

THE BREAKING OF THE STORM

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The Breaking of the Storm by C. A. L. Brownlow

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C. A. L. BROWNLOW

**THE BREAKING
OF THE STORM**

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THE BREAKING OF THE STORM

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First Published in 1918

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE
AMERICAN

uP.

TO
MY WIFE

THE
GARDEN

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE BREAKING OF THE STORM

CHAPTER I

THE GATHERING OF THE CLOUDS

DURING the first weeks of July 1914, being on leave, I determined to visit Ulster, then threatened with civil strife. Thus I found myself one summer evening leaning on the rail of one of the fast steamers which run between Stranraer and Larne, and watching in admiration the translucent green of the Irish Sea and the blue-black rocks and purple heather of the fast receding coast of Scotland. As I gazed eastwards across the foaming wake, a man came up beside me.

"Beautiful!" he said in a harsh voice.

"Lovely," I agreed.

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And so we got into conversation, which soon veered towards Ulster.

"Men are mad in Britain now about these infernal Irish politics, mad and blind."

"What do you mean?" I replied, a little nettled.

"I mean that we are all so engrossed in this domestic quarrel that we have no eyes to see the dark clouds gathering in eastern Europe, clouds of war which may overcast the whole sky and deluge Europe in blood."

"But look how the 1911 crisis was smoothed over."

"The Central Powers were not ready then. Now their preparations are complete, and with Britain divided against herself, they think their hour has come."

And so, thrusting swiftly towards Ireland, this grim stranger unfolded to me a terrible prophecy which concluded with these words: "Germany means to strike, and when she does the whole world will be drawn into the vortex of war."

The following day I spent in Belfast

THE GATHERING OF THE CLOUDS 3

looking for evidence of the state of mind of its dour and implacable people. A hundred straws showed the direction of the stream. Every Ulsterman I talked to held the same dogged opinion, every wall was placarded with his propaganda, and every shop window held a bust of Carson, whose determined and relentless face seemed the very face of Ulster gazing sternly on her Southern neighbour.

On 27th July I went to the old Town Hall, Belfast, which was the headquarters of the Provisional Government. I was shown into an inner room, where I talked to a retired officer who was moving little flags on a large map which covered one side of a wall. He told me many astounding facts, and among other things showed me a sample rifle run through at Larne, and a pattern of the Ulster uniform.

"We work here day and night at high pressure. Our instrument of Government is ready, our instrument of war is nearly forged. If our existence is threatened, we are prepared and soberly determined