

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STARE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1605

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1605.

Witness

Rev. Fr. Eugene Nevin, C.P.,
Retreat of St. Paul of the Cross,
Mount Argus,
Harold's Cross,
Dublin.
Identity.

Member of Passionist Fathers.

Subject.

National activities 1914-17,
including Spiritual Aid rendered
to Irish Volunteer garrison,
Marrowbone Lane, Easter Week,
1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No ... S. 279.

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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
CURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1,605

STATEMENT BY REV. FATHER EUGENE NEVIN, C.P.,

Retreat of St. Paul of The Cross,
Mount Argus,
Harolds Cross,
DUBLIN.

"If you value the blessings that shine at our hearth,
The wife's smiling welcome and the infant's sweet mirth;
While they charm us at eve, let us think upon those
Who have bought with their blood our domestic repose."

When early in August 1914 England declared war on Germany many thought, not a few hoped, that at long last a favourable opportunity had arrived when we could demand not only an easing, but possibly an ending of the long night of our seven centuries' thraldom. England at war with a first class European power was different to the England known to us for generations as making war on primitive tribes and peoples the world over. Now she is pitted against an equal, and "when rogues fall out, honest men come by their own".

A year or so before, a Home Rule bill of sorts was promised, and passing successively through both Houses of Parliament bid fair to be implemented or perhaps better say "inflicted" for good or ill on the country in the course of some months.

But Ulster blocked the way. The Orangemen of the North, under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson, determined to resist to death, so they said, any attempt to force home government on them. The Ulster Volunteers were organised and armed, a very aggressive and provocative body, as the Catholics of the North had every reason to know. I lived in the North then, first in Enniskillen, afterwards in Belfast, and could see the danger menacing Catholics especially in isolated districts. All this and much of what follows is common property and may be found in any history treating of the period; may indeed be recalled to memory by some.

As a measure of self defence, as well as an answer to the truculent attitude of the North, a body of National Volunteers sprang up immediately, we might say spontaneously, and instinctively, all over the country, North, South, East and West. If the North or Ulster could boast of its thousands, its opposite number could reckon up its tens of thousands as resolute to assert their rights and secure the promised concessions, meagre and halting though they were.

The honest and straightforward part of the government in the situation confronting it would be, either to enforce its enactments on the revolters, or treat the contending parties equally, and see to it that fair play and justice would be meted out to both sides alike. But with the background of England's centuries of misrule, that was too much to expect. In reality, Sir Edward Carson and those associated with him in the revolt were guilty of a crime so serious as to approach high treason to the State: yet, instead of being lodged in prison, he could with his Volunteers hold up the port of Larne and all roads leading to it, without molestation, while a cargo of arms was being discharged and distributed to all parts of the North. That was 24th April, 1914. Towards the end of the following July, the National Volunteers effected a similar disembarkment at Howth, and all the forces, Military and Police, were straightway mobilised and turned out to intercept and disarm them.

The Volunteers, as might be expected, resisted disarmament with the result that there were encounters and skirmishes on all the roads leading from Howth to Dublin and elsewhere, culminating in the tragedy at Bachelor's Walk when the military, firing on the people, killed three and wounded several. Strong indignation was felt and expressed on all sides condemning the wanton slaughter, and the unfair discrimination shown by a government professing liberal

principles and friendliness to Nationalist Ireland, but acting contrary to the most elementary forms of justice and fair dealing.

Who was to be trusted after such an act of perfidy; where was faith to be reposed? The weeks following were dark and troubled, forebodings and questionings as to what next - and the next thing, was the cataclysm of the long threatened World War I, in which Empires and Kingdoms disappeared, boundaries centuries old were altered and are still undergoing the process of delimitations.

The National Volunteers were by now a considerable body of resolute young men drilling openly in all parts of the country, and taught by military instructors in the use of whatever arms they managed to possess. They were a force to be reckoned with in any contingency if kept united, which, unfortunately, was not to be.

From its inception the Irish Parliamentary Party gave every assistance to the Movement expecting that in due course they would have its direction and control. But when it grew to outsize proportions, with the leaders in country and city holding and expressing views not in accordance with the Party's policy, a different outlook had to be envisaged. There was the danger that with the advanced notions of some, combined with Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin or non-co-operation, attention and interest would be transferred from Westminster to the Volunteers' parade grounds: and that's what was happening.

For some time, years in fact, many people had been thinking and saying that parliamentary agitation had failed: was barren of results when compared with world advances in every department; and that other methods had better be tried.

However, the Party had many good things to their credit, and liberal allowance should be made for any shortcomings rightly or wrongly accounted to them.

Whatever limited powers or influence they seemed to possess, were offset and almost nullified by the fact that they had to be exercised in a hostile atmosphere charged to the point of explosion with a militant imperialism.

"The Cinderella of the Nations" had to be grateful if, by reason of its proximity to England, it got anything like a prominent consideration when other subject countries and peoples were under discussion. In reality its representatives were beggars appealing for charity to the great, and it was galling, even to the least sensitive, that the House, while surveying mankind from China to Peru; refused to give attention to matters of supreme importance to people but a few hours distance from London. On such an occasion when the subject under discussion had not a particle of interest, academic or otherwise, to the people of Ireland, Mr. Tim Healy, whose powers of ridicule and sarcasm were well known, got up to speak. Congratulating the Government on their masterly conduct of the debate; and continuing in his best style of apparent seriousness he was convinced, he said, that when report of the proceedings of that night reached his home country it would bring balm to Ballyhooley and calm to Ballydehob. Ingeniously and wittily put, it hit off the situation admirably.

Many feared there was danger that the glamour of London, with the endless round of pageantries for their special delectation, might have the effect of enervating the one time vigorous patriotism of our Irish representatives. Listening day after day to the

discussion of world wide affairs in which they could not help taking an interest, friendly intercourse for long with sympathetic English Members of Parliament might result in their beginning to think imperially with them, to the neglect of the commission they received when sent over from Ireland. And later developments went far to show those fears were not without foundation.

Discontent was widespread throughout the country and the policy of Sinn Féin or abstension from Westminster advocated by leading men, lay and clerical, was gaining adherents every day. But the Party still held its ground, had the largest following, jealous of its honour and resentful of anything that might lower the prestige of those in whom they had so long reposed their high hopes. So when at the inaugural meeting of the National Volunteers in the City Hall, Cork, November 1913, Professor John McNeill made a remark deemed derogatory by the audience, to the Members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, there was a serious disturbance, a scuffle; the platform was rushed, several people being badly injured among them some of the organisers of the meeting. And the incident but reflected the feelings of the country in general for some time afterwards.

"Alas! and well, may Erin weep."

That the Irish Leader could from his place in the House of Commons offer the services of the National Volunteers to the British War Office in its fight against Germany is surely the strongest condemnation of that age: its degeneracy: an obvious manifestation that the Soul of Ireland stood badly in need of redemption. "England's difficulty" he said was "Ireland's opportunity" to assist her!

And suiting the action to the word he, with some of his associates, stumped the country in the role of recruiting Sergeants alluring thousands of young men to their untimely graves in the far off fields of Flanders. I was stationed in Belfast at the time where pro-British and anti-German feeling ruled strongly owing to the influence of the Irish Party. The Catholics of Belfast have been proverbially all along staunchest to Irish ideals, Irish nationality and tradition as they have been to their Faith in face of unrelenting persecution; and it was the warmth of their Catholic Faith that left them open to deception by lying stories about German atrocities on the Priests and Nuns of Belgium. It was painful, almost to explosive exasperation, to see the Volunteers marching behind their bands to the tune not of Irish airs but to the British battle songs, banal and meaningless: to see them turn into the barracks, mingle their numbers, their bands and their colours with the military and in their massed strength afterwards parade together round the barrack square to the mixed grill of 'O'Donnell Abu' and 'Rule Britannia'.

And so the fooling went ahead apace but, as someone has said, you cannot fool all the people all the time, the day of reckoning was sure to come in due course. To his eternal honour and that of his historic name Dr. O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe; later Cardinal, though hitherto a supporter of the Party, wrote to the public press a letter strongly protesting that England's war with Germany was no concern of ours. Pity the general body of the Clergy didn't take the cue from His Lordship instead of becoming, as many of them did, active propagandists in favour of England.

Meantime, as might well be expected, there was disaffection and indignation amongst a considerable body of the Volunteers that anyone purporting to speak with authority should thus abuse their

name. "If" they said, "there is fighting to be done, well, we have no quarrel with Germany but we have centuries old grievance against England who has robbed us of our liberty. Our fight will be for the rights that have been filched from us and until restoration is made there will be no peace in Ireland".

There was a break-away, a new organising executive of a distinctive body, and a new name "The Irish Volunteers" under which title the battle of 1916 was fought. Prominent in this Movement, and to whom the members in general looked for leadership and guidance, were Professor John McNeill of the National University, Patrick H. Pearse, Head Master of St. Enda's College, and Sir Roger Casement. It is a misnomer to speak of Sinn Féin Volunteers as many have done and some still continue to do. There were none. Arthur Griffith, founder of Sinn Féin, joined the Volunteers early as an ordinary member and as such remained throughout. Though giving allegiance to the latest development his views were along constitutional lines with occasional strainings or pressure within the law. He was a great man for whom I had strong affection and had many talks with him in his "Nationality" office, No. 6, Harcourt Street.

