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REAMH-READH

by PÁDRAIG UA MAOLDOMHNAIGH

Ón gcéad lá riamh ó chuir Gaill a gcosa ar thalamh na hÉireann d'éirigh Clanna Gael amach ina gcoinne i ngach aois chun an ruaig a chur orthu. Orthu seo do bhí, mar shampla, na hÉireannaigh Aontaithe, na Gaeil Óga, na Finíní agus Laochra na Cásca.

Má theip ar aois amháin do spreag siad an ghlúin ina ndiaidh chun leanúint leis an troid agus do thugadar an Lóchrann ó aois to haois. Imbiana tá Iubhaile Órdha Éirí Amach 1916 á chomóradh againn agus is rud beag é an leabhar seo chun a thaispeáint nach bhfuil Laochra na Cásca dearmadta againn. An bhfuil an Phoblacht a bhí mar chuspóir ag na Laochra againn? Tá sé chontae na hÉireann fós fé smacht na Breataine agus níl ár dteanga féin á labhairt go forleathan. Agus dá mbeadh Poblacht 32 Chontae againn amárach ní bhéadh aon ghlór ann agus sinn ag labhairt teanga an tSasanaigh.

The strongest common bond uniting mankind is love of liberty and willingness to sacrifice anything to achieve it. From man's earliest record to the present time, the names that glow forth from the yellowed pages of history are not the great names of rulers who controlled men's lives, not the great poets and orators who stirred men's hearts, but the simple, honest men of every race. Leonides of Greece, Horatio of Rome, Pearse and Connolly of Ireland, who by sacrificing themselves for the ideal of freedom ennobled men's souls.

Throughout history's pages there is no story so sorrowful, yet so grand, as Ireland's long struggle for freedom. Indeed, no country has laboured so long and diligently, has suffered so much, has failed so often and yet had the strength, the courage and the character to try again. The dying words of Emmet: "When my country takes her place among the nations of the world, then and not till then let my epitaph be written"; the glorious words of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, "God Save Ireland," were spoken in front of a hostile tribunal for a cause which they knew in their day at least was doomed to failure. They failed but they inspired others to follow their example, so it might be said that Tone and Emmet are immortal. It was their action that begot Pearse and his followers. They in turn carried the torch so nobly that their followers remain as true to their ideals as they themselves were to the ideals of Tone and Emmet. The daring and heroism of generation inspired the men of 1916 and resulted in the establishment of the Irish Republic and the people of all Ireland by their votes endorsed that Republic in 1918. This year we pay tribute to that unselfish band who challenged the might of the British Empire in 1916, and this booklet is Limerick's tribute. What greater tribute can we pay then than to relate them to those whom that patriotic Limerick priest, Fr. John Keynon, must have had in mind when he spoke in Limerick in 1847: "If you wish to shake of Saxon dominion, select men of pure hearts; men who would rather die than descent to a meanness. Select a man that fears no mortal — that fears God alone — that fears no government — that will swear eternal hostility to Saxon rule in this land — a man that will do or die."

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Mary Spring Rice

BY

séamus mac conmara

GLORIOUS AND HISTORIC in the history of Ireland as is the 1916 Rising, few will dispute the fact that a very important happening previous to it was the Howth gun-running on July 26th, 1914, and of very much import to us Limerick people is the fact that a leading figure in this now famous exploit was Mary Ellen Spring Rice of Mount Trenchard, Foynes, Co. Limerick. Her story of association with the Nationalist movement of Ireland during the early part of this century was somewhat similar in ways to the Countess Markievicz, who founded Fianna Eireann. Both were ladies of "the big house," and Mary Spring Rice's father was Thomas, second Baron Monteagle of Mount Brandon, Mount Trenchard, Foynes, Co. Limerick. The first Lord Monteagle was Secretary of State for Britain during the last century. So it will be seen that from this very ascendary and pro-English background sprang Mary Spring Rice, a brave spirited girl, whose social association with Erskine Childers and his family caused her to actively engage in treasonable work (according to Dublin Castle standards) for Irish freedom.

However, when the *Asgard*, with a crew of five and two women aboard, left Ireland for rendezvous with the tug *Gladiator* from Hamburg at a point near the Ruytigen Lightship on July 12th, 1914, off the coast of Belgium, Baron Monteagle's daughter was aboard (the other woman was Mrs. Childers), and Erskine Childers, who was captain, is said to have first received the idea from the enthusiastic Mary Spring Rice herself. Be that as it may, fourteen days later, July 26th, into Howth harbour sailed the *Asgard*, overloaded with rifles and ammunition, after the white little yacht and its brave crew, safely running the gauntlet of the British Navy down the English Channel and up the Irish Sea. How proud did the aristocratic lady from Mount Trenchard feel that day, as sitting in the stern of the *Asgard*, she watched the expectant faces of one thousand men of the Volunteers along the little harbour of Howth, all eager to get their hands on the guns, in preparation for a 'Rising in their own lifetime.'

The thrilling story of the landing of the guns and the march into Dublin of one thousand armed Irish Volunteers is now part of our history, and everybody knows the invaluable help the guns were to the men of 1916, and indeed to their successors in the subsequent fight for independence. Mary Spring Rice's bravery in accompanying Erskine Childers on the *Asgard* was not the only effort this Co. Limerick lady made to ensure that Irish Volunteers would not have empty hands when the hour of battle called. With such brilliant associates as Mrs. Alice Stopford Green, and the Childers family, assisted by willing helpers, Mary Spring

Rice organised collections of cash to pay for the guns from Hamburg — an absolute pre-requisite before any shipment of arms could be arranged. Even before the Howth gun-running escapade, Mary Spring Rice had shown publicly her patriotism and love of Ireland's Gaelic heritage, by appearing at Feiseanna and similar occasions of cultural gatherings. Her presence at such functions, particularly around her own county, added much prestige to same.

And during the four glorious years of the War of Independence, Mary Spring Rice was ever on the side of the freedom-fighters. Her home at Mount Trenchard was a welcome refuge of rest for the I.R.A., and it is known that she often risked her life to visit the fighting men hiding in local places with food and aid so badly needed. She even placed a boat always at the disposal of the West Limerick Brigade, should it be needed by them, and in many other ways rendered invaluable service. During the Anglo-Irish War, too, Mary Spring Rice risked her life many times, taking important messages to G.H.Q., in Dublin, from the provinces — her social standing blinding the Dublin Castle authorities to her real purpose. Another way in which this patriotic Co. Limerick lady helped the cause of freedom in those dangerous days was actually done under the palatial roof of Mount Trenchard. There, beneath artistically designed ceilings and magnificent chandeliers, she told her visitors, which often included titled members of Westminster, the true facts concerning the British outrages in Ireland, which were presented to the British Parliament in a very different light.

The coming of the Treaty and the events that followed were heart-breaks to Mary Spring Rice, because she like so many others looked on with sorrow at the division in the ranks. It hurt this gracious lady all the more, because just then she was entering into an illness which within two years was to claim her in death, at the age of forty-four. On December 1st, 1924, Mary Spring Rice went to God. She died in the Vale of Clwydd Sanatorium, North Wales, and was buried at Foynes, being given a military funeral, attended by all who loved her, as she loved Ireland.

Here was a woman of whom Limerick should ever be proud, and when we in this City of the Violated Treaty honour the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising of 1916 this year, we should remember especially this brave woman who walked out from the shelter and privileged class to march beside the fighting men of Ireland. This woman who scorned conservative family tradition, and preferred to take the road fraught with danger, to take up with the common people the Fenian gun, and to strike another blow for Ireland like Wolfe Tone, Emmet, Pearse, and Connolly. God rest the soul of this gentle lady, who is an example to the young womanhood of Ireland today, just as she was when she sailed into Howth with the guns on July 12th, 1914.

AG ULLMHÚ DON ÉIRI AMACH

Sliocht as "B'fhui an Braon Fola," le SÉAMUS O MAOILEÓIN
Le cead ó na foilsitheoirí Sáirséal agus Dill

I ndeireadh Lúnasa 1915 a shroich mé Luimneach. Bhíothas ag ullmhú go tréan le haghaidh an Éiri Amach. Bhí na hÓglaigh go láidir agus bhí raidhfíli Lee Enfield ag a bhformhór. Ní dóigh liom go raibh aon dream Óglach in Éirinn ach amháin i gCorcaigh, b'fhéidir, armáilte chomh maith agus a bhí i Luimneach an tráth sin. Seoirse mac Fhlannchadha a bhí mar cheannfort ar na hÓglaigh agus bhíodh Riobard Monteith ár dteagase. Múinteoir Gaeilge ab ea Seoirse. Dhúnmharaigh na píleirí é nuair a bhí se ina Mhéara ar an gcathair in aimsir na nDúchrónach.

Bhí eagar an-mhaith ar na Fianna agus ar Chumann na mBan i Luimneach. Bhí na cailíní an-oilte i gcúrsaí céadchabhrach. Seosamh Daltún a bhí i gceannas na bhFianna. Togha oifigigh ab ea é. Bhí sé sároilte i gcúrsaí gleacáiochta. Bhíodh mise ag cuidiu leis cúpla oíche sa tseachtain agus ní beag a d'fhoghlaim mé uaidh. Bhí an Bhráithreacht ann leis ach is eagal liom go raibh an iomarca seandaoine agus daoine meánaosta sa ghluaiseacht sin. Ba chuma sin ach amháin go raibh smacht acu ar na hÓglaigh. Bhí na seandaoine ceart go leor i Sinn Féin ach i gcúrsaí troda bíonn gá leis an óige. Bhí sárobair á dhéanamh ag an gConradh agus ag Cumann Lúth-chleas Gael agus ag Sinn Féin i Luimneach. Bhí gach roinn de ghluaiseacht na saoirse ag dul chun cinn go seoigh sa chathair agus de réir dealraimh bhí gach duine indéiríre.

Tháinig an Piarsach i mí Samhna 1915 agus d'inis sé dúinn gan fiacal a chur ann go raibh an lá ag teacht. Ag labhairt dó i nGaeilge dúirt sé go raibh an lá sin an-chomhgarach dúinn, go bhféadfadh sé teach i gceann seachtaine ach go dtiocfadh sé cinnte sara mbeadh leathbhlaín imithe thart. Tháinig Eoin Mac Néill ina dhiaidh sin agus bhí an scéal ceanna aigesean ach ní raibh sé chomh cruinn leis an bPiarsach. Sa chathair a labhair an Piarsach. Ag Loch Goir in oirthear Luimní a labhair Eoin agus bhí daoine ó gach cuid den chontae ag éisteacht leis. Dúirt sé go raibh sé féin ró-aosta le bheith ina cheannfort ar arm agus nach raibh sé oilte a dhóthain ar shaighdiúireacht.

"Nuair a thiocfaidh an gloe," ar seisean, "beidh ormsa éiri as agus slí a dhéanamh do shaighdiúir."

Nuair a bhí mé i Luimneach chuir mé ar aithne Sheán O Dálaigh, Fíinín. Chaith Seán deich mbliana i bpriosún i Sasana agus bhris ar a shláinte ann. Nuair a tháinig sé amach bhunaigh sé bÁCÚS i Luimneach agus thóg sé clann a dhearthár a bhí marbh. Bhí clann mhór iníon ann agus aon mhac amháin, Éamon. Cuireadh Éamon chun báis i ndiaidh an Éiri Amach. Deirtear gur bhris bás Éamoin i mBléa Cliath agus géilleadh na hÓglach i Luimneach croí an tseandúine. D'ála go leor Fíiníní eile, bas gan sagart a fuair se. Nuair a bhí aithne agamsa air ní raibh úsáid na geos aige agus bhí an chaint go lag aige ach bhí a intinn an-léir i gcónaí. s mó scéal a d'inis sé dom faoi aimsir na bhFíiníní.

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— TEO —



DONAL SHEEHAN

by DAN MULGAHY

DONAL SHEEHAN, of Ballintubrid, Newcastle West, met his death under tragic circumstances in the water off Ballykissane Pier, near Killorglin, on Good Friday, 1916. Thus, he shared the distinction of being one of the first casualties in the Easter Week Rising. Aged only thirty years at the time, Donal, with three comrades, was on his way to Cahirciveen on what may well be regarded as one of the most important top-secret missions during that fateful week preceding the insurrection. They had been sent by the Military Council to sieze the wireless equipment from the School of Wireless at Cahirciveen. The Objective was to bring the transmitting and receiving apparatus to Tralee Bay with a view to contacting the German arms ship, *The Aud*, and give directions for the landing of the eagerly-awaited arms.

Unfortunately, due to one of those cruel tricks of fate, the four men never reached their destination. The car in which they were travelling apparently took a wrong turn at Killorglin and plunged into the water at Ballykissane Pier. Ironically, it was disclosed later, the German ship was not equipped with wireless so that the tragic occurrence in which Donal Sheehan and two of his comrades lost their lives did not in fact materially affect the subsequent fate of *The Aud* or the eventual anti-climax to the pre-

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parations for armed rebellion in the south-west. It was also disclosed later, contrary to the view expressed in some quarters at the time, that the fate of Donal Sheehan and his comrades had no bearing on the tragic sequence of events that followed Casement's landing. Nobody was aware of the patriot's evidently last-minute plans at this time for a landing on the Kerry coast.

Donal Sheehan was born at Ballintubrid, a few miles west of Newcastle West, but in the parish of Monegae. He was educated first at Killoughteen National School and later at the Courteney Schools, Newcastle West, where his national aspirations first asserted themselves when he became a keen student of the Irish language. Like so many other young Irishmen of his day, he eventually found his way to London, where he took up an appointment as book-keeper in the Savoy Hotel. In the English capital he immediately joined the Gaelic League, which was helping in a very significant way to keep the national spirit alive amongst the Irish exiles. His quiet and unassuming but genial disposition soon made him a general favourite in London, where his sincere patriotism founded on a thorough knowledge of his country's history was universally appreciated.

After the outbreak of the first world war, Donal returned to Ireland and worked for a short period at Geary's biscuit factory in Merchant's Quay, Limerick. He resided during this spell at Assembly Mall, also known at the time as Charlotte Quay, in the home of a Mrs. Hall. Mrs. Hall's son, Paddy, now a well-known victualler in William Street, was only about ten years old at the time but he remembers Donal well. Donal had a room at the top of the Hall household and, if memory serves Paddy correctly, he was "a tallish, sandy-haired man." One thing Paddy recalls very clearly is that Donal was "a very quiet man," and as a child Paddy was very fond of him. It was Mr. Geary, a friend of the Halls, who sent Donal to live with the family in Assembly Mall. Paddy recalls seeing "the quiet man" leave one evening and that was the last he saw of Donal. He had been recalled to Dublin, and on instructions from headquarters was on his way to Cahirciveen with his three comrades, Keating, Monahan, and a Limerickman, Tom McInerney. The car in which they were travelling was nearing its first destination when tragedy struck. Tom McInerney was the only survivor of the four.

Details of the tragic occurrence and the events that followed have been largely lost in the confusion that inevitably followed the Rising. The *Catholic Bulletin*, outspoken organ of the nationalist cause, records that "when his (Donal Sheehan's) body was recovered from the Laune river no one in Killorglin identified it, with the result that he was reverently buried in the local churchyard and his funeral attended by the whole countryside." In view of the fate that was to befall so many of his comrades of the Rising soon after, it seems a reasonable assumption that Donal, "the quiet man" from Ballintubrid, would have wished no more fitting final tribute from the people he sought to serve and set free.

And now, fifty years after, it is refreshing to find that his old friends, and some of the younger generation who have grown up with the legend of his sacrifice, have not forgotten this gallant young West Limerick man. A representative committee of residents from the district have decided to pay tribute to his memory by the erection of a memorial plaque in the little Parish Church of Monegae where he was baptised. The plaque will bear the simple but significant inscription: "Pray for the soul of Donal Sheehan of Ballintubrid, Kimmage Garrison of Oglagh na hEireann, who was killed in action during the Easter Rising, 1916. Erected by his friends, Easter, 1966."

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Limerick and the Easter Week Rising

by MAINCHÍN SEOIGHE

A GREAT NEW CHAPTER in Irish history began with the founding of the Irish Volunteers at the Rotunda meeting in Dublin, on November 25th, 1913. The first company of Volunteers to be founded outside of Dublin was in Athlone; the second was in Dromcollogher, Co. Limerick. And anyone who knows anything about the subsequent course of Irish history will not be surprised to learn that the early formation of the Dromcollogher company was due to Fr. Tom Wall (An tAthair Tomás de Bhál), who was then curate in the parish.

A meeting was held in the Athenaeum Hall, Limerick, on Sunday, January 25th, for the purpose of inaugurating a corps of Volunteers in the city. The meeting, a large and enthusiastic one, was addressed by Pádraig Pearse and Roger Casement, and practically every man present enrolled. Thereafter the work of organising proceeded apace. Offices were opened at No. 1 Hartstonge Street, where enrolments took place nightly. Soon sufficient numbers had joined to allow for the formation of eight companies.

No account of the early days of the Limerick Volunteers would be complete without some reference to the Honourable Mary Spring Rice, of Mount Trenchard, near Foynes, daughter of Lord Monteagle. Mary Spring Rice was an ardent supporter of the Gaelic League and the Volunteer movement, and it was to her plans that the famous Howth Gun Running was carried out. As well, she had helped to provide funds for the purchase of the Hamburg rifles for the Volunteers, and she was aboard the yacht, *Asgard*, with her friends, Erskine Childers and his wife, when the guns were successfully landed at Howth on July 26th, 1914.

The strength of the Limerick City Volunteers in September, 1914, has been estimated at 1,250 men. When the split that had been precipitated by John Redmond's Great War policy occurred that month, one thousand of the men declared for Redmond. However, most of the 150 guns that had been acquired previous to the split were in the custody of Volunteers who had remained loyal to the original aims of the Volunteer movement.

Is olc an ghaoth ná séideann maith do dhuine éigin. It was so in the case of the Limerick City Volunteers. All but one of their instructors, William Lawlor, had gone with the dissident majority who sided with Redmond, and it seemed that their training programme would suffer as a result. But it happened that on November 14th, 1914, Captain Robert Monteith of "A" Company, of the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers, who had been dismissed from his post in the Ordnance Survey because of his nationalist activities, was deported from Dublin by the British authorities. Monteith came straight to Limerick, where

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John Daly, Thomas Clarke, Sean Macdiarmada

he was to prove a decided acquisition. He began work with the Limerick Volunteers on Tuesday, November 17th. And, he tells us: "The material was excellent. All ranks were eager to learn anything I could teach them of the soldier's trade."¹

Ernest Blythe had already been active in Limerick, organising companies of Volunteers in practically every parish in the county. Now Monteith assisted him in his work, travelling to such places as Dromcollogher and Ballylanders, where he arranged for the training of the Volunteers. In Ballylanders he organised a weekly training class for Volunteer officers from Ballylanders, Galbally, Kilfinane and Mitchelstown. This was largely the famous Galee district, which was later to play so heroic a part in the fight for freedom.

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Writing of the Limerick City Battalion of the Volunteers and its officers, on February 15th, 1915, Pádraig Pearse said:—

“Is dóigh len a lán é Cath Luimnigh an Cath is treise dá bhfuil againn. Ta fir mhaithe ina cheannas, fir nach bhfuil a sárú in Éirinn, ar dhílseacht ná ar chalmacht ná ar stuaim.” (*There are many who think that the Limerick City Battalion is the best we have. There are good men in command of it; men whose loyalty, courage and prudence are not surpassed in Ireland.*)²

The inspiration and driving force of the Volunteers in Limerick city was mainly concentrated in three men: Michael P. Colivet, Commandant of the Limerick Brigade; Seoirse Clancy, Irish language enthusiast and athlete, Vice-Commandant; James Leddin, Honorary Colonel. There were eight battalions in Colivet's brigade area: one in Limerick city; three in Co. Limerick (one of the three, the Galtee Battalion, embraced parts of Tipperary and Cork); four in Clare.

A large parade of Volunteers took place in Limerick city on Whit Sunday, May 23rd, 1915. Two special trains brought 600 Volunteers and hundreds of sympathisers from Dublin; 250 travelled on a special train from Cork; and Tipperary was represented by 150 men. Limerick itself supplied about 300 men. The idea of an armed parade through “the City of the Violated Treaty” had caught the imagination of the Volunteers; and many of Ireland's best and bravest were among those who marched so proudly there that day: Pádraig Pearse, Tom Clarke, Willie Pearse, Sean Mac Diarmada, Ned Daly, Liam Mellows, Terence MacSwiney, Seoirse Clancy, Tomás Mac Curtáin. The parade, which followed the route taken by all the great religious and political processions for almost a century, was subjected to some very shameful treatment when it moved into the Irishtown district. This area had supplied more than its quota of fighting men to the Munster Fusiliers, and when the “pro-German Sinn Feiners,” as its inhabitants called the Irish Volunteers, marched in among them hell broke loose, physical violence being done to the marching men, who were pelted with stones and bottles and every kind of missile. Their restraint and discipline in the face of the gravest provocation at Limerick on that Whit Sunday of 1915 showed the stuff the Volunteers were made of and boded well for the part they would play in the future.

It is now known that the attackers of the Volunteers had been well supplied with drink in advance of the parade by persons who cared very little for the dream of Pearse and his comrades.

