

From Celtic Twilight to Revolutionary Dawn

The Irish Review 1911-1914

By Ed Mulhall

The July 1913 edition of *The Irish Review*, a monthly magazine of Irish Literature, Art and Science, leads off with an article "Ireland, Germany and the Next War" written under the pseudonym "Shan Van Vocht". The article is a response to a major piece written by Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the Sherlock Holmes books and a noted writer on international issues, in the *Fortnightly Review* of February 1903 called "Great Britain and the Next War". Shan Van Vocht takes issue with a central conclusion of Doyle's piece that Ireland's interests are one with Great Britain if Germany were to be victorious in any conflict. Doyle writes: "I would venture to say one word here to my Irish fellow-countrymen of all political persuasions. If they imagine that they can stand politically or economically while Britain falls, they are woefully mistaken. The British Fleet is their one shield. If it be broken, Ireland will go down. They may well throw themselves heartily into the common defense, for no sword can transfix England without the point reaching Ireland behind her." However *The Irish Review* author proposes to show that "Ireland, far from sharing the calamities that must necessarily fall on Great Britain from defeat by a Great Power, might conceivably thereby emerge into a position of much prosperity."

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A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF IRISH LITERATURE, ART & SCIENCE	
JULY, 1913	
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The contents page of the July 1913 issue of *The Irish Review*

In supporting this provocative stance the author initially tackles two aspects of the accepted British view of Ireland's fate under these circumstances: that Ireland would remain tied with Britain under German rule or that she might be annexed by the victor. Under the first the author agrees with the supposition that tied to Britain and already 'weaker, poorer and less recuperative' than Great Britain Ireland would suffer even greater hardship than Britain.

Under the second possibility 'annexation' he finds the outcome potentially more complex. The accepted British view would be that in this situation Ireland forcibly removed from Britain as the spoils of war would for Ireland be "out of the frying pan into the fire". " Germany rule, we are asked to believe, would be so bad, so stern, that under it Ireland, however much she might have suffered from England in the past, would soon yearn to be restored to the arms of her sorrowful sister." This view he challenges by examining what would be the dominant strategic requirement for Germany in regard to Ireland: "Clearly not to impoverish and depress that new-won possession, but to enhance its strategic importance by vigorous and wise administration so as to make it the main counterpoise to any possible recovery of British maritime supremacy, so largely due as this was in the past to Great Britain's own possession of this island." So Ireland is still a dominion but with some more benign policy determining its rule.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes books, wrote in February 1913 that Ireland's interests were best served by support for Britain in any future war with Germany. 'The British fleet is their one shield' It was an argument that drew a response in the pages of *The Irish Review* (Image: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA)

But there is a third possibility that, he argues, is at least as likely as the first option and more likely than annexation which he considers unlikely to be acceptable internationally in a post war settlement. This would be - for want of a better term - be the European solution. Great Britain's defeat by Germany, with its fleet broken up, would be of enormous import to Europe and the whole world. If annexation is not feasible for the victor due to international pressure and the victor's main aim is to maintain the security of its domination of the seas it has now attained what other strategic approach might it adopt? Germany would have to attain her end, the permanent disabling of the maritime supremacy of Great Britain, by another and less provocative measure. Supported by European Diplomacy it would be an independent Ireland: "An Ireland, already severed by German warships, and temporarily occupied by a German army might well be permanently and irrevocably severed from Great Britain, and with common assent erected into a neutralized, independent European State under international guarantees." He argues that the other European states and America might support this outcome and so concludes that Europe is the answer to the Irish question: "The changes wrought in the speed and capacity of steam shipping, the growth and visible trend of 'German Naval Power and the increasing possibilities of aerial navigation, all unite to emphasize the historian Niebuhr's warning, and to indicate for Ireland a possible future of restored communion with Europe, and less and less the continued wrong of that artificial exclusion in which British policy has sought to maintain her - 'an island beyond an island'."

But it was not just the provocative nature of this analysis that was interesting. So also was its timing politically, not just because of the growing international tensions, but also because domestic politics had entered a new phase. This was described in another article in that same edition of the *Review* as 'half-time' in the journey of the Home Rule bill. A critical period lay ahead according to that author writing under the pseudonym "An Ulster Imperialist" who sees "Ulster histrionics" rising and falling as the Government appears to be losing or gaining ground in the constituencies". But there was also a perceived failure of the current political parties, as Ernest Boyd points out in a piece on *Dogmatism in Irish life* where he asks "Surely in the ranks of our young men there are some, as yet inarticulate, who are brooding over their plans for Ireland's welfare, with specific reference to the peculiar needs of their country? For Ireland demands much more than can be effected by the panaceas of the 'political middlemen'."

This plea unknowingly heralds another timing issue which we now recognize in retrospect. In the notes at the end of that July 1913 edition of *The Irish Review* there is a small notice:

"*The Irish Review* has entered a good way into its third year of existence. After the present issue a new proprietor and a new editor will have charge. Since March, 1912, *The Irish Review* has been conducted by Mr. Padraic Colum."

The new proprietor and editor was to be Joseph Mary Plunkett and for the rest of its existence he and his friend Thomas MacDonagh were to be the key figures as *The Review* moved from the literary and intellectual focus it had under Colum and James Stephens to one that was far more directly political and more directly linked to the revolutionary movement that shadowed it. It was a journey in which the author known as Shan Van Vocht was also to play a key role. He was Roger Casement.

