

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 807

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 807

Witness

Very Rev. Patrick J. Doyle, P.P.,
Naas,
Co. Kildare.

Identity.

Parish Priest of
Naas, Co. Kildare.

Subject.

Biographical notes on Gearoid O'Sullivan,
Kevin O'Higgins and Michael Collins.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2005

Form B.S.M. 2

(COPY)

LEACÁN MONAIRISÉ.

m.s.b.

CASAIRÉ.....S.2005

Director's visit to Fr. Doyle,

28th October 1952.

In response to a request I called on Father Patrick J. Doyle, Parish Priest of Naas, yesterday. I found him more than willing to co-operate with the Bureau.

He told me that he had already commenced recording his story with the assistance of a shorthand-typist loaned to him by the local County Medical Officer.

He intended to append to his story a copy of a booklet, entitled "In Maryborough and Mountjoy", which he had written in 1919 on the basis of the prison experiences of Pádraig Fleming, which had been suppressed after publication and of which he thought the only copy extant was the one he had. To save him the trouble of getting it typed, I said I would see if I could get it photostated and he lent it to me for that purpose.

Father Doyle appears to have been intimate with Michael Collins, George Gavan Duffy, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Kevin O'Higgins and others in the national movement from 1916 onwards. Knockbeg College, Carlow, of which he was one time Rector, was used as a place of meeting and refuge by a number of the national leaders. He had some contacts with Dr. Mannix in Rome during the troubled period, and has something to say about the attitude of the Church.

From what he told me, I think that, although he is not a top level witness, his story is well worth having on record. He thinks that it will run to about ninety pages of typescript. He was not recording it in strict chronological order but was setting it out in the form of a series of statements around selected personalities.

Before I called on Father Doyle, I had discussed him with the President to see if I could assess his value as a witness. The President told me that he knew Father Doyle well and that he, Father Doyle, was a man of intellect, for whom his Bishop had a very high regard.

(Sgd.) M. McDunphy

29th October 1952.

GAZETTE.....

PUNCH
HERE

LEACÁN MIONUAIRISCE.

PUNCH
HERE

ORIGINAL

PAROCHIAL HOUSE

NAAS.

DO. KILBARR

Feb. 18th 1953.

Dear Mr. Mc Donnelly

Here at last is the effusion
 that in a moment of weakness I promised
 you. In ploughing through it you have
 my sympathy - but you brought it on
 yourself. Now it can serve as a Lenten
 exercise. Please pardon the untidiness
 of the script, due to the fact that the
 matter was dictated to a typist,
 a 'de luxe' process alien to old P.P.s.
 Apologies, too, for violations of the
 date-line. Senile obstinacy.
 Wishing you an austere Lent!

Sincerely yours

P. E. Doyle.



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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 807

"AN ANTHOLOGY OF FUGITIVE MEMORIES"

I.

GEAROID O'SULLIVAN

At Easter 1916 I was Rector at Knockbeg College, situated about 2½ miles from Carlow Town on the Leix bank of the River Barrow. The boys were about to return from their Easter holidays on the Tuesday. On Monday a rumour reached us that there was some disturbance in Dublin and that trains were not running. I felt quite indignant at this disturbance of civic life and of College discipline.

On Wednesday more news came through, and we learned that there was an active armed rising in Dublin. The following day the news was still more serious. On Friday we heard that the Insurgents held the Castle and part of Dublin, and there was a rumour that if they succeeded in holding the City for a week they would be entitled to international recognition as the legitimate government.

The news of the surrender then came through and on Monday my brother, Dr. L. Doyle of Carlow, told me that he was going to try to reach Dublin. His wife had been spending Easter with her mother at Rathgar, and news had reached the country that there was a grave shortage of food in Dublin. I determined to accompany him, as the Doctor had got a Pass from the Military Authorities in Carlow. We loaded the car with food and started for Dublin. Passing through the countryside we found everything normal until we reached Naas. There the Main Street was barricaded, but on showing our Pass we were allowed through. We reached Rathgar without incident, but found only servants in the house. That morning the Castle Authorities had telephoned Mrs. Anne Leigh, my sister-in-law's mother, who was the proprietress of an extensive wholesale food business in the City, requesting her to go into the

City and arrange for the distribution of food as there was real want amongst the people. They added that they would provide her with an armed escort. She had replied that she would go into the City to arrange for the food distribution, but curtly informed them that she required no armed escort to drive through the streets of her own Dublin. Her daughter accompanied her, ~~and~~ we decided that we must try to make contact with them in the City.

There was no hope of taking the car, so we started to walk. At Portobello Bridge we came up against a military cordon which had been drawn around the whole City. The young Sergeant in charge of the troops there gruffly told us that we could not get through without a Military Pass. We asked him where that was to be got, and he told us at Ballsbridge. We then asked how we were to get there on account of the cordon. He replied that he was "blowed" if he knew - that he had been picked up in England to be dropped on that "ere Bridge" and that was all he knew. I noticed 'Lincoln' on the flash of his uniform and began to talk to him of the city of Lincoln, where I had spent several pleasant holidays with friends. He softened under this treatment, and finally told us that we could go through, but that he would take no responsibility for us, and that it was up to ourselves to get back if we could. We continued our walk. ~~and~~ When we reached the end of Westmoreland Street the horror of the smoking ruins of O'Connell Street broke upon us. It was our first experience of the War.

We found our friends at Mary's Abbey and through the intermediary of a friend who had extensive ^{commercial} dealings with the War Office the Pass was procured for us from the Castle, by which we were enabled to return that afternoon to Rathgar.

On arrival at the house there we found a man in ~~kaki~~ ^{khaki} Officer's uniform. To our surprise we found he was our cousin, Father Michael Doyle. He had volunteered as Chaplain when the call went up that Catholics were dying at the front without the aid of a priest. He had spent some months in a big Camp outside London and one night when returning from London he found all his troops at the Railway Station rapidly entraining with full war equipment. He was told that the train was going to Liverpool, and that they were taking a roundabout way to France because of submarines in the Channel! On boarding the boat he lay down to rest and after some time was called and, to his utter amazement, found that he was at Dun Laoghaire Pier. He accompanied the first contingent of troops who marched into Dublin, and was at the encounter at Mount Street Bridge. He told us that the first man to fall there was a Catholic Officer, the finest man in the Regiment. At this particular time he was staying with ~~a~~ ^{the} priests at Donnybrook; who had kindly given him a room, and he was about to return there. We decided that it would be safer to bring him there in our car and I accompanied him, happy that my black clerical clothes would afford some protection for him, ^{wearing as he was British uniform,} as sporadic sniping was still going on throughout the City.

I might mention that after the surrender he was sent with the Scottish Borderers to Tralee. Afterwards, he used to tell us of his amusement with groups of Tralee urchins, who, not knowing that he was a priest, used to proceed him down the street chanting "Up the King's Cousin"!

Realising that the Scottish Borderers had not much use for a Catholic priest he applied for a transfer and was sent to Mesopotamia, where he went through the whole campaign

and took part in the triumphant entry into Baghdad. *Ironically he used to boast to us that he took part in the entry into the only Capital to be captured during the war, Baghdad and Dublin!*
 (His name will occur again in this narrative).

At Christmas that year I found myself in urgent need of a Master to take the classes in Irish, as the previous Master had suddenly resigned. I sought help from Father Tim Corcoran, S.J., Professor of Education in University College, Dublin. When I explained to him that I must have a First Class Honours Graduate ~~with~~ⁱⁿ Irish, he told me that he only knew of one available, but that he was one of the returned prisoners from Frongcock. I assured him that that would constitute no obstacle and so an interview was arranged ~~for~~^{with} Gearoid O'Sullivan. I offered him the appointment. He accepted, but with marked restraint and a rather icy reserve.

Some weeks afterwards, when we had become more intimate, he told me the reason. He disclosed that he, like the other Frongcock~~h~~ internees, had very bitter memories of the hooting and jeering and bitter insults flung at them by the Dublin mob as they were marched as prisoners to the North Wall on the way to ~~Frongcock~~^{Frongoch}. He thought he had come back to hostile countrymen who resented the Easter Rising. He had not learned of the tremendous revulsive feeling that had swept the country at the time of the execution of the Leaders, and the strong wave of nationalism which was becoming more manifest throughout the country for several months. By this time, too, he could not conceal from himself the open hero-worship of the boys in his class, and the warm friendship shown him by the College superiors and members of the staff.

He frequently talked to me of his experiences in the G.P.O. during Easter Week. He told me that it was to him had fallen the honour of hoisting the National Flag over that building, but before that he had had a grimly amusing experience. The main stock of ammunition for the G.P.O. was at Liberty Hall, and it was his duty to see that it arrived at the G.P.O. at 12 Noon, the hour

arranged for the taking of the building: He hired a cab and loaded the ammunition into the cab, filling the interior of it and piling the remainder on the roof. As they proceeded at a trot up O'Connell Street he heard Plunkett's order to charge and saw the rush of the Volunteers ^{into} the Post Office, but at that psychological moment the bottom fell out of the cab and the principal store of ammunition ^{for the Dublin Rising} was scattered around O'Connell Street.

One evening, when my sister-in-law, Christine Leigh Doyle, joined us at a Staff Dinner, she told us of her experience on Easter Monday. She had been at Faryhouse Races with her mother and brother. In the middle of the afternoon a rumour went round the Racecourse that there was some kind of a riot in Dublin, and that all the Military had been ordered back. On returning to Dublin from the Races, when their car emerged from Parnell Square into O'Connell Street, they saw some dead bodies of horses lying on the street. Her mother, as a Dublin citizen, was very indignant at the slackness of the Corporation in leaving the street so encumbered.* As the car approached the Post Office they saw that a car in front of them had been stopped by a young man and there seemed to be very angry interchanges between him and the occupants. At this stage Gearoid smiled and ^{said -} ~~saw~~ "I was the angry young man." He had been sent down to commandeer the first car that came his way. When he held up the car he ordered the man and woman at the back of the car to get out, intimating that he was taking the car. The man explained that he was an ~~English~~ ^{Law Smith} Judge and enquired whether the young man knew what he was saying, the lady ^{an Englishwoman} adding that if he did not go away immediately she would ^{positively} ~~positively~~ call a policeman! To this Gearoid replied, drawing a revolver, that if the lady did not obey his 'order' it would be his painful duty to shoot her.

*Seeing one of her apprentices standing down the deserted street carrying a rifle she exclaimed - "Look at that boy, Kevin, with a gun. I shall certainly tell his father in the morning!"

At this the car was evacuated. Gearoid got in beside the chauffeur, told him to drive to the back entrance of the G.P.O., and the strange end of the story was that the ~~chauffeur~~ chauffeur stayed and fought with them throughout the week in the G.P.O. *

Gearoid was not very long in Knockbeg College when he was made Brigade Commandant for the area. This entailed an enormous amount of work in enlisting and training Volunteers in the area, where there had been very little volunteer activity up to that time. It meant that he was out nearly every night with his bicycle patrolling the countryside for miles around and getting back to the College in the small hours of the morning. He confessed later to a very intimate friend that on every night, on his return, he used to kneel down and say the Rosary, offering it for the intention that God would give him the grace not to neglect his College duties because of his Volunteer activities.

As a teacher he was a phenomenal success, which fact could only be explained by the boys' admiration for him. On one occasion I heard a class of boys under 12, who had come to the College in September, being examined in March by Intermediate Inspector, Joseph O'Neill (who afterwards became Secretary of the Department of Education), and that class was examined through the medium of Irish. A former pupil of Gearoid, in his final year of the Intermediate, got First Place in Ireland in Irish and the Gold Medal for free composition in Irish. For the impromptu composition in Irish the boy had chosen as his subject a dialogue between a country mouse and a town mouse, in which the town mouse spoke in prose and the country mouse in verse, using several of the Old Irish metres. That boy's class was so advanced that the Course followed was the Course for the Honours Degree in University College, Dublin.

Meanwhile my friends had proceeded down O'Connell's Bridge. They were hailed by a Protestant clergyman friend, who told them there was an armed riot in the city, that a policeman had been shot at the Castle gates, and that the journey to their home at Rathgar was highly dangerous. They drove cautiously to Jerry's Hotel, which the male member of the party entered in search of information. The ladies waited anxiously in the car, when to their terror an uncouth, hairy face was thrust through the window. They were reassured, however, by the anxious question - "Ladies, what won the last race?"

In 1918 a daring scheme was adopted of a training camp for Volunteer Officers at Glandore West Cork. Gearoid was prominent in the training exercises there. He wrote to tell me that he had just received a summons to appear in Court to answer a charge of a seditious speech in Skibbereen the previous January. I determined to proceed to Glandore in case I could be of any assistance in connection with the trial. While there I made the acquaintance of a very striking personality, Jim Fortune, the village ^{shoemaker} sage, a typical Hans Sachs of German Legend, who for hours entertained me with local lore as I sat on a stool in his little shop, and in the ^{authentic} ~~true~~ manner of Hans Sachs, emphasised his remarks with the blows of his shoemaker's hammer.

One day Gearoid arranged for me to go to Baltimore for a boat trip to the islands of the harbour, and out to Cape Clear. The local Captain of the Volunteers provided a motor boat for the trip. I visited several of the islands where we deposited strange longitudinal parcels. The wily Volunteer had taken advantage of the innocent priest's trip to distribute rifles to the Volunteers on the islands.

When the day of the trial arrived I went into Skibbereen, as Gearoid's Counsel had intimated that he wished to call me for evidence of character. On arrival at the Courthouse I found it surrounded by a large body of troops in full war kit. It was a court of summary jurisdiction presided over by two Resident Magistrates, paid officials of the British Crown. The prosecution was in the hands of the Crown Prosecutor for West Cork, Jasper Wolfe (What a gorgeous name for the villain of a Victorian melodrama!)

An R.I.C. Constable gave evidence of the seditious speech, and then Wolfe rose for the attack. His charge

to the Court was made in a spirit of bitter viciousness. Amongst other things he shouted out 'What was this man doing in Knockbeg College? Teaching the boys to shoot from behind hedges!' At this stage I leaned over to Gearoid's Counsel and asked was he not going to protest against this ^{gratuitous insinuation} ~~lie~~ against both Gearoid and the College. The Counsel was a very young man, and apparently a rabbit who considered discretion the better part of a Counsel's valour. ~~and~~ He conveyed to me, in a nervous manner, that any protest made in a Court of that type would be absolutely futile.

When Wolfe's charge was finished I was summoned to the witness's dock for evidence of character. In very clear terms I stated what I knew of Gearoid and his character. Contrary to the usual practice, Wolfe interrupted me several times and challenged my statements. He went so far as on two separate occasions to shout at me "On your Oath, Father! On your Oath!"

(The tension prevailing in the Court may be realised from the fact that the local Captain of Volunteers, who was present at the back of the Court, told me afterwards that he had his hand on a Webley revolver in his pocket, and that, if Wolfe had again repeated "On your Oath", the Webley would have gone into action. I precipitately changed the subject of conversation.)

I persisted in making my statement, and insistently qualified the insinuation made against Gearoid's teaching in the College and the discipline of the College as absolutely baseless and false. Several times there were bursts of applause from the back of the Court, followed by angry threats from the Bench to have the Court cleared. Finally, the decision of the Court was given. The accused was guilty. That caused us no surprise as this Court seemed to have been constituted to bring in

that verdict always. He was sentenced to nine months in Cork Jail.