On the day following the funeral of O Donovan Rossa, when Pearse delivered his great oration, declaring “an Ireland not free merely but Gaelic as well” to be his objective, Tom Clarke came to Limerick, and Monteith met him at the home of John Daly, the Fenian. In the course of their conversation they discussed the Irish Brigade in Germany and its lack of officers; and Clarke told Monteith in confidence that he had already put forward his — Monteith's — name for the command of a company in the Brigade. Monteith left Limerick on August 24th, 1915, and began the first stage of his eventful journey to war-time Germany.

Three weeks before the Rising, Commandant Colivet was ordered by Headquarters to speed up battalion and brigade organisation. He had, as already stated, eight battalions in his command. Only the city battalion could be said to be reasonably well armed. Furthermore, his

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battalions were at less than full strength, numbering no more than some 200 men per unit, whereas a battalion should have comprised at least 500 men. The Limerick city battalion in fact never mustered more than 205 men. At the best, therefore, Colivet could count on no more than 1,600 men in all.

Pearse, outlining the general plan for the Rising, had told Austin Stack and Alfred Cotton in the autumn of 1915 "that in broad outline it was proposed that the Cork Volunteers would move towards Macroom and link up with the Kerry Brigade, which, in turn, would be in communication with the Volunteers in Clare, Limerick and Galway. Ultimately, a line would be held from the Shannon through Limerick and East Kerry to Macroom. Volunteers from Ulster would occupy positions from the Shannon to south of Ulster. The Rising would begin with the declaration of the Republic and seizure of Dublin, with action against the British troops in adjoining counties, while moves would be made by country Volunteer forces towards the capital to relieve the pressure on the Volunteers who had seized the ring of positions inside.

"The arms and ammunition landed at Fenit (from the German arms ship) were to be distributed to the Kerry, Cork, Limerick and Galway Volunteers. Stack and Cotton were to have a goods train ready to leave Fenit with the arms. Part of the armament was to be left at Tralee for distribution to the Cork and Kerry Brigades and the remainder sent on by goods train to Limerick, where arrangements would be ready to distribute them to the Galway area. At Fenit a pilot would have to be on the alert for signals agreed upon with the arms ship, meet it, and guide it into the pier. A cable in code was to be sent to the U.S.A. announcing the proclamation of the Republic."³

Everything, as far as the South and West were concerned, depended on the safe arrival of the German arms ship at Fenit and the successful landing and distribution of the arms.

*Their eyes were straining for the help to come
Over the seas, as in a far off day,
Men waited for the ships of Spain or France
Bearing on Bantry or Killala Bay.⁴*

The Volunteer leaders originally asked that the ship be in Tralee Bay between April 20th and 23rd, 1916. It was when everything had been arranged that, in the words of Desmond Ryan, "the Dublin leaders made their most fatal blunder." They decided that "Arms must not be landed before night of Sunday, 23rd," adding in their message, "This is vital. Smuggling impossible."⁵ By the time this message reached Germany, via America, the arms ship, the *Aud*, was already on its way to Ireland. The *Aud* did not have wireless equipment, and, therefore, no warning message could be flashed to her. The foundations had been kicked from under the plans for a nationwide insurrection in Ireland, and collapse had been made inevitable. But the Volunteer leaders in Dublin, cut off from all direct communication with a world at war, knew nothing of this, nor were they to know until it was too late, and they went eagerly ahead with their preparations for the Rising which they hoped would make their land a nation once again.

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Captain Robert Monteith

On the Sunday prior to Easter Sunday, 1916, Charlie Wall, who was in charge of the Dremcollogher company of Volunteers, was informed by Captain J. MacInerney from the Limerick Brigade Headquarters and Captain Comerford from Dublin, of the date of the Rising. At the same time he was appointed Commandant of the West Limerick Volunteers, whom he was to mobilise on Easter Sunday at Glenquin Castle, near Killeedy.⁶ Part of the West Limerick Volunteers' task would be to ensure the safe passage of the arms train from Fenit through West Limerick to Limerick city.

Limerick was to have been a pivotal point in the insurrection plans.⁷ On the Tuesday of Holy Week, Captain Sean Fitzgibbon, from the Dublin Headquarters, arrived in Limerick with a message that was very much concerned with operations along the Shannon. Fitzgibbon had come on the orders of Pearse, who had instructed him to get in touch with Colivet in Limerick, and Stack in Tralee. Finally, he was to superintend the land of the arms from the *Aud* at Fenit.

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These latest orders that Fitzgibbon brought from Headquarter clashed with the plan of operations on which the Limerick Brigade had hitherto worked. Now Colivet's instructions were that he was to receive at Abbeyfeale the arms which would be landed at Fenit, take what he wanted for his own area, and send the rest ahead to Galway. Police and military positions in Limerick city were to be attacked to cover the transfer of the arms train in safety across the Clare line at Limerick station. So much did these new instructions differ from the original instructions he had received that Colivet, after discussing the matter with Fitzgibbon, at Fitzgibbon's suggestion decided to go to Dublin and have the matter clarified by Pearse himself.

Colivet travelled to Dublin next day, and met Pearse by arrangement at the North Star Hotel, near Amiens Street station. Pearse confirmed the instructions he had sent by Fitzgibbon, and told Colivet to cancel all previous arrangements and concentrate on the arms landing. Once, during the course of their conversation, Colivet asked Pearse point blank:—

"Of course, this means insurrection as soon as the arms are landed and we get them?"

"Yes," Pearse told him, "you are to start at 7 p.m. on Sunday. You are to proclaim the Republic and, as soon as things are secure in your own district, move eastwards."⁸

Finally, Pearse informed him that he would have to work out the local details himself without any more definite instructions from Headquarters. That meant that Colivet, at less than a week's notice, had to face the formidable task of planning in detail the part Limerick was to play in the Rising. He said his final farewell to Pearse, and walked out into the sunny streets of Dublin; the holy streets of Dublin where history was so soon to be made.

An cuimhin libh feighil is aiséirí na Cásca
A shráideanna naofa Átha Cliath,
Is na soilse a hadhnadh 's a leighis bhur náire,
A shráideanna naofa Átha Cliath?
Níorbh fhada a ré 's a scéimh fóiríor!
Bé an falla géar 's an p'leár an díol,
Agus flatha na Féinne san aol 'na luí,
A shráideanna naofa Átha Cliath.⁹

As soon as Colivet arrived back home in Limerick, he summoned his Brigade Staff to a meeting that night at Seoirse Clancy's house. Details of the plan that was drawn up and agreed on at the meeting are given as follows in Desmond Ryan's invaluable book, *The Rising*:—

"Briefly, it was arranged that the Limerick City Battalion should march out of the city at 10 a.m. on Sunday morning to Killonan, as if for the announced three-day manoeuvres. The return to the city was timed for 7 o'clock in the evening when all police and military barracks in the city were to be attacked after first cutting telegraphic and telephone wires, as well as railway communications with Limerick Junction and Dublin. The police and military garrisons were to be confined to their barracks by the attack, which was not to be pressed home but kept up as a diversion until the Kerry arms train had passed safely into

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Clare over Longpavement railway bridge. When the arms reached Limerick the barrack attacks were to be followed up with the utmost energy.

“As the train had to cross the Limerick lines to the south unnoticed and uninterrupted, this diversion of police and military attention was essential. At Newcastle West on the following day the Volunteer units were to be posted, poorly armed as those in West Limerick were, to take over the train at Abbeyfeale, to attack the police barracks at Newcastle West and see the train through in safety, and to attack and disarm all police likely to interfere with the plans. The Volunteer unit at Newcastle West was to watch the station very closely as it was a terminus where all trains and engines had to be reversed, and delay there offered dangerous opportunities for police and military interference. There was an insistent order from Dublin that any armed clash with police and military must at all costs be avoided until 7 p.m. on Sunday.

“The Limerick plan provided that all available Volunteers were armed and taken aboard the train as it proceeded towards Limerick. All possible reinforcements were to be gathered at the various stations. The Galtee Battalion was to attack Charleville Junction and put it out of action, attack all police units in their district, and advance on Limerick to take part in the fighting there. At Limerick Junction the Tipperary Volunteers were to take similar action, and after settling with the local police units, also to march to join the Limerick Volunteers. Doon and Castleconnell units were to deal with railway lines from Castleconnell to Killaloe, destroy Birdhill Junction, and make their way to the Limerick and Clare units operating in Limerick city. In County Clare, Captain Michael Brennan and the Mid-Clare and East Clare Volunteers were to seize Ennis and all stations to Crusheen, and finally, after disarming the R.I.C. in various localities, take up positions on the north of the Shannon at Limerick, complete its encirclement, and force a surrender of the hostile forces within.

“In West Clare, Captain P. Brennan was to take command of all available Volunteers at Kilrush, commandeer boats, cross the Shannon at Ballylongford or Tarbert, join the Kerry Volunteers at Listowel, and proceed to Limerick on the arms train. He was urged to come with as strong a party as possible so as to make sure that there would be no hitch or interference at the danger-point at Newcastle West. The station-master at Castleconnell, Lieutenant MacGee, was an active, although secret, supporter of the Volunteers. He was given charge of the work of making contacts and arrangements for the safe passage of the arms train. When all these plans were successfully carried through, there was to be a general march on Dublin.

“In a word, the Cork, Clare, Tipperary and West Limerick Volunteers were to seize railways and barracks in their immediate areas, disarm the police, surround Limerick and march into the relief of the city battalion. The plan assumed that the barracks would be taken without a hitch, the police overcome, the Limerick attack maintained, that the arms train would pass without interference by police and military, and, most important of all, that the arms would be safely landed from the *Aud.*”

On the Thursday of Holy Week, Commandant Liam Manahan of the Galtee Battalion travelled to Dublin and visited the Volunteer Head-

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quarters with the intention of finding out the truth for himself about the famous "Castle Document" which had just been published. According to this document, a swoop by British troops on the leaders of all nationalist organisations in Ireland was imminent. In a brief interview he had with Thomas MacDonagh, Manahan was to receive his first intimation of divided opinions at Volunteer Headquarters.¹⁰

On Good Friday night the following order from Limerick Brigade Headquarters was delivered to Manahan:—

"Mobilisation Sunday. All arms. March west and hold railway line between Adare and Newcastle West. Seize any arms possible, and do everything possible to avoid shooting the members of the R.I.C."¹¹

But plans counted for little now. On Holy Thursday evening the *Aud* arrived in Tralee Bay, dead on time — that is, according to the instructions that had been issued to its gallant commander, Captain Karl Spindler, when he was leaving Lübeck. But because of that fatal change of dates made by the Volunteer leaders, of which he was utterly unaware, there was nobody to meet him on arrival. He sailed in close to Fenit, flashing his signals and waiting for the pilot boat that never came. Next day, Good Friday, after he had been twenty-four hours in Tralee Bay, he reluctantly began to steam away from Fenit and out towards the open sea. Soon British naval units were in hot pursuit.

The Volunteer command had arranged for the dismantling of the wireless station at Cahirciveen and the setting up of a transmitter at Tralee with which it was hoped to make contact with the arms ship and the submarine which would be arriving about the same time. On Good Friday morning five Volunteers left Dublin by train for Killarney. They were: Denis Daly, Con Keating, Donal Sheehan, Charles Monaghan and Colm Ó Lochlainn. These were the men who were to dismantle the Cahirciveen station and set up the Tralee transmitter. From the very beginning it was a vain journey, for the *Aud* had already come, and would be gone before they reached Kerry; and, anyway, the ship carried no wireless equipment.

Waiting for the five Volunteers at Killarney were two cars from Limerick city, one of which was driven by Tommy MacInerney, the other by Sam Windrim. Tommy MacInerney owned one of the cars; the other was owned by John J. Quilty. Quilty, an active Volunteer, had been unable to travel because of a domestic circumstance, and it was his car Tommy MacInerney was driving. Denis Daly and Colm Ó Lochlainn got into the car Sam Windrim was driving, and their three companions sat in with Tommy MacInerney.

In the darkness the two cars became separated. Then, just beyond Killorglin, Tommy MacInerney took a wrong turning and the car plunged into the sea off Ballykissane pier. MacInerney was rescued by a local man, but the other three occupants of the car were drowned. And so Donal Sheehan of Ballintubrid, Newcastle West, Con Keating of Cahirciveen, and Charles Monaghan of Belfast, became the first casualties of the Easter Rising.

Earlier on that fatal Good Friday, Roger Casement, who had come ashore with Monteith and Bailey off the German submarine, U.19, had been arrested. A few hours later, Austin Stack was arrested. Explaining the inactivity of Kerry at Easter, 1916, after all the brave preparations that had been made, Desmond Ryan, the historian of the Rising, says:

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Sir Roger Casement

“The events that paralysed Kerry were: a tragedy at Ballykissane pier, the sudden arrival of Casement, the arrest of Austin Stack.”¹² And these events paralysed not only Kerry but all of Munster and the West of Ireland as well.

Confusion began to spread through the local Volunteer commands as the news from Kerry trickled through. On Holy Thursday, Commandant Liam Manahan of the Galtee Battalion, Limerick Brigade, issued orders for Sunday manoeuvres at Galbally, but altered company routes and meeting points in order to avoid any clash with military raiding parties. Some of his officers went so far as to oppose the idea of any parade with arms because it exposed the weapons to the risk of capture. In Limerick city, Commandant Michael P. Colivet spent Holy Saturday in a very worried state, wondering what was going to happen the following day. Sean Fitzgibbon of Headquarters Staff had hurried back to Dublin from Limerick on hearing of the happenings in Kerry. Before he left he had been requested by Colivet to send back a code message that would inform them whether the Rising was “on” or “off”.

Colivet then despatched Lieutenant Whelan to Tralee to find out what the position was like there. When no word had come from Dublin,

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Colivet sent out dispatches cancelling all arrangements in his command for the time being, but with the warning that further orders would follow. Still very anxious to hear from Headquarters, he sent Lieutenant Séamus Gubbins to Dublin by an afternoon train. Having failed to meet Eoin Mac Neill, Lieutenant Gubbins went to Sean Mac Diarmada's lodgings, where he met Sean himself. The place was a hive of activity, he tells us, with men constantly coming and going, and stands of rifles arranged along the walls. Mac Diarmada told him that the Rising would definitely take place, and Gubbins sent the pre-arranged code telegram to Limerick: "The books have arrived" — meaning that the Rising was on. Gubbins, stating that he could not now expect to be back in Limerick in time for the outbreak of hostilities there asked to be posted to a Dublin unit, but Mac Diarmada told him that his place was in Limerick. Limerick had requested Headquarters for some lorries, and on Saturday evening two lorries set out from Dublin for Limerick. Lieutenant Gubbins travelled on one of the lorries.¹³

Colivet's anxiety on that Holy Saturday afternoon may be judged from the fact that a few hours after he had sent Lieutenant Gubbins to Dublin he was seeing Captain Liam Forde off to the same destination on a somewhat similar mission. Forde, too, went to Sean Mac Diarmada's lodgings, and confided to Sean the latest news from Kerry and Limerick, conveying as well a suggestion from Colivet that, in view of what had happened, the Rising should be postponed. To Sean, who had perhaps done more than any man to bring the day of the Rising near, the suggestion now that it should be postponed was utterly intolerable. He burst out that the Rising must take place, even if they had only sticks and stones to fight with, and added bitterly that there were too many philosophers in the country. In the intensity of his feelings he became physically sick. Liam Forde slept in Mac Diarmada's lodgings that night.¹⁴

The long-awaited Easter Sunday of 1916 dawned. This was to have been the day of a nationwide uprising. But that hope was killed by Eoin Mac Neill's countermanding order calling off the Easter "manoeuvres," which was published in that day's SUNDAY INDEPENDENT, and which left the country Volunteers in utter confusion. Before he was dressed that morning, Sean Mac Diarmada was shown Mac Neill's countermanding order. Liam Forde tells us that it drove him frantic. He rent the coat of his pyjamas to shreds, crying inconsolably that we were betrayed again. He dressed, and walked to Liberty Hall, accompanied by Forde. In a somewhat calmer mood now, Mac Diarmada said they should rise, if only with pikes and bayonets; that even though defeated their blood would regenerate the nation.¹⁵

Arrived at Liberty Hall, he disappeared into one of its many rooms. Forde had breakfast with Clarke, Connolly and Ceannt, and was waited on by Countess Markievicz. The other three left after breakfast to attend a meeting which lasted until about 4 p.m. Then Pearse emerged, and placing his arm affectionately around Forde's shoulder, told him everything was "off" for the present, but added: "Hold yourself in readiness for further orders."¹⁶ He provided a motor car for Forde as far as Cashel, in order that he would convey a message to Pierce Mac Cann, Commandant of the Tipperary Volunteers. Forde conveyed the message, hired another car at Cashel and reported back to the Limerick

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On Easter Sunday morning, The O Rahilly had arrived in Limerick with written instructions for Colivet from Mac Neill, stating, "Volunteers completely deceived. All orders for to-morrow, Sunday, cancelled." The O Rahilly also told Colivet of the serious differences at the Dublin Headquarters, and confirmed that the German arms ship was lost and the arms gone. Colivet at once issued final orders cancelling arrangements for the outside units of his command, but decided to take the City Battalion to Killonan to camp out there in the usual way as if nothing had happened. These decisions were taken after he had consulted with his staff. Later in the day Lieutenant Gubbins returned from Dublin with two lorries sent by Sean Mac Diarmada, in response to a request which Colivet had forwarded by Sean Fitzgibbon.

One hundred and thirty Volunteers paraded for the march to Killonan on Easter Sunday morning. All were from the City Battalion which, at full strength, never exceeded two hundred men. It was a wet, chilly morning, and as it was now clear that the Rising had been at least postponed, forty or fifty of the Volunteers returned to the city. On Sunday afternoon Colivet received Fitzgibbon's code message stating that the Rising was off. Later that night, Captain Forde arrived from Dublin with the message from Pearse cancelling all arrangements, but warning the Limerick men to be ready for further orders.

About 150 Volunteers assembled under the command of Commandant Charlie Wall at Glenquin Castle in West Limerick. They were drawn principally from the following Companies (names of commanders given in brackets): Monegea (Dan Conway and Dan Collins); Templeglantine (Mossie Leahy); Killoughteen (Jim Somers and Dan MacCarthy); Newcastle West (B. Moone and M. J. O'Gorman); Tournafulla (M. Hartnett and T. Leahy); Ashford (Mick Begley and Jackie Noonan); Raheenagh (Dick Anglim); Broadford (David Brennan); Ardagh (Paddy Drinane and P. Ambrose); Athea Company was ready to march to Glenquin but did not arrive there in time for the mobilisation due to a delay in the delivery of the mobilisation order.¹⁷

Two chaplains were in attendance, Fr. Tom Wall, C.C., Dromcollogher, and Fr. Michael Hayes, C.C., Newcastle West. These were the two patriotic priests whose names were soon to figure prominently in the historic exchange of letters between Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, and Brigadier-General Sir John Maxwell, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in Ireland. Also in attendance was Captain J. MacInerney from Limerick, who, because of previous military experience, was appointed Director of Operations and second in command to Commandant Wall. Some police also had come along and were taking more than common interest in the proceedings.

The leaders had arranged that when zero hour arrived the policemen would be seized and made prisoners of. The men would then be told that the Rising had begun, and any man not willing to take part would be free to withdraw. The only condition to be imposed on those withdrawing was that they were not to return home directly, but were to remain all night on the hills.¹⁸ But before the hour for action struck, an officer arrived from Limerick with Mac Neill's countermanding order.

The West Limerick men carried out some drill and engaged in some field exercises; and before they finally disbanded and set out for home

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Over in South-east Limerick on that fateful Easter Sunday of 1916, the Galtee Battalion was already moving off when Mac Neill's message was received. Mac Neill's dispatch ordered the cancelling of all movements of Volunteers, but despite this Manahan decided to go ahead with some show of manoeuvres until more definite news or orders reached him. Some of his companies were poorly armed and to these he sent messages telling them to route-march in their own areas until they received further orders. He then took the reasonably-well armed companies from Galbally, Kilross, Tipperary, Ballylanders, Mitchelstown and a few other units, and carried out manoeuvres with them. He did not dismiss his men until after nightfall, and then only company by company.

So passed Easter Sunday of 1916 in Limerick — a day that belongs to the calendar of the great might-have-beens of Irish history.

On Easter Monday, Lieutenant P. Whelan returned to Limerick city after his visit to Tralee, where he had interviewed Monteith. Monteith had told him that no men were coming from Germany, that the arms ship was lost, that "the Germans were out for cheap Irish blood," and that the best thing the Volunteers in the South could do was to try and bluff through.

Between 1.30 and 2 p.m., Miss Agnes Daly and Miss Laura Daly delivered to Colivet a message from Pearse, which said: "Dublin Brigade goes into action today. Carry out your orders." Colivet immediately summoned a meeting of all available Volunteer officers. After some discussion, it was decided that, as the orders relating to Limerick were based on the assumption that a successful landing of the arms from the German arms ship would be effected, and that as the arms had not been landed, it was now impossible to carry out the orders. By this time there were, in fact, only seventy-six of the City Battalion left in Killonan camp and the outlying units had been demobilised. There was an unanimous decision that in view of all the facts nothing could be done. The Volunteers at Killonan were marched back to Limerick under dismal rainy skies and dismissed, after which they returned to their homes with their arms, very much on the alert as they expected that an attempt by the British to disarm them was imminent. The local British military forces, consisting of 2,000 infantry, two batteries of artillery and smaller units, took over complete charge of the city. They held all the roads, and erected and manned barricades at the bridge. But no attempt was made to arrest any of the Volunteer officers.