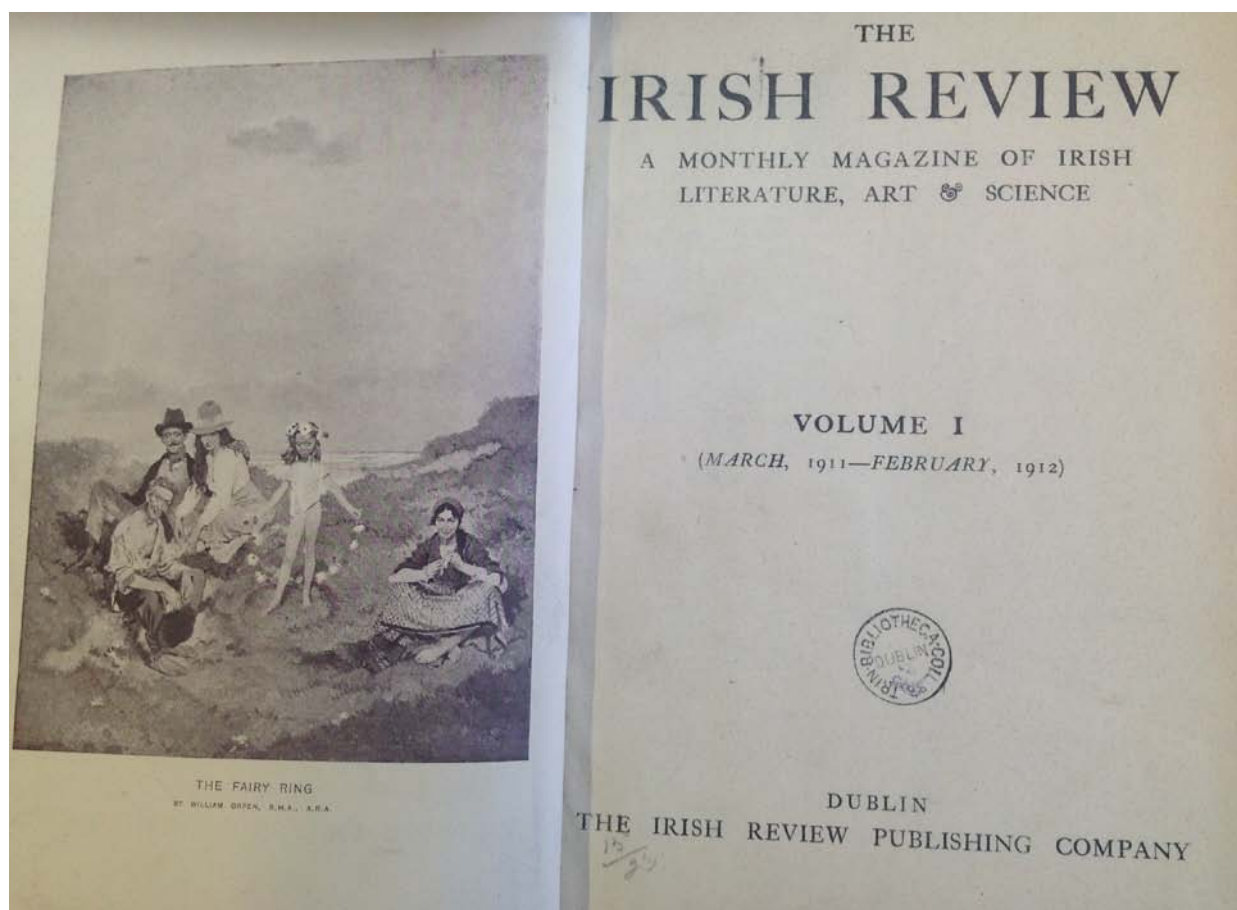


Roger Casement, who used the pseudonym "Shan Van Vocht" when writing in *The Irish Review* (UCD Archives, LA 30/PH/408)

The Irish Review was published monthly from 1911-1914 (with some combined issues in its last year) and contained within its pages poems, stories and essays by some of the key figures of that era; from George Moore to James Stephens; W.B. Yeats to P.H. Pearse; Lord Dunsany to James Connolly; William Orpen to Jack B. Yeats; Mary Colum to Hannah Sheehy Skeffington. We can trace through its pages how emerging young writers of that generation changed their focus from one concerned with literary and cultural pre-occupations to one that was increasingly political and how that politics, influenced by external events, moved from parliamentary to revolutionary.

II

The first edition of *The Irish Review* was published in March 1911. It had four co-founders: David Houston, a lecturer in the Royal College of Science for Ireland, James Stephens, the poet and writer, Padraic Colum, the playwright and poet and Thomas MacDonagh, writer and academic. Very much a co-operative venture, Houston was the initial notional editor with Padraic Colum taking over a year later. In correspondence with the writer and landowner, Lord Dunsany, seeking funds for the launch James Stephens was very clear on its aim: "We are not going to run it with a view to profit, but will try to make it a magazine that people will buy and read...There will be little or no politics in the paper. I fought stubbornly against that - Indeed it will be a literary & artistic journal with very little occupations outside art."



Volume 1 of *The Irish Review*, which appeared in March 1911

The initiative seems to have been Houston's. He was a prominent figure in Dublin literary circles at the time and also editor and publisher of *Irish Gardens*. According to James Stephens's biographer, Hilary Pyle, he was an extrovert "likely to burn up with sudden enthusiasm". Thomas MacDonagh rented a gate-lodge from him in Rathfarnham when he was teaching at Patrick Pearse's St. Enda's school. David Houston called the initial meeting with a wider group in mind: "We have a meeting at Dr. Henry's house tomorrow Friday evening at 8:15 to formulate a scheme to promote a company. There will be present Colum, Gogarty, & (perhaps) Kettle, Dr Henry, yourself and myself and

between us we ought to give birth to some vital idea". Soon after Houston was writing to MacDonagh, Padraic Colum and now James Stephens, who had attended the meeting, to get a prospectus ready and to each prepare a draft incorporating their ideas: "please sling the ink & launch a 'creature of bitter truth' to raise up fame for a future time."

For MacDonagh the context of the time was important. "Ireland is all expectancy of Home Rule. Sinn Féin has fallen quiet in the background. It is really hard to know what will happen. In *The Irish Review* we are going to have a series of articles on it." James Stephens and Padraic Colum were more established writers at that time with Colum having plays produced in the Abbey. Colum and MacDonagh were friends, though according to MacDonagh with "no agreement on literary matters" and they were linked too by their interest in another key person in the formation of *The Review*, Mary Maguire. She had worked with Pearse in St Enda's and St Ita's and - according to her own account - was to reject the proposal of MacDonagh, finally settling to marry Padraic Colum.



Nationalist demonstrators in Dublin in the early 20th century. Thomas McDonagh wrote that "Ireland is all expectancy of Home Rule. Sinn Féin has fallen quiet in the background. It is really hard to know what will happen. In *The Irish Review* we are going to have a series of articles on it." (National Library of Ireland, Clar 48)

There was a strong tradition of periodical journal publishing at that time with many having a political focus but also a strong tradition of ones with a literary focus. They were important vehicles for public debate with the pieces getting wider circulation once published. (Casement's article mentioned above as well as been referred to in other publications was also sent out to interested parties, including the German and US government) For writers, they were a way of getting material published that could also lead to having their first collections published. Many novels were first published in serial form. The launch of *The Irish Review* itself may have been prompted by the demise of *The New Ireland Review* in 1911 which left a gap. Indeed many of its early contributors had written pieces for a number of other publications in this period.