There were other organisations subsidiary to and auxiliary to the Irish Volunteers that played an important part in the memorable events that followed: the Citizens Army under the leadership of James Connolly, Fianna Eireann or Boy Scouts in whose training and instruction Countess Constance Markievicz took a lively interest: and the Cumann na mBan or Ladies' Association.

The National Volunteers increased and multiplied rapidly boosted as they were by the Irish Parliamentary Party, their adherents in the country, lay and clerical, and the monied class generally

anxious to retain in perpetuity what they held by favour of the existing system. They were kindly regarded by the Government, their meeting places becoming fruitful centres of recruiting for the English Army: every inducement being held out to them to join up: quick promotion, commissions lavishly bestowed, with titles in the near future for those foolishly so ambitioned.

The progress of the Irish Volunteers though slow was steady; but what they lacked in numbers was compensated by enthusiasm in the Sacred cause for which they were prepared to give their lives. They were hampered in many ways. Propaganda on behalf of "The National" and against them was so strong on all sides that it was only by dint of strenuous effort on the part of the promoters that any headway could be made. The Press, with rare exceptions, were against them. And as an instance of the disheartening situation confronting them, I give the published account of what happened in Cork at that time. - "The split which resulted in 1914 from the Parliamentary Party's offer of the Volunteers for service under the British War Office had disastrous effects in Cork as elsewhere. Of the 2,000 men who were present in the Cornmarket when the issue was put for their decision, fewer than fifty elected to follow MacCurtain and MacSwiney. It was a heavy defeat, but they were not discouraged."

They might well have been, dear good men, and have decided that an age become so degenerate was unworthy of further consideration. and they would have expressed the feelings of many a disgusted one then: but these good devoted young men were not working for an age or generation, but for all time.

The same thing happened in Dublin as in Cork. I have been told by one who was present; and was, I fear, repeated in many places all over the country.

At that time I was stationed in Belfast about which I have already written, and in August, 1915, came to live in Dublin when the first year of the war had run its course. Casualties from the Front were arriving and were being hailed as heroes. Along with them came, not a casualty but a super hero named O'Leary who, because he had killed so many Germans, received the Victoria Cross and a Lieutenancy in the Army, though he could scarcely write his name. He was lionized and feted wherever he went, or was led, his autograph sought and spuriously supplied by those in possession of him for recruiting purposes. To have seen and spoken to him was to have something to write home about, but to have shaken his blood-stained hand, was to have attained a never to be forgotten distinction. Ugh! Come away. How low a people, even some of our Irish people, when wrongly led, can descend!

What were my feelings then? They were strong and difficult to control, though I attempted to describe them on an occasion in the winter of 1916. It was this - A concert or rather Patrick Pearse's "Isagan" was being staged at The Mansion House by the boys of St. Enda's, to which I was invited. There was a large and enthusiastic audience present and, during an interval, one of the promoters asked me to go on the platform and say a few words. I did. And in course of my remarks I contrasted the resurgent Ireland we then had, result of the sacrifices made in Easter Week, with the decadent Anglo-Ireland of 1914-'15, the Ireland forgetting its glorious, storied and Catholic past, waving Union Jacks and singing "God save the King". It was an odious situation that confronted one and many, in the disgust they felt, lost hope in the future of their country, I for one amongst them; so much so that in purchasing I preferred foreign to Irish manufacture. At this someone in the audience cried 'Shame!' It was no shame I answered back, but

consistent with my feelings, for I concluded that an age become so degenerate, forgetful of its historic past, was undeserving of support: didn't deserve to live even. There was applause then, and I finished by saying "But the soul of an almost lost Ireland was redeemed in Easter Week the fruits of which we and all future generations of Irishmen shall continue to enjoy."

It may possibly appear from what I am writing that I am a hater of England. I am nothing of the kind. It would be unchristian to hate anyone, or any country; and I have had all along and still have many staunch English friends. Having lived and worked several years in widely separated parts of the country I came to know them intimately and appreciate the many sterling qualities they, as a people, possess, and felt I could live all my life happily amongst them. They used to confess openly they would much prefer Irish priests to their own English, and their sorrow at the departure of Irish priests called home had all the marks of being a genuine sorrow.

There were few families among the working class in Dublin at that time that were not in some way connected with the English Army, having a son, a father or brother in it. The same might be said of the large towns where soldiers' barracks were located, the result being that there was a strong pro-English and anti-German feeling throughout the country. In face of this and an active propaganda the double task or duty of trying to prevent young men entering the Army and inducing them to join the Irish Volunteers was no easy matter. Pressure on behalf of the Army was brought to bear from unsuitable, unbecoming quarters; and by persons to whom, if they reflected, it should appear incongruous and unseemly, dedicated, as they were, to directly opposite purposes. An instance of this I

encountered in the early months of my return to Dublin. I was on a sick call. The doctor, who had been there for some time, had just finished his visit but lingered before departing to say to the young men, sons of his patient, how advantageous it would be for them now to join up, quick promotion and security of position after the war: and, having thus delivered himself to the boys, turning his attention to myself he said Catholic Chaplains were badly needed and would be a great help to the Army in many ways: I don't know whether he was Catholic or Protestant, or attached to the Army. His greatcoat, it being winter, could easily have hidden his khaki tunic. But with what patience I could command I replied "You degrade your profession as doctor by becoming an English recruiting sergeant, and whatever skill you possess in the healing art, you have no sense of propriety or even decency in speaking and acting as you have done here this evening: go and exercise your political stunt where you may be headed. Those young men will fight not for, but against England, which they did, one of them becoming prominent.

On the declaration of the Irish Leader in the House of Commons, a pro-British feeling like a huge wave of the sea swept over the whole country leaving but few dry places as foothold for those fortunate to escape an inundation that threatened to engulf even the Church itself. Her mission, like that of Her Divine Founder, is one of peace, justice and mercy; to oppose the oppressor's wrong to uphold the rights of those unjustly treated and in fulfilment of the Sacred trust confided to Her, she has, to her credit, centuries of loyalty.

If by force of misrepresentation individual members of her clergy, good and true men all, in days of crises and strain, have been led into a false position, it cannot be imputed to her as a breach of fidelity; and is but an error of judgment on the part of

her Clergy. Our Lord gave timely warning against false prophets who were to arise whose showing would be so great "as to deceive (if possible) even the elect". That's what happened now. It was deplorable, disconcerting: and bewildering to the young men and the country in general to see their Reverend, their Very Reverend and Right Reverend fathers in God hobnobbing with British recruiting agents. Aye! on the platform with M.P.s, and a Cabinet Minister who openly declared "We make no bones about it we have come over to get your young men for our Army". That was the situation confronting us in 1915: and while highly poised clergymen in the Secular order: the higher Superiors among the Regulars, backed by a mercenary press were orating up and down the country on behalf of England, for an ordinary cleric to hold and maintain a contrary opinion and course, was little short of a misdemeanour. That in the Captain's but a choleric word, which in the soldier is flat blasphemy".

The National Volunteers had almost, from their inception, their own Journal; a weekly publication advocating the policy of the Parliamentary Party, but sometime after the breakaway or split a strong body of Volunteers went and took possession of the whole concern, substituting "Irish" for "National" and reversing its advocacy under the direction and editorship of Professor John MacNeill. About the same time smaller weeklies appeared, with similar outlook as "The Volunteer", "Honesty", "The Spark", "Scissors and Paste" etc., dubbed by their enemies "The Mosquito Press". They did certainly sting, and so much did their sting smart that special détectives eagerly, but vainly, sought for their editors and the whereabouts of their issue, though both were known to multitudes. It was possible now to make one's views publicly known though the Censor was hot on the trail of anti-recruiting which he could not suppress

in private. An idea of the submerged state of Dublin and the country generally may be gathered from the fact that of my many priestly intimates one only, and he over 80, Father Dominic O'Neill, a fellow Passionist, shared my views. His memory I venerate as the most cultured, courtly mannered and saintly priest I have ever known, and I am confident of his prayers now where prayer is of most avail. We used to exchange papers, and my happiest moments were when we met, as we often did, to review our mutual hopes.

I recall with pleasurable feeling an incident during the Boer War. Skirmishes had taken place, indecisive battles fought always to the discomfiture of the English, but now for weeks men and material were being brought together under the command of General Buller and placed along the banks of the Tugela with Spion Kop in the background, determined to crush with one mighty blow all Boer resistance. The day for the battle had arrived; we knew it was on, but, as there was no wireless then to tell of its progress, we had to wait in trembling hope for the following morning's paper. Father Dominic was the first to get it, and I can see him now as he came with it into the Community room, his hands twitching with the nervous feeling of apprehension that possessed him, almost afraid to open it for the dread news of disaster it might reveal. When he did open it and there appeared across its front page the big caption - "Buller beaten! Eleven guns captured" - throwing down the open paper on the table and lifting his hands and eyes to Heaven, he exclaimed "Thank God I have lived to see the day". That was Father Dominic in 1900, the same indomitable spirit in 1915.

My political leanings were well known. I made no secret of them, quite the contrary, though they were unpopular and regarded by the multitude as singular and extreme. When, therefore, on a Saturday afternoon I saw myself listed for the 10 o'clock Mass next

morning, I looked upon it in the light of challenge, for this reason - The 4th Battalion, Irish Volunteers, located in the neighbourhood, had arranged for a military parade at that Mass, and it is usual, when any function beyond the ordinary takes place at a Mass, to say a few words appropriate to the occasion. Though pleased at the favour conferred I was very much puzzled what to do because, as far as I knew, no priest in Dublin at any rate had up to that time identified himself with the Irish Volunteers spoken approvingly of them or attended their meetings. This I thought a pity knowing them to be a straightforward, honest body of young men with proper conceptions of their duty to their native land, deserving of every encouragement. Thus perplexed I reasoned, if high ecclesiastics are haranguing through the country in favour of the English Army have we of the humbler sort no right to hold and express opinions even though at variance with those of our Superiors?