When news of the fighting in Dublin reached Limerick, Colivet, Clancy and the remaining officers of the Limerick command were greatly distressed that circumstances outside their control should have rendered them helpless when Dublin asked for their aid in the fight. They thought that some of the officers might be able to go to Dublin, but Fr. Hennessy, O.S.A., their chaplain, told them that their place was in Limerick to take charge in such a crisis. On Tuesday, April 25th, Colivet called a final meeting of his staff, the Board of Management and all officers who had been concerned in the previous discussions, and the crisis was fully discussed. A vote was then taken, and it was decided by a majority of ten to six that nothing could be done.¹⁹

After midnight on Easter Monday, Manahan, who was then at



Irish Volunteers, Limerick, 1914

Ardpatrick, was told that rumours were circulating in Kilmallock that the Volunteers had risen out in Dublin. As soon as it was light next morning, Manahan made a tour of various local centres to collect as many dispatch riders as he could, and thus be ready for any definite orders that might come. He held his dispatch riders all day, but no orders came from Dublin; nothing only wild rumour. Manahan's dispatch riders stood-to all through that Tuesday night. On Wednesday, two of them were sent to Limerick to find out how things were there, and an attempt was made to get in touch with Cork. The messengers reported demobilisation everywhere. At last, at 9.30 that Wednesday night of Easter Week, Manahan allowed his dispatch riders to go home.

Half an hour later, two of the Galbally dispatch riders returned with a young man who wanted to meet Manahan. This young man was none other than Seán Treacy, then aged about twenty, and unknown to Manahan. He had come from Pierce MacCann, Commandant of the Tipperary Volunteers, and was on his way on his bicycle to Cork to see if the Cork Volunteers would be prepared to fight, for Tipperary was willing to rise if Cork and Limerick did likewise.

Some of the Galtee officers present thought Treacy's mission utterly futile, but Manahan was so moved by the young man's earnestness that he ordered re-mobilisation. By midnight he had got his dispatch riders together again; by 6 o'clock next morning the Ballylanders company was on the march, with Galbally company moving in to join it. But full mobilisation of the whole Battalion area proved impossible. The confusion of the past few days, the contradictory rumours, the inactivity in the cities of Cork and Limerick, these were among the factors that had convinced the majority of the men in the Battalion area that it would be madness to fight now.

Ach bheadh lá eile ag an bPaorach. Yes, the Galtee men would be heard of again, beginning with a brave day when they'd help to snatch Seán Hogan from the jaws of death at Knocklong railway station.

It was only on that Thursday morning, when full mobilisation proved impossible, that Commandant Liam Manahan was prepared to admit to himself that nothing could be done, that no blow could be struck, in his Battalion area.

Seán Treacy, who had spent Wednesday night in Ballylanders, was bitterly disappointed, and pleaded with Manahan for action; and in his heart Manahan was with Treacy, but in his head, where reason ruled, he was not. All that Thursday of Holy Week, while the devouring fires were closing in on the insurgent headquarters in warn-torn Dublin, Treacy travelled like a sweeping flame through the Galtee area, begging in vain for a few men to follow him and blow up bridges or attack police barracks. They would follow him later, but not today. On Friday, he set out for Cork, but near Mitchelstown he learned that all was over as far as Cork was concerned. He turned on the road, and rode back to Doon, to his friend Packy Ryan, one of Munster's I.R.B. leaders. Now he wanted to set out for Dublin on his bicycle, but was eventually dissuaded from doing so.²⁰ Treacy, Dublin, and a bicycle. A tragic combination.

He was on a bicycle that October day four-and-a-half years later in Talbot Street, Dublin, when he turned and, gun in hand, faced his foes for the last time. That darting restless flame that had swept back-

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wards and forwards through the Galtee region of south-east Limerick in Easter Week, 1916, went out in blood only a stone's throw from the G.P.O. symbol now, ever since Pearse stood there, of all that men like Seán Treacy were prepared to fight and die for.

And so no blow was struck in Limerick at Easter, 1916. But Limerick had worthy representatives among the men who fought in Dublin. Con Colbert of Athea was there, and Ned Daly of Limerick city. Con Colbert fought with the Marrowbone Lane garrison; and Ned Daly was in command in the Four Courts area, where some of the fiercest fighting of the week took place. Both were executed after the Rising. Eamon de Valera from Bruree was there, commanding in the Boland's Mill area, which was the last to surrender. And there were others: Eamonn Dore of Glin, courier to the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., personal bodyguard to Sean Mac Diarmada, and brother-in-law to Ned Daly and Tom Clarke; Jim Flanagan and his cousin Matt Flanagan of Killoughteen; Pat and Jim MacNamara of Knocknaboula, Loughill; Maurice Collins, of Tullig, Templeglantine; Pat Mulcahy of Rathcahill; and Gearóid MacAuliffe of Newcastle West, who returned from England to take part in the fight.

And Laura and Nora Daly, two sisters of Ned Daly, went to Dublin on Easter Tuesday, and served with the Dublin Cumann na mBan while the fighting lasted.

And in our roll of the brave ones of Limerick must be included the name of Donal Sheehan of Ballintubrid, Newcastle West, who was drowned with Con Keating and Charles Monaghan on Good Friday night at Ballykissane.

Towards the end of Easter Week, Sir Anthony Weldon, the British Commander in Limerick, sent a demand for the surrender of their arms to the local Volunteers, through the Mayor of Limerick, James Quinn. A meeting of the combined board of officers decided to refuse this demand, which was several times repeated through the Mayor, and as often rejected.

Sir Anthony Weldon was, in fact, a strong anti-Carsonite, and he contented himself with a parade through the city of three infantry regiments, a cavalry regiment and an artillery brigade with eighteen guns; and it was only when pressure was exerted on him from Dublin that arrests were made. When, ultimately, the Limerick City Volunteers were faced with seizure of their arms, they decided that, in order to avoid bloodshed, the arms should be handed over to the Mayor. But to this decision was added the proviso that, first each Volunteer should hand over his arms to Colivet, who would then surrender them to the Mayor as guardian of the peace and security of the city. The surrender of arms took place in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, on Friday, May 5th, in the presence of Weldon and other British officers. The Volunteers had, in fact, rendered most of the guns useless before handing them over. A number of arrests were made on May 11th and on subsequent dates, but by May 16th all the prisoners had been released unconditionally.²¹

The pattern of events in Limerick was repeated with minor variations in Cork, where the surrender of arms took place sooner than it did in Limerick. But the story of Limerick in 1916, was not to end with the surrender of the Volunteer arms on May 5th. On the very day following the surrender, the following letter was addressed to Dr. O'Dwyer,

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Bishop of Limerick:—

“ Headquarters, Irish Command,
Park Gate, Dublin.
6th May, 1916.

My Lord,

I have the honour to request your Lordship's co-operation in a matter connected with the present deplorable situation in Ireland, the settlement of which I am confident you desire no less keenly than I do.

There are two priests in your diocese, the Rev. Father Michael Hayes, of Newcastle West, County Limerick; the Rev. Father Thomas Wall of Dromcollogher, County Limerick, whose presence in the neighbourhood I consider to be a dangerous menace to the peace and safety of the realm, and had these priests been laymen they would have already been placed under arrest. In this case I would be glad if your Lordship could obviate the necessity for such action by moving these priests to such employment as will deny their having intercourse with the people, and inform me of your decision.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

J. G. MAXWELL, General,
Commander-in-Chief,
the Forces in Ireland.

The Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer.”

On May 9th, Dr. O'Dwyer, on a visitation to Kilmallock, had Canon O'Shea, P.P., Kilmallock, reply on his behalf to the letter from Maxwell which he had received that morning. Without revealing his hand, the Bishop requested the General to specify the grounds on which he considered Fr. Wall and Fr. Hayes a dangerous menace to the peace and safety of the realm.

On May 12th, Maxwell wrote his second letter, and specified the charges against both priests. One of them had spoken in his church against conscription on November 14th, 1915; was said to have attended a lecture by P. H. Pearse on “The Irish Volunteers of '82”; had attended a blessing of Volunteers' colours on January 2nd, 1916; had spoken at a Volunteer meeting on March 17th, 1915. The other was said to have been active with “a certain E. Blythe,” organising Irish Volunteers; had got printed a large number of leaflets appealing to young men of the Gaelic Athletic Association to join the Irish Volunteers; was said in fact to be President of a corps of Volunteers; and was said to have been present at an Irish Volunteer meeting “when a certain John MacDermott delivered inflammatory and seditious speeches on 17th March, 1916.”

Having delivered himself of this list of charges, the General was confident that “it should not be difficult for your Lordship under such disciplinary power as you possess, to prevent at any rate priests from mixing up with and inciting their flock to join an organisation such as the Irish Volunteers have proved themselves to be.”

Dr. O'Dwyer was at that time on a round of visitations of his diocese, and he replied to the General's second letter from Ashford, in the south-west of Co. Limerick — the reply was in fact written in the townland of Glenquin, in which stands the Castle of Glenquin, in the

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shadow of which the West Limerick Volunteers assembled on Easter Sunday, 1916. And in that historic letter, "armed arrogance" received an answer it had never bargained for:—

"Ashford, Charleville,
17th May, 1916.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 12th instant, which has been forwarded to me here.

I have read carefully your allegations against Rev. Fr. Hayes and Rev. Fr. Wall, but do not see in them any justification for disciplinary action on my part. They are both excellent priests, who hold strong National views, but I do not know that they have violated any law, civil or ecclesiastical.

In your letter of 6th inst., you appealed to me to help you in the furtherance of your work as the military dictator of Ireland. Even if action of that kind was not outside my province, the events of the past few weeks would make it impossible for me to have any part in proceedings which I regard as wantonly cruel and oppressive.

You remember the Jameson raid, when a number of buccaneers invaded a friendly State and fought the forces of the lawful Government. If ever men deserved the supreme punishment it was they, but officially and unofficially, the influence of the British Government was used to save them and it succeeded. You took care that no plea for mercy should interpose on behalf of the poor young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin. The first information which we got of their fate was the announcement that they had been shot in cold blood. Personally, I regard your action with horror, and I believe that it has outraged the conscience of the country. Then the deporting of hundreds and even thousands of poor fellows without a trial of any kind seems to me an abuse of power as fatuous as it is arbitrary, and altogether your regime has been one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of the misgovernment of the country.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

EDWARD THOMAS, Bishop of Limerick.

To General Sir J. G. Maxwell,

Commander-in-Chief, the Forces in Ireland."

Dr. O'Dwyer, it has been said, made up their minds for the Bishops of Ireland with regard to the Rising of Easter Week and from all over the country came resolutions passed by public bodies congratulating him on the stand he had taken. In acknowledging one such resolution from the Tipperary Board of Guardians, he wrote:—

"The Palace, Corbally,
June 23rd, 1916.

Dear Sir,

I beg to thank the Guardians of the Tipperary Union for the resolution which they were so good to adopt in approval of my attitude towards that brute, Maxwell, who, in my opinion, is only one degree less objectionable than the Government that screens itself behind him. But Ireland is not dead yet; while her young men are not afraid to die

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for her in open fight and, when defeated, stand proudly with their backs to the wall as targets for English bullets, we need never despair of the old cause.

And your resolution will be a comfort to those who reverence the memory of Ireland's martyrs, and will assure them that our countrymen, in spite of all the corruption that is at work, distinguish between genuine patriotism and all the spurious stuff that has been disgusting us of late.

Personally, I am particularly glad that your resolution has been proposed by a Cullen man, Mr. Quinlan, to whom, and to his seconder, Mr. M. Ryan, I send with my blessing, my sincere thanks.

I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

EDWARD THOMAS, Bishop of Limerick.

To the Clerk of the Union Tipperary."

Some time in 1917, the executive of the Irish Volunteers appointed a committee to inquire into the failure of Cork, Limerick and Kerry to take military action during the Easter Rising, and in March, 1918, the following report was submitted by the committee:—

"We regret delay in completing the investigation re action of Cork, Kerry and Limerick during Easter Week, 1916. This delay was unavoidable. Our decision regarding Cork is that, owing to conflicting orders, no blame can be attached to them for their inaction. Against Kerry no charges have been made; consequently their action through the whole matter was, we consider, justifiable. With respect to Limerick, we have read statements from all the principal men concerned. We have also investigated the dispatches alleged to have been received by them from Dublin and Kerry. Some of these dispatches they did not, in our opinion, receive at all and those they did receive were so conflicting that we are satisfied no blame whatsoever rests on the officers and men of Limerick. With regard to the surrender of arms, it is to be deprecated that at any time arms should be given up by a body of men without a fight. But we do not see that any good purpose will be served by any further discussion on this matter as far as 1916 is concerned. This opinion will, we hope, be weighed should any similar circumstances arise in the future."

This report was accepted and ratified by the Irish Volunteers' Executive at a meeting on March 10th, 1918.

Michael Colivet was very dissatisfied with that part of the report dealing with the surrender of their arms by the Limerick Volunteers, and he demanded from the Headquarters Executive not merely a pious wish but a definite verdict as to whether or not the surrender of arms in Limerick in the circumstances prevailing there at the time were justified. To his representations, he received the following reply:—

"The Irish Volunteers,
General Headquarters,
Dublin.

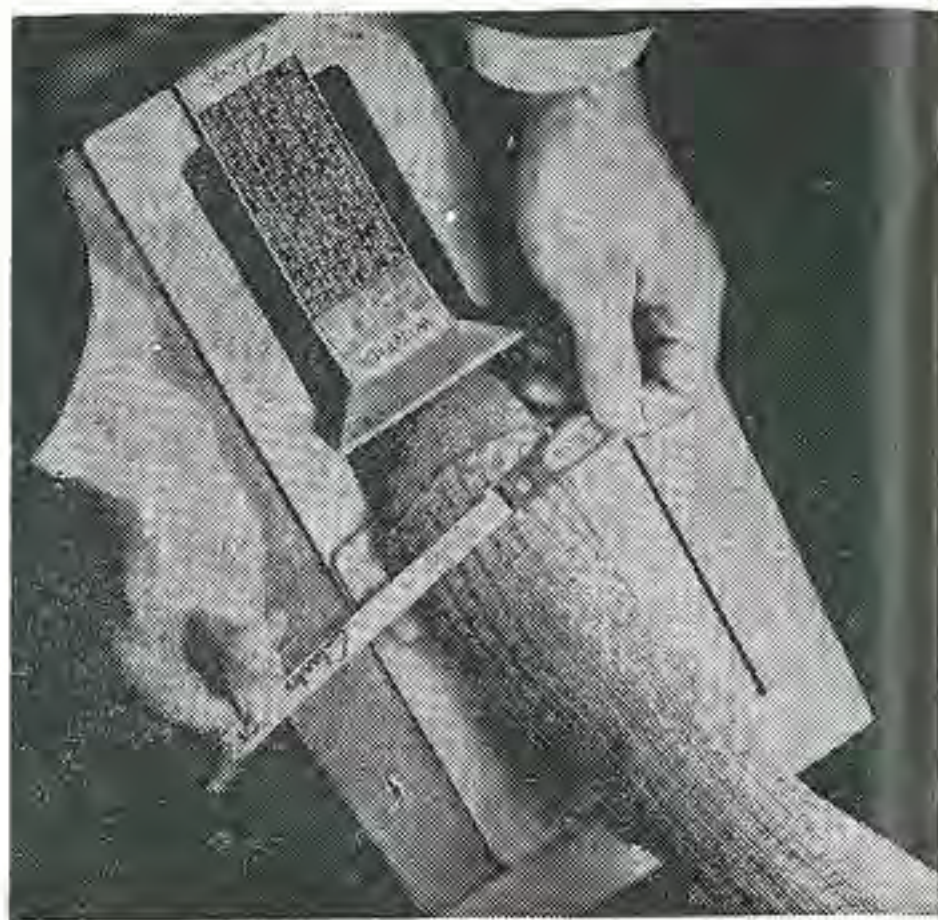
"17th Sept., 1918.

"Statement by Irish Volunteer Executive regarding report issued March, 1918, by Committee of Enquiry into affairs of Easter, 1916.

"Commandant Colivet of Battalion 1, Limerick City, has, on

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behalf of self and said Battalion, objected to above report out of grounds (1) that he was not furnished with particulars of evidence tendered to the Committee, so as to enable him to meet any adverse evidence or charges: (2) that in consequence of (1) the report has, in his opinion, pronounced unjustifiable the surrender of arms by the Battalion at the period mentioned.

"The Executive have considered the matter, and desire to say in regard to No. 1, as the report has not condemned Commandant Colivet, it was not necessary to furnish him with evidence. In regard to No. 2 the report made no pronouncement on this head. This statement is being circulated to those persons to whom the original report was circulated.

"Signed for and on behalf of the I.V. Executive."

(Signed) "CATHAL BRUGHA."

Looking back with the objective eye of the historian at all the "confusion, broken plans, divided counsels and inaction" that "prevailed outside Dublin with a few exceptions," Desmond Ryan, seeing the Easter Week Rising at a remove of almost of a third of a century, could say:—

"The countermanding order, the failure of the arms landing, the poverty of armament, uncertain communications, the very limited training of many of the country Volunteers, all combined against any widespread attempt at a general insurrection. Much agony of mind was endured by the country Commandants and the rank and file alike as soon as it was known that Dublin was in arms. Many unjust and unmerited reproaches were afterwards thrown upon even such men as Austin Stack, Terence MacSwiney, Monteith, Colivet, and the rest . . .

"Nor was it the failure of the arms landing and Mac Neill's countermand alone that checked the impulse towards insurrection outside Dublin. The circumstances in Dublin and in the country were radically different. Dublin communications were better, it was easier to concentrate forces there and the Dublin Volunteers were far better drilled guerilla tactics."²²

Perhaps we can leave the last word to Pearse, for the words that he once wrote about leaders of an earlier time, like Meagher, Duffy, MacGee and Stephens, who had failed to strike a blow when their plans went awry, might equally well be applied to those leaders down the country who failed to strike a blow in 1916:—

"I do not blame these men: you or I might have done the same. It is a terrible responsibility to be cast upon a man, that of bidding the cannon speak and the grapeshot pour."²³

But that much said, all honour to the men who gave the word in Dublin to Pearse, Clarke and Mac Diarmada and their comrades, who rose "In the name of God and the dead generations," that Eastertide of fifty years ago, and fought and died for the dream they had housed in their hearts, the dream of an Ireland that would be not free merely but Gaelic as well, not Gaelic merely but free as well.

This year we will honour them with pomp and ceremony, with parades and speeches; on coins and medals —

"Yet have they more enduring place,
The men of Ireland's hero race,
And they have names that still can stir
The deep unconquered heart of her."

NOTES

(Chief Sources and Abbreviations used in connection therewith)

- CLA: *Casement's Last Adventure* — Robert Monteith.
TR: *The Rising* — Desmond Ryan.
LLA: Articles on Limerick in 1916 by Seamus Gubbins, published in *Limerick Leader* between July 7th and August 6th, 1952.
CW: Commandant Charlie Wall's personal narrative to author.
LFS: *Limerick's Fighting Story* (Kerryman Ltd.).

SOURCES

1, CLA; 2, LLA; 3, TR; 4, from "Resurrection," by Fr. Pádraig de Brún; 5, TR; 6, CW; 7, TR; 8, TR; 9, from "Sráideanna Naofa Áth Cliath," by an tAth Pádraig de Brún; 10, TR; 11, *Ibid*; 12, *Ibid*; 13, LLA; 14, *Ibid*; 15, *Ibid*; 16, *Ibid*; 17, LFS; 18, CW; 19, LFS; 20, Story of Galtee Battalion in Easter Week, based on accounts in Desmond Ryan's two books, *The Rising* and *Seán Treacy*; 21, TR; 22, *Ibid*; 23, *Ibid*.

Thomas J. Clarke

by SEÁN O BEIRN, M.A.

EVIDENCE GIVEN BEFORE the Royal Commission enquiring into the facts surrounding Easter Week, 1916, reveals that from March 7th onwards in that year the Castle Authorities were discussing "the urgency of the arrest of a small knot of violent men, of whom the principals were Thomas J. Clarke of Dublin, and John Daly of Limerick, men who were known to work in great secrecy, never appearing on public platforms or in the press, or making themselves in anyway amenable to the law."

Clarke and Daly were known to British Common Law as convicted criminals who had been released from prison shortly before the turn of the century. They were the remnant of the "dynamite gang," arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment in the eighties. Some of these men, such as Dr. Gallagher and Whitehead, had been insane for some years prior to their release. John Daly, who was released with them in August, 1896, was incapacitated for life as a result of an attempt to poison him while in prison. Others such as Jeremiah O Donovan Rossa and James Egan had since died.

