

The Kilkenny Journal.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1914.

THE FINAL STAGES OF THE HOME RULE BILL.

The second reading of the Home Rule Bill was passed on Monday evening by the substantial majority of eighty, Messrs. O'Brien, Healy and their following, abstaining from voting on the ground that the proposals for the exclusion of North-East Ulster have not been withdrawn. It must have been obvious to everybody, who did not wilfully shut his eyes to the fact, that all along Mr. John Redmond has been fighting against the partition of Ireland, and that the questions he had to weigh were whether the measure of Home Rule offered represented a sufficiently substantial concession to Ireland, or whether the country was capable of sustaining a new agitation for a more complete measure of legislative independence. The speeches of Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin left no doubt on the minds of the people that the patience of the Parliamentary Party was stretched to snapping point, and within the last few weeks the curtain has been turned aside, and the formidable character of the secret opposition to Home Rule has been revealed. We do not now refer to the military eruption, but to the higher authority, which is capable of coercing Cabinets, and which has received a shock from which it will not readily recover. Mr. Asquith, acting purely on his own responsibility, would never have betrayed the Home Rule cause at the eleventh hour. He has now assumed the direction of the Army, and his presence, as Secretary of State for War, is a bulwark against fresh military inroads on civil power and authority. In his speech at Ladybank (East Fife) he said: "As War Minister the Army would hear nothing of politics from him, and in return he expected to hear nothing of politics from the Army." Well, the Army has served its turn in Ireland, by investing a flaccid situation with new and vital interest, and lifting Home Rule beyond the region of domestic politics. Nationalist Ireland has no reason to quarrel with the arrogance of the Army, and its democratization will probably be written down in history as another of the British reforms which the Irish cause has taken in its stride. English democrats owe us a bigger debt than they realise—and than they will ever pay. Now that the enactment of Irish Home Rule has become compulsory, the object of the Irish Party should be, and is, to secure the passage of the original Bill. His admirers who sympathised with him during the trying times which have passed since the re-opening of Parliament, were delighted at reading Mr. Redmond's speech on Monday in the House of Commons. When speaking of his admirers, we do not refer to the craven-hearted people, who were not alone afraid to criticise the partition policy, but by passing resolutions of acquiescence in it, accompanied with lip-praise of the Irish leader, have stiffened Ulster demands and seriously imperilled the cause. Mr. Redmond, in his speech on the second reading, said: "The Government offer has been spurned. Our sacrifice in acquiescing in it has been useless. No advance whatever towards compromise has been made by the representatives of Ulster. They claim permanent and total exclusion of Ulster; they have claimed it from the first; we have gone half way to meet them; they have not advanced one inch from their original position. Under these circumstances all that remains, in my opinion, for the House of Commons, is to proceed with the Bill as it stands. Do not let me be misunderstood. Even yet I do not despair myself of a settlement of this question. The eleventh hour, we are told, has struck, but the eleventh hour has not passed, and I certainly will do nothing and will say nothing, consciously at any rate, to preclude the possibility of a fair and honourable peace at any stage." He

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