If St. Paul, as he tells us in his Epistle to the Galatians, could say "I withstood Cephas to the face because he was to blame", surely lesser lights, very much lesser, than Cephas or St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles as he was, might unconsciously or otherwise lay themselves open to blame, disapproval or contradiction. Fortified by this and other reflections, I finally decided to speak out freely on the morrow, regretting I should be the first while hoping that nothing but happy results would follow.

Punctually at 9.45 a.m. two fully equipped Volunteers came into the Sacristy and, having laid aside their arms and knapsacks, prepared to serve the Mass; the Battalion, meantime, under Commandants Eamon Kent and Cathal Brugha, occupying the front seats.

When at the customary time I had read the weekly notices, standing behind the Altar rails, I closed the book and addressed them. I learned afterwards that many of them were very apprehensive of what they were going to get, denunciation or what? But I soon set them at ease, and as they told me afterwards they felt walking on air all that day it being the first church approval they had received; and is referred to as such by L. Le Roux in his life of Tom Clarke, page 183.

The address was later on published in 'The Irish Volunteer' and can be seen in the National Library, Kildare Street. As it embodies my views at the time, I went there, copied it, and now give it in full. The issue was Saturday 25 March, 1916.

"FATHER NEVIN AND THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

Preaching at Mount Argus, Dublin, on Sunday week when a large number of Irish Volunteers were present Father Eugene Nevin of the Passionist Order spoke as follows - I cannot refrain from expressing the feeling of pleasure I experience on seeing such a fine body of young men here this morning all members of the Irish Volunteers Clarum et nomen venerabile. Yes, to the mind of every true Irishman the name has honoured and glorious associations, and I am confident from what I have heard and from what I see before me now that if the necessity or the occasion arises the honoured principles and associations of the men of 1782 will be fully and nobly maintained by the men of today. What a pity your formation has been delayed so long: delayed until the present great upheaval when all Europe's Empires, Kingdoms and States have been cast into the melting pot, and what will be evolved for us out of the steam and smoke of battle, he would be a wise one who could tell. But now that you have been formed, I think and indeed am quite certain

every young man in the country of military age and capacity should be in your ranks. You deserve every encouragement and support, for after all is said and done - and a great deal has been said - recent events have I think shown us clearly enough that it is only an organisation which commands respect by reason of its numerical strength and discipline and determination that counts for anything.

The Ulster Volunteers of the other day is a standing proof of that, and shall I also say, the power of such an organisation to inflict injury is one of the best reasons for its existence?

Well, my dear friends and brothers, my mission is not one of war, but that of peace - peace which hath its victories no less renowned than war - The Irish Volunteers of 1782 had not to strike a blow at all. They won, by their splendid organisation, and their firm determination, what I am sure every one of you here today, is willing to fight and die for - Irish Freedom.

Dear friends the shadow of a great betrayal is over the land. I do not like to say hard things but, though the truth is sometimes bitter, it had better be said, its always wholesome. We, all of us, have witnessed an infamous act of treachery to which the history of a civilized or uncivilised country can furnish no parallel.

Your duty is to blot out that disgrace and contradict that infamy. You can do it. You can do almost anything by organisation. Something surely ought and must be done. Hence I say in the surrounding gloom that has come down upon us consequent on our betrayal the one bright spot in Ireland today is the parade ground of the Irish Volunteers.

Therefore be zealous members and strict adherents to the rules of your Brigade. Strict discipline, subjection to command are absolutely necessary and without them no army is of any use whatever. And above all be true to the principles and practices of your Holy Faith. Catholics and Irish are, to the mind of many, synonymous. The Irishman who is true to his Faith should be a good Irishman. Love of country is akin to our love of God, and he who does not love his country in good report and evil report is a poor specimen of a Catholic. It is, my dear friends, by steadfastly adhering to the practices of your Holy Faith and the rules of your organisation that you will obtain the purpose for which you are banded together, perhaps too after the manner of the Volunteers of 1782."

Two days after I received the following letter from Eamon Kent :-

"2 Dolphin Terrace,
Dolphin's Barn.

March 14, 1916.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

I consider it my duty, as it is my great pleasure, to thank you for the kind and encouraging address delivered to the members of my Battalion of the Irish Volunteers who attended Mass in Mount Argus last Sunday. We were greatly delighted and stimulated by your remarks which were as frank as they were unexpected. May we all live to see the day to which we look confidently forward.

Is mise le meas mor,

Eamonn Ceannt,
Commandant,
4th Battalion.

Rev. Fr. Eugene C.P."

My belief was that a strong body of Volunteers armed and determined was our best our only effective weapon to enforce our rights. England, weakened by the end of her war with Germany, would from fear grant our demands, as she did to the Volunteers in 1782 weakened as she was after the American War of Independence.

As a result of my public declaration of view my assistance was eagerly sought to augment the roll call of the Volunteers: but, however much I might wish, I had for the time to demur, though I knew from now on I was unofficially regarded as Chaplain to the 4th Battalion under command of Eamon Kent whom I had known for many years.

Recruiting rallies for the Volunteers were advertised and being successfully held all over the city at which their aims were fully and ably explained by competent leaders, men holding responsible positions, educational, legal and civic, yet the clergy kept severely aloof from meetings, and the Movement. This seemed not a little strange as it was generally known that His Grace Archbishop Walsh, despairing of any Parliamentary result, was in sympathy.

It was presumed, rightly or wrongly, they were only waiting for someone to make a move, hesitant as to who should be first to take the step.

That, or possibly the large following the Irish Parliamentary Party had in Dublin, made them reluctant to take sides against; antagonizing considerable portions of their flocks.

The situation was an embarrassing one, as the Irish Volunteer leaders were appealing for the clergy's support so far denied them though freely given to their opposites. My Provincial Superior - alone of major Superiors - was actively engaged recruiting for the

English Army, to which I objected, and strongly remonstrated with him as bringing the Order into disrepute and branding us as anti-Irish. However, as he took no notice and continued campaigning I considered that in fairness he could not object to my taking the other side: nor did he as it is due to his memory to state. A man of many parts, consistent supporter of everything Irish, language, literature, customs and products, he and I were great friends all through until his death in Mount Argus now some years past. May his dear soul rest in peace.

All doubts and scruples being now got over I decided, in the manner if not in the words of Father Matthew, in making his momentous decision "Here goes in the Name of God".

The issue of "The Irish Volunteer" April 15, 1916, has the following :-

"Recruiting meeting 4th Battalion, James Street. Presided over by Lieutenant W. T. Cosgrave, T.C. which/in addition to Officers of the Brigade who spoke at several meetings, Rev. Eugene Nevin, C.P., Mount Argus".

I remained in town that evening until I saw the boys collecting in College Green for their march out, and when they started following the brake on which the leaders were seated, I proceeded along the footpath and on the edge of the crowd.

About half a dozen Volunteers uniformed and armed Cap-a-pie at its head lent an air of dignity and determination to the procession; and they occupied front place at the subsequent meetings. Arrived at the delta or wide space formed by the conjunction of Thomas Street, James Street and Stevens Lane, the

procession, considerably augmented on the way, halted near the fountain there, and the business of the evening began. The place selected for the meeting was not without its significance, a stone's throw only from where young Robert Emmet was sacrificed in the cause of Irish freedom, September 20th, 1803, the most pure souled patriot that ever lived and died for Ireland.

To penetrate the dense mass of people surrounding the brake was no easy matter, but a passage was made for me, and those who did make way seemed doubtful as to the nature of my intrusion - was it pacific or otherwise.

Only the other day General Peadar MacMahon told me he was present at that meeting; I suppose a private in the ranks then. He says all were amazed when they saw the tall silk hat (de rigueur with the clergy at the time) wending its uneasy way through the crowd, fear and hope alternating. The relief was welcome.

However, all doubts were dispelled when they saw me lifted up among the leaders and being received in a friendly manner by them: then cheering on all sides with "You are heartily welcome", and "Its well time for the priests to come and help us".

With Lieutenant Cosgrave were Thomas McDonagh, Eamon Kent, Cathal Brugha, Seamus Murphy and John Fitzgibbon, historic names, two of them being signatories to Easter Monday's Proclamation were executed - Thomas McDonagh and Eamon Kent.

Dispensing with the customary preliminaries such as moving to the chair etc., as there was no chair to sit on, Lieutenant Cosgrave stood up from his seat on the brake and the meeting was formally opened. "There was no need" he said to announce or

or explain the purpose for which they were there that evening; it was widely known: even Dublin Castle timely advertised of it had sent some of its duly accredited representatives to honour(?) the occasion. With an eloquent and strong appeal for Volunteer membership he ended by saying "We are happy to have here with us this evening a Passionist Father from Mount Argus, Father Eugene Nevin, who has kindly consented to address you. This announcement was received with cheering, as were the commonplace platitudes spoken by me, eagerly drunk in by ears attuned for any word of encouragement in the compassing of the task they had set before them. Their enthusiasm was inspiring, giving assurance of what was to follow when the time for action came.

The appearance and manner of Thomas McDonagh have been many times described and photography has made his face and form familiar to hosts of people. This night, in delivering his perfervid discourse, he wore a short cape round his shoulders and held a stout walking stick, mostly in the left hand, which he now and again used to emphasize some particular points.