In pre-1916 Ireland these men were known as "physical force" men or "Fenians." The orthodox historian of the day dismissed their actions as a catalogue of misdemeanours and in his history spoke of Parliaments and Parties. 1916 changed all that. Today the Fenian tradition is seen as the axle-tree of Modern Irish History from 1798 to 1916, and the leaven of all the important political agitation of that era.

Indeed, had the Chief Secretary bothered to read any of the seditious pamphlets circulating at 1d. each (or 12 for 1/- post free) before the Rising he might well have included other notorious criminals such as Wolfe Tone, Emmet, Mitchel, Lalor, etc., in the "knot of violent men" and indicted them as accomplices before the act. For the principle was the same, as also the means, and an understanding of the Fenian tradition is a necessary prerequisite to the study of the lives of any of these men.

"Ghosts," by one Pearse, published in January, 1916, would have considerably enlightened him.—(Pearse, "Political Writings," ff 238.) "The chain of the Separatist tradition has never once snapped during the centuries. Veterans of Kinsale were in the '41; veterans of Benburb followed Sarsfield. The poets kept the fires of the nation burning from Limerick to Dungannon. Napper Tandy of the Volunteers was Napper Tandy of the United Irishmen. The Russell of 1803 was the Russell of 1798. The Robert Holmes of '98 and 1803 lived to be a Young Irelander. Three Young Irelanders were the founders of Fenianism. The veterans of Fenianism stand today with the Irish Volunteers. So the end of the Separatist tradition is not yet." It was the consciousness of this tradition that sustained Tom Clarke during fifteen years of the worst imprisonment ever inflicted on an Irishman at a time when the cause of the Irish Republic seemed in total eclipse; that steeled him against the difficulties which confronted him later in America; that helped him guide the young men of another generation to strike the blow that was 1916. For Tom Clarke was a Fenian, and Fenianism was the nemesis of the Empire.



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Born on the Isle of Wight on the 11th March, 1857, the son of a Galwayman soldiering in the British Army, he was to see South Africa, where his father served for six years, before returning and settling down in Dungannon in 1865, the town with Tom Clarke always considered to be his home town. Tom grew up among the shadows cast by the great famine of '45-'51. Land cleanances were in full swing and there was a marked preference for cattle over people. British economists hailed the famine deaths and the forced emigration as a blessing in disguise. Tom was twenty years of age when the country rang with the news of the shooting of the Earl of Leitrim by his outraged tenantry. The workings of British Providence had already made him a member of the Dungannon I.R.B. code when John Daly, one of the national organisers, gave an address at Drumco Hill, outside the town. Later in the same year, he entrained for Dublin with some companions and was sworn in as a member of the I.R.B. by John Daly and Michael Davitt.

In August, 1880, he left Ireland for America, where he worked for two years at hotel work while he learned the mechanics of the Fenian trade — the uses of firearms and nitro-glycerine. 1883 saw him volunteering for the dynamite campaign which was even then rocking the seat of the Empire and which, Gladstone pointed out, brought the affairs of Ireland to the fore in the English Parliament. The hysteria of fear and hate generated by this campaign was at its height when Clarke, alias Henry Wilson, and his three companions, Dr. Gallagher, Alfred Whitehead, and John Curtin, were arrested, tried and sentenced to life imprisonment.

A terrible vengeance was enacted, through the medium of the prison system, on the members of the I.R.B. imprisoned at that time. From the moment of their imprisonment in April, 1883, until their release — a period of fifteen-and-a-half years in Clarke's case — they were pitted against a system specially devised to deprive them of their sanity. This was, short of death, the severest and most vicious test of the Fenian faith ever administered to its adherents. The animals who ran the system pursued the vengeance of the English people years after the minds of many of their victims had been shattered. Gallagher, Whitehead, Duff, McCabe, Devaney, Flanagan, and Casey had all succumbed by the year 1887, yet Gallagher and Whitehead were not released until 1896, having being insane for eight years. Dr. Gallagher died in Coomb's Sanatorium, Flushing, New York, on November 30th, 1925, without ever having regained his reason. Clarke, recalling this period in articles written in *Irish Freedom*, had this to say: "The horror of those nights and days will never leave my memory. One by one I saw my fellow prisoners break down and go mad under the terrible strain — some slowly and by degrees, others suddenly and without warning. 'Who next?' was the terrible question that haunted us day and night — and the ever-recurring thought that it might be myself added to the agony.

"Can I ever forget the night that poor Whitehead realised that he was going mad. There in the stillness, between two of the hourly inspections, I heard the poor fellow fight against insanity, cursing England and English brutality from the bottom of his heart, and beseeching God to strike him dead sooner than allow him to lose his reason . . ."

Parnell had never agitated for the release of the "Dynamiters." Daly, Clarke and their comrades could have walked out of Chatam



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Prison as free men in the year 1888 had they been willing to give evidence against Parnell in the Parnell versus *The Times* Pigott case. All refused point blank to collaborate and choose to continue life imprisonment in conditions they knew would be made all the worse by their refusal. It was shortly after this that the attempt to poison John Daly was made.

While the treatment meted out to them drove many insane, it armed the survivors with a deathless determination and names like O Donovan Rossa, Devoy, Egan, Daly, and Clarke, were to figure prominently in the future affairs of the Empire, both domestic and foreign. The last Fenian prisoner to be released in 1898, Clarke could say of himself: "... that no word or act of mine during that imprisonment has ever caused me any regret. I was then what I had been, and what I am still, an Irish nationalist ..." He was met at the prison gates by Daly and Egan, who had travelled to England specially to meet him.

Dublin and Dungannon feted the returned prisoner. It was in Limerick, however, in the following year (March 2nd, 1899), that Clarke was paid the greatest public tribute ever paid him — if one treats the signing of the Proclamation as other than public. On the proposal of John Daly, Mayor of Limerick, the City Corporation unanimously decided to confer on him the Freedom of the City of Limerick. The remarkable feature of this event, taking place as it did during the long night of Parliamentarianism, was the uncompromising Fenian terms in which the honour was conferred and received at the public reception. In his speech of acceptance, Tom Clarke had this much to say to John Daly: "Your Corporation, for the first time in its existence as an institution representing the people and democracy, has conferred this honour on me. And why? Because they believe me to be an Irish nationalist, and because I have worn the felon's fetters for many dreary years for the sake of Ireland." Shortly afterwards, he proposed marriage to Kathleen Daly, daughter of the Mayor's sister-in-law, Mrs. Daly. In the same year 1899, he sailed for New York in order to earn a living and prepare for his marriage, which was to take place there two years later, one of the witnesses to the wedding being Major John McBride.

Life in America was tough for the ex-prisoner and more than once Clarke and his wife faced starvation. Disappointment after disappointment attended his search for work. The family struggled through these years on the most meagre of wages. Despite this, the determined Fenian began the work which was to be his second great contribution to the cause of Irish nationality. By now a member of Clan na Gael, he devoted all his spare time to Clan activities, organising functions, outings, and fund-raising activities and succeeded in giving a sense of purpose to Clan activities in New York. One of the most memorable cameos of the period must be that of O Donovan Rossa and Clarke lecturing John Carroll, another Fenian, over the weed-grown grave of Michael Doherty in Calvary Cemetery for responding in English to prayers said in Irish.

Clarke's most important contribution of this period was yet to come. After six months of full-time preliminary work by him, the *Gaelic American* was launched in September, 1903, with John Devoy as Editor, and Clarke as Assistant Editor and Manager. The *Gaelic American*, published weekly, was to be Devoy's great flail in the political arena in America and its influence in Irish-American circles was second to none. Not only did it publish the Fenian gospel throughout America, but it

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was instrumental in defeating several proposed Anglo-American alliances and also in delaying American entry into World War I. Editors of contemporary Irish newspapers would give their right arm to be able to reproduce as their own on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary, the banner headline of the *Gaelic American* a week after the Rising: "Ireland in arms fighting for her Freedom." The foundation of the *Gaelic American* was in large part due to Clarke's efforts. As Assistant Editor and Manager from its launching in 1903 until his return to Ireland four years later in 1907, he performed a vital and demanding task in a newspaper seldom out of financial trouble.

Returning to Ireland, the bearer of an accredited transfer from the Clan to the I.R.B., Clarke's aim was to establish a newspaper which would do in Ireland what the *Gaelic American* was doing in America. His old friend, John Daly, was at Cobh to meet the family. Mrs. Clarke stayed in Limerick, a guest of the Daly's, until June, 1908. Tom, however, went to Dublin immediately, and in 1908 bought a newsagents shop in Amiens Street and in 1909 another, the more famous one, in Parnell Street (Gt. Britain Street).

The Ireland Clarke returned to was, in outward aspect, the same Parliamentary Ireland he had left in 1899. Yet such was not the case. The great revolution that was to be Connradh na Gaeilge's contribution to the age was in large part accomplished. The young men of Ireland, her most generous and most accomplished, has been to school in the Gaelic League. Some had already been in prison; in 1905 was fought the campaign which had brought Pearse into Court as a lawyer for the first and last time in the case of the Crown versus Mac Giolla Bride. In 1909 the battle for essential Irish in University and Intermediate education was approaching its successful climax. Clarke was there to urge on the younger members of the I.R.B., who were active in the Gaelic League in the battle that was won in the teeth of West British and Clerical opposition.

The Gaelic League had brought the mind of Ireland back to its true allegiance and, in doing so, created a problem of direction for itself. Pearse at this time felt the need of a change of methods, felt that the Gaelic League had reached an impasse which could only be resolved by recourse to new attitudes. The League had changed the status quo out of all recognition and needed to adjust its methods accordingly in order to maintain the momentum of progress. The necessary transition of attitude has eluded the League of this day and has left it as it is — the hope of enthusiasts and the plaything of politicians.

The I.R.B. was there to supply an attitude peculiarly suitable to the temper of the times. Pearse had words for it in after years.—(Pearse, op Cit., ff 72.) "A new junction has been made with the past: into the movement that has never wholly died since '67 have come the young men of the Gaelic League. Having renewed communion with its origins, Irish Nationalism is today a more virile thing than ever before in our time. Of that be sure." The I.R.B. would channel the torrent of enthusiasm released by the Gaelic League in another fight for physical freedom — and do so largely through the person of Tom Clarke: he would fill the vacuum left by the death in 1907 of John O'Leary, the veteran Fenian. Co-opted a member of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., he held positions of authority in the movement until his execution

Ireland has come a long way since 1916, the Golden Jubilee of which we celebrate this year.

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which by coincidence celebrates its 125th anniversary this year, also has come a long way and is today the third largest morning newspaper in the country. While its history is old its spirit is young, modern and progressive, so read it every day and keep up to date with modern Ireland.

and enjoyed more than anybody else the confidence and respect of the younger men. And this is the third great mark of his greatness, for while being older than his contemporaries in years, as a revolutionary he was as young and enterprising as any of them. A more conservative man with Clarke's position and influence could have done untold damage to the I.R.B. at that time. P. S. O'Hegarty, himself a progressive young man in the I.R.B., explained later what quality it was which made Clarke the exception of his generation.—(P. S. O'Hegarty, "Glimpses of an Irish Felon's Prison Life (T. Clarke)," ff X.) "There comes in every movement a time when there is a clash between the younger generation and the older generation, and that clash was brewing in the I.R.B. just about that time. There was, on the one hand, the older generation which had got into a groove, which had no policy for the movement save the policy of keeping the spirit alive, which in effect throttled all attempt at a forward policy, and believed that nothing in the way of action was possible. And there was, on the other hand, the younger generation, which believed in a forward movement, wanted a forward movement, and believed in its own capacity to run such a movement." Clarke's stand was emphatically on the side of the young men.—(Op. Cit., ff XI.) "For a good while it was a silent, an almost imperceptible struggle, but it came to a head in the autumn of 1912, and the young men won, won only just in time. Tom Clarke had stood with us from the first, and I can still remember the thrill of pleased surprise with which I saw him, after I first met him, stand for every proposal which the other men of his generation frowned at and would down."

In fact, Clarke's aim in returning to Ireland was an anticipation of the great need of the I.R.B. at the time and of the thought uppermost in the mind of the young men — the founding of a newspaper which would express clearly the Separatist policy. On September 15th, 1910, the first edition of *Irish Freedom* appeared. By the time the fiftieth edition had appeared in December, 1914, and was suppressed, it had played a part in shaking Republican thought and ambition that no defence of the Realm Act could cancel or destroy. Contributors such as Terence MacSwiney, B. O'Higgins, P. H. Pearse, P. S. O'Hegarty, Ernest Blythe, Bulmer Hobson and Tom Clarke himself, succeeded in establishing and maintaining a standard of journalism unequalled in the history of Republican literature since that time.

Seán MacDiarmada, National Organiser of the I.R.B., introduced Pearse to Clarke in February, 1911. It is often forgotten that Pearse's entry into the I.R.B. was blocked on more than one occasion on grounds of suspicion about his politics. Clarke, typically, was quick to recognise the quality that was Pearse's and his support overcame all opposition to Pearse's co-option in 1913. The latter's many-sided greatness was soon recognised by all and in 1916 he was to have the command of all Republican forces in Ireland entrusted to him. All of Pearse's political pamphlets, with the exception of those published in "An Barr Buadh," first saw the light of day in *Irish Freedom*, as did Tom Clarke's own prison memoirs, and Terence MacSwiney's "Principles of Freedom."

To the seed sowing of the Gaelic League, to the new access of energy and purpose in the I.R.B., were soon to be added the external factors which contained hidden among them the long-awaited hour. Clarke's long patience was soon to have its reward. The snows of history were

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drifting with a vengeance. 1913 saw the foundation of the National Volunteers, the I.R.B. inspired counterblast to Carson's Volunteers. 1913 saw the epic confrontation of Labour and Capital in a hunger-mad Dublin; the streets of the capitol wet with the blood of the resurgent poor and the birth of the Citizen Army. 1914 saw the world at war, an undefined Home Rule Act in abeyance, and Redmond acting as recruiting-sergeant for England in the ranks of the National Volunteers, of which he had gained control despite the efforts of the I.R.B. Clarke acted. A coup d'etat, organised by Seán MacDiarmada and himself, led on September 24th to the seizure of the Volunteer H.Q. at 41 Dawson Street, and to the secession of the Irish Volunteers, as they were to be called, from the National Volunteers. This blow prevented the thwarting of the I.R.B. decision to strike for freedom before the end of the war then raging, a decision arrived at shortly after its outbreak in August, 1914.

The imminence of conscription and the success of the anti-conscription campaign added fuel to the fire burning beneath the surface. Dr. O'Dwyer's letter was circulated in leaflet form all over the country on November 10th, 1915. In Limerick, John Daly was stoking like a hero, speaker after speaker being invited to address meetings; Pearse and MacSwiney speaking there within a month of each other in November. The I.R.B. controlled the Irish Volunteers, the Howth guns had been distributed throughout the country; thirty rifles having been despatched to Dungannon at Clarke's expressed order.

Of all the leaders of the I.R.B., Clarke again was the first to recognise in Connolly a valuable ally in the projected Rebellion. He spoke off the same platform with Connolly when other members of the I.R.B. refused to do so, and the latter's presence at the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa was Clarke's achievement. The firing party at the grave, drawn equally from the Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers, represented the first public act of harmony of the two organisations. That that concord should be sealed in the volley fired over the grave of Rossa was the real sign that the miracles spoken of in the oration were ripening to fruition the seeds sown by men like the dead Fenian. Nor could that valiant soldier be paid a tribute more to his liking.

Clarke and Connolly had come by different paths to the Separatist position and it is no small measure of their greatness that despite the imagined divergences seen by sections of their respective followings, they could stand in unison on the high ground of the Republic and meet the hour together. The contribution of the Citizen Army and indeed of Dublin as a whole was to increase in value as the confusion of Easter Sunday played havoc with the carefully-laid plans for a National uprising.

Easter Eve was a trying time indeed for Clarke. The spectre of '65 and subsequent failures became a living anguish in the minds of all members of the Military Council, as the confusion of cancellations and counter-orders swelled over the country and threatened to overwhelm the leadership in Dublin. It must have borne particularly heavy on Clarke. Twice, in that week, he found himself alone in dissent from decisions of the Council. At the meeting held in Liberty Hall on Easter Sunday, he fought grimly to stick to the original plan to strike at 6.30 p.m. on that evening, on the grounds that action as scheduled in Dublin would con-

vince the country that MacNeill's order was a hoax and that the original orders would be carried out. The Council decided to buy time and fixed the start of operations for Monday at noon. Clarke went home to his wife in the company of Seán McGarry and Tom O'Connor more dejected than at any other time in his life.

The Clarke household armed themselves that night and prepared to fight to the death if any attempt at arrest should be made. Evidence at the commission revealed that on that very day the decision had been made "to intern in England some of the Dublin leaders, and notably Thomas J. Clarke." But action had been deferred for three days in order to ensure the success of the general arrests contemplated. Clarke's unerring instinct had not betrayed him.

On the Friday of Easter Week, Clarke was again in a minority of one — but a different Clarke this time, a jubilant Clarke, the Fenian that would address the survivors in the blazing G.P.O. and tell them that the struggle had not been in vain, that the faith would be kept. He was opposed to surrender and urged that they fight to the death. Death it was to be in any case for the first signatory of the Proclamation, an honour which his fellow signatories had conferred upon him, the unrepentant Fenian.

His last message to John Daly, his lifelong friend, was that he and all his comrades were positive that they had struck the first successful blow towards freedom.



Edward Daly and The Four Courts

le BREANDÁN Ó CATHAOIR

EDWARD DALY was Limerick's finest contribution to the 1916 Uprising. He commanded the 1st Dublin Battalion of the Irish Volunteers during that glorious Easter Week. For six days, Commandant Daly's men held the Four Courts and adjoining area in defence of the Irish Republic. Military action in this section of Dublin was particularly intense. General John Maxwell, leader of the British forces, stated that, with the exception of the Mount Street Bridge battle, 'by far the worst fighting' took place against the I.R.A. under Ned Daly. When the struggle was over, the Battalion were cursed by the people as they marched to surrender.

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As one of the prominent rebel leaders, Daly was executed at Kilmainham Gaol on 4th May, 1916.

The object of this article is to describe briefly the main events which took place within the confines of Daly's command, with particular reference to the desperate fighting of the last two days. However, before going any further, some reference to this Limerickman's background may be worthwhile.

Edward Daly was born in Frederick Street, Limerick, on 25th February, 1891, into a famous national family who deserve well of Limerick and Ireland. His uncle, John Daly, was a mainstay of the Fenian organisation after 1867 and spent twelve years in an English gaol, on charges arising out of the Dynamite Campaign of the 1880s. His father, though less well-known, was also a Fenian. In 1912, Edward moved to Dublin where he stayed with his sister, the wife of Tom Clarke. At the founding of the Volunteers in 1913, young Daly was one of the first to be enrolled. The Irish Volunteer movement gave Ned the opportunity to fulfil his ambition in life, which was to be a soldier. His ability and enthusiasm did not pass unnoticed by the revolutionary leaders. When the time came to strike the blow that was to open a new era for the Irish people, Ned Daly was Commandant of the 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade.

On Easter Monday morning, 24th April, 1916, only about one-third of the 1st Battalion, or 150 men turned out. The diminished ranks were largely due to Eoin Mac Neill's countermanding order of the previous day calling off the Rising. Commandant Daly's reported address, to his men assembled in Blackhall Street, sums up the dedicated spirit of 1916:—

"I have to tell you, men, that you will shortly be going into action. At 12 o'clock today the flag of the Irish Republic is to be raised — now I don't want any cheering, and I also want to make it clear that if anybody wants to withdraw now, then he is at liberty to do so."

There were no heroics, just a few well-chosen words spoken in a matter-of-fact tone. Only one man withdrew!

Under the original plan of insurrection, Daly was to take and hold positions running from the Four Courts to Cabra, where he was to link up with the 5th Battalion (under the command of Tomás Aghas). Owing to the weak mobilisation on Easter Monday, this plan had to be modified. North Brunswick Street, Church Street and North King Street became the command's northern outposts; in the south the Four Courts and Mendicity Institute were seized.

The section under Captain Frank Fahy and Lieutenant Joe McGuinness, who occupied the Four Courts building, were the first to encounter the enemy. While the men were erecting barricades, a detachment of Lancers escorting an ammunition wagon came on the scene. Several saddles were emptied by a volley from the rebels. The rest of the troopers fled into a house in Charles Street. Here they remained, cooped-up and ineffective, throughout the week.

"D" Company, under Captain Seán Heuston and Lieutenant Richard Balfe, occupied the Mendicity Institute on Usher's Quay. The whole of Church Street and part of the adjoining streets were occupied; barricades were raised at strategic points, houses fortified. One building seized, a licensed premises at the junction of North King Street and

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Church Street, later christened 'Reilly's Fort,' was the scene of desperate fighting at the close of the week.

Commandant Daly took up quarters at St. John's Convent in Church Street, and was made welcome by some Sisters of Charity. Here he met the Capuchins, Fr. Albert and Fr. Augustine, both sympathisers. The Fr. Matthew Hall was Battalion headquarters until Friday, when Daly was compelled to move to the Four Courts. The command was reinforced by Battalion members who joined their comrades later on, by a handful of the men who came from England for the fight, and by some Fianna Éireann boys.