The alleged seditious speech had been made, not by Gearóid, but by Michael Collins, so that Gearóid had at least the satisfaction of bearing the penalty in the place of his greatest friend.

That afternoon he was marched hand-cuffed through the streets of Skibbereen to the Railway Station surrounded by armed military. His brother, Donald, and I walked at the end of this cortège. When the train was about to leave we could not even shake with the hand-cuffed prisoner. As Donald and I walked back from the Station we tried to carry our heads high, but our hearts were leaden. For about the first and only occasion during the course of the liberation movement I felt tempted to despair of the outcome. In the Main Street we met the Administrator of the Cathedral, an old College friend of mine. As we were talking to him Jasper Wolfe appeared, walking down the Street. In a spirit of sheer mischievousness the Administrator called him over and introduced him to me. He conversed most affably, and amongst other subjects discussed some of the political prisoners for whose jail sentences he was responsible. He assured us that some of them were ruffians, but that he found Fionán Lynch a most charming fellow! I tried to rise to the social demands of the occasion, but my resentment was too bitter after my experiences of British Justice, and the unchecked insults offered to me in the Court that day.

Wolfe was an exceedingly able lawyer with a very big practice. He was a man with a high sense of duty according to his lights, and hence his zeal as a Crown Prosecutor. When the national Government was set up he showed himself equally determined to manifest his loyalty to that Government. Many of the men who were prosecuted

by him became friends of his. When as Barrister Gearoid O'Sullivan joined the Southern Circuit he regularly and frequently received briefs from Wolfe, whose prestige in the profession was manifested when he was elected President of the Law Society. He publicly ~~disclaimed~~ ^{proclaimed} himself— "I had the honour and privilege of being sentenced to death three times, but the most peculiar aspect of that was that all three of my would-be executioners afterwards became my warmest friends".

~~As~~ The crowning testimony to the man's integrity was his election on three separate occasions by the people of West Cork as their Deputy in the Dail.

Gearoid's jail experiences in no way differed from those of his comrades of the period. He took part in prolonged hunger strikes in order to extort the treatment as a political prisoner, experiences which very gravely affected his health.

in the meantime, I had to find a Master to act as deputy for Gearoid at Knockbeg College. Through "the underground" I learned that there was a highly qualified man who would be willing to come to us. ^{Commander at the Four Courts in 1916,} He was Frank Fahy, who for fourteen years had been a Master at Castleknock College. Towards the end of the previous term the College had been raided by the Crown Forces. The College authorities attributed these raids to the presence of Mr. Fahy on the staff, and hence it was conveyed to him that it would be better for him to seek an appointment in ^{elsewhere} ~~another~~ College. He was "on the run" and it appeared that his arrest was imminent. I got in touch with him, offered him the appointment, and he accepted. He came to Knockbeg as "Mr. Murphy", where he did excellent work, and held the classes until Gearoid was able to resume.

Mr. Fahy afterwards became the universally respected first Speaker of the Dail.

For "good conduct" Gearoid had a remission of three months of his sentence. He was able to write to me a few times, and finally sent me word of the date of his release. I travelled to Cork on the previous day. On the morning of the release his brother, Donald, and I drove to the Prison gates. The Warden at the gate, in an excess of politeness, invited us inside to take shelter in the archway. After a short time, Gearoid, trying to walk very erect, in spite of his weakness, joined us. We drove him to a hotel where we tried to obtain some nourishment suitable to his condition. That afternoon he and I joined the Dublin train which we left at Maryboro, where a car was waiting to take us to Knockbeg. When we arrived at the avenue gates we found the avenue lined on both sides by a mass of wildly cheering boys, celebrating the return of the Master to whom they were so devoted. They had persuaded the Vice-Rector to declare off all study for the evening in order that this welcome might be properly organised.

Gearoid insisted on almost immediately resuming his duties in the College, ^{and his activities} with the Volunteers, in spite of his debilitated condition, which yielded slowly to a careful dietary.

When the news of LLOYD George's Plot ^{"Loman"} broke he was summoned immediately to Dublin. In order to cover the journey I travelled with him in a car which took a circuitous route to the City. I deposited him at one of the "favourite lairs" of Michael Collins - the West Cork Hotel - which was owned by Miss McCarthy of West Cork, one of the ^{unsung} ~~ensuing~~ heroines of the movement.

~~After this Gearoid retired from the College as he was appointed Adjutant General of the Volunteers.~~

When the threat of conscription became urgent, Gearoid and I contacted some prominent people in Carlow and arranged to have a public meeting called in Market

Square on a certain Sunday. A large crowd assembled and was addressed by several priests and prominent laymen. It was decided to form a small Committee to draw up a plan of action for the Carlow population as distinct from the Volunteers. Also, a public subscription was opened to which each priest present contributed £50, and generous subscriptions were also made by the other speakers. Within a few weeks a large sum was collected and considerable stocks of food were laid in for the emergency. The Defence Committee met in Knockbeg College, and after several long sessions plans were drawn up for the civilian population as soon as the conscription decree was issued. At these conferences Gearoid's clear, decisive military outlook was invaluable.

Amongst other provisions it was decided that in case of the emergency all able-bodied males were to disperse through the Slieve Margy Hills, so as to avoid being seized by the press-gangs. A well-known personage, on hearing of this draconian decree, pathetically pleaded that he must be exempt, as everyone should know what would happen to him if he got his feet wet! Afterwards, he was a stout opponent of the Treaty, regarding its acceptance as treachery to the nation. Such a case was by no means a unique phenomenon in those days.

We also arranged for a general meeting of the priests of the Diocese to be held in Kildare. The meeting duly came off in a dinghy cinema in Kildare, but the majority of the priests were not prepared to face the crisis with the realistic outlook that had been manifested in Carlow, and the meeting adjourned without any decisive course of action being decided upon. Light relief during the meeting was afforded by a timorous cleric who feared a nigger in the wood-pile, and made a vigorous search of the tawdry scenery and surroundings of the stage in the ~~the~~ ^{fear} of finding some hidden spy.

Shortly after the disclosure of the mythical
~~In the same year Lloyd George produced his famous~~

'German Plot' ~~and it was about this time that~~ Michael Collins summoned Gearoid O'Sullivan to Dublin and informed him that he would have to take up whole-time work in Dublin. He resigned from the College, and became Adjutant General of the Volunteers.

On the creation of the National Army he was made Adjutant General with the rank of Major General. Michael Collins wished to have me as first Chaplain of the National Army and as Commander-in-chief he directed Gearoid to write to my Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Foley, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, requesting him, on behalf of the Commander-in-chief, to appoint me Chaplain. The letter was delivered personally by a Staff Officer, Capt. Hugo McNeill. The Bishop immediately dictated a curt refusal, and democratically addressed the letter to 'Mr. Gerald O'Sullivan'. His Lordship was a Nationalist of the Home Rule School who found it difficult to adapt himself to the new regime, which he was inclined to regard as a mushroom growth of doubtful ^{provenance} ~~providence~~.

By a strange coincidence the cortege of his state funeral passed by the G.P.O. on Easter Monday. As it was on Easter Monday that he had hoisted the National Flag for the first time over the building.

At the Requiem the Mass had been served by his Novice son and the Novice son of Diarmuid O'Hegarty, both members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, the comrade sons of comrade fathers.

After his death an elegy ^{in Irish} was written by Diarmuid O'Hegarty, the comrade who occupied in his affection a place second only to Michael Collins.

(Translation of Elegy)

IN FOND REMEMBRANCE

The generation that conceived that wonderful Vision
Of the Easter of 1916 kindled a spark
In a land that had been in sore bondage.

That time when Ireland was in death's grip
And the crowd of the insincere speech wooing her to exchange
Her heritage for a pot of poor filthy porridge.

Young Gearoid was among the Group in the Speckled House of the
Fenians in the Shadowy Glen -
That House in which no Lamp of Hope shone since
The torch of 1867 was quenched.

The Heroic band took control of the House from the wicked Hag
And lit their way with the fire of their eyes and with the
Brightness of their sacrificial Vision (Dream).

They harnessed the Liath Macha (Cuchullan's Steed) in the
Stable of the Hound (Cuchullan) and the fairy Senglend of
Liberty was in their company and they spread the news around
Ireland's Coast that the old Torch was ablaze again at
the G.P.O. Ath Cliath.

And the men of Ireland at war with England, with
Showers of bullets the heroic Gaedhil definitely
Declared their refusal to be subject to the Gaill.

It was Gearoid Og unfurled the Republican Flag
High in Freedom's breeze - the breeze that wafted away
For ever the fog from Ban Cnoic Eireann O.

-----oOo-----

II.KEVIN O'HIGGINS

When Kevin O'Higgins was obliged to leave Maynooth College owing to infraction of the rule against smoking (a rule that since has been abolished), he was directed by his Bishop to resume his studies in Carlow College. At the time I was on the staff of that College and as the rooms of the staff were more or less sanctuary, I gave Kevin free use of my room where he could smoke without infringement of the rule. We became very close friends but on his leaving the College I lost touch with him for two or three years. It was only when he was forced to go "on the run" that I again met him, when I sent word to him that Knockbeg would be always available for him ^{at all times of need.}

At that time, in his native county of Leix, he assured me, there were only two other houses where he was sure to get a night's refuge. Of course he could never approach his own home in Stradbally as it was too closely watched.

On his becoming Deputy for Leix the pursuit of him by military and police became ~~so~~ intense, and particularly when he took on the work of organising the National Loan, that had been floated by Michael Collins. He was in incessant movement throughout the country, holding meetings in barns and outhouses, stiffening the national resistance, inviting and collecting subscriptions for the Loan. He succeeded so well that Leix, a county on the whole not very prominent for its ^{Resistance} activities, was second ^{only} to Limerick in heading the list of subscriptions to the Loan. He travelled exclusively on an aged bicycle, clothed in a non-descript suit, and white muffler, ^{that served} ~~as~~ ^{as} substitute for a collar. Typical of his life are the following incidents.

I had been informed through the underground that he would arrive on a certain night at Knockbeg. I sat up all night with Padraic Fleming ^{then a refugee guest in the College,} waiting for him. When dawn

came we went out and walked the College avenue. ~~At~~ To our anxiety he did not yet arrive. At six o'clock I celebrated Mass, ^{which} ~~that~~ was served by Padraic. During Mass I heard the door of the Chapel open, and when Mass was finished found Kevin in a state of complete exhaustion at the end of the Chapel. He had ridden all night and had been forced to take several detours to reach the College. After breakfast and a hot bath he went to bed, and at 8 o'clock that night I had difficulty in waking him for dinner.

On Christmas Night 1919, I was dining with my brother in Carlow. Kevin was to arrive in the College late that night. My sister-in-law made up a basket of the ingredients of the Christmas dinner, which a faithful College servant brought out to the College, occupied at the time only by the servants and myself. After dinner I hurried out to the College and sat with Kevin at his lonely Christmas Dinner.

Usually, when he came to Knockbeg, as it was his safest refuge, he used to stay a few days. Even during these rest periods he was not idle, as he put in several hours ^{of} study every day in preparation for his Law Final. He asked me to write to Mr. George Cussen, Solicitor, Dublin, for ^{the latter's} ~~his~~ Law Notes which were indispensable at the time for success in the Law Examination. I wrote to Mr. Cussen, simply saying that I wanted his Notes and added the phrase "qui currit legat". Mr. Cussen correctly interpreted the "qui currit" and sent me the Notes, and afterwards when he became a special friend of mine told me that he had suspected the identity of the person for whom they were intended.

(When as Minister of Justice Kevin was setting up the new Courts of the National Government he asked Mr. Cussen to become the first District Justice, choosing him because of his legal pre-eminence, so as to set a high

standard for the men who would be appointed District Justices. Mr. Cussen, as a matter of national duty, accepted the appointment, at the cost of a sacrifice of a very lucrative practice. During his first year of office, with the tragic Civil War devastating the country, in his area (in our North Kildare and Dublin County) eighteen of his Courthouses were burned down. But he carried on tranquilly, zealously, with unimpaired dignity, undismayed, the embodiment of even-handed justice tempered by kindness and mercy. Subsequently, he became Metropolitan Magistrate of Dublin. At a dinner party he gave one night at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, at which were present his wife, Kevin and his wife, Patrick Hogan, Minister of Agriculture, and myself, our table was approached by the Maynooth Dean (who had become a Bishop) responsible for Kevin's departure from the College. On being introduced to Mrs. O'Higgins, His Lordship humourously inquired if she was aware that it was he who had provided her with a husband. The lady gracefully acknowledged the service rendered.

Each time that Kevin was about to sit for the Law Final he was warned off the previous night by Michael Collins who had learned through his Intelligence that the Examination Hall was to be beset by detectives to effect Kevin's arrest. During this period many of the prominent men in the movement came regularly to us in Knockbeg. So much so that amongst the police and military in Carlow it was freely referred to as "The Rebels' Paradise", a 'Paradise', the ground of which they never ventured to violate, at a time when police raids were the order of the day throughout the country. Probably they were convinced that the gates of that 'paradise' would be defended by desperate men.

One of the most popular of all our visitors was Rory

O'Connor, who used gaily to assure me that I would die on the scaffold. He became one of Kevin's closest friends, so much so that it was Rory and not one of his brothers whom he selected for best man at his wedding.

(The most agonising decision of Kevin's life was ^{when} that as Minister of Justice ~~when~~ he had to sign the warrant for Rory's execution. A decision on which no one could sit in judgment unless acquainted with all the terrible circumstances that determined the deed).

Kevin's father lived in Stradbally, where he spent his life in the service of the poor as Dispensary Doctor. ^{During the Black and Tan terror} The British arrested him in spite of his advanced age and lodged him in the Hare Internment Camp at the Curragh, apparently because he was the father of his ^{activist} sons.

One night during the Civil War when the old Doctor was alone in the house with his wife, a body of young men demanded admission. He brought them into the diningroom where his wife was sitting and, in her presence, they shot him dead - again, apparently because he was the father of his sons, Kevin, Tom and Brian. The daughters of the house were absent at the time in Maryboro, and on returning and witnessing the terrible scene in the diningroom, with their father lying dead in pools of his own blood, they were naturally overcome with horror and grief and were on the point of collapse, but the heroic mother, a frail little mother of a very large family, full of the characteristic faith of the Sullivans said to them, "Kneel down, children, and say 'Thy Will be done', now that it is worth saying it!" The following day I went down to see her. She was resting in her bedroom, her Rosary Beads in her hands, and when I tried to stammer some words of consolation she looked up at me and said: "Father, it is only a tiny thorn from Our Lord's Crown".

At Knockbeg College, Kevin had met Miss Brigid Cole,

a distinguished member of the Staff, who afterwards became his wife. At the marriage breakfast (where my ~~table~~ ^{neighbour at} ~~companion~~ ^{table} was Eamonn de Valera) the Toast of the "Men of 1916" was assigned to me. *I append the text of it.*

During the Treaty negotiations I was in constant touch with Kevin. As a member of the Cabinet he received each day a verbatim transcript of the negotiations of the previous day. He frequently allowed me to read these reports which one day, when publication becomes possible, will be of engrossing interest for the people of Ireland.

After the ill-fated Boundary Commission he wrote me the following letter:-

"Department of Justice,
DUBLIN.

12.12.'25.

Dear Father Doyle,

The last three weeks have left me somewhat 'winded' but may I pant a line of gratitude for your telegram. What an escape! The Feetham line signed by our representative would have written 'Finis' to our little three years history and - 'sicut erat in principio! The agreement while not ideal does really represent the best and only solution of the wretched tangle. The opposition here had warmth without brilliance. With most of them the dominant feeling was intense disappointment at our failure to break our necks when everything pointed to that consummation. I hope that you will find, or make, an opportunity for an early 'visitation'.

