shall, I think, see reason to admire the clemency and moderation with which this out-break, the most dangerous that has occurred in the United Kingdom since 1798, has been dealt with. It is clear that the whole movement depended for any possible chance of success – as Irish rebellions have always depended – on foreign aid and enemy co-operation: in the words of the Sinn Fein proclamation it was “supported by her [Ireland’s] exiled children in America, and by *gallant allies in Europe*,” and was undertaken at the present critical juncture, in reliance on the well-known national maxim that “England’s difficulty is Ireland’s opportunity.” Had the leaders been men of the practical intelligence without which sentimental aspirations, however virtuous, are of little avail, they ought to have known that the time when the British nation was in the stress of a life-and-death struggle for its existence was the time of all others when the promptest and most forcible measures were certain to be taken to suppress a rising avowedly entered upon in alliance with the foreign enemy.

Like many other revolutionary movements, the Sinn Fein Association was, in its initiation, rather literary and philosophic than truculent or incendiary; and its leaders were imbued with altruistic aspirations and a genuine sentiment of the elevating effects, moral and spiritual, of political independence and republican self-government. But the higher the aspirations, and the greater the intellectual and spiritual attainments of the promoters of a popular movement, the greater their responsibility; the claims made for them in this respect by their apologists seem rather to aggravate the turpitude of their conduct, than to palliate or excuse their action, in instigating an armed and violent insurrection.

“Treason doth never prosper, what’s the reason?”

“Why when it prospers, none dare call it treason.”

I would not adopt the converse of Sir John Harrington’s epigram, and say that nothing can justify insurrection except success. There have been many cases in history in which intolerable oppression has madden its victims into premature and hopeless revolt; the actors in which have, nevertheless, been enrolled amongst the heroes of their age; but was there any such excuse as this for the Sinn Fein rising? The answer from the practical side is to be found in Mr. Redmond’s recent address to the Nationalist Party, in which while condemning the outbreak, he enumerates the many benefits which during the past twenty to thirty years, since the passing of the Land Acts, have accrued to the people of Ireland by legislation – and not only by legislation; but by the free local administration and co-operation of the people of Ireland themselves.

It needs no recondite examination of Acts of Parliament or statistical returns to prove the enormous improvement that has taken place in agricultural and pastoral Ireland during the present generation.* No one who recollects the condition of the West and South of Ireland thirty years ago, and compares it with that of the same districts to-day, can fail to see that, in every respect, the present aspect of the country and its people is so changed as to be hardly recognisable as the same. The agriculture is better; the live-stock are better; the houses are better; the people are better clothed and fed. Instead of the woe-begone, apathetic, ragged denizens of miserable hovels, you now see comfortable looking, well-clad peasantry, for a large number of whom substantial well built dwellings have been provided by the County Councils. There is probably no country in Europe in which there has been, in the last thirty years, a greater improvement in the general condition of the population of the agricultural and pastoral districts than in Ireland.

Under these circumstances the question is not unnaturally asked, “What good did these insurrectionists hope to gain if they had been successful?” There is no simple answer to this question.

*It may, however, be worth noting that, during the thirty years 1881 to 1911, whilst the number of families dwelling in houses classified by the Census Commissioners as first-class increased from 57,673 to 77,351, and in the second-class from 403,862 to 576,311; those in the third-class decreased 443,247 to 222,342, and that in the fourth-class from 90,932 to 34,683; also that, whilst the emigration from the United Kingdom in 1913 was at the rate of 10.5 per thousand of the population, that from Ireland was at the rate of only 7.1 per thousand.

The true Sinn Fein leaders are philosophical and sentimental republicans, imbued with the belief in a sanctity of the principal of national self government which, in their view, is the root of every civic virtue and the only firm foundation of intellectual and spiritual development, or even of economical growth and physical prosperity. This is the significance of their title – Sinn Fein: “ourselves alone” – nothing, they conceive, can be achieved in realisation of their ideals, until we have released ourselves from the incubus of the English overlordship. In furtherance of this purpose they are ready to act on Swift’s caustic injunction: “Burn everything English, except her coals,” and it was under the influence of this obsession that they treated the mere wearing of a uniform as a challenging symbol, justifying the shooting of the wearer at sight, once their declaration of war had been promulgated.