Ned Daly spent Monday touring his scattered outposts, seeing that barricades were properly situated, and his men strategically placed to withstand attack. The Battalion had occupied their positions without encountering much opposition; but the difficulties in holding them, once the British reinforcements poured in, were obvious to the youthful commander. The element of self-preservation, however, was the last factor which influenced the leaders of the Rising.

The north-west command was unique in that elsewhere in the city the insurgents occupied buildings only, but Daly's men were out in the streets in an area where a large civilian population resided. The problem of civil administration was added to the 1st Battalion's heavy military task. Non-combatants were asked to leave by the I.R.A., but the majority stayed on despite the danger. A bakery in North King Street remained open when those in other parts of Dublin were closed. The Volunteers organised bread queues and preserved order. In this area, where rebel law alone ran for a week, there was no looting.

Most of the civilian population appear to have been hostile towards Daly's men at first, although one report states that local people helped in the building of barricades. But towards the end of the week, civilians, impressed by the discipline of the rebel army, adopted a more friendly attitude.

Easter Week was a heroic test of human endurance. Tension was high. Volunteers got little or no sleep for five days, and British snipers became an increasing source of danger. There were a number of minor engagements early in the week in which the 1st Battalion sustained some casualties and inflicted a great many more. In the early hours of Tuesday morning, a section led by Lieutenant Peadar Clancy engaged military forces at Church Street bridge, and captured five rifles and 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Seán Heuston's gallant band, cut off on the south side of the Liffey, were forced to surrender on Wednesday. To boost the morale of his men, and to strengthen his position, Daly decided to go on the offensive. Linen Hall barracks were taken and burnt by Volunteers under Captain Denis O'Callaghan. Forty prisoners were taken in a bloodless coup. The Bridewell police station, with its twenty-four occupants, was also seized. Thus, while the other insurgent garrisons were pinned down by the enemy, from an early stage in the rebellion, Daly's men succeeded in striking back.

But towards the end of the week, the superior power of the English heralded the end of the 'fiery protest.' Nearly 12,000 troops, supported by artillery and armoured cars, were closing a steel cordon around the insurgents (who were now outnumbered by more than ten to one). Commandant Daly was practically cut off from the G.P.O., and con-

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ditions were made worse by flames spreading from the Linen Hall barracks. The fires in O'Connell Street lit up the barricades in Church Street, and made the defenders an easy target for snipers.

Even then the British found the Volunteers a stubborn foe. On Friday, 'the most vicious and most sustained fighting of the whole week' began, when 250 men of the South Staffordshire Regiment, with armoured cars and machine guns, launched an offensive on the North King Street positions. The brunt of the attack fell on the seven men in 'O'Reilly's Fort' under Lieutenant John Shouldice. The 'tommies' massed behind an unoccupied barricade opposite Reilly's. They were driven back by a withering fire from Shouldice's men; fleeing down Beresford Street, the English were caught in a cross-fire and mown down. The men from the 'Fort' dashed out, collected the rifles of the fallen soldiers and returned triumphantly to the building.

After six hours of fighting the British had made no progress. They then took to tunneling through houses in an attempt to outflank the I.R.A. It was a night of terror for the unfortunate people who had stayed in their houses. The South Staffs., maddened by their failure to dislodge Daly's men, wreaked vengeance on the defenceless; an estimated fifteen innocent civilians were bayoneted to death.

All night long and into Saturday the battle raged in North King Street. The combatants, facing each other across the narrow street, fired at point blank range. "We weren't frightened," recalls Thomas Sherrin of the 'Reilly's Fort' garrison. "We were simply past being frightened by then."

The Fr. Matthew Hall was only eighty yards from the positions under attack. It contained a number of wounded and members of Cumann na mBan and was not in a position to be defended. Commandant Daly decided to move his headquarters to the Four Courts. Piaras Beasley (the second-in-command) and Quartermaster Eamonn Morkan undertook the dangerous task of removing the store of ammunition and explosives. The flames from O'Connell Street made their path as bright as in daylight.

At length, having been under fire for sixteen hours, the men in 'Reilly's Fort,' spent and exhausted, found that their ammunition had practically run out. Seeing no prospect of relief, they decided to evacuate the building. Although under fire, they succeeded in rejoining their comrades without casualty. The British moved in straight away. According to the evidence of their commander, it took the South Staffs. from 10 a.m. on Friday until 2 p.m. on Saturday (April 29th) to advance 150 yards to the junction of North King Street and Church Street. The British casualty list for this engagement was: 5 officers wounded, 11 N.C.Os and men killed, and 28 wounded.

Captain Paddy Holohan and his men were now cut off in North Brunswick Street. They held out until Sunday morning, and were the last of Daly's Battalion to surrender.

Meanwhile, after an unsuccessful charge up Church Street, Daly called a conference of officers, at which it was decided to make a fresh sortie that evening to try and recover the lost positions. But Pearse's 'cease fire' order intervened. The end for the men in the Four Courts came on Saturday evening, a few hours after the surrender of the G.P.O. garrison. The close of that epoch-making week was graphically described

by Piaras Beasley:—

“... a priest arrived with news of the surrender, and finally Pearse's signed order to surrender was conveyed to Commandant Daly. He showed it to me, and his eyes filled with tears. He had borne himself like a gallant soldier through the week of fighting. Again he rose to this fresh test of soldiership. He checked the murmurings of those who objected to surrender by an appeal to discipline. They must obey the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, however unwelcome. He impressed the English officers with his dignity. They permitted him to march at the head of his men as they brought us through the empty streets (where the few people we saw were those who cursed us) to where other bodies of prisoners were assembled in O'Connell Street. And when the English General asked one of his own officers: 'Who is in charge of these men?' Daly proudly answered: 'I am. At all events, I was' — a remark which, he must have known, would sign his death-warrant.”



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Con Colbárd an tríú duine ab óige de na ceannairí a cuireadh chun báis tar éis Éirí Amach na Cásca, 1916. Rugadh é i Móin an Léana, láimh leis an gCaisleán Nua, sa bhliain 1888. Nuair nach raibh sé ach ina pháiste chuaigh sé féin agus a mhuintir chun cónaí go dtí Áth an tSléibhe, roinnt éigin mílte siar ó thuaidh ó Mhóin an Léana. Is sa bhunscoil in Áth an tSléibhe, agus i Scoil na mBráithre i Sráid Richmond Thuaidh i mBaile Átha Cliath, a fuair sé a chuid oideachais.

Tar éis dó an scoil a fhágaint fuair sé post mar chléireach i mBácús Uí Chinnéide i Sráid Pharnell, i mBaile Átha Cliath. Níorbh fhada dó san ardchathair go raibh sé ina bhall de Fhianna Éireann, rud ba dhual dó, d'fhéadfaí a rá, mar go raibh gaolta leis, ó thaobh a athar agus a mháthar, go gníomhach roimhe sna Finíní. Aon nóiméad dá raibh le spáráil aige thug Con é do Fhianna Éireann; agus nuair a gheibheadh sé a shaoire bhliantúil cuireadh sé éide na bhFianna air féin, agus théadh timpeall na tíre ar a rothar ag iarraidh a thuilleadh buachaillí a mhealladh isteach sa ghluaiseacht sin a bhí ina saghas faiche oiliúna do a lán de fhir na Cásca.

Bhí Con Colbárd i láthair ag cruinniú tionscnaimh na hÓglach san Rotunda i mBaile Átha Cliath an 25ú Samhain, 1913 agus chuaigh isteach sna hÓglaigh an chéad oíche sin; agus toisc an oiliúint a bhí faighte aige sna Fianna ceapadh é ina theagascóir. Chuir Pádraig Mac Piarais aithne air agus, i gcionn tamaill, thug cuireadh dó teacht amach go dtí Scoil Éanna chun aclaíocht a mhúineadh do na daltaí ann.

Chuaigh Con go fonnmhar, agus bhí gach rud ag dul ar aghaidh go breá go bhfuair sé amach go raibh ar intinn ag an bPiarsach tuarastal



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beag éigin a thabhairt dó as an oiliúint a bhí á tabhairt aige do dhaltai na scoile. Bhí Con are buile; agus dúirt sé leis an bPiarsach nach chun airgead a thuilleamh a bhí aclaíocht agus druil á dteagasc aige do bhuachaillí tírghrácha na hÉireann. Agus ba shuarach go leor an tuarastal a bhí á fháil aige ina phost féin an uair úd. Bá mhó ná riamh an meas a bhí ag an bPiarsach air tar éis na heachtra seo.

Bhí mianach iontach san ógánach seo ó Iarthar Luimnigh. Aon uair a bheadh sé ag gabháil thar séipéal, agus gan aon ró-dheifir air, ba ghnách leis caolú isteach ann chun an Choróinn Mhuire a rá; agus staonadh sé ó fheoil ar feadh sé sheachtain an Charghais.

Duine eile a raibh an-mheas aige ar Chon ab ea Seán Ó Dálaigh, an sean-Fhinín cáiliúil ó chathair Luimnigh a bhí tar éis dhá bhliain déag a chaitheamh "fé ghlas ag Gallaibh"; agus is minic a théadh Con ar cuairt chuige. Ba uncail é Seán Ó Dálaigh do Éamon Ó Dálaigh, an t-ógcheannaire eile ó Luimneach a básaíodh tar éis Sheachtain na Cásca. Finíneachas agus Conradh na Gaeilge, dob iad sin an dá mhórfhórsa a sheol Éire ar an mbóthar go dtí glóir agus uaisleacht na Cásca.

Bhain Con Colbárd céim captaein amach sna hÓglaigh, agus cúpla seachtain roimh an Éirí Amach ceapadh é ina gharda cosanta pearsanta do Thomás Ó Cléirigh. Bhí eolas maith aige ar an nGaeilge, agus dhéanadh sé roinnt scríbhneoireachta sa teanga sin agus i mBéarla. I measc an méid a scríobh sé bhí na linte seo:—

*May sharp swords fall on Ireland's foe,
May all her hills be rifle-lined;
May I be there to deal a blow
For Ireland, Faith and Womankind.*

*And may the song of battle soon
Be heard from every hill and vale;
May I be with the marching men
Who fight to free our Grainne Mhaol.*

Bhí Con Colbárd leis na *marching men* nuair a tháinig Seachtain na Cásca, agus throid sé go calma le garastún Marrowbone Lane. Agus ag deireadh na seachtaine, nuair a bhí an troid ag druim chun deiridh, agus uair na cinniúna buailte leo, rinne an Colbárdach beart chomh huasal agus a rinne aon fhear riamh; ghlac sé ceannas an gharastúin air féin chun go rachadh an t-oifigeach a bhí os a chionn saor. Sin is brí leis an tagairt úd sa dán, *Dark Rosaleen's Last Chaplet*:—

*I saw Colbert choose a felon's death that a comrade might go free,
And much is pardoned to one who hath loved another as much as he.*

B'fhéidir nár thuig Con Colbárd é, ach is cinnte nach ligfí saor é féin pé cennas a bhí aige. I súile na nGall ba fhear dainséareach don Ghallréim in Éirinn é, agus chaithfí deighleáil dá réir leis.

Cuireadh Con Colbárd chun báis maidin an 8ú Bealtaine, 1916. Ní raibh sé ach 28 mbliana d'aois. Cúpla lá ina dhiaidh sin fuair an sean Fhinín, Seán Ó Dálaigh, an litir seo:—

"Kilmainham,
7th May, 1916.

My dear Friend,
Just a line to wish you good-bye and to ask your prayers for my poor
soul. God prosper you and yours. May He love Ireland. Goodbye!
Yours ever,
CON."

Cad is féidir linn a rá i dtaobh leithéidí Chon Colbárd ach:—

"Go raibh gach sárfhear de Throid na Saoirse
I bhflaitheas aoibhinn i measc na naomh;
Is a aisce féinig go bhfaghaidh an Píarsach:
Éire Gaelach agus Éire saor."

(Foilsíodh an aiste seo cheana i "Scéala Éireann," 17 Feabhar,
1966. Táimid buíoch do "Scéala Éireann as cead é d'athfhoilsiú anseo.)

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*Edward Thomas O'Dwyer
Bishop of Limerick*

by DAVID W. MILLER

EDWARD THOMAS O'DWYER, Bishop of Limerick from 1886 until 1917, is remembered chiefly for a letter to General Maxwell on 13th May, 1916, in which he referred to the General as "the military dictator of Ireland," and said of the executions "in cold blood" of the Easter week prisoners: "Personally, I regard your action with horror, and I believe that it has outraged the conscience of the country." At a time when most of the ecclesiastical authorities were silent or condemnatory toward the Rising, this letter, soon published in the daily press, was greeted with considerable surprise; probably no one was more surprised than General Maxwell. The letter was prompted by Maxwell's request to the Bishop that he transfer to isolated parishes two priests involved in "seditious" activities. The General was acting in

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accordance with a long-standing Castle method of dealing with troublesome priests in dioceses whose bishops were thought to be co-operative; his mistake was, quite probably, reliance on information about the co-operativeness of this particular prelate which was seriously out of date, for during the 1880s Dr. O'Dwyer had denounced the Plan of Campaign with a vehemence equal to that which he now directed at General Maxwell. He had been vilified throughout Ireland as a "Castle bishop," and it should not be surprising that Castle officials accepted this judgment and, failing to appreciate the subtleties of Dr. O'Dwyer's thought, precipitated one of the more serious tactical blunders in the history of British administration in Ireland.

To understand the development of Dr. O'Dwyer's outlook, we must remember that the years between the Plan of Campaign and the Easter Rising were not only the prelude to a political revolution in Ireland but also a period of quite revolutionary change in the social and political structure of Great Britain. As the advocates of Irish national self-consciousness in cultural fields looked with dismay on the urban, industrial and secular forces which were convulsing Britain in the early years of this century, Dr. O'Dwyer viewed these phenomena with positive horror. And he viewed with even greater alarm the possibility that these changes would sweep over the only part of the British Isles as yet untouched by them — the West of Ireland — inundating and transforming the society which he knew and loved. This society, still rich in Catholic piety, functioned according to traditional patterns — tradition which his own family had helped to shape and sustain. One member of his family, Edmund O'Dwyer, had been Bishop of Limerick in Cromwell's time, and the family had managed to maintain a position of some influence in the succeeding generations in spite of the Penal Laws.

For Dr. O'Dwyer all the dangers and evils of the forces which threatened this society were epitomized in the English Liberal Party of Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith and Lloyd George, and the primary evidence of the pernicious designs of that organisation was its efforts, during the long Liberal government which took office in 1905, to displace the Churches from their role in education. He was by no means alone in these sentiments within the Catholic hierarchy of Ireland (and, for that matter, Great Britain), but he was the most determined and outspoken advocate of these views, and he was not afraid to condemn publicly the alliance between the Irish Parliamentary Party, under John Redmond, and the English Liberals. He was intensely disappointed that in the 1906 general election the Irish Party failed to swing Irish votes in Britain away from the Liberals to prevent the landslide result which made it possible for the Liberals to ignore Irish demands. Recalling Parnell's tactics, the Bishop, pessimistic but hoping for some change in the Party's methods, lamented: "Oh for a touch of the vanished hand . . ." but when, four years later, he still saw no trace of the vanished hand, he despaired completely of any good coming from the activities of the Parliamentary Party. "Politically," he wrote in his 1910 Lenten Pastoral, "Ireland is subdivided into two British camps, the wealthier classes identifying themselves with English Unionism, and the mass of the population, through their representatives, being attached to the English Liberals. For any true spirit of nationality such alliances must be ruinous, and, as far as they affect religion their effect must be even worse."

The Irish Party's attitude toward the First World War did not improve their relations with Dr. O'Dwyer. In his view, the proper role for Redmond

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was to press upon the government the peace initiatives of the Holy See. When Redmond refused to do this, and when Irishmen were attacked in Liverpool for failing to enlist, Dr. O'Dwyer posed the question: "What have they or their forefathers ever got from England that they should die for her?"

The Bishop's famous letter to General Maxwell, therefore, was not as wholly incongruous with his prior career as it seemed to many at the time who had followed only its more publicised aspects. His real grievance was as much against Redmond and John Dillon — the same individuals whom he had been attacking in the 1880s — as against General Maxwell. His position became clearer when, on 14th September, 1916, he outlined the broader features of his policy for Ireland on the occasion of the conferring upon him of the freedom of the City of Limerick. He lambasted the Parliamentary Party for "putting their faith in Asquith and Lloyd George and the Liberals" whose duplicity over Home Rule only confirmed for him the deep-seated distrust he had long harboured toward them. "... this very year, when the English government played false, I would have said to the Irish Members of Parliament 'Come home, shake the dust of the English House of Commons off your feet and throw yourselves on the Irish nation.' Sinn Fein is, in my judgment, the true principle."

The Bishop of Limerick thus became the rallying point for the young priests and Catholic laymen who were inclined toward the Sinn Fein policy of abstention from the British Parliament. When he attended the annual prize-distribution at Maynooth shortly after the publication of his letter to Maxwell he had received an ovation from the students. In the by-elections of 1917, in which Sinn Fein candidates stood against nominees of the Parliamentary Party, the Bishop of Limerick's stand was frequently cited in their favour. When, after Count Plunkett's victory in North Roscommon, a Convention was called to organise the Sinn Fein movement for the coming struggle, Limerick priests were prominent among the delegates. Moreover, Dr. O'Dwyer used his influence, directly and indirectly, to prevent united support of the Parliamentary Party by the hierarchy.

Although Dr. O'Dwyer died in the summer of 1917, it is likely that the subsequent course of events would have been notably different had he not taken the action he did. By the time of the general election which produced the first Dail Eireann, the clergy were still far from unanimous in their support of Sinn Fein. Nevertheless, the new movement did receive a good deal of backing from clergymen at all levels who would have remained on the sideline but for the example of the Bishop of Limerick.

With the removal of Irish representatives from the intrigues and influences of the English Parliament and the displacement of the old set of Irish political leaders by a new group unsullied by decades of involvement in British politics, Dr. O'Dwyer would have been more than pleased. Shortly before his death, on the eve of the election in East Clare, he said to de Valera: "There will be no advance in Ireland until you sweep the rubbish out of the land." De Valera replied that "the Party would die themselves," and he answered: "If you want a real Irish nation, such as you desire, you, first of all, must clean out the rubbish and build from a decent foundation."

● Mr. Miller is a graduate student in the University of Chicago, currently engaged in research in Dublin into the relationships between the Catholic Church and Irish Nationalism from 1900 to 1918.

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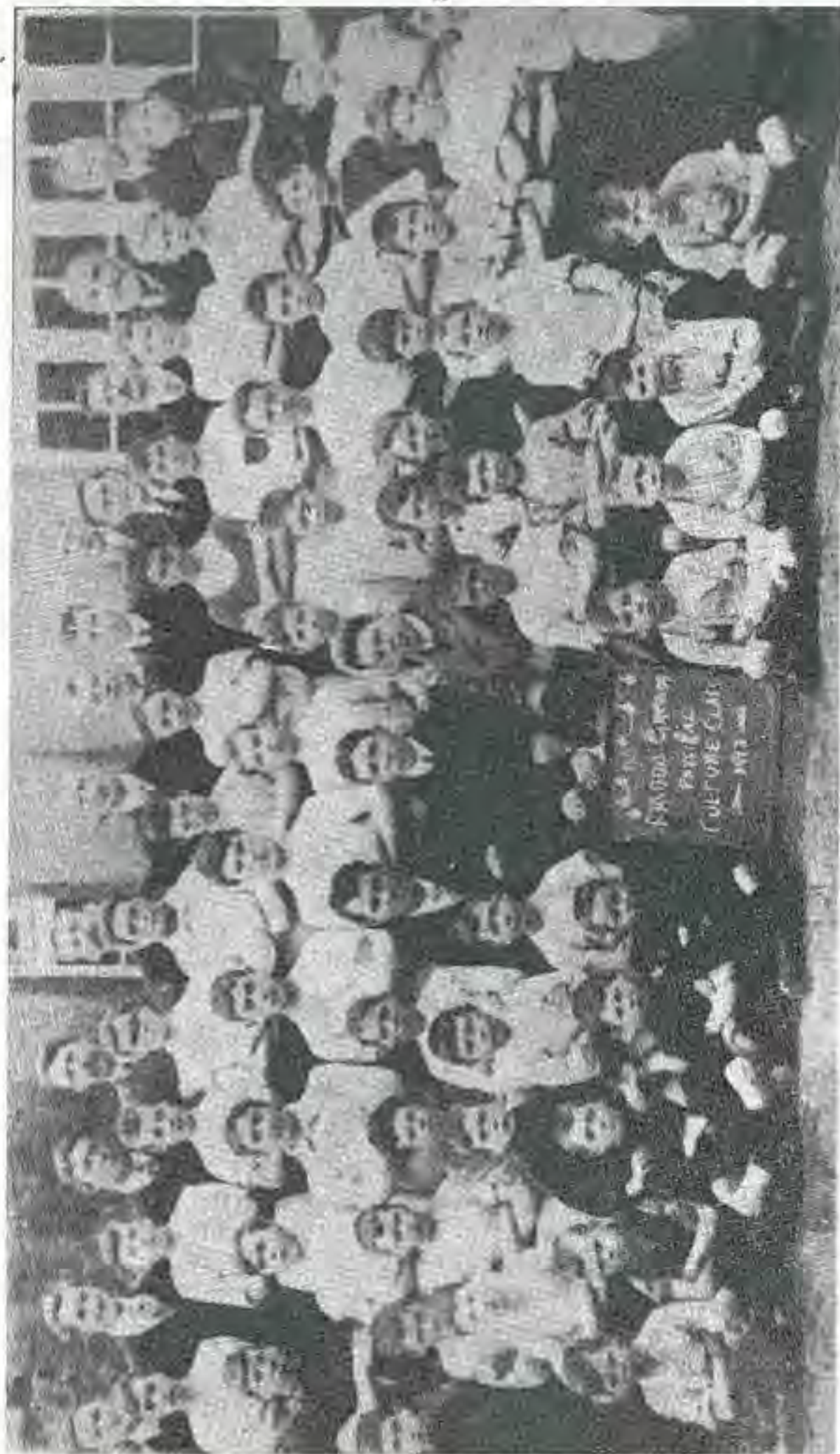
le PHROINNSIAS MHAC GIOLLA LOSCAIDH

Bunúiodh Slua an Tiarna Eamonn de Fhianna Éireann i Luimnigh bhlian 1911. Ta clós ar chúl an tí a bhí ag Seán O Dálaigh agus is ann a bhímís ag druileál. Bhímís ag máirséal síos suas an clós ar feadh í bhfad i n-aon líne, dthosach agus annsan 'n dhá líne. Annsan, deineadh sinn a eagrú 'nar gcomplachtaí, Ceithre ranna i ngach complacht agus dareag buachaillí i ngach roinn. I gceannas ar an gcomplacht bhí lefteanant agus fo-lefteanant, treórai agus fó-threórai ar na ranna agus ar an slua ar fad bhí an Captaen Seosamh Daltúin.

