

Irish News

GENERAL.

Mr. William Redmond, M.P., has enrolled himself as a member of the Co. Clare Irish National Volunteers.

Capt. White, D.S.O., the son of Sir George White of Ladysmith, who commands the Irish National Volunteers in Tyrone, has been requested by the War Office to rejoin his old regiment.

At a gathering of five thousand Irish National Volunteers from all parts of County Meath, and some from County Louth, at Slane, County Meath, on August 17, the services of the Volunteers were offered for the defence of the country, and fealty was pledged to Mr. John Redmond.

The latest Unionist peer to join the Irish Volunteers is the Marquis of Headfort, who, in a letter to the press, gladly welcomes Mr. Redmond's speech and announces his own intention of joining the local corps of Irish Volunteers and contributing his quota to the defence of United Ireland.

His Lordship the Bishop of Kildare, in a letter which was read in all the churches of his diocese on Sunday, says that it is the duty of his flock as faithful Christians and loyal citizens of the great Empire to which they are proud to belong to offer prayers for the success of England and her Allies.

Now, as during the Boer war, over 80 per cent. of the Irish soldiers in the army are Catholics. At the present moment Irish Catholics are enlisting in thousands at Dublin and other Nationalist centres. It is to be hoped Belfast and other Orange centres are supporting the cause of the Empire with equal zeal.

It is understood that in view of official recognition for the Irish National Volunteers, two officers, General O'Brien Mahon and Captain Cummins, have been visiting the South of Ireland making inquiries respecting the National Army. Important developments are expected to take place when their tour of inspection has concluded.

The celebration of the relief of Derry, which in past years has been the occasion of much rioting and disturbance, was this year one of the quietest and smallest commemorations on record. The Irish National Volunteers joined the Ulster Volunteers in policing the streets of the city, so that the considerable force brought in from outside districts had nothing to do.

UNITED IRELAND.

From all parts of Ireland (says the *Glasgow Observer*) come enthusiastic declarations from Protestant Unionists that Mr. Redmond's speech on the war has solved the Home Rule difficulty. In the South and West of Ireland especially, Protestants are heartily throwing in their lot with the National Volunteers. Besides the accession of such Unionists as Lord Bessborough and Lord Montague, it is still more significant to find men like Captain Bryan Cooper, who was himself an Irish Unionist member of Parliament, publishing very cordial approval of Mr. Redmond's speech, and saying that because of it they are themselves joining the ranks of the Irish National Volunteers. It is not too much to say that the effect of Mr. Redmond's great speech has been simply miraculous. It has at one stroke achieved what seemed impossible of achievement—the virtual unity of Ireland.

'ILLITERATES.'

The charge of illiteracy against the people, especially the Catholics, in Ireland is supported by statistics curiously applied, as quoted in the *Glasgow Observer*. In 1901, according to the census returns, 'there were in Ireland 91,819 children over five years and under six. Of these ancient and venerable personages, 59,206 are returned as illiterates, and that enormous

number enters into the Registrar-General's calculations when calculating the percentage of illiteracy for Ireland. Of six years and under seven there were 90,257 children; 34,257 of these could not read, and were classed as illiterates, and so raised the percentage of illiteracy still higher.' Even worse than this, the *Observer* says: 'In the same census report the actual number of persons in Ireland at each age—under one year, one and under two, two and under three, and so on is given; every child under five is classed as illiterate. The number of illiterates given in that report includes 86,261 under one year of age, 80,774 between one and two, and so on. Imagine a baby under one year old who was not illiterate. What a fearsome creature it would be! All under five are returned as "illiterates."' And on such proofs Orange lecturers wax eloquent against 'popular ignorance' and Home Rule—'Rome Rule.'

PROTESTANT BISHOP'S MANLY UTTERANCE.

In the course of his address at the Killaloe and Kilmecora Synod, Right Rev. Dr. Berry spoke of his Catholic fellow-countrymen in terms that it would be well his brethren in the Protestant Episcopacy would ponder over seriously. Having advised submission to Home Rule, should it be passed into law, he said the teaching of the New Testament was plain on the subject. Obedience to law of the land was not a matter of political expediency: it was a moral Christian duty. He appealed to his lay brethren, should the proposed changes in the Government of the country take place, neither to sever their connection with Ireland nor to stand aloof from the new order which altered conditions would involve. He believed that their co-operation would be welcomed in the future time. He said that because he was convinced that the dominating majority in the country, who differed from them in faith, did not desire either to drive them away nor to interfere with their liberties. That might seem to them hopeless optimism, but his conviction was the result of personal experience during all his ministry. He had lived on terms of friendship with his Catholic neighbors, the clergy and laity of the Church, and he knew by the testimony of many of his clergy of the united dioceses that what had been his experience was theirs also.

IRELAND AND GERMANY.

Mr. Redmond's offer to the Government that it may take its troops out of Ireland, since the Irish shores will be defended by the Irish National Volunteers, is very far from being a mere piece of rhetoric. It is a very serious offer and entails the possibility, or more than that, of great self-sacrifice on the part of those in whose name it was made. The National Volunteers in Ireland are by no means unaware of their responsibilities, nor are they imbued with the delusion that they may never be called upon to defend their country. A German invasion of England is quite unlikely; a German invasion of Ireland is on a totally different plane. That great Irish soldier, Sir William Butler, prophesied some years ago that the Germans when they found themselves strong enough would come up against England. Butler was no alarmist, no jingo. He was a man of keen perception, great foresight, and vast experience. It was his opinion that in the event of Anglo-German war there would be no invasion of England, but with Ireland the matter was different. Ireland, he said, is a country with plenty of food in it, cattle, corn, roots and vegetables, and he felt sure that in the archives of the German staff there would be some well-thought-out plan of a campaign in Ireland. Asked whether the British Fleet did not prevent such a possibility, he answered that even a temporary disaster, fog, or a bit of ill-luck might precipitate upon the shores of Ireland a couple of German Army Corps. The Irish shore line to the South and West opens on such a vast expanse of sea that there is much more room for manœuvring and for German ships eluding British patrol than in the case of any other part of the coast-line of the United Kingdom.

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