In the rank-and-file they found a soldiery apt to carry out these behests; brought up on a sort of gospel of hate, fostered, it is to be feared in too many of the National Schools, – it is to be remembered that several prominent instigators of the insurrection were teachers of intermediate schools or professors in the National University – like that German hymn of hate, the burden of which “Gott strafe England,” has become a by-word. To make matters worse, and still further to confuse the issues, the Sinn Fein leaders allowed themselves, inconsistently with their own principles, to invoke the alliance of the Citizen Army, formed and led by James Conolly to enforce the syndicalist doctrines of Larkin, the leader, and almost the inventor of the “sympathetic strike” which, since 1911, has done so much to impoverish the working population of Dublin; an alliance, which, while it gave them, for their immediate insurrectionary purpose, a ready and effective instrument, did much to degrade the character of the whole movement: for, while the Sinn Fein Association, however unpractical and visionary, has something of a sentimentally altruistic, and poetical character, the Syndicalist doctrine is purely materialistic and its methods those of violence, absolute, and unconditioned by any purpose save that of the destruction of what is called capitalism, and the elimination of the whole class of employers from the body politic, irrespective of consequences.

The history of revolutions makes it seem certain that had the Sinn Fein outbreak succeeded it would not have been long before the dreamers and the constitutionalists would have been cast aside, and the future conduct of the movement would have rested with the men of violence; just as the Girondins were annihilated by the Jacobins. On the whole we may answer our question, that the movement had no definite practical object in view beyond the establishment of an Irish Republic – that once gained, its promoters trusted that all the idealised blessings of republicanism would automatically flow from the democratic fountainhead; in this resembling the Anarchists, the Nihilists, and the Syndicalists, none of whom have ever yet thought out their enthusiastic dreams beyond the revolutionary stage, or attempted to give practical shape to the utopian polity to which their revolution was to be the introduction.

Yet the leaders were not wholly without an object which seemed to them to justify a violent effort to give a different direction to the coming reconstitution of Irish Government. The Home-Rule act, is by admission of its own authors, imperfect; for it was hardly passed before an amending Act was freely spoken of, and even promised. The Sinn Fein thinkers denounce the whole scheme as unworkable and “insulting to Ireland”: they want, like the Scottish Covenanters, “a godly thorough reformation,” and this they consider can never be hoped for as long as Mr. Redmond’s half-baked constitution stops the way.

They are out therefore, first of all, to undermine and destroy Mr. Redmond's influence and party. An initial success, such as they hoped to effect through the surprise of a sudden insurrection, in the unprepared and somnolent condition of the Castle Government, would, they believed, achieve this purpose by winning over to the side of the men of action the great bulk of Mr. Redmond's followers, especially the partly-trained National Volunteers; with this prospect before them, and with the confident expectation of efficient help from Germany and America, they considered the risk worth taking; and we have seen, and are suffering from, the result.

There is not, nor has there been, in any section of Irish people any desire for vindictive or harsh treatment of the defeated insurgents; but "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," and a dreamy philanthropy is no sufficient ground for exemption from this penalty. Enthusiasts may be justified in giving their own lives in the pursuit of their ideals, but when they embark on an enterprise, such as the late insurrection, the success of which can only be achieved by violence – and violence on a gigantic scale – they are gambling with human lives and with the happiness and prosperity of their own country and its inhabitants. They wager their own individual lives against those of thousands of their fellows: and when the game has gone against them, who shall say that they are inhumanely treated when they are called upon to pay up the forfeited stakes.

The experience of Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, enforces, above all other lessons, this; that there is an unsleeping Nemesis which, sooner or later, overtakes every Government which, falling to recognise that the first and most essential function of a government is to govern, makes default in the performance of this fundamental obligation. It is the more vitally important that this lesson should be pondered by the Democracy to whose as yet untried hands the destinies of these realms have been entrusted; inasmuch as, while the defaulting rulers are often allowed to escape with a mitigated penalty, the full measure of retribution is relentlessly exacted from the misgoverned people.

"Where there is no vision the people perish." The rulers of Ireland have failed to discern the signs of the times; and the people perish accordingly. Must it always be so?

F. W. Pim.

June 21st, 1916.