Very Sincerely yours,

CASEY."

(The explanation of his signature 'CASEY' is that during his visits to Knockbeg while 'on the run' he was known generally in the house as 'Casey' - the phonetic rendering of his initials 'K.C.')

On the evening he was murdered, an urgent message reached me from the Civic Guards to go immediately to his house at Cross Avenue, Blackrock. Unfortunately, he had died before I reached him. The following morning I celebrated a Requiem Mass in his house, and at the State funeral I had the melancholy distinction of heading the procession.

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MICHAEL COLLINS

It was through Gearoid O'Sullivan that I first became acquainted with Michael Collins, and came under the spell of his strong personality. On visits to Dublin, I used to meet him in the Harcourt Street Headquarters before the hunt for him became too hot. Gearoid had let him know that I was willing to help in any way I could, and he did not hesitate to avail of that assistance when occasion arose.

On coming to Naas I used to meet him more frequently in Dublin as Naas was an important link in his Intelligence Service. One of the most important men in the Intelligence Service was Jeremiah Maher, who as a Sergeant in the R.I.C. was Secretary in Naas to the County Inspector, ~~and~~ afterwards a Commissioner of the R.I.C. (These Commissioners were a new appointment, being given jurisdiction over a group of three or four counties). In this way practically all important police communications passed through Maher's hands. Summaries of these documents were transmitted to Collins. Publicly in Naas I did not know Maher, but used to meet him late at night in a household that was friendly to us both.

When I wished to meet Michael Collins, word was sent to him of the train by which I should arrive at Kingsbridge. The Station there was always beset by G-Men (Detectives - Special Branch). Usually, when passing through the Station gates I would be passed out by a young man who would murmur an address and a name as he passed. On calling to the address I used to be informed of the time and place at which Collins would meet me. On one occasion the place of meeting was a room on the first floor of the Gresham Hotel, where were assembled for lunch six or seven of the leading men of the Liberation movement. The waiter at the table was a Volunteer who afterwards served in the same

capacity in London with our delegates during the Treaty negotiations. During the lunch there was a screeching of brakes outside. Collins walked swiftly to the window and drawing aside the curtains saw Black and Tan lorries drawn up outside. He returned to the table and told us to continue our lunch, remarking "These fellows are only raiding the house next door!"

On another occasion I was told by the emissary at Kingsbridge to go to St. Enda's College, Rathfarnham. There I met Joe O'Reilly, who afterwards became Col. O'Reilly and A.D.C. to the Governor General. He told me to go to the Mansion House, where there was a secret session of the Dail in the Pillar Room. On arrival at the Mansion House I was met by a young man who went into the Dail session and brought out Michael Collins. He gave me a copy of a super-secret code, that had just been issued to only a few of the highest placed R.I.C. officials in the country, telling me to bring it down to Maher for immediate use.

In the Spring of 1920, I arranged to go to Rome with my brother's wife and her mother, Mrs. Anne Leigh of Rathgar. On hearing of this Collins sent me word that he wished to see me. He arranged to meet me at Mrs. Leigh's business premises in Mary's Abbey. (It should be remembered that Mrs. Leigh was one of the first to come to the financial aid of the Provisional Government in the first days of its existence, before arrangements had been made with the Banks. Gearoid O'Sullivan and Eamonn Duggan had called on her and told her of the urgent need of ready money. She immediately wrote for them a cheque for £600).

Over the tea cups we had a long talk about matters Michael wished to have conveyed to Dr. O'Hagan of the Irish College, Rome. When the interview was over, in the bright sunshine of a spring afternoon, pushing his bicycle, he walked down Mary's Abbey with me; down Mary Street

and Henry Street, at the Pillar end of which he bade me goodbye, and pedalled coolly away.

We arrived in Rome on the Tuesday night of Holy Week. My friends had arranged to stay at the Grand Hotel, while I stayed at the Irish College, at the kind invitation of Dr. O'Hagan. At the time Dr. O'Hagan had a double function in Rome - publicly as informal representative of the Irish Hierarchy, and privately as the representative of the Liberation movement. Ireland did not count for very much in war-time Rome. It was significant that Dr. O'Hagan was the only head of a national College in Rome who had not been favoured with the dignity and title 'Monsignor' (After the establishment of the National Government that dignity was conferred upon him).

In a long talk on that Tuesday night I gave Dr. O'Hagan a minute account of affairs in Ireland and especially of the ravages of the Black and Tan Terror. He listened patiently and then he told me that he had very grave news that he had learned from private sources that the Vatican was about to issue a condemnation of the Irish Liberation Movement, not merely of the Volunteers but also of the *whole* Sinn Fein Organisation. He had been told that the condemnation had already been formulated, and would probably be soon ~~published~~ ^{promulgated}. The British Foreign Office had been working might and main to convince the Vatican that the Liberation Movement was an attempt at anarchical revolution promoted by irresponsibles whose main technique was murder. Amongst the devices to curry favour with the Vatican, England had offered, at a time when fuel was so scarce in Italy, that the English Embassy in Rome ~~should~~ ^{could} not be heated, to heat the immense spaces of the Vatican Galleries for the period of the war, an offer which the Vatican coldly declined.

Practically the only influence on the opposite side was Dr. O'Hagan, who, as a simple priest, could contact the

Vatican only at a humble level. To complicate the situation for us, owing to war and post-war conditions, our Bishops had not been able to make their 'ad limina visits' to Rome, and of course there was no Nuncio in Ireland.

Monsignor O'Hagan spoke of the grave dangers of the situation which would arise in Ireland if the Papal condemnation of the Liberation came just then with the Black and Tan Terror raging at its worst. I agreed with him that the age-long unbroken tradition of Irish loyalty to the Holy See would be strained to perilous proximity to breaking point. He said that our only hope now lay with Dr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, an uncompromising lover of Ireland, who was to arrive in Rome the following morning, and who could be relied upon to give the Holy Father the whole truth about the situation in Ireland. Dr. Mannix had been on his way to Ireland to visit his aged mother, whom he had not seen since he left for Australia when the British Navy stopped the liner on which he was travelling and arrested him on the high seas. ^{Naval exploit} This ~~method~~ was obviously dictated through fear of the reactions of the visit of this patriotic Prelate to Ireland in the conditions then prevailing in the country. ^{The Archbishop} He was taken prisoner to London, where he was released in the early hours of the morning with the strict injunction that he was forbidden to travel to Ireland or to visit the West coast of Britain. He proceeded to the Hammersmith Training College, ^{for teachers,} which was under the management of the Irish Vincentian Fathers. He failed to waken anyone in the household, and then proceeded to the nearby Convent of Nazareth Nuns, where he resided during his stay in London, much to the disappointment of the good Vincentians at missing so thrice welcome a guest.

Michael Collins told me that he had communicated with His Grace and told him that if he wished to come to Ireland means would certainly be found to bring him there, but

His Grace, as an Australian citizen did not wish to offer this public defiance ~~to~~ Imperial Authority.

On Wednesday morning I went with Monsignor O'Hagan to the Railway Station in Rome, where we found a group of priests and a number of young lay students from the Rome University, who, in the name of liberty, had come to welcome the Archbishop to Rome. He was deeply touched by this gesture of the young Romans. He expressed his surprise at finding me in Rome, who last had seen him when saying goodbye on the evening of the day on which he was consecrated at Maynooth College. During my student days he was President and had proved himself a magnanimous friend to me. For my private study of music he had given me facilities ^{such} as had never before been given to a Maynooth student, so that I had, and still have, nothing but the most grateful memories of my former President.

He came with us to the Irish College, where he officiated at the Holy Week Ceremonies. On Holy Thursday morning I had the privilege of receiving Holy Communion from the consecrated hands of him who had so often given me the Blessed Sacrament in Maynooth. On Easter Sunday Dr. O'Hagan gave a reception in the Irish College, attended by many distinguished ecclesiastics. At a subsequent informal concert a German Cardinal got tremendous applause for his spirited singing in English of "The Good ^{Rhine} Wine".

Amongst the guests were Mr. and Mrs. George Gavin Duffy, the official representative in Rome of our Liberation Movement. As I had already known Mrs. Gavin Duffy, our party had paid a courtesy call upon them. They occupied a suite in the Hotel Flora, near the ^{Pincian} ~~Pincian~~ Gardens. The outer door of their suite bore a plaque on which was inscribed "Délégation ^{de la} République Irlandaise".

Gavin Duffy had been sent to Paris as our Representative

I have in my possession a photograph showing him, Mrs. Gavin Duffy and Mr. Sean T. O'Kelly (our present President) about to enter a car displaying our tricolour in a Paris Street. They were about to start for Versailles to put the Irish Case before the Peace Conference. English power took good care that they would not be received, and that the Irish Case would not be on the agenda of the Conference, the Conference that boasted of its policy of self-determination for ~~other~~ ^{all} countries. Ultimately, the French Government informed Gavin Duffy that he was an unwelcome visitor and virtually expelled him, granting him, however, the diplomatic courtesy of a special ^{reserved} carriage on the Express that bore him to Belgium. After some time he had been sent to Rome as Irish Representative.

The Vatican Authorities had declined to receive Mr. Gavin Duffy as Diplomatic Representative, and for that reason his activities in Rome were very restricted. Following the diplomatic protocol he had not entered Saint Peter's, as he had not been officially received at the Vatican. But the presence of the young University students at the Railway Station to receive Archbishop Mannix as defender of Irish Independence was testimony that Mr. Gavin Duffy's influence was effectually at work in Rome. On the Thursday evening of Easter Week he and Mrs. Gavin Duffy entertained our party to dinner and afterwards took us to a performance of Wagner's "Parsifal". In the Opera House Mr. Duffy indicated to me two young men seated immediately in front of us, and humourously confided to me "Two Buachailli Black and Tan!". They were ~~Attaches~~ ^{Attaches} from the British Embassy. (At the time everything English in our eyes was tarred with the Black and Tan brush).

The Tuesday of Easter Week was fixed for the Archbishop's audience with the Holy Father. To our supreme delight, His Grace invited us to go with him to the Vatican, telling us

that, after the audience, he would introduce us to the Holy Father. We set out from the Irish College in two cars and on arrival at the Vatican were directed to the Courtyard of Pope Damasus, where distinguished visitors are received. A company of Swiss Guards was drawn up to receive His Grace, their halberds clattered on the pavement as he descended from his car. He was met at the door of the Palace by two Prelates who immediately conducted him up the Royal Staircase and brought him immediately to the Pope's private Library. A Prelate took us in charge, led us ~~to~~ ^{up} the staircase and, with a pause of five or ten minutes in each, led us into one after another of the magnificent Halls, in each of which a Noble Guard was stationed. ^{On us} The strain of waiting was intense, realizing, ^{as we did,} the tremendous issue that hung upon the audience. Finally, ^{after about half an hour,} in an almost exhausted condition, we were led into the Small Throne Room and told to kneel down, as the Holy Father would soon be with us. Standing near the door, leading into the private Library, were a Noble Guard and a Papal Chamberlain, of British Nationality, a convert member of a well-known industrial ^{company of manufacturers.} ~~concern.~~ In a tone that was made perfectly audible for us he sneeringly remarked to the Noble Guard, "Well, I expect His Grace ^{is being} ~~has been~~ taught his lesson this morning". The remark put a very painful strain on our ^{sense} ~~heart~~ of fraternal charity. ^{When is throttling lawful?!}

At length the door of the private Library opened, and there appeared Archbishop Cerratti, who was in attendance on His Holiness that morning. Obviously, he had been selected for his familiarity with affairs in Australia, where he had been Papal Nuncio.* He said something to the Prelate who was looking after us, he came over to us, told us to rise, and informed us that the ^{whole} ~~complete~~ party, including the ladies, was to proceed into the Library.

Immediately our spirits soared as we knew it was a very ^{He had been Nuncio in Austria also. On the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand in 1916 he had cryptically cabled to the Pope - "Eamus parati" - The temple of the War-god is open.}

great privilege to have ladies admitted into the private apartments, unless in the case of near relatives of His Holiness. When we entered the Library the Archbishop was standing beside the frail little white-clad figure of the Pope. One glance at the look of glad confidence on the face of the Archbishop told us that everything was all right. The Pope, standing with his hands in his soutane pockets, spoke to each one of us in turn in a most friendly, paternal manner. He asked me was I a student in Rome, and I had to assure him that I was a venerable cleric in Ireland of thirteen years standing. On asking me where I lived and on my replying Naas, I saw a puzzled frown crossing his face and, in alarm, I wondered how Naas had gone wrong in my absence! But he immediately continued the conversation with me, and gave me faculties to impart the Papal Blessing to the people of Naas on my return. (It was only afterwards that I realized why the mention of Naas seemed to give His Holiness pause. I remembered that the word 'Naas' occurs in the Old Testament in the Second Book of Kings, and is the name of one of the princes who remained faithful to King David).

As we were about to leave the Library, the Pope took from his desk a little case containing a gold Rosary Beads which he handed to His Grace with the words "For your mother in Ireland".

On arrival at the Irish College, the Archbishop told us of the tremendous success of his interview. He had told the Pope the whole truth of the conditions of affairs in Ireland, after which the Pope ^{simply} asked him "What do you want me to do for Ireland?" His Grace then told him of the Irish White Cross, the organisation that had been started for the relief of the surviving victims of the Black and Tans, and suggested that a contribution from His Holiness would be a source of supreme consolation and strength for the Irish people.

A couple of weeks afterwards the Freeman's Journal (Dublin) came out with a banner headline "The Holy Father sends 100,000 lire to the Irish White Cross". Needless to say, the joy throughout the country was profound.

On the following night I gave a dinner party in the leading Restaurant of the City. The table was decorated with our National colours, and a string orchestra provided appropriate music. Amongst the guests were Archbishop Mannix, his cousin Bishop Foley of Ballarat, Mr. and Mrs. Gavin Duffy, Dr. O'Hagan and Dr. Curran of the Irish College, some priests from other Irish houses, and members of my party. The Freeman's Journal also duly recorded this victory celebration.

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On the night that our delegates returned to Dublin with the Treaty, Collins sent me a message to meet him the following morning in the Gresham Hotel, where Eoin O'Duffy had established his Headquarters as Truce ^{Liaison} ~~Liaison~~ Officer with the British. After a long talk on the terms of the Treaty he told me that he was going to the Mansion House for a meeting in which he intended to put before an assembly of Volunteer Officers the terms of the Treaty, telling me to be back for lunch in the Hotel with him about 1 o'clock. I then proceeded to Kevin O'Higgins' Headquarters, where the whole of our Local Government Department was housed in one room, over a tobacconist shop in Exchequer Street. At the time practically every County Council in Ireland was referring its transactions to that Department.* It consisted, as Kevin lovingly remarked, of "himself and Michael de Lacey and one elderly clerk". For some time, in my talk with Kevin, things were painfully strained for each of us, as neither of us knew what the other thought of the Treaty and dreaded mentioning it in view of the close friendship prevailed between us. Finally I pulled myself together and said to Kevin "Michael wants you to come back with

To Kevin's bitter disillusionment the policy of the Government was roundly, summarily and imperiously condemned. De Valera on his return from U.S.A., declared that the leaders at home had bitten off more than they could chew. Competent observers have been found and in England who maintain that the success of the Department played a bigger part in the Volunteer movement in demoralising Britain than in Ireland.

to lunch with him in the Gresham at 1.30". At once a look of tremendous relief spread over Kevin's face, reflecting the relief I also felt. *We were fortunately on the same side of the fence.*

At the luncheon party in the Gresham, Collins presided. In addition to Kevin and myself there were present Eamonn Duggan, a signatory of the Treaty, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Eoin O'Duffy, and Rory O'Connor. Although Rory had voted at the Volunteer meeting against acceptance of the Treaty he was quite reconciled to abide by the majority decision of the Volunteers in favour of it. During the lunch, he took part in an animated conversation about the formation that the new Irish Army ~~could~~ ^{should} adopt and urged very enthusiastically the adaptation of the Swiss System of formation, and still a few months later Rory was out in armed opposition ~~oppositor~~ to the Provisional Government. I have never yet met any of the Volunteer Officers who took up arms in that cause who could give a coherent account of the tragic split that ensued after the acceptance of the majority decision.