Bhí an slua ar súil fe choimirce Cumann Uolf Teon eagrais a bhí mar "front" ag an Braithreacas Poblachta (I.R.B.).

I rith an tsamraidh bhímís ag dul amach 'nar gcomplachtaí agus annsan bhí an chéad mórshúil poiblí againn go Atha Choitig. Ag an am san, bhí hata agus crios ag gach einne againn ar chostas 2/6 agus is sinne a bhí go mustarach ag súil amach os cóir an phobail. Bhí an lá go breagh. Thug Mac Ui Bhrodsheá na n-uisci mianra agus na ceapairí amach in a van agus roinneadh orainn iad nuair a shroiseamar ceann scribe.

I mbliain a '12 d'imthig an runaí Phroinnsias O Seachasaigh go dtí an Aifric Theas agus deineadh áirithe, do tugadh fear óg ós ár gcóir is dubradh go mbeadh sé na runaí againn. Buachaill árd é agus knickerbockers a gcaitheamh aige. Seán Mac Aoidh (Seán Heuston) a bhí ann. Fuaras amach ar ball gurbh Baile Atha Cliathac é.



Thosnuig sé laitreach ar an druil a mhuineadh duinn i nGaedhilge agus ás san amach ní raibh a mhalairt againn. Timpal an ama ceadhna cuireadh fé scrudú sinn, bhí orainn ár n-aimneacha agus ár sloinnte a bheith againn in Gaedhilge agus beith in-ánn comhaireamh suas go dtí fiche. Bhí roinnt trioblóide agam lem shloinne féin ach glachad le Glascú agus d'eirig liom.

Bhí Halla mór á thogaint sa clós agus crichnuigeadh e fe dheire. Chosain sé £120 nó £130 agus thug Seán Ó Dálaig £100 de sin. La mór a beadh la na h-oscailte agus thainig Seán Ó Dálaigh féin in a chataoir rothach agus d'árduig se an brat uathne os cionn an halla agus d'fhogar gur oscail sé an halla i n-ainm na h-Éireann agus tugad Árus na b'Fiann air. Bí an halla san phríomh-árus ag an bFéinn agus ag Óglaigh Éireann agus bhí sé le fail ag cumainn éagsamhla náisúinta as san amach go dtí gur chuir na Dubhcronaigh tre theine é imbliadhan a '21. I lathair ag an lá iomráiteach seo bhí Conchubair Cólbard, Sean MacDiarmada agus a lan daoine móra 'san gluaiseacht náisúinta.

As san amach leis bhí gnothaí ar súil gach oidhche beagnach san halla, bhí oidhche do chorp-oileamhaint, do druil, de ranganna Gaedhilge agus staire. Bhí cór againn agus múinte amhraniocht ag Risteárd Ó hÓgain. Bhíodh cuirmeacha ceóil againn ó am go h-am ar oidhche Domhnaigh. Comh maith leis an bFéinn bhí daoine mar Séamus O Goibín, Mac Cartaigh agus Seán Ó Fearghail ag cabhrú linn.

Oidhcheanta léigeadh Seán Heuston Sliocht as úr-sceál mar Donal Dun O'Bryne (Sceál a bhain le 98) duinn, nó tráthnóinte samhraidh dá mbhead an tinnreamh beag thugad sé sinne ag suil agus bheadh sé ag chuir síos ar eactra eigin í stáir na h-Éireann. Is cuimhin liom fear ag bualadh linn uair agus ar seisean le Seán "An mba leatsa iad go leir?" "Is liom," arsa Seán.

Bhí taoisig an Éirí Amach ar chuaird chugainn go minic ach Cólbaird agus Mac Diarmada bhídís ann go hana-mhínic.

Bhí campáí samhraidh againn gach bliadhan in aitheanna mar Creathlach agus Ath na Coithigh.

Bhí comharthaoicht seamafóir againn leis agus ní raibh ag éirí liom aon mhaith do dhéanamh cun gur thug Seán Heuston me i leath taobh anois agus airís, d'eirig liom níos fearr annsan.

Bheadh scrudaithe againn gac blian agus duaiseanna le fáil ach níor gnotuigh me ach ceann 'sa stair agus duais soláis 'san comharthaoicht. Brat a bhí ann agus Seán Mac Diarmada a thug dom é.

I mbliain a '13 thainig Ruairí Mac Easmuinn go Luimnigh chun na h-Óglaigh do chur ar bun. Bé tabairt-amach san Árus. An chead rud ar an gclár ná beirt nó truir again ag cuir teachtaireacht ó cheann an árus go dtí an cheann eile. Toghadh mise mar dhuine acu agus an teachtoíreacht i mBéarla.

"Fáilte roimh Sir Ruairí Mac Easmuinn." Bhí sé ana shásta linn agus bronn puball orainn.

Nuair a bunuigheadh an Fhiann duirt an Cunntaois leis an bPiarsach: "Beidh na fir agam má bhíonn na n-oifigh agat." Ach a mhalairt a tharla. Nuair a bunuighead na h-Óglaigh na h-oifighigh a bhí ar an bhFéinn agus na buacaillí móra fuadarar postáanna mar oifighigh agus fo-oifighigh 'sna h-Óglaigh.

Nuair a thainig an Éirí Amach ní raibh aon eolas againn ar an sceál ach is cinnte go mbhead buacaillí na Féinne i Luimnigh lán, comh maith

le buacailli Baile Átha Cliath dá mbeadh an uain aca.

Na beireadh éinne leis gur trúpaí gasóga gnatacha sinn. Bé aidhm an Chuntaois agus a cáirde a bhnuigh an Fhiann na dream oilte a bheith acu nuair a tíocheadh lá na cinniúnn.

'Sé an gheallamhaint a thog na Feanna ná "Geallaim gnothú ar son saoirse na h-Éireann agus gan dul isteach bhforsaí armtha Shasana agus bheith umhal dom chuid oifigeach."

Deire bliana a '16 shleanhnuigheas insteach in-sna h-Óglaigh tre chúl-doras.

Deineadh atheahrú ar an bhFéinn i mbliain a '17 agus cruthuig said go h-iontach i gcogadh na Saoirse. Taim cinnte da mbeidis beagán nois sinne go mbéadh morán nios nó le maoideamh againn i Luimnigh as an Ceithre Bliana Glómhara.

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Gallant Cumann na mBan of Limerick

by MADGE DALY

(From *Limerick's Fighting Story*, by kind permission of the Kerryman Ltd.)

SOON AFTER THE formation of the Volunteers, a branch of Cumann na mBan was started in Limerick city. The first meeting was held in the Gaelic League Rooms, and the majority of those in attendance were members of the Gaelic League, or were girls belonging to families who had carried on the Fenian tradition. A provisional Committee was elected, and I had the honour of being made President, an office which I held until 1924 except for one year, 1921, when we unanimously asked Mrs. O'Callaghan to accept the position. She insisted on resigning at the end of a year of office. Following the inauguration, Mrs. Dermot O'Donovan was Vice-President; Miss Mollie Killeen, Hon. Secretary; Miss Annie O'Dwyer, Hon. Treasurer; and the Misses Tessie Punch, Maggie Tierney, Laura Daly, Una O'Donoghue, and Mrs. Michael O'Callaghan were on the Committee. I am quoting these names from memory, so that it is possible that I may have omitted some. From its inception, ours was a large and active branch and I can recall over seventy girls who were active members to the end. Classes were immediately started for First Aid, Home Nursing, Drill, Signalling, and for instruction in the care and use of arms. For military matters we had the services of Captain Monteith and other Volunteer officers, whilst we had four city doctors and two nurses who gave the first aid and nursing lectures voluntarily. In 1911, my uncle, John Daly, and some Fenian friends were responsible for the erection of a Fianna Hall on the grounds at the back of our house, 15 Barrington Street, and there most of our activities were carried on. Designed by the late Maurice Fitzgerald, of Richmond Street, it was a lovely little hall, complete with stage and seating accommodation. We arranged lectures, Irish dances and concerts, while many of our honoured martyrs came there to teach us the way to freedom. Terry MacSwiney, Sean MacDermott, Mary MacSwiney, P. H. Pearse, Roger Casement and many others gave lectures which helped to keep active the various organisations — the Fianna, the Volunteers, and the Cumann na mBan — during the black days which followed the outbreak of the European war. We always charged admission to these functions, and all members, except the Fianna, had to pay; in this way we helped the Volunteer Arms' Fund. Our classes were held in the hall, and we also had the use of a room from my uncle at 26 William Street, where the Committee met every week. When John Redmond forced his nominees on the Dublin Executive of the Irish Volunteers, the word went around that the women of his ideas should join and, if possible, gain control of the Cumann na mBan. Accordingly, in Limerick, as elsewhere, large numbers joined who, if they held any national opinions,

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were supporters of the Parliamentary Party and had nothing in common with the original members. Soon after this development an election for a new Committee was held, and some of these new members made an all-out effort to secure election; a few succeeded. A short time prior to this, we had made over £130 from a Fete in aid of the Arms' Fund. At our first Committee meeting following the election, the Redmondite members enquired about our funds. They were informed that our collections were for the Volunteer Arms' Fund, and that we had handed over all the money to the Irish Volunteers for that purpose. The new members were very disappointed. We had the big majority on the Committee, however, and co-opted additional members of our way of thinking so that we had full control. Following a few meetings, the opposition became dispirited by the course of events, and resigned in a body. They immediately started the National Volunteer Ladies' Association and set up in great style in expensive rooms in O'Connell Street. They soon faded away, however, as they had neither the faith nor the enthusiasm of Cumann na mBan. During this upheaval, we lost only one of our original members, and she returned a few months later. Our Committee remained practically unchanged during these years, up to 1924. We got some additional members, but those whose names I have mentioned were there to the end. Mrs. Clancy resigned the Honorary Secretaryship, and the Misses E. Murphy and Tessie Punch took over her duties.

The friendship formed with the members of the Committee are most precious to me. We worked together as one, each one doing all possible to help the organisation and to forward the cause, whilst never counting the cost. This applies equally to the rank and file, in which each girl not only carried out the task allotted her, but, in addition, let pass no opportunity of doing any national work that came to hand. As time passed, and the difficulties and dangers multiplied, the girls rose gallantly to the occasion, so that it was a joy to work with them. A practice which caused us much fun was initiated soon after the outbreak of the European war. We started first aid classes under the Department of Education, and a number of our members passed the examinations — for each of our members who passed we were given a grant from the Department and, in this way, we earned £48 which, as usual, was transmitted to the Arms' Fund of the Irish Volunteers. In that way the British Government was unwillingly subscribing to the funds of its enemies. The classes were confined to Cumann na mBan, and were held in the Gaelic League rooms and in the Fianna Hall. The home nursing classes were sometimes held in private houses. As the Rising approached, work went ahead with great energy and enthusiasm and for a few weeks a group of girls was constantly busy in our house making first aid outfits. Wholesale arrests followed the suppression of the Rising, and the Cumann na mBan then began collecting for the Volunteers' Dependents' Fund (later the National Aid Fund), attending to the welfare of the prisoners and their families, and helping in every way to maintain the national morale. Crowds thronged the churches to attend the Requiem Masses for the 1916 martyrs arranged by the Cumann na mBan. The memory of one Requiem Mass stands out. On my suggestion, it was arranged by the Cumann na mBan, and through the special permission of the late Bishop O'Dwyer, it was celebrated in St. John's Cathedral

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at dawn on the 4th of May, 1917, the first anniversary of the Rising. Hours before dayling St. John's Square was packed by a dense crowd of people, which swelled as others joined it from the farthest ends of the town; from streets and lanes and the suburbs they came to honour the memory of our latest martyrs. As we hurried along in the darkness most houses were lit up, and every family seemed to be about and moving. When we arrived at the church it was densely packed, and there was an immense crowd outside which could not gain admittance. The Volunteers were unable to get us to our specially reserved seats, and we had to hear Mass in the sanctuary. The altar was crowded with young priests, the choir was splendid, and the impressive ceremony was altogether unforgettable.

Some Volunteers were released in the autumn of 1916 and internees in Frongoch and other English jails were released on Christmas Eve, 1917. Limerick Cumann na mBan had collected a large sum of money to send parcels to these men. Those under sentence were not allowed any parcels. We got about five hundred-weight of butter from local creameries, and this was sent with hampers of cakes, ham and all kinds of Christmas fare. I had been in touch with Michael Staines, who was in charge of parcels in Frongoch, and he asked me not to expend any more money on food, as huge parcels had reached them from all parts of Ireland. Accordingly, following the release, we sent the balance, over £80, to Dublin to be spent on the prisoners. We also sent regular parcels to the women prisoners in England. When release came unexpectedly, a few volunteers had to remain in Frongoch to re-pack the food and send it to Dublin for re-distribution amongst the prisoners' families. In June, 1917, all the sentenced prisoners were released, and then work started on the Sinn Fein campaign for the General Elections, in which members of the Cumann na mBan were busy helping in all constituencies. Soon the jails began to fill again, as Sinn Fein and the latest resistance movement gathered impetus and the Limerick Branch of Cumann na mBan had much to do, attending to the needs of the prisoners and their families, visiting the jails, arranging for meals, and writing to prisoners' relatives. Sometimes, men arrested in the neighbouring counties of Kerry, Limerick and Tipperary were brought to Limerick and their people never knew where they had been taken until our members reported to them, a step we always took as rapidly as possible. A Sergeant in William Street Barracks always sent word to me when prisoners arrived there.

I think it was in 1921 that Cumann na mBan changed the constitution and arranged for more active co-operation with the I.R.A. Each branch needed a Captain, who was specially trained for this work. In Limerick, we appointed Miss Mary McInerney, and she proved a very satisfactory choice. She gave her whole time to the work until the finish and was always cool and practical. She had a number of young girls working with her. During the years of the campaign, we regularly got bundles of posters, leaflets and other literature from Headquarters. These parcels generally arrived by rail at our house, and were later distributed amongst the members of each district. They were then posted on walls or otherwise published by night. We often went into the country and put posters on chapel gates. We also had our own special propaganda and, in this connection, Desmond Fitzgerald gave me a list of people outside of

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Ireland to whom we used send reports of local atrocities committed by the British. I got a duplicator and, with Tessie Punch's help, sent out a large volume of propaganda. Later on I got a typewriter, which I lent to Tessie Punch. This was taken from her house by Free State raiders and that was the last I heard of it.

The British had a special hatred of Cumann na mBan and well-known members of the organisation had little rest. My own case was typical. We were raided regularly, our business place was set on fire, and our furniture seized for unpaid fines imposed by courtmartial. My sister was dragged out of the house one night, her hair shorn off and her hand cut with a razor. She was later courtmartialled and fined £40 for tearing down a military proclamation which the Black-and-Tans had put up inside our shop window. Still this treatment was mild when compared with the desolation and sorrow dealt to other members. In March, 1921, Michael O'Callaghan, ex-Mayor of Limerick, was shot dead in the presence of his wife. George Clancy, the Mayor, was also killed the same night in his wife's presence, and Mrs. Clancy was wounded in the wrist in a fruitless effort to save her husband. Thus, two of our foundation members were dealt the cruellest blow that the Black-and-Tan fiends could devise. In 1921, we proposed Mrs. O'Callaghan as T.D. for the city and her nomination was acclaimed with great enthusiasm. She was elected with a huge vote, and proved a grand representative, incapable of being deflected from her high ideals. Rev. Dr. I. Cotter, a distinguished American priest and author, aptly wrote of her:—

"Mrs. O'Callaghan, refined, cultured and learned, has ever employed all her great powers, before her martyred husband's death as well as since, in the emancipation of her country from the yoke of the despot . . . She does honour over much to historic Limerick . . . I was never in a home where husband and wife so supplemented intellectual activities on behalf of their dear country."

Mrs. Clancy had not been married many years at the time of her husband's murder. Both had always worked for the cause, and though life was then strenuous and dangerous, they had a lovely and a happy home shattered in a moment by the devilry of the British forces. Cumann na mBan did not waver under the increased terror, and the work went on as before. Sometimes wounded Volunteers were brought to the Limerick hospitals and, to the credit of the staffs, the men were sheltered and nursed, and never a word or hint of their presence reached the British. Whenever the hospitals were raided by the Black-and-Tans, the wounded men were safely hidden. The nuns of St. John's Hospital were particularly kind and helpful, and the Limerick doctors were also splendid. Irrespective of their political opinions, they went to the relief of our wounded, often at great inconvenience, and to the most out-of-the-way places. There was never a question of fees, nor was there idle talk which would have led to the capture of the wounded.

When the Treaty was carried, Limerick Cumann na mBan lost some of its members, but the majority remained loyal to the Republic. During the Civil War, the Republican forces, in the New Barracks, were joined by Cumann na mBan, who helped them in many ways. The hospital was in charge of Nurse Laffan and Nurse Connerty, a Limerick girl home from New York on holiday. These nurses, with the nursing section

of Cumann na mBan, attended to the sick and wounded, whilst other girls helped with the cooking of meals and maintenance. When the Republicans evacuated the city, the girls remained in the barracks until the men had got clear, and then returned to their homes, still ready to undertake any duty required of them. Mrs. Hartney, an early and most active member, who went to Adare to help the I.R.A., was shot dead by Free State troops when crossing the yard of the hotel there. Her husband was serving with the Republican forces at the time. She was a fine woman with a definite Fenian outlook and was a great worker. Some time previously, her home and shop in Davis Street were burned down. She left two lovely little girls to mourn her loss with her husband. Cumann na mBan arranged High Mass and a public funeral, and she was buried in the Republican Plot in the New Cemetery. From that stage onwards, Cumann na mBan made the arrangements for the burial of the Limerick Republicans killed in the fight, as all the men were with the armed forces. It was the saddest period in our history, the comrades of yesterday fighting and killing one another. I was Trustee for the Republican Burial Plot. The other Trustees were both on the Free State side. I had the plot opened for the burial of all Republicans killed in the Civil War, and the Free State Trustees never made an effort to stop me, or to have Free State soldiers buried there — an admission that they had no right to do so, having deserted the Republic they had sworn to defend. Soon the jails were filled with Republican prisoners, and conditions in Limerick Jail were deplorable. Our girls did all they could to help the prisoners. In 1922 a number of members of Cumann na mBan were arrested outside Limerick Jail, where they had been waiting for prisoners who were supposed to be allowed escape. It later transpired that this was a plot to capture the girls and, as far as I can remember, those arrested included Maura O'Halloran, Nellie Blackwell, N. O'Rahilly, Nellie Fannell, Josie O'Brien, and Nannie Hogan of Cratloe. They were held in Dublin jails for a long time, and went through hunger strike with Mary MacSwiney, and Mrs. O'Callaghan, who had also been arrested. The conditions under which they were held in custody in Kilmainham and Mountjoy were appalling. I have a number of letters sent out secretly by Nannie Hogan, which describe vividly the brutality to which they were subjected. That was the most terrible and depressing period since the start of the fight. Yet, our branch continued to function until 1924, by which time most of the prisoners had been released. I look back now with pride and pleasure to my long association with these grand women of the Limerick Branch of Cumann na mBan. I never observed a sign of pettiness, jealousy or personal ambition amongst them. All worked for the cause to the utmost of their abilities, giving of their time and means willingly and upholding their principles regardless of consequences.

Native Games & National Ideals

by SEAMUS Ó CEALLAIGH

WHEN THE Gaelic Athletic Association was founded its aim was wedded to the cause of Irish nationality, and that communion of spirit must remain inviolate if the games it was established to foster are to fulfil their purpose and maintain their traditions.