In telling of the wide appeal the Volunteer Movement made, especially to the young men for membership, to all for support, he was certain he said there were many, some of them wearing the King of England's uniform, who were in heart and soul with us, but debarred by force of circumstances from joining; "even perhaps that man over there who has come to spy on us" - pointing with his walking stick to a man on the left outskirts. I could see the man looking deadly pale and very uneasy as the crowd, turning round, surged angrily towards him, but McDonagh, with a wave of his right hand, commanded them to desist. "Leave him alone" he said, "we have other and better means of dealing with men of that sort".

The man was a notoriously officious detective sergeant, known locally as Johnny Barton.

When the James' Street meeting was over, the brake with its occupants was driven to Dolphin's barn for a second meeting; and I was told afterwards that the evening, with its two meetings, was most successful in the large number of young men who signed on, some of them foremost in the battle of Easter Week.

The following is in the nature of a footnote - I was transferred August 1917 to our Monastery in Lancashire, ten or twelve miles from Liverpool where there is a big Irish and Catholic population; and the Liverpool Irish have a reputation of the true and lasting quality, so I was not too badly situated as I had many opportunities of meeting my fellow exiles both in public and in private.

To meet and hear Arthur Griffith the Liverpool Stadium was engaged for Sunday 29th November, 1919. I was invited and requested to be one of the speakers on the occasion; and, though the Stadium has a capacity accommodation for well over 10,000, it was filled to overflowing that evening.

In the course of my remarks, I suppose to illustrate some point or to show the broadmindness and kindly nature of our leaders, I told of Thomas McDonagh having saved from a severe mauling a detective sergeant who had come to be present with evil intent. Next morning on opening the paper I got a bit of a shock on seeing that Sergeant Barton was shot in Dublin the previous day, possibly the very moment I was referring to him. May he rest in peace.

The frequent repetition in these "notes" of the personal pronoun "I" would, in a published work, have a disfiguring effect

branding the author as an inveterate egoist and demanding an apology. My pardonable plea is that of, necessity. Were I to attempt to omit the capital personal pronoun "I" there would be no "notes" at all, no more than the Play of Hamlet be brought on the stage without introducing the Prince of Denmark. Most of the sayings and incidents related must appear, and really are, trivial, merely the catching of the living manners as they rose long, long ago, the recording of words and sayings as they came fresh from hearts and lips that are now no longer with us, extenuating nothing, nor do I hope setting down aught in malice.

The publicity, result of the two meetings, brought many requests for help from different quarters, but I had respectfully to decline. With the pro English atmosphere there was about, to take further open and active part might lead the Government Authorities to make representations to the heads of my Order for my removal away from Ireland. In fact, one Judge of the High Court, a Catholic but strong Unionist, had, when adjudicating on a case arising out of the agitation, referred to me without mentioning my name. So I had, in consequence, to confine myself to the showing of a quiet sympathy with the Movement, such as visiting "The Volunteer" Office in Dawson Street, which I did fairly often.

One visit stands out clearly in my recollection, chiefly amongst the reasons, I suppose, because of its nearness to Easter and its sequence. It was the early afternoon of a Saturday, and a goodly number of the leaders were present - John McNeill, Thomas McDonagh, Bulmer Hobson, Sean McDermott and others whose names I now forget. They had evidently been in serious conclave, and before departing broke into twos and threes in the roomy apartment for an interchange of personal individual views. In the incidence I happily found myself associated and apart with Thomas McDonagh, lively and energetic.

He told me, in the course of our conversation, how anxious he was in trying to impress upon McNeill the importance of equipment in every detail; for instance he said, "To display a white handkerchief might give away a whole position, so I want the boys supplied with a coloured pattern". This, as an example of his attention to smallest minutiae, and probably too the secret of his being able to hold out his fortress of Jacob's longer than the others.

At that time we had an academy for our Junior Boys at Sandymount - since transferred - and as one of the priest prefects of Studies was a particular friend I used to visit there occasionally. One morning, while we were chatting together in his room, there was a knock at the door, and on the response "Come in" the door opened and a tall man I hadn't seen before, named Eamon De Valera, teacher of mathematics, appeared; to say he was short of chalk for his demonstrations on the blackboard.

"We have travelled far and fast since then.

The following letter received at this time will be of interest:-

"Woodtown",

Rathfarnham.

16 March, 1916.

Dear Father Nevin,

I was very happy to get your note and the enclosed. It did not reach me in time for this week's Irish Volunteer as we finish up printing on Mondays, but I'd be glad to have it next week.

So far as I can judge the majority of the priests in Ireland are in hearty support of the position taken by the Irish Volunteers,

and I thank God for it, for it would be unfortunate for Ireland and perhaps for the future of religion in Ireland if they were not. At the same time an occasional word of encouragement spoken by priests in public is of incalculable help. You may take it from me that Dublin Castle is aching for an opportunity to strike us down. I have been watching their attitude closely. They were bitterly hostile to us from the very first, long before the war, and they were never hostile to the Ulster Volunteers. They hesitate to strike because they know we will not submit tamely to their tyranny: so they keep up a system of petty raiding and perjury, hoping to wear us out, or make us act rashly. In every prosecution of our men they have tried the most flagrant perjury.

The latest instance is the other day when it was sworn in Court that Mr. Pearse said to a Constable in Grafton Street, "I ignore your Government, and laws pertaining thereto". Mr. Pearse did not say a syllable of this, or anything of the kind. Nothing could help more than for priests to speak out now and then and condemn the conduct of the Castle, especially in raiding for arms and in encouraging their subordinates to bear false witness.

The Independent, though it is not much good, would hardly refuse to publish letters dealing with these matters. In any case a letter in The Irish Volunteer would have its effect. But there is another strong reason why priests should not be silent when every enemy of the country gets the ear of the public. Our men do not half know the amount and earnestness of support and goodwill they can count on. Many of them are young and untried, and they see all the powers of evil ranked against them, and only a few raised in their favour. This does not intimidate them for their courage is splendid, but in many cases it makes them imagine that the best they can do, is to give up their lives in fighting a forlorn hope,

but in the assurance that their sacrifice will assure the fidelity of future generations.

That is a splendid spirit, but it is better still to hold on and build up and give our unfortunate country a chance to get rid of the delusions and degradations imposed on it by Liberal hypocrisy and the weakness of our poor pitiful leaders of the Irish Party.

Nothing will do more to sustain the men and give them confidence and steadiness than an occasional word of encouragement from priests. You may have noticed too that part of the Castle game is to divide the Nationalists into hostile factions. That was the meaning of charging Mr. MacSwiney with inciting to the murder o" Redmond, an absolute invention which they could not afterwards find anybody to swear to. Every opportunity should be used to expose and frustrate this abominable game.

I have read some of the performances of the gentlemen you refer to. We have to bear patiently with that sort of thing and counteract it as best we can. I always try to restrain myself in dealing with conduct of the kind lest our people should get as fierce against the misconduct of their own kith and kin that they would lose sight of their real enemies.

The late Dr. Tohill, Bishop of Down and Connor, a holy and conscientious man, said to me many year ago "The connexion with England is the one curse of Ireland." Every piece of knowledge that comes to me proves this to be true. I hold proofs of the dishonourable and degrading character of English government in Ireland that would astonish the Russians.

Thanking you very heartily for your good words.

I remain, dear Father Nevin,

Yours sincerely,

EOIN MacNEILL".

Poignantly pathetic in its earnest appeal for help where help should be spontaneously offered, his letter, after the lapse of many years, will be a revealing of the defeatist, the listless spirit of the time, a mirror that reflects the difficulties besetting the paths of the pure-souled patriot and scholar, Eoin MacNeill, one of the principal architects of the Ireland we have today.

The little efforts I had been making to help the Movement brought me a publicity that was embarrassing, painfully so often enough. If "to do good by stealth and blush to find it fame" be pleasant to some, to me it brought many uneasy moments. I had to be careful in view of the notice taken in many quarters, particularly that of the Judicial High Court pronouncement, but before and above all as member of a religious Order whose Superiors might look askance at any political or non religious activities indulged in by me. I was in consequence constrained, much that I wished otherwise, to confine myself within certain limits.

Matters were now moving rapidly, prosecutions for political offences taking place every day. The illegalities which Sir Edward Carson said in Belfast were not crimes, were grave offences in Dublin incurring heavy sentences of fines, imprisonment and deportation. There was open unabashed persecution, goading to desperation, with the result that the atmosphere was heavily charged with combustible particles coalescing for the explosion bound to happen even were there no rising pre-arranged.

The following letter, outpourings of a soul in distress,
will confirm what I have stated above :-

"University College,

Dublin.

30 March, 1916.

Dear Father Eugene,

Following what I wrote to you I would ask you - if at all possible - either to come to our meeting in the Mansion House at 8 this evening or to write to me at the Mansion House. The meeting is a public one, to protest against the government's recent aggression towards the Irish Volunteers and in particular the recently renewed attempt to banish our organisers three of whom have received orders to leave Ireland with the alternative of being forcibly deported to England.

This sort of thing was defeated before and can be defeated again. But it is a good time for those whose voices command respect to make themselves heard.

If there were no effective public protest the result would be great exasperation.

I know that now in Lent you are not so free as at other times, but I ask you to do your best, and I also appeal through you to other friends to give us the maximum possible support at this time.

Yours sincerely,

EOIN MacNEILL.