Kevin O'Higgins often told me of his conviction that the Grey Eminence of the opposition was Erskine Childers, that strange idealist and perfectionist, who was able to reconcile his idealism with what many would call treachery to his own country, ~~of~~ England, in order to fight for Irish freedom.

Collins, while urging acceptance of the Treaty definitely wanted a strong opposition in the country, but certainly not in arms, in order to strengthen our Government's hands in dealing with Britain. Shortly after Christmas he rang up my sister-in-law in Carlow, asking her to have some propaganda work done in Carlow with Carlow County Council in favour of the Treaty. At the end of the telephone conversation she remarked "I do not think too much about that Treaty of yours", and got the gruff reply "I am glad to hear it. We want opposition".

On Easter Sunday we brought off a big meeting in Naas. A huge crowd assembled in the very spacious Main Street, ^{partly} ~~apparently~~ through interest in the Treaty ^{controversy} ~~debate~~ and ^{partly} ~~apparently~~ through a natural curiosity to see the legendary Michael Collins in the flesh. He spoke at the meeting as also did Eamonn Duggan, Kevin O'Higgins and others, including Desmond Fitzgerald, who throughout the terror period had been our Minister of Information. In interviews with foreign journalists during the worst of that period, ⁱⁿ ~~his~~ cultured, drawling tones he used to assure them that when all this was over he intended to retire to Brittany and write poetry.

I should mention that when the Parish Priest of Naas, ^{an octogenarian} ~~a~~ veteran of the Land League days, heard that Collins and his companions were coming to the meeting, he invited the whole party to lunch at his house before the meeting.

That night, we gave our guests a Public Banquet in the Town Hall. As an orchestra played during the meal it was possible for neighbours to have a quiet conversation without being overheard. Collins was seated by me and through some accidental references Casement's name was mentioned. In a quiet undertone he told me of an incident which had occurred during the Treaty negotiations in London. During these negotiations Lord Beaverbrook had developed a marked admiration and liking for Collins. (As a matter of fact he sent word to the Government, on hearing of Collins' death, that he was coming to the funeral, but the Government had to request him not to come as they could not guarantee his safety). On one occasion Collins had talked to him about the Casement trial and accused the prosecution of disgraceful malice in introducing the matter of the alleged Casement Diary, which reflected so frightfully on Casement's moral character, a procedure which was motivated, he said, solely by a desire to prejudice Casement's cause. When he said "alleged

Diary" Birkenhead asked him was he quite sure of his grounds and, on Collins professing his absolute faith in Casement, Birkenhead asked him would he like to see the Diary. Collins immediately announced his willingness and Birkenhead took him and Eamonn Duggan to the House of Lords, in the Archives of which the book was kept, and had the book produced for their inspection. Collins told me that he was very familiar with Casement's handwriting and that if the book was not authentic it was a devilishly clever forgery.

On ^{my} leaving the banquet room with Collins, a characteristic incident occurred.

The walls of the room were lined with Volunteers armed with rifles as a ~~guard~~ ^{Squad} of Honour. As we walked towards the exit, Collins gave them a friendly grin, and turning to me said "You will see that these lads get a good feed".

On returning to town that night the car containing Collins and some of his colleagues drove to their party Headquarters in Parnell Square. As Collins stepped out of the car, a youth approached and fired ~~the~~ revolver at him at point blank range. Fortunately the aim was very bad, probably owing to the youth's nervousness. He was seized immediately, disarmed and conveyed to Mountjoy Prison. A couple of months afterwards, when speaking to Collins, I asked him what had become of his would-be assassin, and I got the curt reply: "He had a good face ~~and~~ I sent him home to his mother".

One evening during the Truce, Collins, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Eamonn Duggan and Eoin O'Duffy came down to dine with me in Naas. After a very enjoyable night they left for Dublin, driven by Collins' faithful Volunteer chauffeur. Just beyond Clondalkin they suddenly saw a car approaching them driven at a furious speed and

zig-zagging across the road. The inevitable crash came, they were all unhurt but their car was crippled and the other car wrecked and the contents scattered about the road - the contents consisting of some Black and Tans and some female acquaintances. The situation was nasty: A crash with Black and Tans and the Chief ^{liaison} ~~liaison~~ Officer, Eoin O'Duffy, a member of what might be termed ^{maliciously} 'the offending party'. Collins and his party immediately proceeded on foot to the house of the Oblate Fathers in Inchicore. They rang at the door and a venerable figure soon opened it to them. Collins explained that they had just had a bad motor accident, and that he wished to send a most urgent telephone call. He said: "My name is Michael Collins", and got the refreshing reply, "Are you Michael Collins, the murderer? Come in, in God's name". He rang the Castle and explained what had happened and was informed that relief cars would be sent out at once. In a comparatively short time the cars arrived and, to Collins's amazement, one of them was occupied by Cope, the notorious Under-Secretary, who proved himself to be a most affable rescuer. He asked them where they wished to be driven in the City and, on Collins replying "Vaughan's Hotel, Parnell Square", Cope, with a dry smile, commented. "I have heard of it". It had been raided again and again as the suspected haunt of Michael Collins. When they arrived there, Collins suggested to Cope that he had better come along with him and have a little reinforcement against the night air. It proved to be a surprisingly harmonious party, in the course of which Cope airily remarked to Collins, "I believe, Mr. Collins, I was Number One on your shooting list", to which Collins decisively retorted "You were not! You were only Number Three!"

A night in May of that year Collins, ~~and your humble~~ ^{Gearoid O'Sullivan and} ~~the writer~~ ^{servant} were to dine with my brother in Carlow. I went ^{from Naas} down to meet them. They arrived about an hour late and apologised profusely for their tardy arrival. After dinner Collins told us the cause of the delay. He had been held up by an interview with some Russian Emissaries who had come to this country to negotiate a loan, offering as security the Russian Crown Jewels. In the early hours of the morning they drove me back to Naas, and in the course of the journey ^{we} had the wonderful experience of being greeted by the dawn-chorus of the birds.

My last encounter with Collins was in Naas at the time he was on his tour of inspection of the Irish Army Posts. In his inspections he was ruthlessly ^{intolerant} ~~intolerant~~ of any defects, and hence these inspections raised the temperature of the Army Posts to a ^{hectic} ~~high~~ degree. One day I got a message from the Commandant at Naas Military Barracks to go up at once, to function as a lightning-conductor ⁱⁿ ~~from~~ the storm that was anticipated. After the inspection Collins came down to my house for a short time, and then left for Dublin. It was the last time that I saw him alive.

When the question arose, on his death, of bringing his body to Dublin, owing to broken communications by road and rail, it was decided to have the body conveyed by sea to the North Wall, Dublin. On the day the body was due to arrive, I received a message from Army Headquarters to go to Dublin. When I arrived there the Adjutant General told me that he had asked me to come as he knew that I should very much desire to be present at the reception of the body at North Wall. As the body was due to arrive about 11 ^{p.m.} ~~o'clock~~, General Mulcahy and Gearoid O'Sullivan took me in an army car to the North Wall, where we found waiting the members of the Government

and a small group of Collins' most intimately devoted followers. Where the boat was to berth we found the Murichu moored close by. When it transpired that the boat from Cork was going to be very late, the Captain of the Murichu invited the Army Chiefs, members of the Government and myself on board, where he hospitably entertained us with salmon and coffee. There was a long and strained wait until about 2 o'clock, when we saw a light moving down the river. It was the boat from Cork, a cross channel liner. The boat's engines had been cut out, the spacious, empty decks were blazing with light, the solitary figure of the captain stood motionless on the bridge. In the inky darkness of the night the great, gleaming, white vessel came drifting towards us in eerie silence, like a phantom ship of destiny, borne on the black, swiftly in-flowing tidal waters of the Liffey. By some accident, probably due to the strong tide, the vessel crashed noisily against the quay-side. The sudden tearing of the heavily charged silence seemed to have irresistibly snapped a paralysing tension, and a cry of agony broke from the throats of strong men, whose self-control had stoically stood the test of many a searching ordeal.

When the boat was moored, we went on board and as we advanced towards the coffin, covered by the national flag, Emmet Dalton, Collins' companion in the fatal ambush, emerged from the companion-way bearing the dead hero's military cap, stained with blood and brain-matter, the physical remains of that wonder-brain that had served Ireland so nobly. When the coffin was mounted on a waiting gun-carriage, and the Army Chiefs and members of the Government formed up behind it, I walked with them in slow progress over the rough square ^{of the quay-side.} sets. The silence was broken only by the clattering of the gun-carriage's

wheels over their uneven surface, until, in the neighbourhood of Butt Bridge, ~~where~~ rifle shots rang out from the opposite side of the Liffey - why or by whom has never transpired. At the opening of Abbey Street to Burgh Quay, a crowd of poor people were standing in respectful silence, the first people we had met since leaving North Wall. We crossed O'Connell Bridge and proceeded up Westmoreland Street, where some night workers from the printing offices were standing silently on the footpath, and so on through the silent, deserted, brilliantly lit streets up Grafton Street and on to ^{St.} Vincent's Hospital, in the Chapel of which the coffin was placed, and remained until removal to the City Hall for the lying-in-state. In the Chapel, I sorrowfully took leave of the mortal remains of the brilliant, attractive, vital, high-powered personality, endowed with a unique compulsive influence, that for a few years, pregnant with promise, had dominated the course of Irish history. It was in no excess of hollow sentimentality that I stooped, and with reverence and gratitude, kissed his forehead.

On the morning of the funeral, Gearóid O'Sullivan told me that the Army Authorities had requested that I should officiate as Deacon at the Requiem Mass, but the request had been refused by the Ecclesiastical Authorities at the Pro-Cathedral, where the Requiem was celebrated.

I walked in the funeral procession and stood beside the grave at Glasnevin Cemetery until the last sad rites were completed.

Some weeks afterwards a very extraordinary letter was sent to me for consolation and edification. It was so extraordinary that I presumed to have copies of it taken. It was a letter written by Father Ignatius of the Congregation of the Passion, who had been giving a Retreat in Greystones at the time that our delegates were about to

leave for the Treaty Conference. Father Ignatius met Collins there, and in this letter which he afterwards sent to Sister Michael, a nun in the South Presentation Convent, Cork, ~~and~~ a sister of Michael Collins, Father Ignatius gives an account of the encounter. This is the letter, which for many people will disclose an unsuspected aspect of the soul of Michael Collins:-

"St. Anne's Retreat,
St. Helen's,
Lancs.

Friday.

"My dear Sr. Michael,

I am so pleased to get your letter. Many a time have I wished to get in touch with the near ones of "Our Hero".

Yes, Sister, you have the Missioner who knew Michael as only a priest may know his penitent, one who loved him for his big, pure Catholic heart. There is not a man in a million who would have done what Michael did, that he might get to Confession and Holy Communion (I have not met one and I have been a Missioner for years). The facts are these; he was staying at the Grand Hotel, Greystones, while I was giving a Mission there. It was coming near the close of the Mission. Michael was very busy in Dublin, worked and worried almost beyond endurance. He got to Greystones one night very late and very tired. It was the eve of his departure to London, re the **P**act. He got up the next morning as early as 5.30 a.m. and came to the Church, and made a glorious General Confession and received Holy Communion. He said to me after Confession, "Say the Mass for Ireland, and God bless you, Father". He crossed an hour or so later to London.

I said to the Congregation that day - "You saw a big man, you saw a brave man, you saw one of Ireland's hidden saints making no small sacrifice this ~~no~~ morning for the Master".

Sister, I haven't the slightest fear for Michael's

"salvation. Michael is in Eternal Joy. His hidden self was the most glorious part of him. Others may think of him as the great big and brainy Hero, but deep in the heart of an Irish Missioner there is the sweetest truth and thought of all - "Michael Collins was a Saint". Whether others believe it or not is to be of little concern. I knew him as the Master knew him, and to know one's heart is to know the truth.

I was in Italy when I heard the terrible news, it almost broke my heart. Only one thought I treasure - "Michael is waiting for those who love him".

Have no doubt, Sister, Big and Brave and Glorious as he was, he was as humble as a child. One of God's Little Ones in heart.

As I knelt by his grave, I remembered the grand old Irish Faith that said, as he wrung my hand, and dashed away - "May God be always with you, Father". I am so proud to know that his dear sister came across the photograph; tell her to keep it in memory of the Missioner who loved her brother because he was God's own.

I gave Michael a prayer book with a Crucifix inside in memory of the Mission. I wonder if it were found. They told me in Portobello that it was.

Sister, I should love to have some little memento of my Big Boy - that is what I call Michael. Could you secure one for his Missioner friend, and I would be so very grateful, and would treasure it all my life.

I gave a Mission in Co. Cork last year. I may be in Cork next year. If I am I shall call on you.

Every morning I whisper "Michael" over the Chalice of my Holy Mass, and I shall do so until the last Mass Bell sounds for me, and penitent and priest meet in the bright Beyond. I feel that Michael is praying for us there, and waiting for us too.

May Our dear Lord comfort those who loved Michael

"and were loved by him. I, for one, keep happy in the knowledge "Michael was a saint". If others knew him for what he was, they would believe.

With every good wish and blessing,

Very sincerely yours,

IGNATIUS, C.P."

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IV.

PADRAIC FLEMING

At 3 p.m. on 29th March, 1919, Padraic Fleming

(born at Wolfhill, Linn, March 2nd 1894)

Piarais Beaslai, and eighteen others escaped over the walls of Mountjoy Prison in open daylight. Collins had arranged that a bicycle was waiting for each man and instructions as to where each was to go. The ~~twenty entirely~~ escaped and vanished into the unknown, as far as the English Authorities were concerned.

Fleming was instructed to proceed to the house of two maiden ladies, the Misses Gavan Duffy, where he received a warm welcome. He stayed there for some weeks and as he dared not appear outside the house, the good ladies helped him to pass the time by giving him lessons in Irish. As the hunt grew hotter and hotter for all of the escapees, but especially for Fleming, their leader, Collins decided that he must leave the city.

I received word in Knockbeg to expect an important visitor on a certain day. About mid-day on that day I saw a car driving rapidly down the College avenue. I went down to the hall door to meet it, and saw ^{a lady} ~~Mrs. Gavan Duffy~~ stepping from the car. Before this I had not the pleasure of knowing this distinguished lady. While she was introducing herself to me ^{as Mrs. Gavan Duffy} I observed another lady in the back of the car attired in a luxurious fur coat, with fashionable toque, and struggling desperately with a complication of rugs. Finally, the rugs were cast aside and a tall, gaunt

figure stepped from the car, the upper part of which was wrapped in the fur coat and the rest in male attire, and then I was introduced to the man who became one of my greatest friends, Padraic Fleming.