From the opening pages of the first edition *The Review* made clear its intent. It began with a piece of art - a print of a painting by William Orpen called *The Fairy Ring*. The opening story was one by George Moore called *The Flood*. It led, according to Mary Colum (the only 'girl' in the group and younger, so 'well bossed and patronised by them'), to a dispute amongst the editors. "The bright

boys of the editorial board “decided that the piece was an imitation of Zola and that it would be a mistake to print it in such an up-to-date magazine as they projected.” Padraic Colum wanted to write a more contemporary piece himself for the first edition. But Moore went directly to Houston, who was funding the venture, and it stayed. Mary Colum herself had her first review published on Synge to her pride. (Moore had asked Houston who was writing the article on Synge. When told ‘a girl’ was doing it: “George Moore with a characteristic outward gesture of his hands, said ‘My dear man! A girl! What girl? Whose girl?’ ”)

Padraic Colum, James Stephens and Thomas Mac Donagh all contribute poems and there are prose pieces by Lord Dunsany, John Eglinton, AE George Russell. The Irish language contribution is the start of a series by P.H. Pearse called *Specimens from an Irish Anthology*. Books reviewed included ones by MacDonagh, James Connolly (Labour in Irish History), Maud Gonne and Tom Kettle.

The aims of the journal were set out by the editors: “*The Irish Review* has been founded to give expression to the intellectual movement in Ireland. By the intellectual movement we do not understand an activity purely literary: we think of it as the application of Irish intelligence to the reconstruction of Irish life....*The Irish Review* will strive to speak for Ireland rather than for any party or coterie in Ireland. Emancipated from the tyranny of his party and lifted above the flattery of his coterie, the Irishman of action, study, or letters may utter himself here for the benefit of his country people and of such others as may care to give attention. *The Irish Review* belongs to no party. Current politics, for us, are part of the affairs of the month. We will try to deal with them with as little partiality and as little bias as it is good for people in earnest to have. We will note current affairs in their historical rather than political aspect.”

These lofty aims are exhibited in the editions which followed. An artistic statement is made by having a new art plate in the opening pages of each edition. The first year has two by Jack B. Yeats; *A Night at Ballycastle* and *The Tinkers Curse*. William Orpen returns with *A Portrait of the Artist in December* and other artists include John Yeats, AE, Nathaniel Hone, E. A. Morrow and Grace Gifford.



W.B. Yeats, who contributed to poetry to the journal (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

Poetry features prominently in the journal. W. B. Yeats provides a poem "On those who Dislike the Playboy" in December:

"Once when midnight smote the air
Eunuchs ran through Hell, and met
Round about Hell's gate to stare
At great Juan riding by;
And like these to rail and sweat
Maddened by that sinewy thigh."

James Stephens, Padraic Colum all contribute poetry as does AE and Séamus O'Sullivan. MacDonagh's poetry included his famous translation *The Yellow Bittern* and, in June, Joseph M. Plunkett joined the contributors with *White Dove of the Wild Dark Eyes*. As well as his series *Specimen from an Irish Anthology*, P. H. Pearse also had his own *Fornocht do Chonac Thú*, one of his most known poems:

" Fornocht do chonac thú,
a áille na háille,
is do dhallas mo shúil
ar eagla go stánfainn"

The most significant literary contribution in that period came from James Stephens. Beginning in April and running until February 1912 and under the title *Mary: A Story* he publishes what became his first novel *A Charwoman's Daughter*. One of the first pieces of fiction to examine tenement life, it remains an important novel of the period.

The links to the cultural revival are best seen in the critical essays with MacDonagh, George Moore, Standish O'Grady, Lord Dunsany, Edward Martyn, Piaras Béaslaí and Francis Sheehy Skeffington all represented.

Political and economic analysis in that first year includes a series by George Russell (AE) on *The Problem of Rural Life* where he called for a co-operative Commonwealth. Maud Gonne contributes a piece called Responsibility on the starvation caused by the failure to feed children during school hours and Oliver St. John Gogarty is involved in a major piece on the need for medical inspection of School children featuring some dramatic photographs on the impact of malnutrition.



George Russell contributed a series to *The Irish Review* on 'The Problem of Rural Life' (National Library of Ireland, PD 3052 TX)

The context of the debate around Home Rule is evident throughout this early period but there are also a variety of opinions given.

In February 1912, Frank Cruise O' Brien, father of Conor Cruise, in an article called *Home Rule and After*, discusses Erskine Childers' book *The Framework of Home Rule*. While praising its approach he disagrees with the suggestion that there should be 'safeguards' for the religious minority. He says he believes that Protestant Irishmen will agree that "artificial safeguards promote rather than hinder strife" He adds: "They weaken the sense of responsibility which the Irish Government must, if it is to be strong, feel. In that feeling of national responsibility lies the surest hope of an Ireland slowly uniting; of an Ireland ceasing to feel the war of creed against creed, of party against party; of an Ireland, in a word, which is to be a normal and healthy state, instead of an abnormal and diseased one."

The debate grows sharper with an exchange involving Arthur Griffith and a writer using the name an 'Ulster Imperialist' who is to be a consistent contributor on this topic to *The Review*. The original essay was called *On Nationalism and Imperialism* and argued that one could be in favor of both. This is rejected by Griffith pointing to what he sees as the failure of the Imperial Conference of 1911:

"Irishmen who accept the idea of Imperialism as true, and who preach it to their countrymen as if it were a new-found gospel, waste their energy so long as the Imperialism they preach concretes itself into the British Empire...The Irish have learned to complain and whimper and even to appeal to their enemies, but they have not learned to admit defeat. Centuries of cruel punishment, because they kicked against the pricks, have taught them a mean wisdom-to dodge the lash and flatter the overseer. But it has not forced them to throw up their hands and cry, 'We surrender'."

In his response, the 'Ulster Imperialist' disagrees about the effectiveness of the Imperial Conference and ends: "In conclusion, it may be permissible to express the conviction that, in spite of out-worn theories of Ascendancy politicians, English or Orange, in spite of the Sinn Féin doctrine that tries to ignore everything outside Ireland, the day is not far ahead when Ireland will take her proper place among the nations of the British Empire, recognising it (call it by what name we will) for 'the greatest experiment mankind has yet made to bind together people dwelling in the uttermost parts of the earth in bonds of brotherhood'."