When native games were commended to the practice and support of the Irish people, the originators of the movement knew that it must fail unless it was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of militant nationality: for militantism is the essence of physical vitality.

Launched in that hope, it had immediate success and the goal of a free and self-reliant Ireland has remained the great objective of the mass of the Gaelic Athletic Association. It inherited the Fenian tradition from men who had struggled and suffered on the rugged path of uncompromising nationalism, and it would be disastrous to its immediate and paramount aims alike should Irish manhood ever recant the doctrine which is the basis of their union and the glamour of their rivalry.

Right Rev. Mons. Michael Hamilton, B.A., B.D., born as close to Limerick as not to matter, correctly summed up the national aspect of the Association's work when he said: "The Gaelic Athletic Association was the first organisation to call the Gael back to his own: it was the first organisation to make Irish compulsory in the country by putting into its rule book that all correspondence should be addressed in Irish; and it was the first organisation to stand up and support Irish industries by insisting that all its official notepaper and equipment used in the playing of its games be of Irish manufacture. It was the G.A.A., through Croke, Cusack and Davin, that gave a clarion call to Irishmen to stand on their own feet, and it was the G.A.A., on the field and in the forum, on the hillsides and in the valleys, that brought Irishmen back to the proud position of possessing the freedom which they enjoy in their own land today."

The Irish Republican Brotherhood played the leading part in bringing the G.A.A. into being, and quarter of a century later when the Old Fenian organisation was revitalised, members of the G.A.A. and of the Gaelic League were the main source of recruitment. It was generally accepted that if a man belonged to either of these organisations he was fairly sure to be possessed of the qualities invaluable in an I.R.B. man — perseverance, sincerity, honesty of purpose and moral courage.

Members of the G.A.A. in Limerick have been closely associated with the National Movement since the foundation of the Association. It would be impossible in the space at my disposal to mention any but the very few, in the hope that they will prove an inspiration even to generations yet unborn to uphold the proud traditions that have been handed down by many other men of resolve and high principle.

Frank Dinneen of Ballylanders, the only man ever to hold the two great offices of the G.A.A. — that of President and Secretary — was an I.R.B. man, who was also closely identified with the Land League.

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Pat Hassett of Ahane, who was Treasurer of the Central Council in its early days, was another I.R.B. man, as was the first Chairman of Limerick County Board, Paddy ("Twenty") O'Brien. Another great Co. Board Chairman, Very Rev. Canon W. Casey of Abbeyfeale, was known far and wide as the "Land League priest."

With the formation of the Irish Volunteers, many members of the G.A.A. joined up, and the 2nd Battalion, under the leadership of Commandant Johnny McSweeney, was mainly composed of hurlers and footballers. Johnny, an enthusiastic Gael himself and an ardent member of the Young Ireland Club, always insisted that the G.A.A. members would, when the call came, be eager and ready to do the harder and nobler thing — fight for the land whose games they played.

Many sterling Gaels answered the call at Eastertime of 1916, but Limerickmen were denied participation in the fight under circumstances which more abler pens than mine will undoubtedly relate in this publication.

The G.A.A. in Limerick, however, can take pride in the fact that two of the executed leaders — Con Colbert of Athea, and Ned Daly of the city — were members of the Association and played our native games. John Daly, uncle of the latter, a noted Fenian and supporter of Gaelic pastimes, is commemorated in the magnificent cup that is the perpetual trophy for the Co. Senior Hurling Championship.

The immediate reaction of the general public to the Rising was not favourable and for a brief period many felt that hope was dead for at least another generation. It was then that the patriotic Bishop of Limerick, Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer, spoke for the soldiers of freedom and asserted that "while grass grows and water runs there will be men in Ireland to dare and die for her."

The resurrection after death followed quickly, the old heroic days were brought back with one big swing of time's pendulum, and the heart of Ireland was stirred to the very depths. That was in truth the triumph of Easter Week.

Glorious years were to follow, and in those the Gaels of Limerick played a full part. Men from almost every parish joined in the fight against foreign aggression and members of the G.A.A. were in the thick of it everywhere — organising, planning, plotting. From Galbally to Glin, from Abbeyfeale to Castleconnell, the story was the same and many names were written in letters of gold in a story yet untold of brave hearts and grand deeds. They found what was then a mighty Empire, and there is ample evidence how well the British realised that the G.A.A. was helping through its games and its National outlook to produce the bravery and energy which turned to the arts of war smashed their garrisons throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Following Easter Week, the playing of Gaelic pastimes was prohibited and the ban remained in operation until 10th June, 1916. Later that year, on November 12th, the Limerick Co. Secretary, Jim Ryan, was arrested for refusing to admit members of the R.I.C. to the semi-final of the Co. Senior Hurling Championship between Cloughaun and Bruff at Pallasgreen. A prosecution followed and, at the trial, Mr. H. O'Brien Moran, who defended Jim Ryan, caused a sensation by producing confidential documents circulated to the R.I.C., advising them to keep G.A.A. members under observation. The pair were later hauled

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before a British court-martial, at which they refused to disclose where they obtained the secret papers. Both were sent to prison.

The British again struck in July, 1918, when an order was issued prohibiting the playing of Gaelic Games, except under a permit from the occupying forces. The G.A.A. hit back this time in dramatic fashion. The Central Council ordered that permits were not to be sought, and declared August 4th a "Gaelic Sunday" on which matches were to be played by every club in the country in defiance of the ban. The huge total of fifteen hundred games were arranged, and all were carried through without interference from the authorities, and it was quite apparent that the ban had failed. Fourteen Limerick venues were engaged, at all of which large crowds were present. At the Markets Field, Young Irelands beat their old rivals Cloughaun in senior hurling, and in junior hurling, Shamrocks triumphed over Treaty. In senior football, Commercial scored a narrow win over Oola.

There was a general strike against British militarism in Limerick for a fortnight in April, 1919, and the All-Ireland G.A.A. Congress meeting in Dublin made a very substantial financial contribution to the strike fund.

The Munster Senior Hurling Championship semi-final between Limerick and Tipperary was fixed for Cork Athletic Grounds on August 8th, 1920. The railways were not functioning because of the patriotic action of the employees in refusing to carry members of the British armed forces. Limerick travelled by charabanc but were intercepted by military at Charleville, who confiscated the county colours. They continued to Cork after some delay, and as they pulled into the Victoria Hotel the charabanc skidded and struck one of the supporting pillars of the hotel porch and a resounding crash of iron and glass announced that the boys from Garryowen had arrived! It was a night of great tension in the Rebel city, as Most Rev. Dr. Mannix had been arrested on the high seas and transferred to a British warship that evening. Martial law was in force and Sunday's match proclaimed. The G.A.A. moved fast — they transferred the game to Riverstown, where Limerick won by 5-7 to 3-3.

Police and military rowdyism in Limerick, which was evident for a long time, reached its zenith on August 15th when several houses were burned down. Following this, curfew was enforced and matches arranged for the Markets Field had to be transferred to outside venues.

The Munster Senior Hurling Championship final, fixed for Thurles on August 29th, between Cork and Limerick, was not played because Cork's Lord Mayor, Terry McSwiney, a member of the Association, was on hunger strike in Brixton Prison and, as a token of support, no G.A.A. games were played during the period of the fast, which ended with the death of the heroic patriot on October 25th after seventy-three days protest. October 31st was observed by the G.A.A. as a day of national mourning, and as a protest against the inhuman treatment of him by the British Government.

In late November, the events of "Bloody Sunday," when British forces fired on players and spectators attending a football match between Dublin and Tipperary in Croke Park, killing and injuring a big number marked a new phase of the struggle, following which it was deemed prudent to suspend operations on Gaelic fields — a situation which

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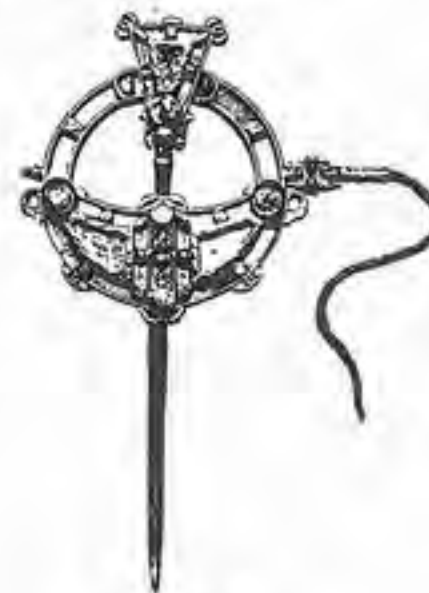


Volunteer Joseph O'Donoghue.

continued until the Truce the following July.

In March, 1921, the Association in Limerick, in common with all the citizens, suffered a terrible blow in the foul murders of Seoirse Clancy, Mayor of the City, the ex-Mayor, Michael O'Callaghan, and Volunteer Joseph O'Donoghue. Both Clancy and O'Donoghue were popular players, and O'Callaghan was an ardent patron of the games.

When the British were beaten and the Treaty made, Ireland was to know dark days, the darkest, most disastrous in its history. The G.A.A. did more to minimise bitterness in and after the Civil War than any other organisation. Through their Association on boards and teams, Irishmen who in that conflict had been pitted against one another in the most bitter struggle a people may endure, learned to remember the common name of Irishmen. That is not the least of the achievements in which the G.A.A. played a noble part.



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LABOUR--Foes to British Tyranny

by JAMES KEMMY

*"God what a world, if men in street and mart,
Felt the same kinship of the human heart,
Which makes them, in the face of flame and flood,
Rise to the meaning of true brotherhood."*

These lines, culled from the Limerick Labour news bulletin, "The Bottom Dog," of the 27th April, 1918, set the scene on one of the proudest chapters in the history of the Limerick Labour movement. In 1917 and 1918 the Limerick United Trades and Labour Council held a series of public meetings in protest against the attempt by the British Government to enforce conscription in Ireland. These meetings culminated in a full day's stoppage of work on Tuesday, 23rd April, 1918. On that day the trade unionists of Limerick recorded their opposition to conscription by signing the anti-conscription pledge at their union meetings. Later that day, close on 10,000 workers marched through the streets of Limerick to Bank Place. There a meeting was held, and Labour's attitude to conscription was put explicitly to the huge gathering by John Cronin, President of the Trades and Labour Council; Rev. Fr. Hennessy, O.S.A.; M. G. O'Connor, I.T.G.W.U.; J. Keyes, N.U.R.; M. Daly, I.S.A., and R. P. O'Connor, B.C. This massive display of solidarity by the Council, spearheaded by Railway Workers' Emergency Committee, demonstrated the unyielding resistance of Limerick workers to conscription, and went a long way towards finally defeating this tyrannical measure.

Shortly after this, Robert Byrne of Town Wall Cottage, a well-known trade unionist and a prominent member of the United Trades and Labour Council, was arrested — a revolver having been found at his mother's house. Charged with being in unlawful possession of firearms, he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour.

In jail he quickly became the leader of his fellow political prisoners, whom he led in a campaign to secure political treatment. At first, constitutional means were employed but, finding those unavailing, they resorted to more vigorous methods. Police reinforcements were sent for and the prisoners were overpowered. Byrne and the other political prisoners were then subjected to barbarous treatment — many had their boots removed and were kept bare-footed, handcuffed and strapped in their cells day and night. Others were held in solitary confinement.

On Saturday, the 1st of February, 1919, the feelings of the workers of Limerick were expressed in the following leaflet, circulated by the United Trades and Labour Council:—

"That we, the members of the Limerick Trades and Labour Council, assembled in conference, protest most emphatically against the treatment meted out to the political prisoners at present confined in Limerick County Jail, and view with grave alarm the inactivity of the visiting Justices and Medical Officer. Furthermore, we call on the public

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representatives to do their duty to their fellow-countrymen and take the necessary steps to have the prisoners receive what they are justly entitled to, namely, political treatment; that copies of this resolution be submitted to the Local Press, Visiting Justices and Medical Officer."

This protest was ignored and, eventually, having exhausted every other means of seeking redress, the prisoners went on hunger strike. After some time they became very weak and Byrne, one of the bad cases, was removed to the Hospital at the Limerick Union. He was placed in the general ward, an armed guard sat on either side of his bed day and night, and six other armed policemen occupied vantage positions inside the ward.

This heavy guard did not deter plans being immediately put in train to effect his rescue. His trade union and Volunteer colleagues rehearsed the operation carefully, and at 3 o'clock on the 6th of April, the attempt was made. A concentrated rush was made on the ward, and in the ensuing fierce melee, Byrne, weak and exhausted, bravely struggled to get up, but was shot through the breast and died at eight-thirty that evening in the house to which he had been carried.

So the first shots which presaged the intensive guerilla warfare of the years which followed were exchanged, and the first man to fall in the new fight for freedom was the young Limerick trade unionist, Robert Byrne, then twenty-eight years of age. In dying he became a legend and an inspiration to those who followed after him and who felt the fire of freedom in their hearts.

In the attempted rescue, one of the policemen guarding Byrne was killed, another was seriously wounded, and four others received injuries. On the 9th of April, 1919, the British military authorities in Ireland proclaimed the City of Limerick a special military area, the ostensible reason being the attack on the Union hospital and the death of the policeman. Barriers with military and police guards, tanks and armoured cars were erected on all roads and bridges, and workers going to and from their daily occupations had to face the bayonets of foreign soldiers and the insolence of the police. Permits to enter the city were supposed to be granted by the military, but in reality the people were at the mercy of the police. Those who needed permits had to present themselves at an office, where they were vetted by the police. If the policeman thought that the applicant was a fit and proper person, whose loyalty was beyond doubt, he might recommend him to the military authorities, who then recorded his height, weight, the colour of his hair, eyes and other details. Those particulars were recorded on a card, duly stamped and signed. In some instances, applicants for permits had to go through this ordeal every day, as the permits were only granted from day to day. It is easy to visualise how difficult it would have been for workers to carry on under such intolerable conditions, and strong resentment quickly manifested itself.

In riposte to this gross act of tyranny, the action of the Trades and Labour Council was swift and drastic. A general strike was declared, which led to one of the most momentous struggles fought against foreign domination in this country. The result was an overwhelming victory for Limerick Labour and Nationalist Ireland.

On the 13th of April, the Council, which was composed of the representatives of thirty-five trade unions, held a special general meeting

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for the purposes of considering what action should be taken to meet the hardships imposed on the workers by the military authorities. After deliberation, it was unanimously decided to order a general stoppage of work on the following morning, the 14th April. A Strike Committee was appointed to take charge of the entire city, and sub-Committees were also appointed to take care of propagand, finance, permits, food and vigilance. The Propaganda Committee was one of the most efficient and important of the many Committees set up. It was in charge of a member of the Clerical Workers' Union and a member of the Typographical Society. The strike was only decided upon at 11.30 p.m. on Sunday when, naturally, all printing offices were closed, but despite this inside two hours the whole city was covered with the following proclamation:—

" LIMERICK UNITED TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCIL PROCLAMATION

The workers of Limerick, assembled in Council, hereby declare cessation of all work from five a.m. on Monday, 14th April, 1919, as a protest against the decision of the British Government in compelling them to procure permits in order to earn their daily bread.

By order of the Strike Committee,
Mechanic's Institute.

Any information with reference to the above can be had from the Strike Committee."

So the strike began and every worker obeyed the call loyally. The Propaganda Committee took charge of a sympathetic printing works and, with the permission of the Printers' Association, it was worked day and night.

There was as much sedition printed in one hour in this office during the strike as would normally get the operators ten years' imprisonment. The Propaganda Committee was also responsible for drafting and printing money, printing permits, proclamations, list of food prices and the citizens' news sheet, "The Daily Bulletin." It was the duty of this Committee to prepare a report of the proceedings of the day for the foreign press correspondents who were then in the city — a unit attached to the Propaganda Committee was responsible for the printing and issuing of the famous paper money; specimens of which were later on exhibition in Cork, Dublin, San Francisco and New York. The monetary scheme was devised by which it was possible to alleviate all immediate distress and to purchase food. The money was issued in denominations of 10/-, 5/- and 1/- notes, and to the tune of some thousands of pounds. The money was accepted by shopkeepers on the promise of redemption by the Trades and Labour Council, and it was backed by the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress. Ultimately the notes were redeemed and left a surplus from a fund that had been subscribed by sympathisers in all parts of Ireland.

The Permit Committee was in charge of four City Councillors, men who had a thorough knowledge of the needs of the people. Permits were issued to merchants to save perishable goods and to obtain and



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carry such commodities as coal, butter and flour from the railway station to traders. The necessary labour to maintain plant was provided in the gas and electricity works and in factories. The only vehicles that appeared on the streets were owned by those who had appeared in person before the Permit Committee and obtained permission to ply. Permits were also issued to doctor's chaffeurs and car drivers where necessary. Any car that appeared without displaying the notice "Working under authority of the Strike Committee" was immediately ordered off the streets by the citizen police.

The Food Committee was divided into two sections, one for the reception of food, and the other for distribution. Rev. Fr. Kennedy, of Ennis, did trojan work among the farmers of Clare in getting food for the besieged inhabitants of the city. The work of collecting the much-needed food and other supplies from the neighbouring towns and villages was carried out by the Irish Republican Army. After nightfall, relays of boats with muffed oars were successfully used to run the food through the blockade and to maintain communication with the beleaguered citizens. Numerous stratagems were employed to elude the military cordons, and funeral hearses from the Union hospital and other districts outside the city did not always have a corpse in the coffin. The Food Committee established four food distribution depots, which supplied the ordinary traders at fixed prices. Any trader not carrying out instructions was immediately closed and his supplies stopped. A Vigilance Committee supervised the distribution of foodstuffs and saw that no profiteering or unequal distribution was engaged in, and that the prices as published by the Food Committee were strictly adhered to. Publichouses were not allowed to open. The pickets, which were numerous, paid particular attention to the opening and closing of shops at the prescribed hours for the sale of the necessary food, regulated queues outside provision shops, and controlled traffic. Every effort was made to prevent inconvenience, and equality for all classes was the guiding principle of the Committee. In fact, it was generally admitted that the city was never so well guarded or policed previously. The people, for once, were doing their own work, and doing it well.

A typewritten notice, posted up by the military authorities in the streets, disclaimed responsibility for the inconveniences caused to the people, and placed the blame for such upon "certain irresponsible individuals." To this the Strike Committee replied:—

"Fellow Citizens, as it has come to our notice that the military authorities are endeavouring to spread the falsehood that it is we, rather than they, who are trying to starve you. We hereby disclaim any such intentions, as we have already made every arrangement whereby foodstuffs will be distributed to our fellow citizens. Our fight is not against our own people but against the inhuman and tyrannical imposition of martial law by the British Government which is solely responsible. As peaceful workers, we only desire that we should be left alone to exercise the right of free men in our own country. What is happening in Limerick now, what may happen hereafter, will be laid at the door of the British Government, and in our fight for freedom we disclaim responsibility for the doings of the said Government. We confidently appeal to our fellow citizens of Limerick to aid us in every way in making the strike effective. Should any suffering or inconvenience

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be occasioned, we rely on the men and women of Limerick, inspired as they are by old and proud traditions, to suffer them patiently as our forefathers did before us in the glorious cause of freedom. Limerick has proud and noble traditions to uphold and now in our hour of trial, we confidently rely on Limerick to fight gallantly in this glorious cause in which we shall soon have millions of supporters from all over the world."

And from the Bishop and clergy of the city came the following manifesto:—

1.—"That we consider the Proclamation of the City of Limerick in existing circumstances as quite unwarrantable without investigation of any kind. The citizens of Limerick are being penalised for the lamentable incidents at the Limerick Workhouse.

2.—That the military arrangements of the funeral of the late Mr. Robert Byrne were unnecessarily aggressive and provocative. The presence of armoured cars on the route and the hovering of aeroplanes over the city during the funeral procession were quite an uncalled for display, in the circumstances, of military power, and calculated to fill every right-minded person with feelings of disgust and abhorrence.

3.—That in fixing the boundaries of the military area, the responsible authorities have shown a lamentable want of consideration for the convenience of the citizens at large and especially for the working classes.

Signed: Denis Hallinan, Bishop of Limerick; David Canon O'Driscoll, P.P., V.G., St. Munchin's; David Canon Keane, St. Munchin's College; Michael Murphy, P.P., St. Patrick's; P. A. O'Connor, St. Mary's; B. J. Connelly, Adm., St. John's; Fr. Bonaventure, O.F.M., Guardian, Henry St.; P. Hennessy, Prior, O.S.A.; S. M. Fahy, O.P., Prior; L. B. Potter, S.J., Rector; J. F. Kelly, C.S.S.R., Director of the Men's Confraternity."

At a special meeting of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce, held on the 19th of April, a resolution, couched in the strongest terms, was passed and sent to Mr. Bonar Law, the British statesman, demanding that martial law be removed. Martial law was removed and, on the 26th of April, the Strike Committee ordered all back to work, having demonstrated to the world that the people of Ireland were competent to manage their own affairs. During the whole two weeks of Limerick's protest there was not a single case of looting or disorder of any kind, and not one case came up for hearing at the Petty Sessions.