I recollect having heard afterwards that Mrs. Gavin Duffy expended a very large amount in order to induce ~~any~~^{the} Dublin taxi-driver to venture so far into the country in the dangerous circumstances then prevailing.

We found that Padraic's health had been gravely undermined by his terrible prison experiences. My brother, Doctor Doyle, assumed medical care of him and, by the aid of dietary and open air exercises, he began slowly to improve. Gradually we began to extract from him a detailed account of his prison experiences. Amongst ourselves ~~he~~ came to be known as "Fionn", named after his famous warrior prototype.

Fionn, after the hectic doings of his jail days, chafed against the inactivity of his days in the College, rendered imperative by the debilitated condition of his health. One source of consolation was talks with our activist visitors who gave him first-hand information of developments on the Liberation front. After a couple of months he grew very restless, and began to worry about the condition of his own Volunteer Battalion, from which he was so long separated. He said he must arrange to review the Battalion. Though we tried to convince him of the extreme risk, seeing that it was a question of going to his home area, where police were numerous and particularly active in pursuit of the leader of the great escape, he persisted in his determination to accept the risk. My brother, Dr. L. Doyle, of Carlow, gave us the use of his car, which his wife pluckily volunteered to drive, by way of cover.

Early in the afternoon of the day arranged, our fair chauffeuse arrived attired for tennis. After some sets

with members of the staff, and fortified with tea, we prepared to start. Miss Brigid Cole, of the College staff, ~~decided~~ ^{insisted} she must come as chaperone! Just then a visitor arrived, my cousin, Father Michael Doyle, ex-War Chaplain to the British Forces. He insisted on joining the expedition, saying that inexperienced civilians required the presence of a trained warrior on such an occasion. So we set out. I sat in the front of the car with the chauffeuse, whilst Miss Cole sat between Fionn and Father Doyle in the back, the ladies very conspicuous in their white tennis costumes. We drove in wide detours towards our objective. On a long straight strip of the Athy - Castlecomer road, two R.I.C. constables suddenly sprang on to the middle of the road about a hundred yards ahead, yelling "Halt!" We thought it our best policy to do so. The constables advanced slowly and cautiously towards the car, step by step in a crouching attitude, with their rifles trained upon us. Still covering us they took a position on either side of the car. The man on my side, in obviously tense strain, began cross-questioning, which I parried as coolly and carefully as I could. When finally he asked where we were coming from, I had a flash of inspiration. I mentioned a place some miles back, through which we had actually passed, where there was a Protestant Rectory. With two clergymen and two tennis-clad ladies in the car, my story at least sounded plausible. At least it suggested an atmosphere, however, fictitious, of respectability, and loyalty to the Crown. After a few more agitated, incoherent questions, they gruffly told us to drive on, which we did at the highest speed of which the car was capable, as we felt that rifle shots from the rear were a grim possibility. Were the constables as relieved as we were? They gave me the impression of men who felt they were performing an extremely perilous duty. Who

was the tall, gaunt, dark-clad 'non-player' in the back of the car? Personally, I should have felt the strain more acutely if I had then known what I afterwards learned. During the dialogue Fionn had a Webley revolver in each hand, by which each constable was covered, in expectation of a crisis in the cross-questioning. When our excitement died down the party started to "rag" me, declaring it was my "super-superior accent" which had over-awed the simple constables, and saved the situation. We deposited Fionn safely at his destination, and returned to the College. I suffered sharp pangs of conscience over the risk into which we had allowed the ladies to be drawn, and also my brother, whose car was notoriously well-known in the neighbourhood. After some days the Volunteers brought Fionn back to us, greatly exhilarated after his meeting with his old comrades.

When Fionn had first come to the College, he committed to my safe-keeping a brown paper parcel, which I was to guard carefully until he reclaimed it. Later he told me of the contents. When he had been staying with the Misses Gavin Duffy, he had met Mrs. George Gavin Duffy, who naturally had a great admiration for the prison hero. One day, in the course of conversation, she told him of her relations with Casement. When Casement was imprisoned in London, awaiting his trial, he had asked her husband to conduct his defence. At the time Gavin Duffy was working as a Solicitor in London. When it became known that he had conducted Casement's defence all the members of his staff refused point blank to have anything to do with the handling of the case. Then Mrs. Gavin Duffy, ~~the~~ lady with ~~the~~ very distinguished academic record, stepped into the breach and offered her services as clerk. In this way she met Casement repeatedly, ~~and visited~~ ^{visiting} the prison in company with her husband in his professional capacity.

Casement naturally had profound admiration for the distinguished lady who had come to his aid in time of need. The night before his execution he told Mrs. Gavin Duffy that he would like to leave her some memento, but that he had literally nothing but the clothes in which he stood, and that if these had any interest for her she was to take them from the ~~death~~^{gallows} cell the following morning. Knowing Fionn's great admiration for Casement, she brought the clothes for his inspection, and, seeing the veneration with which he viewed them, and feeling that some pleasure was due to him in compensation for all he had suffered, she nobly and generously gave him the relic she so much valued. It was only a few years ago that Fionn, on my urgent insistence, came to resume possession of the clothes, with a view, I understand, to presenting them to the National Museum.

It is interesting to remember that, in going through the clothes, we found, in a pocket of the jacket, a small national tricolour, otherwise all the pockets were empty.

Towards the end of the summer, my brother became alarmed about the marked deterioration in Fionn's health and informed Collins that he considered it absolutely necessary to get Fionn out of the country, away from all the tense excitement of the time, and to arrange for his transfer to a warm, dry climate, where the imminent danger to his lungs might be averted. In spite of the intense search for the escapee that still continued, Collins got him over to Liverpool, where arrangements were made for his passage to the United States. He remained there about two years and returned to Ireland restored to health.

He is now a very successful and prosperous industrialist on an imposing scale. *(Shortly after this was written he passed to his reward, December 5th 1942. R. J. P.)*

During the course of many conversations which I had with Fionn, there gradually evolved an account of his prison

1952 ?

experiences. I realised, not only the propaganda, but also the historical value of his story. I insisted that it was a national duty to put it on record, but Fionn pleaded his inexperience and absolute incapacity to commit the story to writing. I was very troubled about this and, like most people of the national movement in trouble at the time, I went to the unfailing source of help. I went to Dublin and had a talk with Collins about the matter. He said that certainly the story must be recorded, and told me ^{with his usual unquestionable decisiveness} that, if I ultimately failed to prevail on Fionn to write it, I was to do so as he related the various incidents to me. And so the collaboration began.

It was long and laborious owing to Fionn's scrupulous anxiety for minute accuracy, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. When the manuscript was finished the question arose about its printing and publication. I failed absolutely to find a printer with a sufficient sporting sense of sacrifice to take the risk of printing it. At the time, printing presses paid the penalty of a Black and Tan raid of demolition for offences hurtful to the susceptibilities of English tetrarchs in Ireland, and, thus, I had to have recourse to Collins again, bringing the manuscript with me. He told me immediately that he would have it printed. Actually, it was printed by the "under-ground" press, by which was printed An tOglach, the official periodical of the Volunteers. I had asked Collins to write a preface, but he told me that he could not possibly find time to reach upon it, but that he would get it done. And done it was, and brilliantly, by Piarais Beaslai, ^{editor of An tOglach,} himself one of the Mountjoy escapees. The green cover of the booklet served as a title page which bore the following inscription:-

IN MARYBORO AND MOUNTJOY
 THE PRISON EXPERIENCES
 AND PRISON-BREAKING OF
 AN IRISH VOLUNTEER.
 (PADRAIC FLEMING)
 BY AN IRISH PRIEST
 (All Rights Reserved)

Fortitudine Vincit.

On the inside of the cover was stencilled "Support Dail Eireann Loan".

It was only a few weeks on sale in the Dublin shops when a bookseller was awarded three months in prison for the offence of offering it for sale. After this it disappeared entirely from public circulation, *one treasured copy remains on my book-shelves* and at the present time ~~I do not know if there is another copy surviving in the country except the one in my possession.~~

When Fionn was some months in the United States, he brought out a Second Edition of the booklet, a copy of which he had succeeded in bringing with him. This Second Edition differed only in one detail from the original, namely, in that on the cover it bore my full name, at a time when the Black and Tans were still distressingly active here. From the proceeds of the sale Fionn sent me a draft for 500 dollars to be given to Collins for Volunteer funds. (It was only a few weeks ago that the County Manager for Kildare told me that he had read the book in Iowa, shortly after its American publication.)

As the booklet is of genuine historical value and as it is now so scarce and practically unknown, I ^{should} append here the full text, as it was written, without any attempt at emendation, *but for the fact that the Secretary of the Bureau of Military History has told me that he has already acquired two copies.*

*P. L. Doyle, P.P.
 Naas, 1952.*

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 BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
 BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
 No. W.S. 807

A W E D D I N G T O A S T

THE MEN OF 1916

A Toast on the occasion of the
Wedding of KEVIN O'HIGGINS, T.D.E. and
Miss Brigid Cole, October, 27th 1921.

Mr. President, Very Reverend Fathers, Ladies and
Gentlemen -

It has fallen to me to propose the last toast of this happy and memorable day - the toast of the "Men of 1916, Dead and Living". There are some feelings so intimately sacred as to find expression only under the stress of compelling circumstance, and then are poured solely into the private ear of some friend of the soul, feelings that find public expression only under the conviction of the supreme call of duty or of loyalty. To such a call I am essaying a response today, willing however unworthy. Emotions raw from still gaping wounds, memory overladen with images of lethal suffering and heroic grandeur, mind congested with the crowding thoughts of five glorious years, and an Irish heart torn with gratitude and love, how except under the irresistible sense of a debt clamouring for discharge could one presume to find words adequate to such a theme? Hence may I not hope that the seeming indelicacy of the avowal is ~~condemned~~ ^{condoned} and spiritualised by

the quasi-sacramental holiness accruing to the open confession of a quick, human heart ?

The Men of 1916 assumed their heavy and glorious task with a sense of awed and lonely responsibility. They saw the National spirit sunk in the slough of despond consequent upon the disappointment, the gross humiliation and disillusionment of the Home Rule struggle. They saw the question of our Independence slipping away into oblivion amidst the welter of England's war-politics, the international rivalries and ambitions raging amongst the war-mad nations of Europe. They realised that a great heroic gesture was necessary to exorcise the demon of despair, to fan into living flame the dully smouldering embers of the Nation's passion for liberty, to convince all men of the survival of the national soul, to herald to the world the rights that soul demanded. They felt it was the lonely duty of a few, the few elect who felt a strange stirring of the blood, the periodic eruption of the national consciousness that all through the period of foreign occupation broke forth with a strangely rhythmic recurrence, the life-pulse of the Nation with periodicity of intensity. They heard the call of Red Hugh, of Phelim O'Neill, of Sarsfield, of Tone, of Mitchell, and, perhaps most of all O'Donovan Rossa, "splendid in the proud manhood of him, splendid in the heroic grace of him, splendid in the Gaelic strength, and charity and truth of him". With calm confidence and lofty exalt-

ation of a vicarious sacrifice they did "a hard, sweet thing", almost with naked hands they "went out against the Gall", to do knightly service even unto death for

"The passionate Dark Rose whose strange
surprise
Of beauty nerved them to their enterprise".

In 1916 they did not conquer the Saxons, it is true; but they conquered the Gaels, leading them through a baptism of blood to a new, a stronger, and a purer life. The responsibility that laggards, even of our own house, would fain have made a pillory was, as a French publicist recently has written, proudly assumed by the survivors of the gallant band and raised aloft as a pedestal for the culminating glory of the task. Some paid the ultimate price of their knightly devotion. We passionately regret them. But our sorrow is tempered and transcended by our pride, and by our realization of the glorious recompense their death has brought them.

"Tears for the dead, but for them
Spirits of wind and flame and fire
Raise we a loftier requiem,
Build we a lordlier funeral pyre".

With their names I fittingly associate the names of those who have fallen in our War of the last few years whether they fell on the fields of heroic battle, or fell beneath the bullets or bayonets of hired assassins, or faced in the prison-cell a death whose gristly horror was transformed into beauty by their martyr's fortitude, or walked with proud confidence and the laughter of God's heroes in their hearts to the gibbet of the British Empire.

Exultantly singing in our hearts today are those lovely lines of Seamus O'Sullivan:-

"Little Dark Rose, the rain is in their faces,
Mourn not the past of agony and drouth;
Proud-eyed and strong they stride the starry spaces,
Laughter has flowed from every bleeding mouth.
Weep not their wounds who loved your eyes of sorrow,
Red wine of joy stains every pierced side,
Sons of young Angus, princes of the morrow,
Sunlight and wind acclaim the crucified".

Of the living ~~and~~^{the} finest and truest thing I can say is that they have nobly and unfalteringly maintained the tradition, the tradition of our heroic Dead, mindful of the message of Pearse, their Chief - "Patriotism is in large part ~~a~~^a memory of heroic dead men, and a striving to accomplish some task left unfinished by them". Animated by the same spirit of stern duty and heroic abnegation, they have roused the whole Nation to a realization of the sacredness of the work that is afoot, its claims upon the generous service of every loyal citizen, the conviction of the ultimate triumph of right over wrong - in brief they have awakened and fortified the national will-for-liberation. As a fundamental and cohesive factor for the whole national effort they have raised and brought to a wondrous state of efficiency the Volunteer Army of Ireland. The Army has become the finest expression of the National Spirit. It has been raised for the one object - to fight on behalf of Justice and to defend the rights that Justice concedes. Its mainstay is a lofty sense of duty and the infectious enthusiasm

that a complete surrender to duty always engenders, its bond ~~of~~^a rivalry of honour - its motto the old chivalric war-cry—God and my duty! That Army has fought the British Empire, a struggle at first sight apparently of a pigmy against a giant, but in reality it proves to be between a spirit and material force. And already the scales of victory are tilted on the side of the spirit. This success is due to the exaltation consequent on the Volunteer's mystic sense of duty, splendidly supported as it was by the re-acting, flaming sympathy of the entire people, who rapidly became infected with the Volunteer spirit of service and sacrifice. Repression brought to bear on the civilian population only strengthened the people's resistance, suffering only further steeled their will, and today the National spirit is as it were a powerful spring of immeasurable latent strength, quickly and adequately responsive to every added strain. Hence the success of our Secret Service, presided over by a man of magnetic personality evocative of limitless devotion on the part of his collaborators, of both sexes, of every rank and occupation, a man of superb genius in organisation, of ruthless efficiency in his multiple activities. Hence the success of the Republican Police and judiciary system, firmly based as it was on the free assent of the Nation, for Republican Justice is more than an authority to which men mechanically submit, rather is it an expression of the National will, accepted and cherished as a proud symbol of civic liberty.

hence the splendid efficiency and success attendant on the brilliant administration of the Ministry of Local Government.

Such are the Men of 1916, this their contribution to the victory that we hope is near at hand. Need we wonder that "the boys", as the Nation affectionately styles them, have at their service all that is most tender and most exalted in the hearts of the Irish people? It is the passionate loyalty, the burning love and gratitude of the Gael that I have tried to voice today.

Very Rev. Fathers, Ladies and Gentlemen, I toast the Men of 1916, - the memory of our holy dead, to the long life and happiness of the beloved living, and to the full culmination of their dearest wish, the liberty, the untrammelled liberty of Ireland.