Thus was the scroll of time unrolling itself the while we hoped and prayed for a triumphant Germany, cheering her victories, and warmed into enthusiastic feeling at sight of our own boys in green

as they now and then paraded to the strains of our ancient martial music.

The Germany of those now distant days was that of the Kaiser who, in an interview with Harold Begbie author of "The Lady Next Door", declared the war as one of the Freemason countries, France, England and America, against Christianity. Whatever truth there was in it, the Germany then was totally different to that of Hitler's.

To be pro-German was to be also its opposite number anti-English, and the confusion resulting from the Irish Leader's declaration in the House of Commons, with its consequent alignments, hopelessly complicated matters. There were divisions, partings of friendship and incipient enmities. Overnight one didn't know what mental re-adjustments may have taken place in one's friend; as caution had to be exercised to avoid treading on tender corns. I remember calling on an old and valued friend, a life-long Nationalist, who on their establishment helped by his time and money towards the equipment of the National Volunteers. After the usual preliminary greetings, and I suppose an introduction to a topic of interest, he said, "We seem to be doing well at the Front these days". That startled, if it didn't shake me, but I asked, "Who do you mean by we?" "Oh, of course" he said "the English". "In that case" I said "we had better talk of something else as we happen to be in different and opposing camps". But I told him how surprised I was that he a strong nationalist with honoured family traditions of the same kind would change so completely at anyone's dictation. We then talked about the weather, and parted the best of friends, continuing so to the end of his life. May his dear soul rest in peace.

Interest in the progress of the World War so absorbed the general attention that the quick development of home affairs attracted but limited notice: as the marching and drilling of the Volunteers was almost taken for granted as an everyday occurrence. True an unusual number of young men were to be seen round the city confessionals; that was all.

Tuesday 18th April, a young man came to me with a letter from Mrs. O'Doherty whom I knew as an energetic worker in the Movement, urging me to attend a meeting and concert she had organised for Sunday 30th. in a hall in Parnell Square. That was the day of the General Post Office surrender when, of course, the proposed meeting did not, as it could not, materialize.

The young man, or boy, in his early twenties, Volunteer Paddy Moran, at business in Dublin, from the West, I clearly recall because of his earnestness in stressing the importance of granting Mrs. O'Doherty's request; his open, innocent, smiling and handsome features too. Poor little Paddy! He survived the ordeal of Easter Week, but continuing his allegiance, in a fight with the Black and Tans, he was along with others taken prisoner. A Volunteer rescue raid on the Prison was partially successful, but not for Paddy. He with five companions were courtmartialled and sentenced to be hanged, the sentence being duly carried out. May their souls rest in peace, and the souls of those also who like them died for Ireland.

In the afternoon of Good Friday I was absent preaching in a city church, and during my absence Pat and Willie Pearse called to see me. I was and am so sorry they couldn't wait my return as I never saw them after.

We priests were kept very busy all that week; but especially

the next afternoon, evening and far into the night, hearing the Confessions chiefly of young men who crowded round the Confessionals, and it must have been evident to the least observant that there was something unusual afoot.

Next day Easter Sunday morning I was celebrant at the High Mass, 12 O'clock, at the conclusion of which I found Eoin MacNeill's eldest son waiting with a letter and verbal messages from his father for me. The following is a copy of the letter:-

"Woodtown Park,
Rathfarnham,
Co. Dublin.
Easter Sunday.

Rev. Eugene Nevin, C.P.,

This is to authenticate my order in today's Sunday Independent. Great influence will be needed at the first possible moment, and in every direction to secure faithful obedience to that order throughout the country and avert a very great catastrophe.

EOIN MacNEILL".

Fully occupied as I was Saturday evening, night and Sunday morning, I had no time or opportunity for seeing any papers so the contents of the letter were a surprise to me: But, "there's not to reason why", and a verbal message asked me to go round to the different centres at once and impress on the leaders and the boys the importance of obeying the order not to "parade" next day. Reporting progress in the evening at Dr. Seamus O'Kelly's, 53, Rathgar Road, I did as requested visiting first the most important centre the nearby "Larkfield", Kimmage Road, Count Plunkett's

suburban residence. This was in reality a hidden magazine, and arms' factory combined where a fair amount of the material used in Easter Week was turned out under the direction of Engineer Rory O'Connor; and a close relative of the Count, an Engineer also. Many of the workers there were Irish refugees from the conscription law in England. The Count was not in residence, and the only male member of the family I met that afternoon was George who assured me MacNeill's Order would be obeyed and there would be no parade. But at the same time I noticed a war kit complete, piled in the centre of the drawing room, with an officer's broad sword laid atop. As far as I recollect George was in uniform, so likely the kit I saw was Joseph's who, as everybody knows, was one of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence suffering with the others the patriot's death.

I next went to seek out Eamon Kent, Commandant of the 4th Battalion, at his residence, Dolphin's Barn. He was not at home, but being assured from many inquiries that the Order would be obeyed I resisted from further efforts, and went in the evening, as directed, to 53 Rathgar Road. There I found a goodly number of those prominent in the Movement among them Miss MacNeill, sister of Eoin. All were pleased with my report, so we spent a pleasant couple of hours together, never dreaming, at least I didn't, of the powder magazine ready to be exploded under us.

Next forenoon Easter Monday, Bank Holiday, I was surprised and not a little shocked to hear and to see the Volunteers marching down the Kimmage and Harold's Cross Roads, on towards the city. I didn't know what to think, what to surmise, but all doubt was soon dispelled as news of the first clash of arms and sounds of rifle fire reached us. The Battle of Dublin, Easter Week, 1916, had begun,

though ending in apparent defeat and disaster, was clearly a pointer and an assurance that -

"Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son
Though baffled oft, is ever won."

We were outside the area of the fighting; nearest post occupied by Captain Seamus Murphy, 4th Battalion, was Marrowbone Lane Distillery, being about two miles off. Headquarters of the Battalion under Commandants Kent and Brugha were located in the South Dublin Union Buildings; and the military cordon drawn tightly round the city rendered it difficult and dangerous to get through.

Two of our Fathers on hospital sick calls early that afternoon were hard set to get back. Many people on business or visiting friends in the city, caught within the circle, were almost starved and scared to death the whole week, food being impossible as well as dangerous to try to procure. Bakers', meat and grocery shops were soon emptied, and new supplies out of the question. Severe hardships and sufferings were endured all round.

Stories innumerable are told of the heroic efforts of mothers, wives, sisters and girl friends of the Volunteers risking their lives endeavouring to bring food relief to the different posts. But all this, as well as the fighting that took place, is part of the general history of the Rising which has been told by those fully competent, in some cases by those who took an active part in it.

By pre-arrangement I called in the afternoon at Dr. O'Kelly's, Rathgar. On my way through Harold's Cross I met the mother of a Volunteer whom I had known, since as an Altar Boy he used to serve my Mass. "Pat" she said "is gone into the city with the boys and

I'm afraid I will never see him again, but if he is killed, well thank God he died fighting for Ireland and not for any other country". That was the noble, self sacrificing attitude of many Dublin and Irish Mothers then. Though suffering the indignity of prison and deportation, Pat has been assistant in the National Library for long years past.

Arrived at 53 Rathgar Road, I found there the doctor himself, John MacNeill and his son, Councillor Tom Kelly and John Fitzgibbon, all in a state of utter consternation: John MacNeill and Tom Kelly, chiefly, stunned and bordering on desperation, because there was a rebellion on, and they weren't in it. Tom was very excited, chaffing under the restraint he was now forced to endure; but for John MacNeill I felt greatest sympathy, by reason of the position he had held; the mental torture he was enduring; the blame for failure he would have to shoulder; the obloquy, perhaps, that in consequence would attach to his name. All these anguishing thoughts passed through his harassed mind and were plainly written on his face. Yet the world knew then, as it knows today, that an honester or more upright man than John MacNeill never trod the soil of his native land. I spent that day of rumours and war alarms with them. Both John and Tom Kelly stood the danger of immediate arrest did they appear in public, so they had to keep or be kept indoors, but the Doctor and I went out frequently towards the city seeking for information easy to get but hard to rely on. Who, I wonder, starts those lying rumours? One told that Dublin Castle was taken: this was such a good, interesting and exciting piece of news that John exclaimed "If that's true and gets known down the country all the boys will be out with any kind of weapon". It wasn't true. England's frowning Pastile had remained yet, to be stormed and taken, later.

So the day wore on filled with sensational rumours, the crack of rifle shooting, the rat-ta-tat of machine guns and the occasional loud bursting of bombs - Kimmage made I thought - : the big guns had yet to be brought into play; they will tomorrow and the following days dealing death and destruction on the devoted city.

Night coming on provision had to be made for shelter. Tom gratefully accepted the Doctor's kind offer of hospitality, but John's decision to go to his home at Rathfarnham, a distance of three miles, alarmed everyone of us, knowing as we did he would have to pass under the windows of two R.I.C. Police Barracks. However, he was determined to go, and no amount of persuasion could alter his decision. We reasoned with him, argued, told him how safe he was there at least for the night instead of facing imminent danger; all to no purpose, go he would. The strain of the day's happenings with his anomalous position as Leader and not there was beginning to tell on him now, and poor man he deemed dazed and reckless as to consequences. Fearful of what might befall him I went almost to the length of physically trying to detain him as he put on his overcoat and prepared to mount his bicycle. To assuage my anxious feelings, as he thought, but it was to disturb them all the more, he said, putting his hand in his overcoat pocket, and firmly grasping something there to show he was armed, "if they attempt to arrest me they wont have it all their own way". That ended further remonstrance, and was the last word passing between us for fifteen months. I watched him and son as they cycled together up Rathgar Road until the bend hid them from view, then darkness, the night and returning to Mount Argus where for the next five days we had to listen to the booming of big guns, the bursting

of shells, and to see the red glare of Dublin's great buildings given to the flames.

