

THE FENIAN VOLUNTEER TO HIS CONSTITUTIONALIST COMRADE.

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I.—THE SITUATION.

You and I have come to know each other, respect each other, and admire each other in the ranks of the Irish Volunteers. The Irish Volunteers were established with extraordinary success, because all Ireland came suddenly to see—what some of us had never lost sight of—that England, now as always, was not to be trusted in her dealings with this country. The Volunteers, with their marvellous advance in numbers and proficiency, became a factor in the situation then: now, with the situation grown immeasurably more acute, they have become a greater factor still; and wily England would turn them to her account. Unfortunately, she can command the service of our members of Parliament, who are entirely under her influence; and who, already, are coming on a campaign to win our Volunteers for England's aid. That is the situation. And here is a question:—Has the English Government, that was not to be trusted at the beginning of the year, grown suddenly virtuous? And what is our duty?

II.—OUR COMMON HOPE.

I speak to you with confidence, because I have in mind that bright summer morning that we set out on our first route march. We met for the first time. We knew we were of different 'parties.' We spoke briefly and with some mistrust—there was doubt in the atmosphere. But our work saved us. We were Irishmen, with the blood and traditions of soldiers, training for the army of Ireland. We could bring our steel

into the light, and the music of the march was in our veins. Political meetings had sundered us; soldiering united us. And we came to see we were not of different parties at all. You were at heart a Fenian; and you found me, to your surprise, you thought, a bit conservative. But we had one cause, Ireland; one hope, freedom for Ireland; one dream, to step into the fight for Ireland, and carry her last battle to victory. Have we not that one common hope still?

III.—OUR ENEMIES UNITED.

What has happened to sunder us anew? Our enemies are united in fear. That should strengthen us in confidence. But they have won over the parliamentary leaders in whom Ireland till now trusted, in particular the men you trusted—alas, for that trust? You were loyal to them while they were loyal to Ireland; but now that they would sacrifice Ireland to the Empire, that you as well as I hate, where will you stand? By the Ireland of our common hopes and dreams! There, too, I stand, and those of our comrades who first sprang to arms. We were of all parties; we are of all parties! let us make now one unconquerable band. For now the party leaders surely cannot come between us. These new allies of England have cut all the old ties. Mr. Redmond and Mr. O'Brien, the 'Freeman's Journal' and the 'Independent,' the 'Cork Examiner' and the 'Cork Free Press,' all recent in their mutual recriminations, are now one for the Empire. They unite for England who would not unite for Ireland! Is not that enough? But you, and I, and our comrades, let us be one for Ireland.

IV.—THE UNION OF HONOUR.

Our union will be the only union of honour and promise. We represent the manhood of Ireland, and when the manhood of Ireland is true, the Cause is safe. Let the campaign of falsehood be carried through with all the Devil's cunning, yet God's truth shall prevail, and our flag shall have victory. And the leaders who abandoned us shall be discredited, and their new banner dragged in the dust, and their power shall be no

more. Our strength lies now in standing together and preparing for the future. When England is fighting for her life, the simple withholding of our aid is a factor in the dissolution of her Empire. That Empire sucked our blood like a vampire; that it did not destroy us as a people is due to our vitality. Let us conserve that vitality now for Ireland, and in a little while we shall arise for battle; and from that battle we shall emerge erect and proud and free.

V.—WHAT IS POSSIBLE?

It is the unceasing cry of the slave—What is possible? So many and such various and splendid things are possible, that I should take long to tell you of them; though you will not ask that slave-question, I know, once we have forged the new union for Ireland. But we shall talk of these things here and elsewhere, that we may win all troubled and anxious hearts to our side. And meantime and always, let us keep our eyes on the goal.

VI.—THE GOAL.

And the goal? It is not Ireland within the Empire; not even Ireland moulding and ruling the Empire! We despise and repudiate it. But Ireland taking up the continuity of her life, broken after the disaster at Kinsale, and renewing herself in a life fresher and finer and purer—purer for all the martyrdoms, sufferings, dreams, and victories; for we have had victories, remember. Every man who died rather than surrender won a victory. And these held the interval:—Tone, Emmet, Davis, Mitchel, Stephens—these held the continuity of our life. But the cup of our martyrdoms is full, and the fruit of our victories is to reap. Comrade, your hand, and pardon that I questioned you; but there was confidence also in my words, for I thought of our first march; and so we shall march to the end—the end that is not far. Already the light has touched the skies, and soon it shall blaze into a great fire. Do you not hear the cry of crowning victory? It is the goal.