Statement by the Very Rev. Patrick J. Doyle, P.P.,
Naas, Co. Kildare.

"AN ANTHOLOGY OF FUGITIVE MEMORIES"

1.

Gearóid O'Sullivan:

At Easter 1916 I was Rector at Knockbeg College, situated about 2½ miles from Carlow town on the Leix bank of the River Barrow. The boys were about to return from their Easter holidays on the Tuesday. On Monday a rumour reached us that there was some disturbance in Dublin and that trains were not running. I felt quite indignant at this disturbance of civic life and of College discipline.

On Wednesday more news came through, and we learned that there was an active armed Rising in Dublin. The following day the news was still more serious. On Friday we heard that the Insurgents held the Castle and part of Dublin, and there was a rumour that if they succeeded in holding the city for a week they would be entitled to international recognition as the legitimate government.

The news of the surrender then came through and on Monday my brother, Dr. L. Doyle of Carlow, told me that he was going to try to reach Dublin. His wife had been spending Easter with her mother at Rathgar.

and news had reached the country that there was a grave shortage of food in Dublin. I determined to accompany him, as the Doctor had got a pass from the Military Authorities in Carlow. We loaded the car with food and started for Dublin. Passing through the countryside we found everything normal until we reached Naas. There the Main St. was barricaded, but on showing our pass we were allowed through. We reached Rathgar without incident, but found only servants in the house. That morning the Castle Authorities had telephoned Mrs. Anne Leigh, my sister-in-law's mother, who was the proprietress of an extensive wholesale food business in the city, requesting her to go into the city and arrange for the distribution of food as there was real want amongst the people. They added that they would provide her with an armed escort. She had replied that she would go into the city to arrange for the food distribution, but curtly informed them that she required no armed escort to drive through the streets of her own Dublin. Her daughter accompanied her. We decided that we must try to make contact with them in the city.

There was no hope of taking the car, so we started to walk. At Portobello Bridge we came up against a military cordon which had been drawn around the whole city. The young Sergeant in charge of the troops there gruffly told us that we could not get through without a Military Pass. We asked him where that was to be got, and he told us at Ballsbridge. We then asked how we were to get there on account of the cordon. He replied that he was "blowed" if he knew - that he had been picked up in

contingent of troops who marched into Dublin, and was at the encounter at Mount St. Bridge. He told us that the first man to fall there was a Catholic Officer, the finest man in the Regiment. At this particular time he was staying with the priests at Donnybrook, who had kindly given him a room, and he was about to return there. We decided that it would be safer to bring him there in our car and I accompanied him, happy that my black clerical clothes would afford some protection for him, wearing as he was British uniform, as sporadic sniping was still going on throughout the city. I might mention that after the surrender he was sent with the Scottish Borderers to Tralee. Afterwards, he used tell us of his amusement with groups of Tralee urchins, who, not knowing that he was a priest, used to proceed him down the street chanting "Up the King's Cousin"! Realising that the Scottish Borderers had not much use for a Catholic priest he applied for a transfer and was sent to Mesopotamia, where he went through the whole campaign and took part in the triumphant entry into Baghdad. Ironically he used to boast to us that he took part in the entry into the only capitals taken during the war, Baghdad and Dublin. (His name will occur again in this narrative).

At Christmas that year I found myself in urgent need of a Master to take the classes in Irish, as the previous Master had suddenly resigned. I sought help from Father Tim Corcoran, S.J., Professor of Education in University College, Dublin. When I explained to him that I must have a First Class Honours Graduate in Irish, he told me that he only knew of one available, but that

made the acquaintance of a very striking personality, Jim Fortune, the village shoemaker sage, a typical Hans Sachs of German Legend, who for hours entertained me with local lore as I sat on a stool in his little shop, and in the authentic manner of Hans Sachs emphasised his remarks with blows of his shoemaker's hammer.

One day Gearóid arranged for me to go to Baltimore for a boat trip to the islands of the harbour, and out to Cape Clear. The local Captain of the Volunteers provided a motor boat for the trip. I visited several of the islands where we deposited strange longitudinal parcels. The wily Volunteer had taken advantage of the innocent priest's trip to distribute rifles to the Volunteers on the islands.

When the day of the trial arrived I went into Skibbereen, as Gearóid's Counsel had intimated that he wished to call me for evidence of character. On arrival at the Courthouse I found it surrounded by a large body of troops in full war kit. It was a court of summary jurisdiction presided over by two Resident Magistrates, paid officials of the British Crown. The prosecution was in the hands of the Crown Prosecutor for West Cork, Jasper Wolfe (What a gorgeous name for the villain of a Victorian melodrama!)

An R.I.C. Constable gave evidence of the seditious speech, and then Wolfe rose for the attack. His charge to the Court was made in a spirit of bitter viciousness. Amongst other things he shouted out 'What was this man doing in Knockbeg College - teaching the boys to shoot

from behind hedges!' At this stage I leaned over to Gearóid's Counsel and asked was he not going to protest against this malignant gratuitous insinuation against both Gearóid and the College. The Counsel was a very young man, and apparently a rabbit who considered discretion the better part of a Counsel's valour. He conveyed to me, in a nervous manner, that any protest made in a Court of that type would be absolutely futile.

When Wolfe's charge was finished I was summoned to the witness's dock for evidence of character. In very clear terms I stated what I knew of Gearóid and his character. Contrary to the usual practice, Wolfe interrupted me several times and challenged my statements. He went so far as on two separate occasions to shout at me "On your Oath, Father! On your Oath!"

(The tension prevailing in the Court may be realised from the fact that the local Captain of Volunteers, who was present at the back of the Court, told me afterwards that he had his hand on a Webley revolver in his pocket, and that, if Wolfe had again repeated "On your Oath", the Webley would have gone into action. I precipitately changed the subject of conversation).

I persisted in making my statement, and insistently qualified the insinuation made against Gearóid's teaching in the College and the discipline of the College as absolutely baseless and false. Several times there were bursts of applause from the back of the Court, followed by angry threats from the Bench to have the Court cleared. Finally, the decision of the Court was given. The

accused was guilty. That caused us no surprise as this Court seemed to have been constituted to bring in that verdict always. He was sentenced to nine months in Cork Jail.

The alleged seditious speech had been made, not by Gearóid but by Michael Collins, so that Gearóid had at least the satisfaction of bearing the penalty in the place of his greatest friend.

That afternoon he was marched hand-cuffed through the streets of Skibbereen to the Railway Station surrounded by armed military. His brother, Donald, and I walked at the end of this cortège. When the train was about to leave we could not even shake with the hand-cuffed prisoner. As Donald and I walked back from the Station we tried to carry our heads high, but our hearts were leaden. For about the first and only occasion during the course of the liberation movement I felt tempted to despair of the outcome. In the Main St. we met the Administrator of the Cathedral, an old College friend of mine. As we were talking to him Jasper Wolfe appeared, walking down the street. In a spirit of sheer mischievousness the Administrator called him over and introduced him to me. He conversed most affably, and amongst other subjects discussed some of the political prisoners for whose jail sentences he was responsible. He assured us that some of them were ruffians, but that he found Fionán Lynch a most charming fellow! I tried to rise to the social demands of the occasion, but my resentment was too bitter after my experiences of British Justice, and the unchecked

insults offered to me in the Court that day.

Wolfe was an exceedingly able lawyer with a very big practice. He was a man with a high sense of duty according to his lights, and hence his zeal as a Crown Prosecutor. When the national Government was set up he showed himself equally determined to manifest his loyalty to that Government. Many of the men who were prosecuted by him became friends of his. When as Barrister Gearóid O'Sullivan joined the Southern Circuit he regularly and frequently received briefs from Wolfe, whose prestige in the profession was manifested when he was elected President of the Law Society. He publicly proclaimed himself - "I had the honour and privilege of being sentenced to death three times, but the most peculiar aspect of that was that all three of my would-be executioners afterwards became my warmest friends".

The crowning testimony to the man's integrity was his election on three separate occasions by the people of West Cork as their Deputy in the Dáil.

Gearóid's jail experiences in no way differed from those of his comrades of the period. He took part in prolonged hunger strikes in order to exhort the treatment as a political prisoner, experiences which very gravely affected his health.

In the meantime, I had to find a Master to act as deputy for Gearóid at Knockbeg College. Through "the underground" I learned that there was a highly qualified man who would be willing to come to us. He was Frank

Fahy, Commander at the Four Courts in 1916, who for fourteen years had been a Master at Castleknock College. Towards the end of the previous term the College had been raided by the Crown Forces. The College Authorities attributed these raids to the presence of Mr. Fahy on the staff, and hence it was conveyed to him that it would be better for him to seek an appointment elsewhere. He was 'on the run', and it appeared that his arrest was imminent. I got in touch with him, offered him an appointment, and he accepted. He came to Knockbeg as "Mr. Murphy", where he did excellent work, and held the classes until Gearóid was able to resume.

Mr. Fahy afterwards became the universally respected first Speaker of the Dáil

For "good conduct" Gearóid had a remission of three months of his sentence. He was able to write to me a few times, and finally sent me word of the date of his release. I travelled to Cork on the previous day. On the morning of the release his brother, Donald, and I drove to the prison gates. The Warden at the gate, in an excess of politeness, invited us inside to take shelter in the archway. After a short time, Gearóid, trying to walk very erect, in spite of his weakness, joined us. We drove him to a hotel where we tried to obtain some nourishment suitable to his condition. That afternoon he and I joined the Dublin train which we left at Maryboro', where a car was waiting to take us to Knockbeg. When we arrived at the avenue gates we found the avenue lined on both sides by a mass of wildly cheering boys, celebrating the return of the Master to whom they were so devoted. They had

persuaded the Vice-Rector to declare off all study for the evening in order that this welcome might be properly organised.

Gearóid insisted on almost immediately resuming his duties in the College, and his activities with the Volunteers, in spite of his debilitated condition, which yielded slowly to a careful dietary.

When the news of Lloyd George's "German Plot" broke he was summoned immediately to Dublin. In order to cover the journey I travelled with him in a car which took a circuitous route to the City. I deposited him at one of the "favourite lairs" of Michael Collins - the West Cork Hotel - which was owned by Miss McCarthy of West Cork, one of the unsung heroines of the movement.

When the threat of conscription became urgent, Gearóid and I contacted some prominent people in Carlow and arranged to have a public meeting called in Market Square on a certain Sunday. A large crowd assembled and was addressed by several priests and prominent laymen. It was decided to form a small Committee to draw up a plan of action for the Carlow population as distinct from the Volunteers. Also, a public subscription was opened to which each priest present contributed £50, and generous subscriptions were also made by the other speakers. Within a few weeks a large sum was collected and considerable stocks of food were laid in for the emergency. The Defence Committee met in Knockbeg College, and after several long sessions plans were drawn up for the civilian population as soon as the conscription decree was issued. At these conferences Gearóid's clear, decisive military outlook was invaluable.

Amongst other provisions it was decided that in case of the emergency all able-bodied males were to disperse through the Slieve Marge Hills, so as to avoid being seized by the press-gangs. A well-known personage, on hearing of this draconian decree, pathetically pleaded that he must be exempt, as everyone should know what would happen to him if he got his feet wet! Afterwards, he was a stout opponent of the Treaty, regarding its acceptance as treachery to the nation. Such a case was by no means a unique phenomenon in those days.

We also arranged for a general meeting of the priests of the Diocese to be held in Kildare. The meeting duly came off in a dinghy cinema in Kildare, but the majority of the priests were not prepared to face the crisis with the realistic outlook that had been manifested in Carlow, and the meeting adjourned without any decisive course of action being decided upon. Light relief during the meeting was afforded by a timorous cleric who feared a nigger in the wood-pile, and made a vigorous search of the tawdry scenery and surroundings of the stage in the fear of finding some hidden spy.

Shortly after the disclosure of the mythical "German Plot" Michael Collins summoned Gearoid O'Sullivan to Dublin and informed him that he would have to take up whole-time work in Dublin. He resigned from the College, and became Adjutant General of the Volunteers.

On the creation of the National Army he was made Adjutant General with the rank of Major General. Michael Collins wished to have me as first Chaplain of

the National Army and as Commander-in-Chief, he directed Gearóid to write to my Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Foley, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, requesting him, on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, to appoint me Chaplain. The letter was delivered personally by a Staff Officer, Capt. Hugo McNeill. The Bishop immediately dictated a curt refusal, and democratically addressed the letter to 'Mr. Gerald O'Sullivan'. His Lordship was a Nationalist of the Home Rule School who found it difficult to adapt himself to the new regime, which he was inclined to regard as a mushroom growth of doubtful provenance.

By a strange coincidence the cortege of his state funeral passed by the G.P.O. on Easter Monday. As it was on Easter Monday that he had hoisted the National Flag for the first time over the building.

At the Requiem the Mass had been served by his Novice son and the Novice son of Diarmaid O'Hegarty, both members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, the comrade sons of comrade fathers.

After his death an elegy in Irish was written by Diarmaid O'Hegarty, the comrade who occupied in his affection a place second only to Michael Collins.

(Translation of Elegy).IN FOND REMEMBRANCE.

The generation that conceived that wonderful Vision
of the Easter of 1916 kindled a spark
In a land that had been in sore bondage.

That time when Ireland was in death's grip
And the crowd of the insincere speech wooing her to exchange
Her heritage for a pot of poor filthy porridge.

Young Gearóid was among the Group in the Speckled House of the
Penians in the Shadowy Glen -
That House in which no Lamp of Hope shone since
The torch of 1867 was quenched.

The Heroic band took control of the House from the wicked Hag
And lit their way with the fire of their eyes and with the
Brightness of their sacrificial Vision (Dream).

They harnessed the Liath Macha (Cuchuláinn's Steed) in the
Stable of the Hound (Cuchulainn) and the fairy Senglend of
Liberty was in their company and they spread the news around
Ireland's Coast that the old Torch was ablaze again at the
G.P.O. Áth Cliath.

And the men of Ireland at war with England, with
Showers of bullets and heroic Gaedhil definitely
Declared their refusal to be subject to the Gall.

It was Gearóid Óg unfurled the Republican Flag
High in Freedom's breeze - the breeze that wafted away
For ever the fog from Ban Cnoic Éireann O.

11.

Kevin O'Higgins:

When Kevin O'Higgins was obliged to leave Maynooth College owing to infraction of the rule against smoking (a rule that since has been abolished), he was directed by his Bishop to resume his studies in Carlow College. At the time I was on the staff of that College and as the rooms of the staff were more or less sanctuary, I gave Kevin free use of my room where he could smoke without infringement of the rule. We became very close friends but on his leaving the College I lost touch with him for two or three years. It was only when he was forced to go "on the run" that I again met him, when I sent word to him that Knockbeg would be always available for him at all times of need.

At that time, in his native county of Leix, he assured me, there were only two other houses where he was sure to get a night's refuge. Of course he could never approach his own home in Stradbally as it was too closely watched.

On his becoming Deputy for Leix the pursuit of him by military and police became intense, and particularly when he took on the work of organising the National Loan that had been floated by Michael Collins. He was in incessant movement throughout the country, holding meetings in barns and outhouses, stiffening the national resistance, inviting and collecting subscriptions for the Loan. He succeeded so well that Leix, a county on the whole not very

during those rest periods he was not idle, as he put in several hours of study every day in preparation for his law Final. He asked me to write to Mr. George Cussen, Solicitor, Dublin, for the latter's Law Notes which were indispensable at the time for success in the Law Examination. I wrote to Mr. Cussen, simply saying that I wanted his Notes and added the phrase "qui currit legat". Mr. Cussen correctly interpreted the "qui currit" and sent me the Notes, and afterwards when he became a special friend of mine told me that he had suspected the identity of the person for whom they were intended.