I will be pardoned a slight digression here - In the month of July next year 1917, I called of an afternoon at Woodtown Park, Rathfarnham, and was shown into the drawing room, large and oblong as I recollect. Seated at one end, and facing the other end oblong, after a few minutes I saw the door there open and a man I didn't know enter walking the while towards me. As he approached with hand outstretched I got up to meet his advances. When lo! and behold! it was smiling John MacNeill himself! looking in the pink. Before and up to the Rebellion he favoured a full navy cropped beard, now he was clean shaven; and if as 'tis said 'noses alter faces', it must be allowed the shaving off, of a full beard is likely to have a similar changing effect, and therefore I could not be blameworthy in not immediately recognizing him. He had "with the boys" returned the day before under the general amnesty, was in grand form and had a bagful of stories, comical and otherwise, about his gaol experiences which he told in his own inimitable amusing way. Mark Tapley, happy, jolly even in the most discouraging circumstances, had many emulators amongst "the boys" who besides demoralizing the common convicts through the bad example given, went near to breaking up the whole English prison system, by the unconquerable, untameable spirit they manifested.

Their principal diversion, or occupation rather, since they left Ireland, seems to have consisted chiefly in fooling the warders and some of the upper officials too who, driven almost crazy by their antics, were dying to be rid of them, and made no secret of it either. They couldn't tell where they stood, being ordered by, instead of ordering, their prisoners, until finally it came to such a pass that

it was this - "Either these here men go, or we go". But the amnesty came to the rescue, and the Empire was saved for yet another while. Our heroes had now achieved a double reputation; perhaps better say two reputations diametrically opposed and mutually destructive. One acquired at home in their own country - glorious; the other abroad and so bad that it got them thrown out of the English Jails as unfit company for the criminals there confined. Two distinctions which possibly some friends and admirers might feel inclined "to bind as a crown unto them". However, no such thoughts bothered their minds as they entrained together for Hollyhead looking forward eagerly to the happy reunion with their beloved ones anxiously awaiting their return. They were in great spirit and held an impromptu concert on the Mail Boat, consisting principally, as might be expected, of all the rebel songs they could remember. In one of these there occurs the passage - "A felon's cap's the noblest crown an Irish head can wear" when, as if by magic, suiting action to word the head gear worn in prison was displayed triumphantly and donned by nearly everyone of them. Surely, a sentimental journey, if ever:

A few months before the release John wrote to someone in Ireland, or someone there wrote to him, I forget which, seeking information about a Cairn or Cromlech or the markings on an Ogham Stone and this was the source of infinite amusement to him because of the problem it set to the minds of the officials. Questioned and requestioned, any explanation or assurance of his could not penetrate, obtusely-minded as they were regarding everything Irish.

What were those cryptic allusions and strange looking foreign names but part of a secret code used in working up to re-enact the last year's troubles that cost the country so much loss in money, men and prestige? Yes, the situation was serious, intricate, and

it was only by recourse to highest authority and intelligentia that the knotted gordian was cut. "It is for to laugh" as the French would say.

And now we are back again to the early days and crowded hours of Dublin's Easter Week 1916, with its heartbreaking racket and rumble, every sound of which we knew meant death and destruction.

To reach any of the Volunteer posts was difficult and attended by grave danger, as shooting was continuous night and day. Yet they managed to communicate somehow, both by word and letter, with their friends outside. During the course of the week I got from the nearest post three messages, hard to decipher now after the lapse of forty years, scribbled as they were hurriedly by pencil on any kind of paper to hand. The first is dated :-

"Marrowbone Lane, Distillery.

25/4/16.

7-30 p.m.

To Rev. Fr. Eugene Nevin.

Dear Father,

Could you possibly come down to us. We are intact so far, but all the men and the brave girls who are with us express an earnest desire to see you.

Do come Father.

S. Ó Murchadha.

Captain".

The matter seemed to me urgent because I knew some of them were taken unawares, thinking, especially in view of the countermanding order, that they were taking part in a customary afternoon route march, but now they were "in it" decided to continue

to the end. Having got permission for a few hours' absence, and Father Kieran Farrelly volunteering to accompany me, we both set out about 10 o'clock in darkness for there was no gas or electricity. It was weird travelling, meeting few, with no sounds but that of the spasmodic and widely dispersed fighting: the shooting fairly distant and safe for the moment, but it wont be for long as we near our destination, though it will be directed chiefly towards, not from the city. The Distillery situated mid a labyrinth of narrow winding streets and lanes would, to a stranger, be hard to find even in broad daylight but to us it presented no difficulty as we used often to cycle or drive through the locality as a short cut to the Kingsbridge Station.

Arrived at its big factory door, deep silence reigning inside, a knock brought forth the stern inquiry "Who is there?" Assured by the answer, the voice then said "All right Father, please wait just a few minutes". The few minutes wait was, we knew, to be utilized in preparation to resist a possible attack, for in war nothing can be taken for granted, there must be no risk overlooked where the enemy may come in disguise of a friend assuming his name as well as outward appearances.

Presently we could distinctly hear the placing of the men at arms with the whispered words of command, until the few minutes having elapsed, when suddenly as if by a powerful spring the big double door flew wide open revealing the whole interior. There confronting us, ranged in form of a half circle, was a twofold line of defence, first line, fixed bayonets, second, rifles at the ready, with a few miscellaneous figures in the background holding what looked to me suspiciously like Kimmage manufactured bombs: no precaution was neglected, and one little word from friend Seamus, when in a twinkle? well! all would have depended on our past lives.

But the fateful word was not spoken, arms were grounded, tension was relieved, and in quickest of time the big door closing behind us we were in the midst of the fortress' defenders. There was a goodly number of them in men, boys and girls all enthusiastic, vieing with each other in their eagerness to tell of the success they were having.

However, they all realised the dangers they were facing every hour and in consequence were anxious to be prepared for whatever might happen; so selecting what we thought suitable points among the vats we began to hear their Confessions to the accompanying sound of gun-fire. Most of them had been to the Sacraments recently, but all decided to avail themselves of this perhaps the last opportunity.

When finished we remained on for some time having a talk with the boys; were shown over the building, the provision they had made for defence, and their improvised commissariat in munitions and food. It was interesting, and amusing in some respects even though overshadowed by what might happen to be tragic for many amongst them: but they were bright, cheery and confident of final success. I remember talking to a Sergeant - three chevroned - who would fit admirably into the post in any European Army and be typical of the rank he held. Middle aged, I thought, and a trifle middle spread, he was engaged in the uncongenial task of making tea in a tank! I wished him every success, offered some wise ? suggestions as a help, and in return was invited to wait for a cup. But as it was now the early hours of the morning and having to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice , the pleasure of enjoying the result of his experiment had to be thankfully declined.

The journey back to Mount Argus was uneventful, the days following far from bring so. Besides the well known historic happenings, the

wildest rumours abounded in the air keeping us for ever on the tenter hooks oscillating alternately between hope and fear; now lifted up into the highest stratosphere, the next moment cast down into the deepest depths of despondency. A powerful German Army has landed somewhere in the South, and is marching to the relief of Dublin. Whisperings of dire disasters have reached us from the City etc. etc. The spreading of rumours in time of war should (and I believe used to) be a capital offence followed by summary execution. And justly so. People were constantly calling here seeking news about their boys, sons or husbands and we were as much in the dark as they were. Poor Mrs. Pearse called every day. Pat's position being most difficult of all to contact nothing could be known of him.

Volunteer units were coming in from the country to join their battalions. At business in Dublin they had gone home for Easter holiday thinking there would be no "parade" owing to the countermand, and now on their return they call for information, we could not give, as to where they might find their companions. I have often since reflected on the bravery of those boys; their patriotism; their fidelity to plighted promise and spirit of comradeship. They could have remained safely at home until the trouble was over, but no, death before dishonour. They are, brave boys, disturbed now, not by the dangers they are going to encounter in battle, they were prepared all along for that since joining the Volunteers, but the disgrace of being courtmartialled for disobeying orders in face of the enemy, which in reality they did not. Yet, it was their one concern now as they ask for Confession and a blessing before departing for - the unknown. As they knelt before me holding their feeble equipment for fighting

against an Empire, the stripling David against the giant Goliah, I was forcibly, affectingly reminded of lines heard so often at Concerts and social gatherings - the well known words of 'The Croppy Boy' -

"Now Father bless me and let me go

To die if God has ordained it so."

It was touching: it was a tugging at one's heart strings to see them as they get up and prepare to depart regardless of the dangers and possible death awaiting them in fulfilment of their duty to their native land, and fidelity to their plighted word. Two of those boys I now know as honourable and substantial citizens of Dublin, each with his own thriving business concern; married; with large families; one father of an excellent young priest.

The days were passing filled with historic, also some, tragic events; rumours: but little reliable news from the seat of war, so near yet so far away. The scattered embers of burnt out Postal Orders and official documents blown from the G.P.O. and thrown on the fields round here were confirmation, if needed, of the report that the Headquarters of our Army had been evacuated.

It is now Saturday of this never to be forgotten week, and there comes in the early afternoon a second letter from friend Seamus :-

"Marrowbone Lane,

29.4.16.