The 'Ulster Imperialist' was the pseudonym of Alec Wilson, a Northern Irish Protestant who had contributed to Pearse's school, was a friend of Roger Casement and who corresponded with Asquith on the Irish question.

Padraic Colum takes over the formal editorship of the Review in March 1912. It seems to follow some concern over the financial guarantees for the periodical with the printer Ernst Manico being approached to support it. (Dunsany and Gogarty also contribute but Houston remains the main backer.) Colum acts more as a direct editor than the co-operative approach before with MacDonagh still assisting but contributing less in this period. Under Colum's editorship a number of newer, younger writers are featured and there is an increasing exploration of the intricacies of the Home Rule issue in keeping with the external environment and the events in Ulster.

His first issue begins with an appraisal of the situation by the 'Ulster Imperialist' "The Ulster attitude, while it is understandable, is impossible, in the event of the Government having sufficient English support to force the Bill through. Once everyone was certain that it was inevitable, a great body of moderate Unionist opinion would separate itself from the extremists and would show the public that even in Ulster the King's Government would be carried on." However if the Government through its unpopularity and the pressure from Ulster fails in passing the Act then the existing Nationalist Party will break up, and the whole question will have to be dealt with de novo as the greatest and most urgent question of all Imperial problems by the Conservative Party in England."

In the May edition, Arthur Griffith addresses the issues of Home Rule and the Unionists. He makes common cause with some of the Unionist objections to the Home Rule bill "...the defects of the Home Rule bill which have been properly condemned by the Irish Unionist Press and the Irish Unionist Primate exist in the system of government both seek to maintain... It would be, according to Archbishop Crozier a degradation of the status of Irishman to accept a measure which denied them an army, a navy, the power to defend their shipping and their ports, the full control of their Customs and Excise: which gave to another nation the power to collect their taxes and to decide how much of them should be returned. It is a degradation of the status of Irishman that they should accept such

restrictions on their liberty. I shall agree, provided Archbishop Crozier agrees that geography doesn't change the principle. If it be a degradation to the status of Irishman that they should thus be [be?] restricted in College Green, it is a degradation to the status of Irishman that they should now be so restricted from Westminster."

The following piece in that edition of the *Review*; *Light on Ulsteria* by an 'Ulster Protestant' calls for a more rational effort to get the Unionist views into the right perspective, commending the efforts of Mr William O'Brien (who) "would endeavour by friendship and calm argument to bring his Unionist opponent over to his point of view." The focus on Unionism continued in subsequent editions with pieces by F. C. Ormsby and an 'Ulster Scot' and, in January of 1913, by Ulster protestant, Boer war veteran and later founder of the Irish Citizen Army, Captain Jack White. This contribution is the text of a speech he had delivered in London : "I hear the spirit of Catholic Ireland crying to the spirit of Liberalism : 'Give us some of the Freedom you have won , and we will give you some of the Reverence and Beauty you have lost' "

The Review examines the changing international environment with the first major piece by Roger Casement. This time writing under the name Batha MacCrainn, Casement examines Ireland and the German menace and asks:

"Would Germany offer us better? The more we value our own worth, the more others are likely to value it. Ireland, if she only knew, holds a winning hand between England and Germany."

In that same edition of September 1912, Colum published a poem by Casement called *In the Streets of Catania*. Unfortunately, there was a misprint and in the following month the poem was correctly printed with a profuse apology. Colum got the full brunt of Casement's anger; "I was astonished at the abuse heaped upon me.. never had poet blasted editor and printer with such whole-hearted fervour before."



Discovery by the Intilligence Department of a Disguised Militant Selling Bombs

The rise of the Suffragette movement was featured in the pages of the journal, with Hanna Sheehy Skeffington defending the inclination towards militant action. The cartoon above was drawn by Ernest Kavanagh and published in *The Irish Citizen* newspaper in May 1913.

Side by side with the concerns of Home Rule throughout this period there were a number of articles on the vote and on Women's suffrage. In articles in August 1912 and April 1913 James Creed Meredith of the British PR Society writes pieces on Proportional Representation and the List System of Proportional Representation. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington writes on the *The Women's Movement in Ireland* as the lead piece in July 1912. She defends the move to militancy "Men applaud the stone thrower as long as the missile is flung for them and not at them." She concludes that the story of women's struggle since 1876 will be interesting material for the psychologist working out a research thesis on Female Patience in the 19th century and says "these scattered thoughts are penned on the eve of prison. When I come out I may have more to add." It is followed in September by a powerful piece from Frederick Ryan saying that the Women's vote must come with Home Rule but cautioning against violence in support of it: "It would be unfair and ridiculous to ask women to assume, what we all know to be untrue, that reason and justice alone sway human affairs. But when all this is allowed for, it seems perfectly clear that women have an especial interest in strengthening the forces of reason and limiting and weakening the forces of passion and violence. One would, indeed, suppose that they would much prefer to fight on the intellectual and moral field, where they are strong, rather than on the physical field, where they are weak."

Also taking on a significant issue in the debate over a Home Rule administration was P.H. Pearse. In the lead article for the February 1913 he takes issue with the Bishop of Limerick who had been

alarmed at John Dillion's suggestion that the first task of a Home Rule parliament would be to reform the education system. Here he outlines the case that was later developed under the title *The Murder Machine*. Pearse describes the ruthlessness of the Irish education system: "It is cold and mechanical, like the ruthlessness of an immensely powerful engine... Into it is fed all the raw human material in Ireland; it seizes upon it inexorably and rends and compresses and remoulds; and what it cannot refashion after the regulation pattern it ejects with all likeness of its former self crushed from it, a bruised and shapeless thing, there after accounted waste." Pearse's piece is accompanied by a stark painting by Wilhelmin M. Geddess called *Usher's Well*. The illustrations stay strong during Colum's editorship with J. B. Yeats providing regular paintings and Beatrice Elvery's famous sketch of *The Arts Club* appearing in May.