(When as Minister of Justice Kevin was setting up the new Courts of the National Government he asked Mr. Cussen to become the first District Justice, choosing him because of his legal pre-eminence, so as to set a high standard for the men who would be appointed District Justices. Mr. Cussen, as a matter of national duty, accepted the appointment, at the cost of a sacrifice of a very lucrative practice. During his first year of office, with the tragic Civil War devastating the country, in his area (in our North Kildare and Dublin County) eighteen of his Courthouses were burned down. But he carried on tranquilly, zealously, with unimpaired dignity, undismayed, the embodiment of even-handed justice tempered by kindness and mercy. Subsequently, he became Metropolitan Magistrate of Dublin. At a dinner party he gave one night at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, at which were present his wife, Kevin and his wife, Patrick Hogan, Minister of Agriculture,

and myself, our table was approached by the Kynnooth Dean (who had become a Bishop) responsible for Kevin's departure from the College. On being introduced to Mrs. O'Higgins, His Lordship humourously inquired if she was aware that it was he who had provided her with a husband. The lady gracefully acknowledged the service rendered.

Each time that Kevin was about to sit for the Law Final he was warned off the previous night by Michael Collins who had learned through his Intelligence that the Examination Hall was to be beset by detectives to effect Kevin's arrest. During this period many of the prominent men in the movement came regularly to us in Knockbeg. So much so that amongst the police and military in Carlow it was freely referred to as "The Rebels' Paradise", a 'Paradise', the ground of which they never ventured to violate, at a time when police raids were the order of the day throughout the country. Probably they were convinced that the gates of that 'paradise' would be defended by desperate men.

One of the most popular of all our visitors was Rory O'Connor, who used gaily to assure me that I would die on the scaffold. He became one of Kevin's closest friends, so much so that it was Rory and not one of his brothers whom he selected for best man at his wedding.

(The most agonising decision of Kevin's life was that when as Minister of Justice he had to sign the warrant for Rory's execution. A decision on which no one could sit in judgment unless acquainted

with all the terrible circumstances that determined the deed).

Kevin's father lived in Stradbally, where he spent his life in the service of the poor as Dispensary Doctor. During the Black and Tan terror the British arrested him in spite of his advanced age and lodged him in the Hare Internment Camp at the Gurragh, apparently because he was the father of his activist sons.

One night during the Civil War when the old Doctor was alone in the house with his wife, a body of young men demanded admission. He brought them into the diningroom where his wife was sitting and, in her presence, they shot him dead - again, apparently because he was the father of his sons, Kevin, Tom and Brian. The daughters of the house were absent at the time in Maryboro, and on returning and witnessing the terrible scene in the diningroom, with their father lying dead in pools of his own blood, they were naturally overcome with horror and grief and were on the point of collapse, but the heroic mother, a frail little mother of a very large family, full of the characteristic faith of the Sullivans said to them, "Kneel down, children, and say 'Thy Will be done', now that it is worth saying it!" The following day I went down to see her. She was resting in her bedroom, her Rosary Beads in her hands, and when I tried to stammer some words of consolation she looked up at me and said: "Father, it is only a tiny thorn from Our Lord's Crown".

At Knockbeg College, Kevin had met Miss Brigid

Cole, a distinguished member of the Staff, who afterwards became his wife. At the marriage breakfast (where my neighbour at the table was Eamonn de Valera) the toast of the "Men of 1916" was assigned to me. I append the text of it.

During the Treaty negotiations I was in constant touch with Kevin. As a member of the Cabinet he received each day a verbatim transcript of the negotiations of the previous day. He frequently allowed me to read these reports which one day, when publication becomes possible, will be of engrossing interest for the people of Ireland.

After the ill-fated Boundary Commission he wrote me the following letter: -

"Department of Justice,

DUBLIN.

12.12.'25.

Dear Father Doyle,

The last three weeks have left me somewhat 'winded' but may I pant a line of gratitude for your telegram. What an escape! The Feethan line signed by our representative would have written 'Finis' to our little three years history and - 'sicut erat in principio! The agreement while not ideal does really represent the best and only solution of the wretched tangle. The opposition here had warmth without brilliance. With most of them the dominant feeling was intense disappointment at our failure to break our necks when everything pointed to that consummation. I hope that you will find, or make, an opportunity for an early 'visitation'.

Very sincerely yours,

CASEY.

(The explanation of his signature 'CASEY' is that during his visits to Knockbeg while 'on the run' he was known generally in the house as 'Casey' - the phonetic rendering of his initials 'K.C.').

On the evening he was murdered, an urgent message reached me from the Civic Guards to go immediately to his house at Cross Avenue, Blackrock. Unfortunately, he had died before I reached him. The following morning I celebrated a Requiem Mass in his house, and at the State funeral I had the melancholy distinction of heading the procession.

111.

Michael Collins:

It was through Gearóid O'Sullivan that I first became acquainted with Michael Collins, and came under the spell of his strong personality. On visits to Dublin, I used to meet him in the Harcourt St. Headquarters before the hunt for him became too hot. Gearóid had let him know that I was willing to help in any way I could, and he did not hesitate to avail of that assistance when occasion arose.

On coming to Naas I used to meet him more frequently in Dublin as Naas was an important link in his Intelligence Service. One of the most important men in the Intelligence Service was Jeremiah Maher, who as a Sergeant in the R.I.C. was Secretary in Naas to the County Inspector, afterwards a Commissioner of the R.I.C. (These Commissioners were a new appointment, being given jurisdiction over a group of three or four counties). In this way practically all important police communications passed through Maher's hands. Summaries of these documents were transmitted to Collins. Publicly in Naas I did not know Maher, but used to meet him late at night in a household that was friendly to us both.

When I wished to meet Michael Collins, word was sent to him of the train by which I should arrive at Kingsbridge. The Station there was always beset by G-Men (Detectives - Special Branch). Usually, when passing through the Station gates I would be passed out by a young man who would murmur an address and a name as he passed. On calling to the address I used to be

informed of the time and place at which Collins would meet me. On one occasion the place of meeting was a room on the first floor of the Gresham Hotel, where were assembled for lunch six or seven of the leading men of the Liberation Movement. The waiter at the table was a Volunteer who afterwards served in the same capacity in London with our delegates during the Treaty negotiations. During the lunch there was a screeching of brakes outside. Collins walked swiftly to the window and drawing aside the curtains saw Black and Tan lorries drawn up outside. He returned to the table and told us to continue our lunch, remarking "These fellows are only raiding the house next door"!

On another occasion I was told by the emissary at Kingsbridge to go to St. Enda's College, Rathfarnham. There I met Joe O'Reilly, who afterwards became Colonel O'Reilly and A.D.C. to the Governor General. He told me to go to the Mansion House, where there was a secret session of the Dáil in the Pillar Room. On arrival at the Mansion House I was met by a young man who went into the Dáil session and brought out Michael Collins. He gave me a copy of a super-secret code, that had just been issued to only a few of the highest placed R.I.C. officials in the country, telling me to bring it down to Maher for immediate use.

In the Spring of 1920, I arranged to go to Rome with my brother's wife and her mother, Mrs. Anne Leigh of Rathgar. On hearing of this Collins sent me word that he wished to see me. He arranged to meet me at Mrs. Leigh's business premises in Mary's Abbey. (It

should be remembered that Mrs. Leigh was one of the first to come to the financial aid of the Provisional Government in the first days of its existence, before arrangements had been made with the Banks. Gearóid O'Sullivan and Eamonn Duggan had called on her and told her of the urgent need of ready money. She immediately wrote for them a cheque for £600.

Over the tea cups we had a long talk about matters Michael wished to have conveyed to Dr. O'Hagan of the Irish College, Rome. When the interview was over, in the bright sunshine of a spring afternoon, pushing his bicycle, he walked down Mary's Abbey with me; down Mary St. and Henry St., at the Pillar end of which he bade me goodbye, and pedalled coolly away.

We arrived in Rome on the Tuesday night of Holy Week. My friends had arranged to stay at the Grand Hotel, while I stayed at the Irish College, at the kind invitation of Dr. O'Hagan. At the time Dr. O'Hagan had a double function in Rome - publicly as informal representative of the Irish Hierarchy, and privately as the representative of the Liberation movement. Ireland did not count for very much in war-time Rome. It was significant that Dr. O'Hagan was the only head of a national College in Rome who had not been favoured with the dignity and title 'Monsignor' (After the establishment of the National Government that dignity was conferred upon him).

In a long talk on that Tuesday night I gave Dr. O'Hagan a minute account of affairs in Ireland and

especially of the ravages of the Black and Tan Terror. He listened patiently and then he told me that he had very grave news that he had learned from private sources that the Vatican was about to issue a condemnation of the Irish Liberation Movement, not merely of the Volunteers but also of the whole Sinn Féin Organisation. He had been told that the condemnation had already been formulated, and would probably be soon promulgated. The British Foreign Office had been working might and main to convince the Vatican that the Liberation Movement was an attempt at anarchical revolution promoted by irresponsibles whose main technique was murder. Amongst the devices to curry favour with the Vatican, England had offered, at a time when fuel was so scarce in Italy, that the English Embassy in Rome could not be heated, to heat the immense spaces of the Vatican Galleries for the period of the war, an offer which the Vatican coldly declined.

Practically the only influence on the opposite side was Dr. O'Hagan, who, as a simple priest, could contact the Vatican only at a humble level. To complicate the situation for us, owing to war and post-war conditions, our Bishops had not been able to make their 'ad limina visits' to Rome, and of course there was no Nuncio in Ireland.

Monsignor O'Hagan spoke of the grave dangers of the situation which would arise in Ireland if the Papal condemnation of the Liberation came just then with the Black and Tan Terror raging at its worst. I agreed with him that the age-long unbroken tradition of Irish

loyalty to the Holy See would be strained to perilous proximity to breaking point. He said that our only hope now lay with Dr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, an uncompromising lover of Ireland, who was to arrive in Rome the following morning, and who could be relied upon to give the Holy Father the whole truth about the situation in Ireland. Dr. Mannix had been on his way to Ireland to visit his aged mother, whom he had not seen since he left for Australia when the British Navy stopped the liner on which he was travelling and arrested him on the high seas. This Naval exploit was obviously dictated through fear of the reactions of the visit of this patriotic Prelate to Ireland in the conditions then prevailing in the country. The Archbishop was taken prisoner to London, where he was released in the early hours of the morning with the strict injunction that he was forbidden to travel to Ireland or to visit the West coast of Britain. He proceeded to the Hammersmith Training College for teachers, which was under the management of the Irish Vincentian Fathers. He failed to waken anyone in the household, and then proceeded to the nearby Convent of Nazareth Nuns, where he resided during his stay in London, much to the disappointment of the good Vincentians at missing so thrice welcome a guest.

Michael Collins told me that he had communicated with His Grace and told him that if he wished to come to Ireland means would certainly be found to bring him there, but His Grace as an Australian citizen did not wish to offer this public defiance to Imperial Authority.

On Wednesday morning I went with Monsignor O'Hagan to the Railway Station in Rome, where we found a group of priests and a number of young lay students from the Rome University, who, in the name of liberty, had come to welcome the Archbishop to Rome. He was deeply touched by this gesture of the young Romans. He expressed his surprise at finding me in Rome, who last had seen him when saying goodbye on the evening of the day on which he was consecrated at Maynooth College. During my student days he was President and had proved himself a magnanimous friend to me. For my private study of music he had given me facilities such as had never before been given to a Maynooth student, so that I had, and still have, nothing but the most grateful memories of my former President.

He came with us to the Irish College, where he officiated at the Holy Week Ceremonies. On Holy Thursday morning I had the privilege of receiving Holy Communion from the consecrated hands of him who had so often given me the Blessed Sacrament in Maynooth. On Easter Sunday Dr. O'Hagan gave a reception in the Irish College, attended by many distinguished ecclesiastics. At a subsequent informal concert a German Cardinal got tremendous applause for his spirited singing in English of "The Good Rhine Wine".

Amongst the guests were Mr. and Mrs. George Gavan Duffy, the official representative in Rome of our Liberation Movement. As I had already known Mrs. Gavan Duffy, our party had paid a courtesy call upon them. They occupied a suite in the Hotel Flora, near the Pincian Gardens.

The outer door of their suite bore a plaque on which was inscribed "Délégation de la République Irlandaise".

Gavan Duffy had been sent to Paris as our Representative. I have in my possession a photograph showing him, Mrs. Gavan Duffy and Mr. Seán T. O'Kelly (our present President) about to enter a car displaying our tricolour in a Paris street. They were about to start for Versailles to put the Irish Case before the Peace Conference. English power took good care that they would not be received, and that the Irish Case would not be on the agenda of the Conference, the Conference that boasted of its policy of self-determination for all countries. Ultimately, the French Government informed Gavan Duffy that he was an unwelcome visitor and virtually expelled him, granting him, however, the diplomatic courtesy of a special reserved carriage on the Express that bore him to Belgium. After some time he had been sent to Rome as Irish Representative.

The Vatican Authorities had declined to receive Mr. Gavan Duffy as Diplomatic Representative, and for that reason his activities in Rome were very restricted. Following the diplomatic protocol he had not entered Saint Peter's, as he had not been officially received at the Vatican. But the presence of the young University students at the Railway Station to receive Archbishop Mannix as defender of Irish Independence was testimony that Mr. Gavan Duffy's influence was effectually at work in Rome. On the Thursday evening of Easter Week he and Mrs. Gavan Duffy entertained our party to dinner and afterwards took us to a performance

of Wagner's "Parsifal". In the Opera House Mr. Duffy indicated to me two young men seated immediately in front of us, and humourously confided to me "Two Buachailli Black and Tan"! They were attachés from the British Embassy. (At the time everything English in our eyes was tarred with the Black and Tan brush).

The Tuesday of Easter Week was fixed for the Archbishop's audience with the Holy Father. To our supreme delight, His Grace invited us to go with him to the Vatican, telling us that, after the audience, he would introduce us to the Holy Father. We set out from the Irish College in two cars and on arrival at the Vatican were directed to the Courtyard of Pope Damasus, where distinguished visitors are received. A company of Swiss Guards was drawn up to receive His Grace, their halberds clattered on the pavement as he descended from his car. He was met at the door of the Palace by two Prelates who immediately conducted him up the Royal Staircase and brought him immediately to the Pope's private Library. A Prelate took us in charge, led us up the staircase and, with a pause of five or ten minutes in each, led us into one after another of the magnificent Halls, in each of which a Noble Guard was stationed. On us the strain of waiting was intense, realizing, as we did, the tremendous issue that hung upon the audience. Finally, after about half an hour, in an almost exhausted condition, we were led into the Small Throne Room and told to kneel down, as the Holy Father would soon be with us. Standing near the door, leading into the private Library, were a Noble Guard and a Papal Chamberlain, of British Nationality, a convert member of a well-known industrial company of

manufacturers. In a tone that was made perfectly audible for us he sneeringly remarked to the Noble Guard, "Well, I expect His Grace is being taught his lesson this morning". The remark put a very painful strain on our sense of fraternal charity. When is throttling lawful?

