

MR. REDMOND'S VISIT TO WATERFORD.

Mr. John Redmond spoke with no uncertain voice at the great meeting held in Waterford on Sunday last. As the period for the enactment of Home Rule approaches, the position of security, to which he has led the Nationalist forces, becomes more and more apparent. The Unionists in North-East Ulster have all along been advised by their leaders that if they created a sufficient din, they would succeed in intimidating the Government, and that they would never be called upon to make a supreme sacrifice in resisting Home Rule. Their armaments were intended merely for show, and they were encouraged to drill on the ground that an armed and disciplined body would present such a formidable appearance, that Mr. Asquith would haul down the Liberal flag without inquiring too closely into the bona-fides of the rebel forces. They sadly misjudged their man, for although Mr. Asquith has on occasion been embarrassed by the pusillanimity of his own followers in England—some of them members of the Cabinet—he has, on the whole, kept his forces admirably in hands, and his personality has always dominated the situation. It is not difficult to appreciate the position of Mr. Redmond, when rumours of conference and compromise on an already emaciated Bill filled the air. The fate and fortunes of the Nationalists of Ireland, were in his keeping. One false step might have jeopardised the victory so dearly fought for, and so near achievement. On the one hand, he was accused of dictatorship, on the other, of perfidy; he was alleged to be running the British Empire and selling the Irish people at one and the same time; supposed to be in the confidence of the Government, and allowing himself to be duped. As in the case of the abolition of the Lords' Veto, he is the only political leader whose predictions have been fulfilled when he has chosen to assume the mantle of the prophet. His emphatic declaration

that hardly anything short of a miracle could disturb the passage of Home Rule, is, therefore, made by one who has been sparing in promises, but exacting in their performance. "All the talk of civil war in Ulster was absurd," he said on Sunday. "It would not intimidate Mr. Asquith, who was as firm as a rock. While desiring the Home Rule Bill to pass exactly as it stands, he (Mr. Redmond) said that if any change were made, it must be to buy the good-will of our opponents in the North of Ireland, but he saw no prospect whatever of that good-will being purchased by any amount of concession, or at any price whatever." Mr. Wm. O'Brien, whose conduct during the closing days of the struggle for Home Rule, has been such a valuable asset to the Unionists, has chosen the present moment to perpetuate the crowning folly of his career. It was only by demonstrating that he had the solid body of the people of Ireland behind him in his demand for Home Rule, that Mr. Redmond could combat the opposition to the measure manifested in North-East Ulster, and amongst the reactionary elements of the electorate of England. Mr. O'Brien is himself a Home Ruler, and a genuinely honest and sincere Irishman, despite his eccentricities. A contest between a United Irish League and an All-for-Ireland candidate, on the eve of Home Rule, would supply the very argument necessary to point the moral of the irresponsibility of the Irish People, so long urged as a reason for denying us self-government. We have, however, outlived our propensity for internecine strife, and tempting as the prospect must have been for Cork Nationalists to try issues with Mr O'Brien, the advice of Mr. Redmond on Sunday, will be dutifully acted upon. A fight between two Nationalist parties, as to which as prepared to go farthest in the direction of appeasing the irreconcilable Orange mob, while it might have afforded unmixed pleasure to our enemies, would bring upon the country the richly-deserved contempt of serious-minded people at home and abroad.