Among the new writers to feature are Daniel Corkery and Brinsley MacNamara and a new serialisation begins: *The Soul of Kol Nikon* by the English poet Eleanor Farjeon, friend to Robert Frost and Edward Thomas. Poetry remains strong and two major figures of the Revival exchange poems. First W. B. Yeats in a poem called *At the Abbey Theatre* and obviously responding to a criticism already made he addresses An Craoibhín Aoibhinn, Douglas Hyde :

"Because we have made our art of common things,
So bitterly, you'd dream they longed to look
All their lives through into some drift of wings"

The following month, not with the same skill and with a slight apology Hyde responds in a verse :

"A narrower cult but broader art is mine,
Your wizard fingers strike a hundred strings
Bewildering with multitudinous things,
Whilst all our offerings are at one shrine"

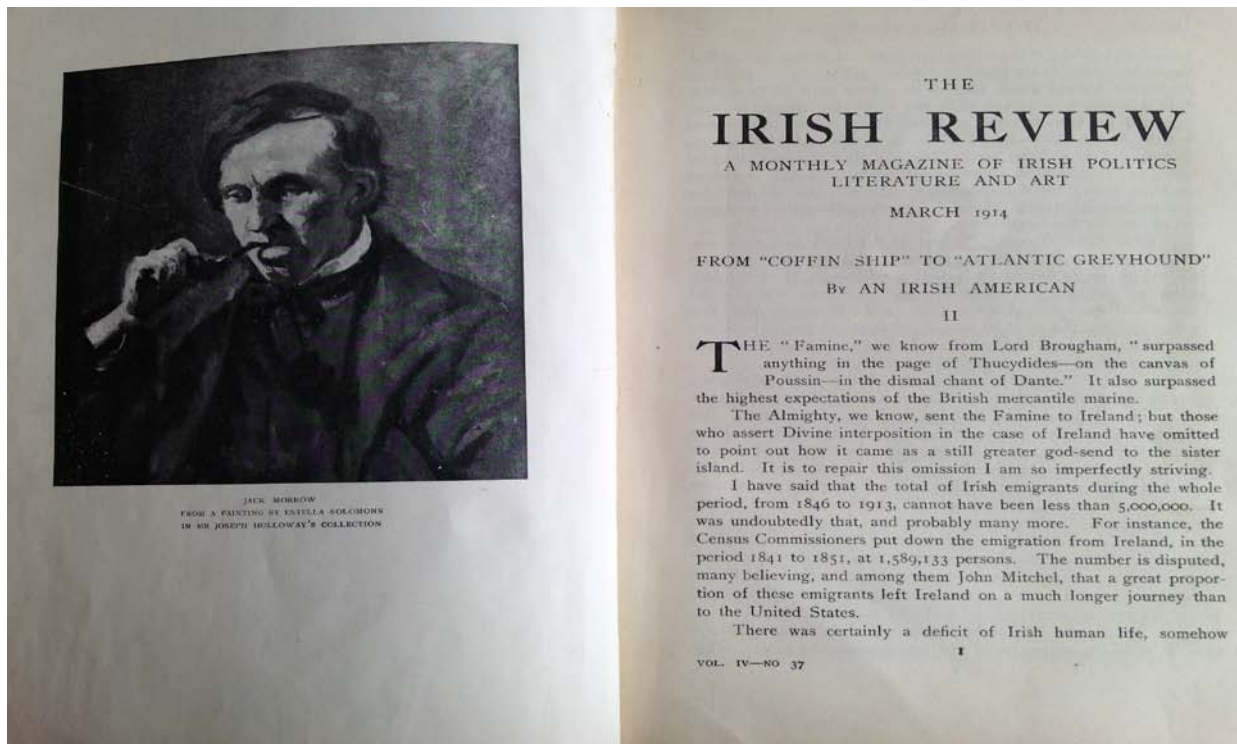
III

The summer of 1913 sees a major crisis for *The Review*. James Stephens, now becoming established as a writer with the publication of *The Charwomen's Daughter* and *The Crock of Gold*, is in Paris. Padraic Colum is now married to Mary Maguire and they have the opportunity to move to America. But must significantly *The Review* is in financial trouble, partly attributed by its printers Manico to Colum disorganisation and his habit of changing the issues at the last moment.

Houston, who has been less engaged in *The Review* of late, sets about a plan to sell *The Review* and, at MacDonagh's instigation, they approach Joseph Plunkett to buy *The Review* and become the new editor. MacDonagh and Plunkett are now close friends, despite their near 10 year age gap, having met when MacDonagh gave Plunkett Irish language lessons. Colum is not pleased with the plan. He wishes to control the succession and approaches the publisher George Roberts as well as Alice Stopford Green, Lord Dunsany and other possible investors. He tells MacDonagh to back off as "Mr Houston and I had a vital interest in *The Irish Review* - you had not" and states his objection to Plunkett : "I do not greatly care because I have to relinquish the editorship of *The Irish Review*. But I do care about an organ of free opinion in Ireland. I have a great respect for Plunkett but I know that he

is a delicate young man and may have to put the whole thing aside on a doctor's order" Plunkett had gone to his mother for the necessary £200 to clear the debts and take over *The Review* and after her initial response ("offer them on hundred" she said) - gets the money which is paid to the printers Manico and he now has control of *The Review*.

It heralds a significant change in priorities, for before the end of the year the frontispiece description of the Review shifts from: "A Monthly Magazine of Irish Literature, Art and Science" to "A Monthly Magazine of Irish Politics, Literature and Art". Politics is now to the fore.



An extract from the March 1914 issue of *The Irish Review*. By then, the priorities of the journal had shifted. No longer a 'A Monthly Magazine of Irish Literature, Art and Science', it was now promoted as 'A Monthly Magazine of Irish Politics, Literature and Art'.