Dear Father Eugene,

Could we have Mass tomorrow do you think? You can certainly advise us and we would be thankful for anything you could do. We are here still, thank God, with no casualties as yet save a splinter wound, but many on the enemy side from

our rifles. We are all in great spirit looking forward to the day of Freedom beneath the flag of the Republic. Thanks for Agnus Deis received. Please remember me to Fathers Gerald, Joseph and Kieran.

Respectfully Yours,

S. Ó Murchadha.
Captain."

It was manifest he didn't appreciate the difficulties, I might say, the impossibility of having the Holy Sacrifice offered there on the morrow. The location was so unsuited that, even in normal times, one would feel uneasy in approaching Ecclesiastical Authority for the required sanction. But knowing that the boys and girls there, with Seamus himself, would have qualms of conscience about non-attendance at Sunday's Mass, I sent word that the circumstances cancelled the obligation, and they were to say the Rosary as a substitute round about 12 o'clock which, I learned afterwards, they all did at Seamus's invitation. Yet - early that morning a short note came:-

"Marrowbone Lane.

30th April, 1916.

Dear Father Eugene,

I wonder if a message I sent you yesterday was delivered. It contained a request to you to advise us as to whether it would be possible to have Mass said here today. We earnestly hope you can do something for us in a push - a direction. Still here thank God.

Respectfully Yours,

S Ó Murchadha.

Captain."

Saturday afternoon a young lady member of the Cumann na mBan evacuated from the G.P.O. came to know if I could receive and conceal for the night one of the leaders, not giving his name. Having consulted Fathers Joseph and Kieran, now collaborating with me, I answered yes. I would meet him any time he came in the Church not in the retreat as extreme caution had to be exercised, the local Rector being strongly opposed to the Irish Volunteers and everything they stood for.

It should be recalled, and pity it is that it has to, that the Insurrection was unpopular with the vast majority of Dublin people, Catholic and Protestant alike, many of whom were ready to co-operate with the Authorities in suppressing what they to disparage called "the riot" and in rounding up the "rioters."

In due course, after a short interval, the young lady returned with Desmond Fitzgerald, travel-stained and weary. I met them in the Church; but what to do immediately, with time pressing and the danger of detection imminent, was a serious problem; for we could not take him into the house in the then state. However, as he told us he was in no need of food or refreshment of any kind, all he wanted was some quiet place to sleep, as he hadn't had a wink even, for the past week, we thought in the circumstances the Organ gallery, safest, though incongruous in ordinary times; but any port in a storm.

To improvise a makeshift lie-down back of the big organ was a matter of a few moments only, and no sooner prepared than he threw himself down on it, and was fast asleep straight away. Having locked the inner and outer doors and taken the keys away to assure safety and freedom from disturbance, we left him

"alone in his glory", a "warrior taking his rest" if not "with his martial cloak around him", with a cloak that effectively covers all the worries and troubles of the day.

The hours wore steadily on filled with the excitement of historic happenings. Saturday's Confessions were to be heard, anxiously inquiring callers had to be soothed in many cases until evening and the night came when the Church had to be cleared and closed. Then the Brother Sacristan Begnignus having, as he thought, got everyone out of the Chapels and Confessionals, was disturbed because, as he told us, he could hear someone snoring, but where, after much searching and listening, he could not make out. We knew all about it, set his mind at ease and asked him to keep the matter secret, which indeed he did.

Having managed to prepare a room, bed and supper in the Retreat, we about 10 o'clock released our prisoner and led him by hand stealthily in the darkness, for gas and electricity being cut off there was nothing but candle light.

He was now fully refreshed by his long sleep and we all four together in his room talked far into the night on the situation in general and plans for his immediate future. He was anxious to go next day to his wife and children in Bray even though it entailed the danger of arrest there or before reaching it. We suggested disguising himself clerically and giving him a bicycle that would take him to Maynooth where we knew a priest there who would, we were certain, do the needful afterwards. But he was all for home.

How he managed to get away from Headquarters after the surrender and avoid capture is of interest to know and not a

little amusing. Educated for the most part abroad, his general appearance, refined manner and address was cosmopolitan rather distinguishably peculiar to any country. His style, also, of speech devoid of accent was as far removed from the least approach to Irish brogue or mannerism as anything we can imagine. When, therefore, he presented himself at the military post held by English Tommies and politely sought permission from them to pass, he was, to their minds, the direct opposite to what they pictured - the sansculotte made Irish revolutionary republican, and he had no need to pose as, what he was to them already, an Englishman escaping from the "bloomin sin feiners". And under that role, unwittingly thrust upon him, but willingly accepted in the emergency, he successfully and successively passed through barrier after barrier that lay between the G.P.O. and Mount Argus.

So far, so good. But it wont be so simple to get clear of lynx and many eyed detectives of the two police forces a paternal government has provided for our safety. His name prominent in all the activities of the Volunteer Movement was well known to them and, as it didn't appear on the list of those captured at the fall of the G.P.O., he would prove a valuable prize for someone ambitious of promotion. His appearance too could not be be mistaken: tall, handsome, well-set-up, distinguished-looking with a profusion of loveliest hair that disdained all manner of head gear and rendered him conspicuous above his fellows. He had, therefore, to be disguised as an ordinary Seán Citizen, and, for this purpose he decided, I'm sure not without a squirm, to sacrifice his precious locks and wear a cap or hat for head covering.

Sampson shorn of his locks was shorn also of the giant strength the Lord had endowed him with, suffering other and serious consequences.

But if Absalom, the recalcitrant son of King David, had a hair cut that morning before engaging in the Ephraim Forest battle, it is possible there would not have to be recorded the bewailing lament at his death of an over-indulgent and too fond a father in that "high chamber over the gate" of the city.

We anxiously hoped and prayed for success to the transformed Desmond who, having attended the 10 o'clock Mass next morning, mingled with the departing congregation and was soon lost to sight among them as they dispersed. It was the last I saw of him until he returned from Prison fifteen months later.

He went straight to Seamus O'Kelly's, Rathgar, as the first stop in his eventful journey home which, I understand, he reached that evening; and strange to say though "wanted" and sought for by the Authorities he was there unmolested for over a week. Then a large body of police re-inforced by a Company of soldiers with a machine-gun, we presume, "on information received proceeded to his house in Bray, surrounded it" and took into custody "one of the King's rebellious Irish enemies".

This document was fortunately in striking contrast to the tragic endings of the two instances I have quoted from Holy Writ; for by now the Bloody Assize, that was handing out freely death sentences on prisoners of war since the surrender, had begun to feel satiated with killings and content with life sentences or deportation. Had Desmond Fitzgerald been among the captured Headquarters garrison he, without a doubt, would have had to face

the firing squad: and I remember him, in our Saturday night's talk, contemplating his possible fate in case he failed to escape. "I don't mind being shot" he said "but to be hanged is too awful". As a rule those under sentence of death are not given the option of choosing the manner of their taking off, but whether it is a luxury to be shot instead of being hanged is, I think, debateable. I hope I and my friends may manage to escape both alternatives, but there is the notable case of one who didn't - St. Thomas More. When told the King, by special favour, had commuted his sentence of hanging and quartering to that of decapitation, his reply was, "I pray God that none of my friends will ~~ever~~^R have need of such a favour", as jestingly he went to his death saying to an attendant "Please help me up the steps, I'll shift for myself coming down". In both shooting and hanging, the end being the same, it is the principle at stake, not the manner of death, that matters.

Oliver Plunkett was hanged, and in revolting circumstances Archbishop Hurley of Cashel: so were many other bishops and priests with hundreds of lay people who died for the Faith.

And who can enumerate the hosts of Irish patriots who, like Robert Emmet, suffered a like fate.

The couple of weeks following were sad, rendered particularly so by the dawn executions, enumerating our losses; and the deportations, relieved only by the reports reaching us of deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice that were part of the struggle for our independence. All this belongs to the general history of the period.

Poor Mrs. Pearse called here every day since the start of the Insurrection: a pathetic figure, mother of two devoted sons (and such sons!) whose fate hung on the tricky balance of British Justice as always known and exercised in this country. Sometimes she would

be accompanied, but she was generally alone, a picture of calm sorrow, resignation and hope. After the surrender when it became known that both sons had survived the ordeal our eager speculation as to what next occupied our thoughts, and our interchange of dreaded possibilities as to Pat's fate. He being a principal would suffer the heavier penalty - life sentence perhaps - but Willie, a participant only, should get off lightly. So we thought.

But our wishful thinking got a rude shock when on the 3rd May the first batch of prisoners were executed, Pat taking precedence of honour. If it were a hard or unpleasant duty to meet her that afternoon trying to find and to speak adequate words of comfort to soothe the anguish that was rending her mother's heart, it was immeasurably more embarrassing on the day that Willie was executed. During the interval between the two tragedies we had been hoping and of course fervently praying that he would be spared to her; conjuring up to ourselves reasons and precedents to confirm our hopes though, in view of past dealings, we could not altogether banish fears of the worst from our minds.

It was late in the day when I was told of her arrival. Several times did I hesitate in my passage to the reception room thinking out what to say or how to meet and comport myself in the presence of such sorrow as this latest cruel blow would inflict on a heart already overladen with grief. But she was calm, queenly so; affliction seemed to enoble, to spiritualize her habitually unruffled features undimmed as yet by fear. In fact, she appeared more anxious than anything to forestall the embarrassing or uneasy feelings of those coming to tender their sympathies; with just a faint movement of the lips, a quiet sadness of face veiling her innermost she says, "Thank God they both died for Ireland. I am sure they are pleased and what pleased them in life they knew pleased me, so I am satisfied."