The women of Limerick, true to their grand traditions, played a noble part in the General Strike, and the spirit of the very poorest was inspiring. Sarsfield would have been proud of such indomitable defenders of his city. From 1691 to 1919 is a long stretch, but the spirit of Limerick was as strong, proud and defiant as when William battered its walls in vain. The city had withstood two memorable sieges in the past, and the third proved as big a stumbling block to British tyranny as any of its predecessors. After the strike the United Trades and Labour Council presented its President, John Cronin, with an illuminated address, marking in concrete form its unbounded appreciation of the sterling qualities of his leadership.

During the whole campaign against the forces of the British Crown in Limerick, the Irish Republican Army received the unqualified support

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and co-operation of the Labour Movement. The workers of the city's factories and other workplaces were always generous in their subscriptions to the Cumann na mBan weekly collections. The headquarters of the Mid-Limerick Brigade was situated in the Irish Transport and General Workers Union Hall in O'Connell Street, and I.R.A. activities were directed from a back attic at the top of the building. The attic was always occupied by Staff Officers, sending and receiving dispatches and communications from all parts of the country, covering the movements and activities of I.R.A. and British forces alike. The officers had many narrow escapes, as the building was frequently raided by British auxiliaries, police and military, but they were always given that split second to disappear. In the front hallway a bell push that connected with the attic was ingeniously concealed, and a member was always on duty beside the bell to warn the I.R.A. officers upstairs of impending danger. A light ladder gave access to the roof through a cunningly disguised trap-door which, in position, looked like an ordinary part of the ceiling. Whenever the warning bell sounded the occupants of the attic immediately went on to the roof top, taking all papers in their briefcases and drawing the ladder up before replacing the false ceiling in position. Union meetings took place by candlelight and were presided over by the Branch President, Henry Meany, who conducted the business with two loaded revolvers placed before him on the table. During this period many raids were also made on the premises of the Mechanic's Institute, Lower Glentworth Street, and union books and other records were confiscated and destroyed.

Limerick may not have had its Citizen Army, but its workers played their part in the nation's fight for freedom.

A MEMORY OF 1916

by GEARÓID Ó hAODHA

I WAS ON the roof of our dwellinghouse, carrying out a minor repair, on that fateful April morning in 1916, when the creamery car arrived in the yard and the driver shouted up to me: "The Volunteers have gone out in rebellion and they have occupied the G.P.O. and many other buildings in the City of Dublin." In the words of Michael Doheny, the patriot poet, "The long, long wished-for hour hath come" — the hour I had been looking forward to in pleasurable anticipation and a feeling of elation and pride seized me. My first reaction was to quit the work on hands and go to the village (Glin), eager to get the latest news and to find out what contacts it might be possible to make with a view to participate in it in some capacity. I was one of those in my neighbourhood who had been in the Volunteer movement since the harvest of 1913 and had gone to our drill exercise on the Friday evening previous. Our drill instructor, Edward Dore (formerly of the Bakery, William Street), on that evening hinted that we might be called on at short notice to answer the summons for duty. He was non-committal before that.



GUINNESS

**- SIN DEOCH AGUS
TUILLEADH**



We learned afterwards that he knew the insurrection was to take place on that Sunday (Easter Sunday) or on the Monday.

When I reached the village I was informed that our drill instructor had gone to Dublin in answer to an urgent call. (Incidentally, he joined the G.P.O. garrison and fought valiantly.) The news filled me with consternation, because we had anticipated getting orders through him to take up duty locally or in any particular place assigned to us. We little visualised the tragedy that was being enacted down Kerry way at the time and which was responsible for the debacle which left us uncommunicated with. It came to our knowledge at a subsequent date that we were to figure in the drama of the ill-fated *Aud* and the making of contact with Roger Casement at Banna Strand. The emissaries from headquarters came to Limerick and there they got instructions to call to our house, which was on the direct route westwards to Tralee. (They called at Kelly's shop in Ballygoughlan. Our house was then and after a central agency for dispatch, carrying and receiving of messages for the I.R.A.) Through some error, the emissaries were deflected south of the direct route and they reached Killorglin instead of Tralee, and met tragedy at Ballykissane pier. Had they called to our place it is probable the whole course of history would be changed. Their lives would certainly be spared and the debacle of Banna Strand and the *Aud* would be averted and Munster would be participants in the Rising had the guns been landed, and it is possible too that the Rising in Dublin would not be suppressed as quickly as it was if the British garrison forces had to be deployed down South. The aftermath of the unrealised ambition to be participators in the rebellion left a potential and patriotic manpower filled with despair and disappointment from Tralee to Limerick, because if things had gone otherwise a gun would be in each man's hand with the consequent influence it would have on the course of events.

Now on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of this historic event, those of us who lived through that epic time will recall with pride and sorrow the disappointment of the time, yet we are glad that it has been given to us to witness the many benefits that have accrued from the efforts and sacrifices of the patriotic men of the time. It is to be regretted that the country does not yet enjoy the full freedom that the men of 1916 fought and died for.

Guidhmid nac fada eile uainn an lá go mbeidh an tír saor ar fad
o Dhoire go Corcaigh.



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Michael Meaney (Accordionist)

Charles Sciascia at the Organ

Recollections of Easter Week

by SÉAMUS Ó GOIBÍN

THE PREPARATIONS FOR the Rising reached a high intensity during the Holy Week of 1916. For a couple of months before we had been conditioned to the prospect of an early Rising. Addresses by Pearse and other leaders in the Fianna Hall left no room for doubt. Although neither an officer nor a member of the I.R.B., I was made aware on the Wednesday of the intention to rise in the following Sunday. Liam O'Sullivan, who stayed at the time at my house, a prominent Gaelic Leaguer, and although a cripple, an active Volunteer, was my informant. He was in the confidence of Seoirse Clancy, Vice-Commandant of the Battalion, who was Mayor of the City in 1921, when he was murdered by the British Auxiliaries.

My work as a commercial traveller afforded me an unique opportunity to get to know Volunteers and shopkeepers who were in sympathy with the cause. On the Wednesday of Holy Week I travelled to Listowel on my usual journey. In the carriage was a priest, and Sean Fitzgibbon who was on his way to Tralee after having been in Limerick, to superintend to loading of arms from a German ship. I was unknown to Fitzgibbon and I made no sign that I was aware of his identity. The three of us chatted casually. I left the train at Listowel and that was the first and the last I saw of Sean Fitzgibbon. In Listowel I spoke to two traders whom I knew were in touch with the Volunteers and went as far as I was able, without betraying confidence, in letting them know that a Rising was imminent. One of them, Jack McKenna, having assured himself of my bona fides, produced several revolvers of various calibres from shelves and hiding places and presented them to me. I was a walking arsenal on my return to Limerick that night.

The story of the events of Holy Thursday night when Commandant Colivet administered an oath of secrecy to the officers and revealed his plans, has often been told. I well remember the unofficial conclave of officers which took place after the parade and the reactions of those who had heard them now for the first time. I remember Lieut. Phons. O'Halloran, who later became a historian of the period, confiding that he would not mind any warlike operation, except a bayonet charge. Those of us who shared his dislike for a bayonet charge kept discreet silence.

In truth we were ill-equipped for military operations. We had about 140 men armed with rifles and I doubt if any more than 100 of these could have sustained a military operation. High in courage and determination as they may have been, many lacked the youth and the physique to stand a campaign and had but a minimal knowledge of the use of the Lee Enfield and the Martini rifles they carried.

It must be remembered that, in order to conserve our ammunition supplies, our total firing practice amounted to three rounds for each man. This ammunition was removed on the same night by Liam O'Sullivan from the cache in Pennywell. Liam Forde slept at my house and we talked far into the night speculating on the future. In reaction to the

tension of the preceding three hours we were able to picture, with some hilarity, the shock with which some of our comrades would react to orders to destroy the railway installations at Killonan at 7 o'clock on Easter Sunday evening.

On Good Friday I attended a service at one of the city churches at which a preacher impressed on us the duty of obeying the laws imposed by authority. With wry amusement, I speculated as to his feelings when the storm would break for him.

On Easter Saturday the bubble burst. We read to our dismay a report in the CORK EXAMINER of the blowing up of the German ship, the *Aud*, of the landing of three men from a boat in Kerry and the arrest of one of these, of the loss of the car at Killorglin, of the arrest of Stack, the Kerry Commandant. Our world had fallen in around us.

Commandant Colivet sent Paddy Whelan to Tralee to learn what he could of the position there. Hearing nothing from Dublin, he decided to dispatch me there with what information we had. He instructed me to ask for orders in the light of the existing situation. If the fight was on I was to send a telegram saying "the books have arrived." If the operations were off the wire was to read "the books have not arrived." To outwit the 'G' men who were stationed at the entrance to the passenger platform at the railway station, I joined the afternoon train through the goodsyard. On arrival in Dublin, without incident, I made straight for Gleeson's drapery shop in O'Connell Street, knowing that the proprietor Paddy Gleeson, a native of Nenagh, was a Volunteer and a friend of many of the important men in the movement. He was behind his counter and I asked him to help me to get in touch with Eoin McNeill, adding melodramatically in order to impress him with the desperate urgency of my mission that it was a matter of life and death. He replied that from what he was after hearing it looked as if it would be a matter of life or death for all of us very shortly, but that he knew nothing of McNeill's whereabouts. At that moment, Finan Lynch, now a Circuit Court Judge, entered the shop. Gleeson introduced me to him, but he also was unable to help me to locate McNeill. Seeing my urgency he invited me to accompany him, and we walked together to a building which I discovered was the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League. Many men were there, including Pierce Beasley and Gearoid O'Sullivan, who were chatting and cracking jokes in Irish. There was no sign of tension. After considerable delay I was helped to contact, not McNeill, but Sean McDermott, at the house where he was staying. The place was a hive of activity. Many men were present and others were constantly arriving. Stands of rifles were arranged along the walls. It seemed to me as if everyone in Dublin must know that an insurrection was about to take place on the morrow. Cumann na mBan girls were serving tea in an atmosphere of cheerfulness and good-humoured pleasantries with those present. The scene resembled more the preparation for a picnic rather than that of preparation for the grim business of war. I delivered my message and was informed confidently by McDermott that the lost German ship did not matter; that it was only one of several such expeditions and that the Rising would certainly take place. He also strongly recommended that Limerick officers should resist arrest, should such be attempted, as such resistance would strengthen the morale of Volunteers elsewhere.

The code telegram "the books have arrived," meaning "the Rising is on," was accordingly dispatched to Colivet by me. I now asked McDermott that as I could not now hope to reach Limerick in time for the insurrection that I should be assigned to a Dublin unit. McDermott replied that my place was in Limerick and that a lorry was about to leave for that city. He turned to one of the men seated at the table and asked him: "Paddy, what are you to do to any R.I.C. man who attempts to stop the lorry?" "Shoot him," said Paddy promptly, a reply which was enthusiastically received by McDermott. (It should be noted here that instructions had been issued by Pearse that action was to be avoided until 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday.) A Volunteer conveyed me to the spot from which the lorry was to start. After a very long delay, during which I was the object of hostile scrutiny by a short, burly man who looked like a tradesman who was lurking in the vicinity, two lorries drew up at the kerb. "At last," said I audibly and fervently, at which his demeanour changed. He was a Volunteer, assigned to accompany the lorries to Limerick, had no reason to expect me and mistook me for a 'G' man. Had Paddy been in his place instead of in the lorry things might have gone badly with me. He, as driver, Paddy and I set out. The vehicles moved without interference slowly through the night, and it was late morning when we arrived in Limerick.

I made a hurried call to my house to be met by a most despondent Liam O'Sullivan. He told me that the German arms lay at the bottom of the sea; that the position was hopeless and that nothing now remained for us but go out and be slaughtered. He was preparing to transport food and ammunition to Killonan. Feeling very despondent, I made my way to the Fianna Hall and reported to Colivet, who heard me out and then told me that O'Rahilly had passed us on the road from Dublin with a dispatch from McNeill which read: "Volunteers completely deceived. All orders for tomorrow (Sunday) are entirely cancelled." Colivet also told me that he had demobilised all outside units in his Brigade area but he would proceed with his advertised parade to Killonan in order to preserve the appearance of normality. He also told me of Casement's arrest.

After having some breakfast I again went on parade, at which only about 140 men were present. As we headed for Killonan through the city, it seemed to me that the tension in our ranks had spread to the spectators. As we passed near to Shaw's Bacon Factory in Mulgrave Street, a well-known citizen, "Big" Jim Ryan, Secretary, Limerick Board, G.A.A., who was not a Volunteer, ran out from the footpath to ask me if I could supply him with any kind of weapon and he would join me. I was unable to accommodate him. On reaching Killonan, Colivet granted leave generously with the result that only about 80 men availed themselves of the accommodation provided by Batt Laffin's friendly barn and lofts. One of those who applied for leave was Jim Dalton, who had a houseful of children. I was present at the conversation. Colivet granted leave but told him that he wanted him back without fail on the morrow. "Why," asked Dalton, "are you expecting trouble?" "I am," said Colivet. Dalton was back on parade the following day. As I had no sleep for forty-eight hours I slept like a log and woke refreshed on the Monday to enjoy a breakfast served, or should I say "dished out," by Liam O'Sullivan. The day passed quietly until about

2.30 p.m. Forde who had reported at midnight the night before told me of his Dublin experiences and I heard from Whelan the details of his Tralee journey. (The experiences of both are to be found in the current volume of the CAPUCIAN ANNUAL.)

At about 2.30 p.m. the Battalion officers were summoned and Colivet read the dispatch which had been handed to him a short time before by Miss Daly. It read: "The Dublin Brigade goes into action at noon today (Monday). Carry out your orders. (Signed) P. H. Pearse." Colivet then briefly gave some reasons why the dispatch could not be acted upon, and announced his decision to return to the city. As he turned to leave he observed that some of us were inclined to discuss the situation and he said sharply that he wanted no discussion on his decision. More than thirty years later I recalled this incident to him and not alone did he not recall it, but he denied it ever took place, which illustrates how memories become blurred and incidents forgotten with the passage of time.

And so we returned to the city under dripping skies, which seemed to mourn with us the destruction of our hopes. We were joined occasionally by men on leave and by others who had not paraded on the day before but who hurried to join their comrades on hearing that fighting had broken out in Dublin. The faithful Fr. Hennessy drove in a sidecar to meet us, and to impart spiritual consolation. Wet to the skin, we reached an apparently-deserted city. The Battalion band struck up a march when passing through O'Connell Street, the dismiss was given at the Fianna Hall without further incident, and each man carried his equipment home with him.

The utter misery of the men during the following week, as their hopes were destroyed in the flames of the Dublin insurrection, can scarcely be imagined. Many were anxious for an uprising, even then, to aid the Volunteers fighting in Dublin; many were severely critical of the action of the leaders in starting a fight which could hold no prospect of military success. Officers from other areas, including Tomas McCurtain of Cork and Eamon O'Dwyer of Tipperary, came to take council with the local leaders. All agreed there was nothing to be done. A meeting of the Battalion Council, the Board of Management, and most of the officers who had knowledge of previous events, to which I was not summoned, was held on the Tuesday night, at which it was decided by a majority of ten to six not to rise. During the week the Mayor, Councillor Sir James Quinn, conveyed a demand from Colonel Sir Anthony Weldon, in command of British forces, for a surrender of arms. The demand was rejected. The citizens, most of whom were openly hostile, became alarmed at the prospect of bloodshed in the city and intense pressure was exerted by the Mayor, by the Bishop, Dr. O'Dwyer, by the clergy and others, to have the arms surrendered.

Tribute is due to Weldon for his tact and patience during this time. A less humane man, confident of his overwhelming strength, might have precipitated bloodshed by raiding for the arms, as the Volunteers had orders to resist, and many desperate men would undoubtedly have done so. An Irishman and a Home Ruler, he stated later that there was danger of his supercession at this time. Colivet held out until the Friday following Easter Week, during which time the surrender in Dublin, Cork and other places had taken place. It then became evident to Colivet that Weldon

would raid for arms, and he held a final meeting which decided to surrender the arms, not to the British military, but to the Mayor. This decision was taken, not without opposition, but no counter-proposal was put to the meeting, and no vote was taken. When the result was conveyed to the Mayor, he suggested that the Battalion should march to the surrender under a white flag, or that a white flag should be attached to each rifle; a suggestion which was peremptorily rejected.

And so, on the 5th May, 1916, the surrender took place. A dark evening; R.I.C. men posted singly in the street and adjacent to the Town Hall; curiously silent knots of onlookers stood at corners. British military patrols were posted outside and inside the building. The men arrived singly or in small groups. They had been instructed to render the arms useless, and this order was effectively carried out. The rifle bolts were missing in most cases; corrosive acid had been poured down the barrels; some of the barrels were bent in half hoops; some were so thoroughly destroyed that they had to be surrendered in haversacks. Each man handed his rifle to Colivet, who then laid it before the Mayor. He in turn handed it to the officer in charge of the British military. A tense situation developed at one stage. The Mayor left the Council Chamber temporarily and a British officer took his place. Colivet at once stopped the proceedings and declined to hand over any more arms. The tension was relieved by the return of the Mayor, and the proceedings continued. The manliness of the Volunteers, the dignity of Colivet, the courtesy of Weldon, shall ever remain in my memory.

A few days later most of the Battalion officers were arrested, but were released after 11 or 12 days.

So ends one man's story of Easter Week in Limerick, recorded as a tribute to the courage and loyalty of the Limerick Battalion. They were ready and willing to do their part, and if they did not go into action, the fault was not theirs.



TÁIMÍD FIÓR-BHUOIC DO GACH ÉINNE A CABHRUIG
LINN I FOILLSIÚ AN LEABHAR SEO:—

A thug Sintúis duinn:

Do Sean-Óglaig

Cumann Iúth-cleas Gael (Coisde na Cathrach)

Comhairle na gCeárdcumann

Sinn Féin

Cumann na mBan

Óglaig na hÉireann

Na scríobnóirí a thug altanna duinn.

Na luct-gnótha a thug fógraí.

Don "Kerryman" Teo, agus Sairséal agus Dill a thug
chead duinn altanna a usáid.

Don "Treóraí" a cló-bhualad an leabhar

— Rath Dé ortha go léir —

THE SEVEN WHO SIGNED FOR DEATH

1.—THOMAS J. CLARKE was a Fenian who never for a moment bent the knee to Ireland's enemy, or despaired of her ultimate victory. He was shot at dawn on 3rd May, 1916.

2.—P. H. PEARSE. Born in Dublin in 1880. At an early age the call of Éire came for him and he set himself to learn the language of his motherland. In Easter Week his pupils in St. Enda's, Rathfarnham, insisted on following him into the fight. He was Commandant General of the Irish Republican Army and first President of the Republic. "It is idle to try to praise Pádraig Pearse. His greatness is unknown to us yet. The years will praise him and show to all men the nobility of his life and the magnificence of his deed." He faced the British firing squad on 3rd May, 1916.

3.—THOMAS McDONAGH. Born in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary. A man of great intellectual gifts, poet, historian, teacher, and a comrade in whose company everyone felt happy and at ease. He worked with Pearse in Scoil Eanna, Rathfarnham, and devoted every spare moment to the task of preparing the Volunteers for the defence of their country. He was in command at Jacob's factory and it was only after long persuasion he was induced to surrender, his belief being that it should be a fight to the finish. He was executed on 3rd May, 1916.

4.—JOSEPH MARY PLUNKETT. The young mastic and patriot, who came from a sick bed into the heart of the fight, was one of the most remarkable men in the Irish Volunteer movement. He went through the fight to the very end with a calmness and resolve that only one who loved greatly and believed firmly could feel. To the priest who attended him in his last moments, he said: "I am very happy, Father. I am dying for the glory of God and the honour of Ireland." He was executed at Kilmainham on 4th May, 1916.

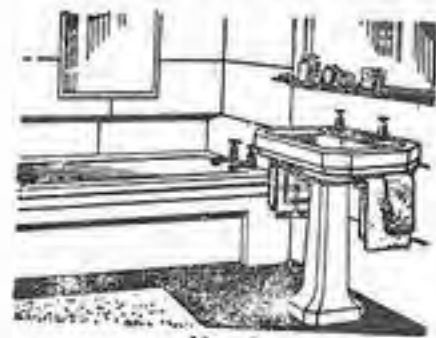
5.—EAMON CEANNT. Born in Galway in 1882. Educated in Dublin, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the language fight and became a well-known figure at all Gaelic League gatherings. Never did a man more intensely sincere stand in the bearna baogail of Ireland's hopes and fears. His memory shall be an inspiration to true patriots for all time. Always calm, cool and self-possessed, so was he when he stood before the firing squad on 8th May, 1916.

6.—JAMES CONNOLLY. Born in Co. Monaghan in 1876. Led the Citizen Army into the Rising of Easter Week. The greatest leader of Labour Ireland has ever known and was intensely National in thought and outlook. He was still suffering from the wound received in action when he was carried out and shot on 12th May, 1916.

7.—SEAN McDERMOTT. Born in Co. Leitrim. From his earliest years all his actions were directed towards the attainment of Ireland's freedom. "The cause for which I die has been rebaptised during the past week in the blood of as good men as ever trod God's earth and should not I feel justly proud to be numbered amongst them?" he wrote on the eve of his execution, which took place on 12th May, 1916.

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THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE,
SEAN Mac DIARMADA, THOMAS MacDONAGH,
P. H. PEARSE, EAMONN CEANNT,
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