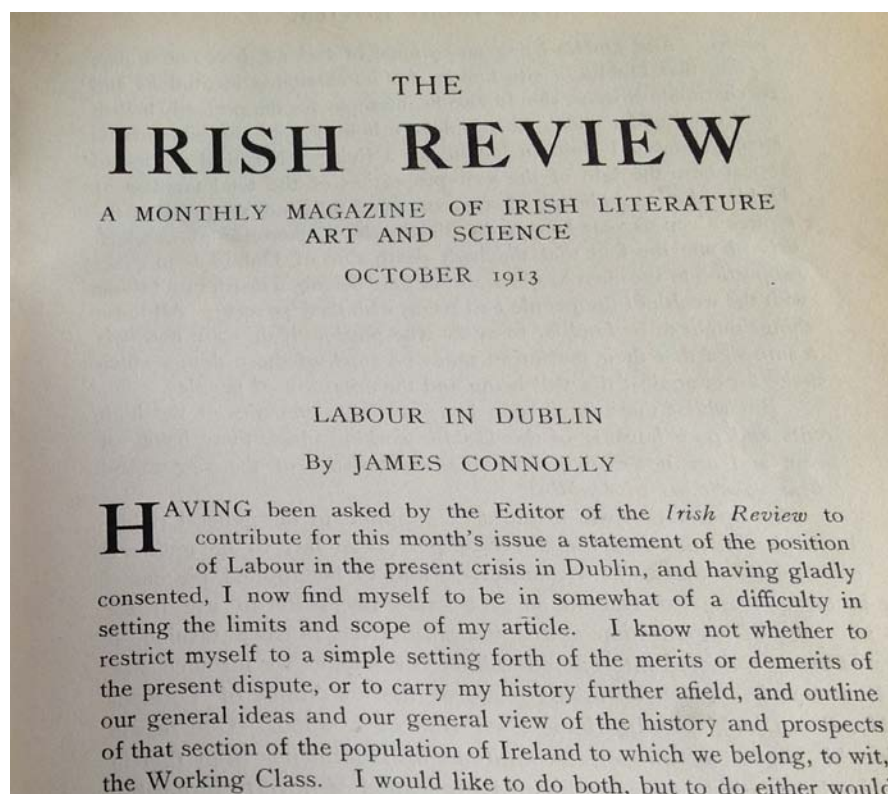
The row leaves some bitterness between the participants. Houston recounted to MacDonagh in detail all of Colum's intemperate correspondence and feared that it would have consequences: "I am afraid he will go about for months telling people (& his wife I'm pretty certain will do the same) how you and I conspired with Plunkett to rob him of the Review."

The rift is short lived and Houston hosts a farewell event for the Colums later in the year and Colum corresponds with suggestions before the end of the run. However, at the time, the dispute means that there is not a smooth handover between the editors. Plunkett has some difficulty in identifying the anonymous contributors and they in turn are puzzled when he contacts them. Alec Wilson, the 'Ulster Imperialist' initially sends his reply to Horace Plunkett thinking he was the new editor! But most alarmingly when Joseph Plunkett contacts Casement he feels betrayed his identity has been revealed and re-acts angrily. (As Colum recounts: "A month afterwards I saw Casement in the Abbey Theatre... I found him distant toward me... and as I was going he said, "I asked you not to mention who wrote *Ireland, Germany and the Next War*," I was thunderstruck, and protested that I had made no such revelation, but found that he was unconvinced by what I said") Plunkett convinces Casement that he had just worked out his identity from his prose style and thus assured of future confidentiality Casement continues to contribute.

The intent of the new editorial team of Plunkett and Mac Donagh is clear from the first two editions in which they are in sole charge, August and September 1913. Accompanied by an atmospheric painting by Jack Morrow *The Seaweed Gatherers*, the August issues begins with a long poem sequence by MacDonagh *The Beginning of The Book of Images* ("I gaze on the hill again, /What the tree that had withered shall grow"). The following month, accompanied by Dermot O'Brien's *Summer Sketch* (of a ploughman), Joseph Plunkett's *Lux In Tenebris* ("To Seize and hold The citadel of the City of gold I must attain the Flag of love Blazoned with the eternal Dove"). August also sees the beginning of a new series by Pearse : *Songs of the Irish Rebels*, translations from the Irish including in the first two episodes *On the Fall of the Gael* and *Róisín Dubh*. The Plunketts' house had become the new centre of activity for the review and as his sister says: "as time went on, poetry and literature always seemed to lead to politics".

By October, and with Dublin in the midst of the 'Lockout', *The Review* starts to get more directly involved with current controversy. Plunkett asks James Connolly to write the lead piece *Labour in Dublin*. The Lockout is a very significant event in the political development of both editors. MacDonagh was a witness to the August baton-charge in O'Connell Street and Plunkett joins the Industrial Peace Committee causing a rift with his mother whom he later discovers was a tenement landlord.

James Connolly describes the role of what he terms the 'sympathetic strike' and says that while historically it can have ample justification "it was not cool reasoning that gave it birth in Dublin. In this city it was born out of our desperate necessity". He argues for a 'Conciliation Board' to deal with disputes between unions and employers with strikes only as a last resort as a way to the conflict.



The opening of James Connolly's article on 'Labour in Dublin', published a month after the Lockout began.

In November, Tom Kettle, a member of the Industrial Peace Committee, writes the lead piece in a 'spirit of rigorous and even frozen impartiality'. In an interesting and detailed analysis of the dispute

he seeks a proper conference to settle it and makes a case for looking again at the recommendations of the Askwith Report which he feels has been too hastily rejected by both sides : " To say that such a programme offers no basis of discussion in Dublin is to proclaim the bankruptcy of Dublin in the two great economic requisites, common-sense and good-will...in England both parties recognise a third party to their quarrels - namely, the Public. Public opinion is with them the ultimate tribunal which decides the issue of industrial wars, and they are anxious to keep right with it. Since in Ireland, as a result of political calamities, public opinion hardly exists, let us create it!"

The wider political argument was now hardening too. Leading off was a return of the 'Ulster Imperialist' (Alec Wilson), asking the editor "What is to be done about Ulster?". Wilson had been part on the platform with Casement and Captain Jack White at a notable meeting in Ballymoney Co. Antrim for Protestants in support of Home Rule and against Carson. He writes in frustration: " the party organs of Irish 'public opinion' (so-called) are useless just now: they simply boycott everything but their own party war-cry." His view is that (a) Home Rule must come and (b) that Ulster must be brought into the scheme of her own free will and asks for the editor to open up his columns for answers to the questions posed.

