

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 1914.

THE KING'S OWN SCOTTISH BLACKGUARDS.

By the occurrence of Sunday last, the foul and dastardly methods of the Irish Executive Government have been illuminated with lightning-like vividness. Not alone has it been shown that Dublin Castle, the seat of Irish Government, outrageously discriminates between the ascendancy classes and the ordinary people in this country, but that the life of a native Irish person is held in as little worth to-day as it was during the most rigorous periods of extermination. From that point of view, it matters not one whit what Government is in power—Coddin is just as deceitful as Short. It should, however, be expected that in return for costly favours extended by this country, a Liberal Administration, pledged to amend Irish Government, would not openly befriend the cause of the enemies of its allies. In Belfast, day after day, armed Orangemen parade the streets, deliberately provoking breaches of the peace, while the so-called authorities look on approvingly. Gun-running is a favourite occupation on the Northern coast, though it must be practised more as a demonstration of the supineness of the Government, than because there is any actual necessity for arms. The thoughtful Liberal Government saw to it that every adult in Ulster was supplied with a rifle, and ammunition before the Arms Proclamation was issued, the latter being simply designed to keep the National Volunteers, just then springing into existence, in such a defenceless condition, that in the event of civil war, they would be completely at the mercy of the Orangemen. As we have said, even since the proclamation, the efforts of the Government have been altogether in this direction. Gun-running has gone merrily on in Ulster; all the civil, military and naval forces of the Crown have been requisitioned to prevent the landing of arms in the South and West, and in fact the best opportunity open to the National Volunteers of procuring equipment, would be via Ulster. Sunday's tale, may be quickly told, though its memory will never be effaced. A gun-running coup, on a large scale, was effected at Howth, and word was conveyed to the Metropolitan police headquarters, of which Commissioner Harrel was in charge, that the National Volunteers were marching citywards. This gentleman must have known thoroughly all the policy of the Government in deal-

ing with armed Volunteers. The probability of a disturbance in Belfast, as a consequence of parades of force, is always present; the danger of a disturbance in Dublin under similar circumstances, except deliberately provoked by the authorities, as happened on Sunday, is positively nil. Commissioner Harrel communicated with the Under Secretary, who arranged to meet the subordinate at the Castle at 2.45 p.m., or forty-five minutes after the message had been received that arms were being landed. This appointment Mr. Harrel failed to keep, being then in search of military reinforcements, to ensure a conflict with the Volunteers. The Under-Secretary—just imagine the irony of it!—made a minute expressing disapproval of Mr. Harrel's conduct, which in the nature of things, could not possibly reach the chief investigator of Sunday's murders in time to alter his course of conduct. Presumably then the Under Secretary went to lunch, for he does not figure further in the evil affair. The next thing that happened was a collision between the military, who evidently on Mr. Harrel's instructions, were equipped for war, and the Volunteers; the King's own Scottish Blackguards—not their official, but their proper designation—beating a hasty retreat. The Volunteers cleared their stock of rifles, and the Scotch Blackguards marched back towards their barracks, accompanied by a hooting crowd, who undoubtedly threw missiles at them. The man, Harrel, had by this time disappeared, though he must have known that the city was seething with excitement, and that it was his duty, both as a policeman and a man, to see to the end of the ghastly work he had set on foot. Right in the heart of the city, and without a moment's warning, the King's Own Scottish Blackguards fired into the dense crowd of defenceless people, killing three and wounding about fifty. There can be no doubt but that the whole affair was a deliberate conspiracy to provoke civil war in Ireland, and in a quarter of the country where the issue would lie between the military and the Nationalists, and the Orangemen would not be called upon to risk their wretched skins. The proximity of the Curragh to Dublin made the latter the most suitable place to commence operations. The requisitioning of the military, the provisioning of them with ball-cartridge, the failure of Commissioner Harrel to keep his appointment with his superior, the indifference to consequences of the latter, the entire absence of the Chief Commissioner of the D.M.P., the fact that no civil authority was consulted—all these things, and a hundred other circumstances which will readily arise in the public mind, point to a plot to embroil the South and West of Ireland in a war with the armed forces of the Crown. Of course an inquiry is promised in the circumstances; Sir John Ross has resigned; Mr. Harrel has been suspended, and the King's Own Scottish Blackguards are to be deported from Dublin. But who is going to stand in the dock, charged with the murder and attempted murder of citizens of Dublin? That is what we all want to know.