

THE WAR IN IRELAND.

By Eamonn Ceannt.

From *The Spark*, March 28, 1915. Ceannt is named as the author in Desmond Shaw's *The Drama of Sinn Féin*, published 1923.

While the Allies are advancing by trenches in France, and the cause of small Nationalities is being daily established on a firmer foundation by the 'Freeman's Journal,' most people forget to note the progress of the War in Ireland. We do not sufficiently take to heart the flaring poster's command to remember Belgium! That small country with an area one fourth of Ireland's has shown how a small people can fight for a great cause. We do not remember to have seen the Belgians fighting on the soil of Ireland against our ancient enemies, the Saxons, before John Dillon proclaimed his 'truce' with England. But when the fight came to his own doors the little Belgian knew how to shoulder his gun, bid good-bye to his home, and to do battle for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods.

The cry 'Remember Belgium' is good—for the Belgians. The cry 'Remember Ireland' is sound sense—for Irishmen. The battle for Ireland goes merrily on. John Dillon's 'truce'—unhappily suggestive word—is a one-sided affair. The enemy is within our gates. He teaches our children not to remember, but to forget, Ireland. He banishes our language from the schools. The little sons and daughters of Ireland have not the privilege accorded to the little Belgian folk to prattle in their native tongue. Our Post-office refuses to do business in Irish. Our Irish-addressed letters are delayed, opened, and eventually strayed. Our Mike O'Leary's must not remember their ancestors done to death in the penal days for devotion to religion, nationality and honour. A truce has been called. During the truce we can reckon our gains—population decreasing; birth rate almost stationary; industries stagnant; the Irish Language spurned from the public life in Ireland; ignored by the 'Law,' boycotted in the school; natural resources undeveloped; communication with the outer world cut off; free speech and freedom of the press banished—during the blessed 'truce.' Truly

Irishmen, ye don't sufficiently realise the importance of the war on which we are engaged. Ye do not know whose turn it may be next to fall.

Then, in the language of the man with the ribbons, enlist to-day in one of the gallant regiments which is fighting for the cause we have all at heart. Join the Irish Language Movement, motto: Ni Eireannach go Gaedhilgeoir. Join the Irish Volunteers; motto: 'Remember Ireland!' Join any branch of Ireland's service. Do not be a shirker. Ireland needs every son. Every department of National endeavour is undermanned and overworked. Take your place in the ranks and help to stop a bullet. There are too many neutrals—too many sailing under false colours. Spread the light. Learn a little bit of Irish history. Try to answer off-hand why Ireland once looked to Belgium for succour. Who drove our clerics to Louvain? Why should you fear to speak of '98, or even Bachelor's Walk? Ask yourself or your friend the present population of Belgium, then that of Ireland. The area of both. How the native language stands in both countries. And so on, and so on. And when you have realised that a country the size of Munster can make world history you will seriously ask why Ireland, the mother of heroes, is the Cinderella of the Nations. And while she is in rags and tatters, without arms, without language, without the right to rule her own household, you will see, that, after all, there is more than meets the thinking Irishman's eye in the adjuration to remember Belgium. In the wake of the thought of that gallant land fighting to preserve herself as a buffer between England and her foes, will flow other thoughts, thoughts of a free Ireland, ruling her own land and her people in her own right. And when next the Khaki picture-soldier halts your eye with his cry 'Remember Belgium,' you will pass on your way with the soliloquy 'Remember Ireland.'