But events were now moving into a new phase as is seen from the following pages of *The Review*. Almost as a rejoinder to the lead article it is followed directly by Thomas MacDonagh's *Marching Song of the Irish Volunteers*. (It had music composed by O'Brian Butler but never worked as an sung anthem):

For Ireland, for Ireland, for Ireland all,

Our ranks we band in might:

From her four seas we at Ireland's call

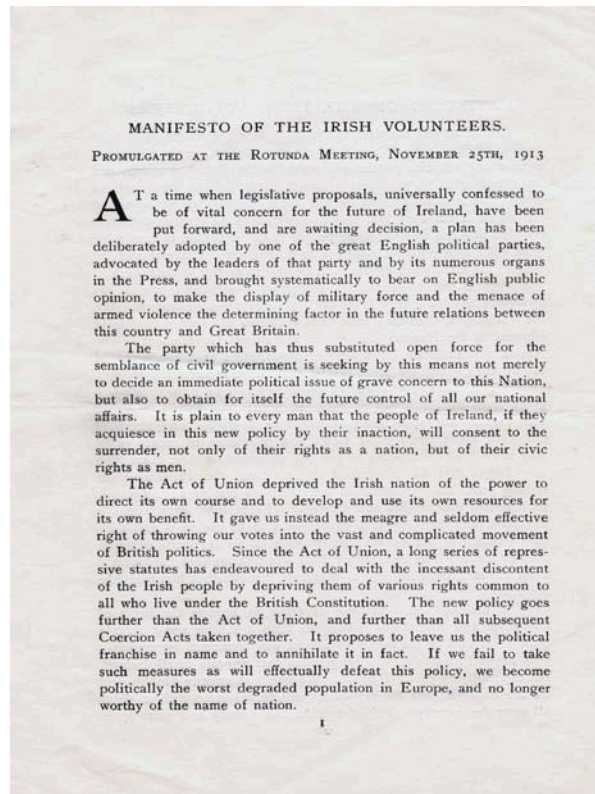
In Ireland's cause unite,

And march to the hosting of Gael and Gall,

To claim our Freedom's right.

Next is *The Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers* printed directly after its adoption at the Rotunda on November 25th. It sets out clearly that the formation of the Volunteers it is a reaction to the involvement of the British Conservative Party in the Ulster Volunteers:

"A plan has been deliberately adopted by one of the great English political parties, advocated by the leaders of that party and by its numerous organs in the Press, and brought systematically to bear on English public opinion, to make the display of military force and the menace of armed violence the determining factor in the future relations between this country and Great Britain... It is plain to every man that the people of Ireland, if they acquiesce in this new policy by their inaction, will consent to the surrender, not only of their rights as a nation, but of their civic rights as men."



(National Library of Ireland, MS 11396)

MacDonagh and Plunkett both attended that first meeting to form the Volunteers and joined its Provisional Committee. Home Rule is still the focus but - as MacDonagh explains in a letter - not the only one: " If it passes good, we shall be in a better position to stand for the full right. If not we shall have a splendid opportunity of getting a strong following ...we should be able to get Redmond and the others to withdraw from Westminster and set up a government here." The literary and the political are starting to converge.

Throughout these months almost like a background soundtrack the other pieces in *The Review* echo this shift. Pearse's series on the *Songs of the Irish Rebels* continues. Joseph Plunkett in an essay called *Obscurity and Poetry* takes on a comparison of the poetry of AE and Thomas MacDonagh and the doctrine that binds them : "in the same service of beauty, the creed subscribed to by all who have experienced the divine vision: for the flowers of heaven and earth are the same flowers." Plunkett and MacDonagh continue to contribute poems as does James Stephens. Lily Fogarty writes a piece , on the address by Lord Dunsany at the National Literary Society in February, called *A New Poet* which introduces the work of young Francis Ledwidge ... " a true poet destined to prove that whatever may have degenerated or died in Ireland, the old spirit of poetry still lives to fuse its magic either into a world coloured drab and prosaic by brush of Realist and Rationalist."

Eoin MacNéill contributes an essay on *The Rediscovery of the Celts* and, in April 1914, Edward Martyn makes *A Plea for the Revival of the Irish Literary Theatre*. - following which he is approached by MacDonagh and, together with Plunkett, they form the Irish Theatre Company and start producing their own plays.



UCD Professor and later a leader of the 1916 Rising, Eoin MacNeill was a contributor to *The Irish Review* in 1914 (UCD Archives, LA/PH/325)

The economic content continues to be strong with a series by Justin Philips on the Land Question and in February, March and April 1914, major pieces feature entitled *From 'Coffin Ship' to 'Atlantic Greyhound'* by an 'Irish American', whom we now know to be Roger Casement. They centre on the steps taken by Britain to prevent liner routes, in particular the Hamburg-Amerika line, using Irish ports.

Casement's plea is for America to support free trade and to reject British claims that the restrictions are necessary on the basis of security "we read the true mind of the British people toward all who dare to claim equality of right at sea. The world is the oyster of this peculiar people - and Ireland is the knife that opened that oyster. Free Trade and a Free Ocean demand that the key shall be cut from the Pirate's girdle." Behind the scenes, Casement is urging Plunkett to send an early printing of his article in March to Edward Carson ahead of a meeting the MP is having with Prime Minister Asquith. (In May of 1916 a copy of Casement's letter to Plunkett is sent to Carson by an officer of the Royal Irish Rifles who had come across it while raiding Plunkett's home at the time of his arrest and execution.



The stunning landscape of Connemara and the Aran Island was also home to dreadful poverty and deprivation. Roger Casement wrote about it *The Irish Review* in May 1914. The previous summer, while visiting the west of Ireland, he described the living conditions as 'the worst in the civilised world' (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA)

Casement also dominates the edition in May; this time by name, as it opens with a report prompted by his call for urgent attention to the conditions on the Aran Islands following his visit the previous summer. The report submitted to, and ignored by, the Congested Districts Board was compiled by Douglas Hyde, Alice Stopford Green, H. Barbour and Alec Wilson (now also out from behind the 'Ulster Imperialist mask' and who arranges the article with Plunkett).

Its strong conclusion is that:

"If action is going to be taken at all, we would put in the plea that the case is not one for tinkering with and patching up here and there, but for a thorough, carefully considered plan of action which will effectively deal with the situation as a whole, and which will gradually bring a decent way of living to a people who, though terribly poor, are still unspoiled by the hardships of their lives, and who are as far superior in qualities of mind and body to the slum-dwellers of our great cities as their own sea-winds are to the reeking air of a back street."

June 1914, unknown of course at the time, begins the last phase of *The Review*. It is now regularly printing messages for the Volunteers with a *Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers* signed by Eoin MacNéill and L. J. Kettle, welcoming John Redmond's association with the movement in this issue. According to Geraldine Plunkett this was to damage its circulation... "as the Review's principal supporters had always been civil servants who could now not afford to be seen with it, the circulation went down. It had never been more than a thousand and the American order was ridiculously small. Thomas always said the 'Four Seas Co' who were the agents were just 'two men in an attic'."