The history of the heroic Mother of the Machabees, as told by the Inspired Writer comes naturally to the mind (11 Mac. VII) "How the Mother was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men, who beheld her seven sons slain in the space of one day, and bore it with a good courage, for the hope that she had in God. And she bravely exhorted everyone of them in her own language being filled with wisdom, and joining a man's heart to a woman's thought, she said to them, 'I know not how you were formed in my womb. For I neither gave you breath, nor soul nor life, neither did I frame the limbs of everyone of you. But the Creator of the world that formed the nativity of man and that found out the origin of all, He will restore to you again in His Mercy both breath and life as now you despise yourselves for the sake of His Laws'".

The chaos attendant and consequent on every violent upheaval was not spared us, and were it not for the bakers and general food providers of Cork, Limerick, Waterford with some of the Northern centres we would be starved outright. As it was, the innermost of many was crying out vehemently for what money couldn't then buy, because it wasn't to be had either for love or money. However, for most this was a passing phase while giving all a taste of what they might have endured had the struggle been prolonged. But for the orphans and dependants of those executed, of those who died fighting, and of those sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, something had to be done for their present pressing necessities and their future provided against. A relief committee was formed with Michael Collins as its very energetic secretary, and an appeal for funds was issued which fortunately met with a ready and generous response for there were many very necessitous cases brought to the notice of the Committee. It used to meet weekly

in upstairs rooms near the South City Markets, Great Georges Street, and I had the honour of being a member though my duties in Mount Argus prevented me attending its meetings as regularly as I would wish. But I am happy to record as a member receiving, amongst many other things of a similar kind, a most appreciative letter with a substantial donation, from an Englishman, a doctor and non Catholic, wishing every success to our undertaking. I know other members also of the Committee received many letters of encouragement with pecuniary assistance from seemingly most unlikely quarters. So happily sometimes one may "chid away a friend that hath a stern look but a gentle heart."

St. James in his Epistle says - "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Fathers is this - to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation: and to keep oneself unspotted from this world". In His description of the General Judgment Our Blessed Lord tells us that the just in receiving their reward shall have the words of commendation addressed to them - "I was hungry and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink; sick and you visited Me: I was in prison and you came to Me".

The charity as set forth in these two texts of Our Blessed Lord and His Apostles is of binding force in necessitous cases according to each one's capacity. But in the situation then confronting us there was superadded to our ordinary acts of Christian Charity to all, a national duty incumbent on us towards our suffering ones.

It was open to everyone so inclined and unhindered to visit the homes of the bereaved widows, those orphaned by death, or by life imprisonment: and it is due to the people of Dublin to say that in this respect they nobly responded to the call of Charity and Patriotism

both, deeming it a privilege rather than a duty to tender their sympathies.

To visit those in prison was a different and by no means an easy matter, for the regulations governing permission to visit, at all times strict, were now most difficult to negotiate.

Count Plunkett was confined a prisoner in the military barracks, Kilmainham, and to reach him, having obtained the necessary permit, one had to tread through a maze of barbed wire entanglement and a labyrinth of passages with an armed sentry at every turn. I found the dear man in a small white-washed room, the only furniture of any kind being what looked like a large soap box on which he sat reading the last evening's "Mail".

He came forward smilingly; indeed in a short while he was laughing, for his reading matter was the correspondence between Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, and General Maxwell, just released for publication. He was highly amused, and could not help but now and again refer to the Bishop's trenchant reply to the man whose draconian dictatorship had a couple of weeks previously deprived him of his eldest son Joseph.

And now that I think of it I wonder whether or how the poor man slept or had his food, so destitute of elementary amenities did the apartment or cell appear.

On coming away, on the road outside I met Tim Healy going towards the prison. Besides his sympathy and the interest he would naturally have in those confined as prisoners there, he had been briefed for some who were to stand their trial before a Courtmartial.

Hearing that Cathal Brugha was badly wounded and a prisoner in an improvised hospital in The Castle, I managed to get a pass for a visit. Wounded? He was riddled in his body almost shattered to pieces; downhearted? Most assuredly no. Unlikely then, if able even, with Goldsmith's broken soldier to shoulder his crutch and show how fields were won; or to indulge in the idle day dream of Dryden's ode, when the King growing "vain fought all his battles o'er again; thrice routed all his foes; and thrice he slew the slain." But he surely must have lived over and over again, and many times, those crowded ^{hours} of that glorious week's struggle, and thought of the gallant comrades that fell in the fight, or were afterwards executed. Reluctant to admit he did anything beyond his plain duty, he patiently, cheerfully bore his wounds suffered in the country's cause, prepared and ready at any moment for the supreme sacrifice in the manner of James Connolly.

Of medium height but well knit frame, he was truly lion-hearted, with a valour that bordered on recklessness as the danger increased.

I wonder was his counterpart Richard of the Crusades the huge man we are apt to picture him as represented by the historian, demolishing camel after camel with one stroke of his powerful sword arm, just as we miserables of this degenerate age might strike the head off a field flower. In those days of old when Knights were bold were men in general built on the generous proportions of life-guardsmen or the D.M.P. of a former generation? We hardly think so, and a visit to a Museum will furnish evidence in support of this opinion. There we see the actual coats of mail in which those doughty warriors locked in steel rode forth to the spearing of dragons or the rescueing of princesses and maidens imprisoned in deep moathed dungeons - and when measured we find those coats of

mail were tailored, if we may so put it, for normal or comparative statures. Imagination, the romance of fiction with facts of history often get hopelessly inter-mixed, producing pleasing, colourful pictures of unrealities for which we must be grateful; for without them life for youth and age alike would be a dull and stale business.

Whatever the proportions or disparity in girt or height between Richard Coeur de Lion and Cathal Brugha, their hearts beat in unison to the same chivalrous note - loftiness of purpose, resolute determination in face of death to defend the right and redress the wrong.

Certain it is that Cathal was born 500 years late: he would fit so well and feel so much at home as one of the mail clad crusaders before the walls of Jerusalem; or later on in the Army of Ferdinand and Isabella storming the Moorish strongholds of Granada. In all which we may be confident he would do honour to his country and his flag. But great little man that he was he would be at home and an inspiration in any period of our history. On reading account of his last disastrous fight and death, July, 1922, I couldn't help recalling Patrick Sarsfield's sigh as his life's blood ebbed away on the plains of Landen, July 1693. Some years previous to 1916 I knew him in a business transaction as Charlie Burgess an active member and director, if I mistake not, of the firm he was associated with until his death. May he rest in peace.

Of the many visits paid to the victims of Easter Week and after, none stand out so poignantly clear as that to the young widow of Thomas McDonagh and her two baby orphans, boy and girl,

at her residence, Oakley Road, opposite the original St. Enda's College.

A convert to Catholicity, Muriel Gifford before marriage, sister of Mrs. Grace Plunkett who like her namesake, Maud Bridal of Malahide, was widowed three hours after marriage. A wife and a widow, a maid and a bride. Mrs. McDonagh was still a girl in years and ways; in manner and appearance attractive; and as she sat there a baby on each side lisping alternatively a daddy's name whose homecoming they never more shall hear, it was a sight calculated to draw tears from those who came to console. Sad indeed it was, extremely so: even when removed from the scene, as a sort of compensating balance or comforting thought, one might repeat over, Tom Moore's lines :-

"Dark falls the tear of him who mourneth
Lost joy, or hope that n'er returneth
But brightly falls the tear
Wept o'er a hero's bier."

Though her widowhood was rendered happy by the possession of her two lovely babies, it was shortlived for she was accidentally drowned in the early part of the following summer 1917. The Relief Committee had rented a large house in Skerries where the children of their charge with their Mothers could together spend a few weeks holiday at this popular seaside resort; and thither went Mrs. McDonagh to lend a hand in the good work. The Holiday House, regarded as a capital idea, was highly appreciated by both parents and children and it soon became the rendezvous for friends and sympathisers every evening. But on Sunday afternoons there would be quite a large gathering come to treat and be treated by the children after their guiless fashion. Having spent a couple of hours there, that never to be forgotten Sunday afternoon, I bade goodbye to the happiest ever group of children, Mrs. McDonagh one

with them and leader in their merrymaking. I never dreamp't then, who could? that the angel of death was already hovering over, claiming its victim amongst them, and that, this joyous leader. Yet so it was. Later on in the evening she essayed to reach one of the small islands lying off the coast but, though an expert swimmer, through some mishap or other she unfortunately failed, her dead body being rescued from the sea a few hours afterwards. May her gentle soul rest in peace. Her babies are now doubly and tragically orphaned; she has joined her beloved in Heaven who on earth by his habitual good humour, charm of manner and ready wit was the life and soul of many a meeting. We may, I think, appropriately apply to them the words of Holy Writ, "Lovely and comely their life even in death they were not divided."

May their souls, those who died for Ireland, and all those of the faithful departed rest in peace.

In a recent talk with Donagh McDonagh - now District Justice - whose memory of his father and mother is the faintest, as he and sister were then mere babies, he told me from what he heard, his mother was strongly opposed to the idea of the Holiday House.

She went there to please others, and not to spoil sport; a sacrifice in a double sense as the event proved.

SIGNED: Eugene Kevin C.P.

DATE: 4 April 1957

WITNESS: P. Freeman

*Secretary of the Bureau of
Military History, 1913-21*

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