Pearse continues his focus on Education with *An Ideal in Education*; MacDonagh opens what he proposes as a major series on Irish poets with an essay on *Language and Literature in Ireland* and Padraic Colum returns with a review of Lord Dunsany's plays.

But then the demands of the developing political situation start to dominate the work of those preparing *The Review*. The July and August editions have to be combined. It opens with another *Manifesto from the Irish Volunteers* dated 30th June:

"Several lying and sensational reports have been published, professing to relate acts of violence or hostility on the part of the Irish Volunteers towards the Ulster Volunteers and towards Irish Unionists. The authors of such reports hope and desire that their fictions may lead to actual occurrences such as they falsely describe, and may raise difficulties in the way of national unity and national liberty. The conduct of the Irish Volunteers will be such as to defeat any malicious and unscrupulous designs of any kind"

Attached as a supplement to this edition is a detailed account titled *Clontarf 1914* by Thomas MacDonagh, as Company Commander of the Irish Volunteers, of the events following the landing of arms at Howth on 26th July. He had a prominent role in this action and when the parade of Volunteers was stopped by soldiers, he negotiated - as a stalling tactic - to allow the guns to be smuggled away. (Padraic Colum had also been one of the volunteers to carry the arms back into the city on that day. He lunched with Eoin MacNeill afterwards, showing him one of the rifles, and only later heard of the shooting of civilians by the Scottish soldiers returning from their engagement with the Volunteers.)

Daniel Corkery and Pearse both contribute stories called *Storm -Struck* and *The Wood* respectively. There are pieces on the Irish Industrial Question and the Irish Education system and Justin Phillips examines the Post Office Savings Bank. Thomas MacDonagh harshly reviews an anthology in which he himself features: Padraic Gregory's *Modern Anglo Irish Verse* ("in the four hundred page book out of two hundred and forty one poems by sixty eight authors, seven thousand three hundred lines there are fifty-two good poems, the work of thirty authors, one thousand five hundred and eighty lines and one hundred and eighty nine poor, worthless poems, running to five thousand seven hundred lines odd". He left his own nine poems, four hundred lines, out of the calculation.)

By November it was over. The September, October and November issues were combined. A note from the editor Joseph Plunkett explains: "Our entire staff has for some time past been working full-time and overtime (if such a thing is possible) in the Irish Volunteer organisation. Owing to international complications, copies of *The Review* sent to foreign subscribers have been returned to us. Many of the persons and firms that are normally given to advertising have retrenched themselves effectively out our range." He says they are struggling to survive and may double the price to try and do so. It was not to happen and this was to be the final edition.

Beside a drawing by Grace Gifford of *Cupid and Psyche*, the edition begins with a *Manifesto to the Irish Volunteers* dated Thursday 24th September 1914. "Mr Redmond, addressing a body of Volunteers on last Sunday, has now announced for the Irish Volunteers a policy and programme fundamentally at variance with their own published and accepted aims and pledges, but with which his nominees, are of course, identified. He has declared it to be the duty of the Irish Volunteers to take foreign service under a government which is not Irish." It went on to state that the original formation of the Volunteers would return to their basic principles and affirm "to repudiate any undertaking to consent to the legislative dismemberment of Ireland and to protest against the attitude of the present Government who, under the pretence that 'Ulster cannot be coerced' avow themselves prepared to coerce the Nationalists of Ulster" and "to declare that Ireland cannot, with honour or safety, take part in foreign quarrels other than through the free action of a National Government of her own: and to repudiate the claim of any man to offer up the blood and lives of the sons of Irishmen and Irishwomen to the service of the British Empire, while no National Government which could speak

and act for the people of Ireland is allowed to exist." Among the signatories (and with an apology from Casement in America) were Eoin Mac Néill and The Ó Rathghaille, Mac Donagh, Plunkett, Pearse, Con Colbert, Éamon Ceannt, Seán Mac Diarmada and Liam Mellows.



When the Irish party leader, John Redmond (above), delivered a speech in September 1914 declaring it the duty of Irish Volunteers to support the British war effort, it led a split in the Volunteer movement and rebuke in the pages of *The Irish Review* (National Library of Ireland, INDH 0009)

This heralded the break from Redmond, the split in the Volunteers and perhaps too any hope the Review had of keeping its wide spectrum of opinion in contributors and readers. It was followed by "Twenty Plain facts for Irishmen" which Plunkett's sister Geraldine felt was sure to provoke the censor. Plunkett replied "What harm, we're broke anyway."

In the literary content of this final edition, Pearse continues with the second section of *The Wood*. Geraldine Plunkett has a poem to Saint Francis, Lord Dunsany returns with a story *Of Land and Sea* and Thomas MacDonagh begins his series with a piece on Alice Milligan *The Best Living Irish Poet*. He concludes having praised Milligan's courage as a poet by taking issue with a phrase of hers in the poem *Benediction* where she describes herself and 'helpless weary nearly hopeless'. "This is the only phrase at which I have to demur. I discovered it when I went to copy that benediction into a book for even a littler boy than the boy whom she addresses. In our time we are not helpless weary hopeless"

In his end note Joseph Plunkett says that the Review deserves to live but it was not to this was the end. It's founders and editors were to journey on divergent and perilous paths. David Houston would - following the sinking of the Lusitania - enlist and head off for war. Joseph Plunkett, just after this final edition, was to head to Germany and a rendezvous with Roger Casement and James Stephens - back in Dublin as Director of the National Gallery - would find himself in *Insurrection in Dublin* chronicling the revolution and execution of his two friends Plunkett and MacDonagh. *The Review* itself became a footnote in history. Yet in its pages we can examine the transition from the literary and cultural pre-occupations of the Celtic Revival to the more political and 'visionary' approach of those who gathered together to organise the Irish Revolution. A political transition that was to see the parliamentarianism of Home Rule eclipsed in favour of a more militant militarism and another chapter in a troubled history.

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Fifty years later the 'littler boy' referred to by Thomas MacDonagh in his Milligan review, his son Donagh MacDonagh, was to sum up the end of *The Irish Review* :

"That it should have become the mouthpiece of the Volunteers in 1914 guaranteed not only its disappearance as a literary journal but its ultimate end. 1914 was a year of endings as well as beginnings, the end of all its firefly companions, the beginnings of The Irish Volunteer to which many of its writers migrated, and the beginning of that war in Europe, which was to devastate the world and to wake Ireland from its restless nightmare of almost a hundred years."

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