At length the door of the private Library opened, and there appeared Archbishop Cerratti, who was in attendance on His Holiness that morning. Obviously, he had been selected for his familiarity with affairs in Australia, where he had been Papal Nuncio. He had been Nuncio in Austria also. On the murder of Archduke Ferdinand in 1916 he had cryptically cabled to the Pope -

Janus Pacet - the temple of the War-god is open.

He said something to the Prelate who was looking after us, he came over to us, told us to rise, and informed us that the whole party, including the ladies, was to proceed into the Library. Immediately our spirits soared as we knew it was a very great privilege to have ladies admitted into the private apartments, unless in the case of near relatives of His Holiness. When we entered the Library the Archbishop was standing beside the frail little white-clad figure of the Pope. One glance at the look of glad confidence on the face of the Archbishop told us that everything was all right. The Pope, standing with his hands in his soutane pockets, spoke to each one of us in turn in a most friendly, paternal manner. He asked me was I a student in Rome, and I had to assure him that I was a venerable cleric in Ireland of thirteen years standing. On asking me where I lived and on my replying Naas, I saw a puzzled

frown crossing his face and, in alarm, I wondered how Naas had gone wrong in my absence! But he immediately continued the conversation with me, and gave me faculties to impart the Papal Blessing to the people of Naas on my return. (It was only afterwards that I realised why the mention of Naas seemed to give His Holiness pause. I remembered that the word 'Naas' occurs in the Old Testament in the Second Book of Kings, and is the name of one of the princes who remained faithful to King David).

As we were about to leave the Library, the Pope took from his desk a little case containing a gold Rosary Beads which he handed to His Grace with the words "For your mother in Ireland".

On arrival at the Irish College, the Archbishop told us of the tremendous success of his interview. He had told the Pope the whole truth of the condition of affairs in Ireland, after which the Pope simply asked him "What do you want me to do for Ireland?" His Grace then told him of the Irish White Cross, the organisation that had been started for the relief of the surviving victims of the Black and Tans, and suggested that a contribution from His Holiness would be a source of supreme consolation and strength for the Irish people.

A couple of weeks afterwards the Freeman's Journal (Dublin) came out with a banner headline "The Holy Father sends 100,000 lire to the Irish White Cross". Needless to say, the joy throughout the country was profound.

On the following night I gave a dinner party in

phenomenal success of the department played a bigger part even than the Volunteer movement in demoralising British power in Ireland. It consisted, as Kevin lovingly remarked, of "himself and Michael de Lacey and one elderly clerk". For some time, in my talk with Kevin, things were painfully strained for each of us, as neither of us knew what the other thought of the Treaty and dreaded mentioning it in view of the close friendship that prevailed between us. Finally I pulled myself together and said to Kevin "Michael wants you to come back with me to lunch with him in the Gresham at 1.30". At once a look of tremendous relief spread over Kevin's face, reflecting the relief I also felt. We were fortunately on the same side of the fence.

At the luncheon party in the Gresham, Collins presided. In addition to Kevin and myself there were present Eamonn Duggan, a signatory of the Treaty, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Eoin O'Duffy, and Rory O'Connor. Although Rory had voted at the Volunteer meeting against acceptance of the Treaty he was quite reconciled to abide by the majority decision of the Volunteers in favour of it. During the lunch, he took part in an animated conversation about the formation that the new Irish Army should adopt and urged very enthusiastically the adaptation of the Swiss System of formation, and still a few months later Rory was out in armed opposition to the Provisional Government. I have never yet met any of the Volunteer Officers who took up arms in that cause who could give a coherent account of the tragic split that ensued after the acceptance of the majority decision.

Naas, an octogenarian veteran of the Land League days, heard that Collins and his companions were coming to the meeting, he invited the whole party to lunch at his house before the meeting.

That night, we gave our guests a Public Banquet in the Town Hall. As an orchestra played during the meal it was possible for neighbours to have a quiet conversation without being overheard. Collins was seated by me and through some accidental references Casement's name was mentioned. In a quiet undertone he told me of an incident which had occurred during the Treaty negotiations in London. During these negotiations Lord Beaverbrook had developed a marked admiration and liking for Collins. (As a matter of fact he sent word to the Government, on hearing of Collins's death, that he was coming to the funeral, but the Government had to request him not to come as they could not guarantee his safety). On one occasion Collins had talked to him about the Casement trial and accused the prosecution of disgraceful malice in introducing the matter of the alleged Casement Diary, which reflected so frightfully on Casement's moral character, a procedure which was motivated, he said, solely by a desire to prejudice Casement's cause. When he said "alleged Diary" Birkenhead asked him was he quite sure of his grounds and, on Collins professing his absolute faith in Casement, Birkenhead asked him would he like to see the Diary. Collins immediately announced his willingness and Birkenhead took him and Eamonn Duggan to the House of Lords, in the Archives of which the book was kept, and had the book produced for their inspection. Collins told me

that he was very familiar with Casement's handwriting and that if the book was not authentic it was a devilishly clever forgery.

On my leaving the banquet room with Collins, a characteristic incident occurred.

The walls of the room were lined with Volunteers armed with rifles as a Guard of Honour. As we walked towards the exit, Collins gave them a friendly grin, and turning to me said "You will see that these lads get a good feed".

On returning to town that night the car containing Collins and some of his colleagues drove to their party Headquarters in Parnell Square. As Collins stepped out of the car, a youth approached and fired a revolver at him at point blank range. Fortunately the aim was very bad, probably owing to the youth's nervousness. He was seized immediately, disarmed and conveyed to Mountjoy Prison. A couple of months afterwards, when speaking to Collins, I asked him what had become of his would-be assassin, and I got the curt reply: "He had a good face - I sent him home to his mother".

One evening during the Truce, Collins, Gearoid O'Sullivan, Eamonn Duggan and Eoin O'Duffy came down to dine with me in Naas. After a very enjoyable night they left for Dublin, driven by Collins' faithful Volunteer chauffeur. Just beyond Clondalkin they suddenly saw a car approaching them driven at a furious speed and zig-zagging across the road. The inevitable crash came, they were all unhurt but their car was crippled and the other car wrecked and the contents

scattered about the road - the contents consisting of some Black and Tans and some female acquaintances. The situation was nasty: a crash with Black and Tans and the Chief Liaison Officer, Eoin O'Duffy, a member of what might maliciously be termed 'the offending party'. Collins and his party immediately proceeded on foot to the house of the Oblate Fathers in Inchicore. They rang at the door and a venerable figure soon opened it to them. Collins explained that they had just had a bad motor accident, and that he wished to send a most urgent telephone call. He said: "My name is Michael Collins", and got the refreshing reply, "Are you Michael Collins the murderer? Come in, in God's name". He rang the Castle and explained what had happened and was informed that relief cars would be sent out at once. In a comparatively short time the cars arrived and, to Collins's amazement, one of them was occupied by Cope, the notorious Under-Secretary, who proved himself to be a most affable rescuer. He asked them where they wished to be driven in the City and, on Collins replying "Vaughan's Hotel, Parnell Square", Cope, with a dry smile, commented "I have heard of it". It had been raided again and again as the suspected haunt of Michael Collins. When they arrived there, Collins suggested to Cope that he had better come along with him and have a little reinforcement against the night air. It proved to be a surprisingly harmonious party, in the course of which Cope airily remarked to Collins, "I believe, Mr. Collins, I was Number One on your shooting list", to which Collins decisively retorted "You were not! You were only Number Three!"

A night in May of that year Collins, Gearoid O'Sullivan and the writer were to dine with my brother in Carlow. I went down from Naas to meet them. They arrived about an hour late and apologised profusely for their tardy arrival. After dinner Collins told us the cause of the delay. He had been held up by an interview with some Russian Emissaries who had come to this country to negotiate a loan, offering as security the Russian Crown Jewels. In the early hours of the morning they drove me back to Naas, and in the course of the journey we had the wonderful experience of being greeted by the dawn-chorus of the birds.

My last encounter with Collins was in Naas at the time he was on his tour of inspection of the Irish Army Posts. In his inspections he was ruthlessly intolerant of any defects, and hence these inspections raised the temperature of the Army Posts to a hectic degree. One day I got a message from the Commandant at Naas Military Barracks to go up at once, to function as a lightning-conductor in the storm that was anticipated. After the inspection Collins came down to my house for a short time, and then left for Dublin. It was the last time that I saw him alive.

When the question arose, on his death, of bringing his body to Dublin, owing to broken communications by road and rail, it was decided to have the body conveyed by sea to the North Wall, Dublin. On the day the body was due to arrive, I received a message from Army Headquarters to go to Dublin. When I arrived there the Adjutant General told me that he had asked me to come as he knew that I should very much desire to be present

at the reception of the body at North Wall. As the body was due to arrive about 11 p.m., General Mulcahy and Gearóid O'Sullivan took me in an army car to the North Wall, where we found waiting the members of the Government and a small group of Collins's most intimately devoted followers. Where the boat was to berth we found the *Murichu* moored close by. When it transpired that the boat from Cork was going to be very late, the Captain of the *Murichu* invited the Army Chiefs, members of the Government and myself on board, where he hospitably entertained us with salmon and coffee. There was a long and strained wait until about 2 o'clock, when we saw a light moving down the river. It was the boat from Cork, a cross channel liner. The boat's engines had been cut out, the spacious, empty decks were blazing with light, the solitary figure of the captain stood motionless on the bridge. In the inky darkness of the night the great, gleaming, white vessel came drifting towards us in eerie silence, like a phantom ship of destiny, borne on the black, swiftly in-flowing tidal waters of the Liffey. By some accident, probably due to the strong tide, the vessel crashed noisily against the quay-side. The sudden tearing of the heavily charged silence seemed to have irresistibly snapped a paralysing tension, and a cry of agony broke from the throats of strong men, whose self-control had stoically stood the test of many a searching ordeal.

When the boat was moored, we went on board and as we advanced towards the coffin, covered by the national flag, Emmet Dalton, Collins's companion in the fatal ambush, emerged from the companion-way bearing the dead

hero's military cap, stained with blood and brain-matter, the physical remains of that wonder-brain that had served Ireland so nobly. When the coffin was mounted on a waiting gun-carriage, and the Army Chiefs and members of the Government formed up behind it, I walked with them in slow progress over the rough square sets of the quay-side. The silence was broken only by the clattering of the gun-carriage's wheels over their uneven surface, until, in the neighbourhood of Butt Bridge, rifle shots rang out from the opposite side of the Liffey - why or by whom has never transpired. At the opening of Abbey St. to Burgh Quay, a crowd of poor people were standing in respectful silence, the first people we had met since leaving North Wall. We crossed O'Connell Bridge and proceeded up Westmoreland Street, where some night workers from the printing offices were standing silently on the footpath, and so on through the silent, deserted, brilliantly lit streets up Grafton St. and on to St. Vincent's Hospital, in the Chapel of which the coffin was placed, and remained until removal to the City Hall for the lying-in-state. In the Chapel, I sorrowfully took leave of the mortal remains of the brilliant, attractive, vital, high-powered personality, endowed with a unique compulsive influence, that for a few years, pregnant with promise, had dominated the course of Irish history. It was in no excess of hollow sentimentality that I stooped, and with reverence and gratitude, kissed his forehead.

On the morning of the funeral, Gearóid O'Sullivan told me that the Army Authorities had requested that I should officiate as Deacon at the Requiem Mass, but the request had been refused by the Ecclesiastical Authorities at the Pro-Cathedral, where the Requiem was

celebrated.

I walked in the funeral procession and stood beside the grave at Glasnevin Cemetery until the last sad rites were completed.

Some weeks afterwards a very extraordinary letter was sent to me for consolation and edification. It was so extraordinary that I presumed to have copies of it taken. It was a letter written by Father Ignatius of the Congregation of the Passion, who had been giving a Retreat in Greystones at the time that our delegates were about to leave for the Treaty Conference. Father Ignatius met Collins there, and in this letter which he afterwards sent to Sister Michael, a nun in the South Presentation Convent, Cork, a sister of Michael Collins, Father Ignatius gives an account of the encounter. This is the letter, which for many people will disclose an unsuspected aspect of the soul of Michael Collins: -

"St. Anne's Retreat,
St. Helen's,
Lancs.

Friday.

"My dear Sr. Michael,

I am so pleased to get your letter. Many a time have I wished to get in touch with the near ones of "Our Hero".

Yes, Sister, you have the Missioner who knew Michael as only a priest may know his penitent, one who loved him for his big, pure Catholic heart. There is not a man in a million who would have done what Michael did, that he might get to Confession and Holy Communion (I have not met one and I have been a Missioner for years). The facts are these; he was staying at the Grand Hotel, Greystones,

while I was giving a Mission there. It was coming near the close of the Mission. Michael was very busy in Dublin, worked and worried almost beyond endurance. He got to Greystones one night very late and very tired. It was the eve of his departure to London, re the Pact. He got up the next morning as early as 5.30 a.m. and came to the Church, and made a glorious General Confession and received Holy Communion. He said to me after Confession, "Say the Mass for Ireland, and God Bless you, Father". He crossed an hour or so later to London.

I said to the Congregation that day - "You saw a big man, you saw a brave man, you saw one of Ireland's hidden saints making no small sacrifice this morning for the Master".

Sister, I haven't the slightest fear for Michael's salvation. Michael is in Eternal Joy. His hidden self was the most glorious part of him. Others may think of him as the great big and brainy Hero, but deep in the heart of an Irish Missioner there is the sweetest truth and thought of all - "Michael Collins was a Saint". Whether others believe it or not is to be of little concern. I knew him as the Master knew him, and to know one's heart is to know the truth.

I was in Italy when I heard the terrible news, it almost broke my heart. Only one thought I treasure - "Michael is waiting for those who love him".

Have no doubt, Sister, Big and Brave and Glorious as he was, he was as humble as a child. One of God's Little Ones in heart.

As I knelt by his grave, I remembered the grand old Irish Faith that said, as he wrung my hand, and dashed away - "May God be always with you, Father". I am so proud to know that his dear sister came across the photograph; tell her to keep it in memory of the Missioner who loved her brother because he was God's own.

I gave Michael a prayer book with a Crucifix inside in memory of the Mission. I wonder if it were found. They told me in Portobello that it was.

Sister, I should love to have some little memento of my Big Boy - that is what I call Michael. Could you secure one for his Missioner friend, and I would be so very grateful, and would treasure it all my life.

I gave a Mission in Co. Cork last year. I may be in Cork next year. If I am I shall call on you.

Every morning I whisper "Michael" over the Chalice of my Holy Mass, and I shall do so until the last Mass Bell sounds for me, and penitent and priest meet in the bright Beyond. I feel that Michael is praying for us there, and waiting for us too.

May Our dear Lord comfort those who loved Michael and were loved by him. I, for one, keep happy in the knowledge "Michael was a saint". If others knew him for what he was, they would believe.

With every good wish and blessing,

Very sincerely yours,

IGNATIUS, C.P.^a.

IV.

Padraic Fleming:

At 3.p.m. on 29th March, 1919, Padraic Fleming (born at Wolfhill, Leix, March 21st, 1894), Piarais Heaslai, and eighteen others escaped over the walls of Mountjoy Prison in open daylight. Collins had arranged that a bicycle was waiting for each man and instructions as to where each was to go. The twenty escaped and vanished into the unknown, as far as the English Authorities were concerned.

Fleming was instructed to proceed to the house of two maiden ladies, the Misses Gavan Duffy, where he received a warm welcome. He stayed there for some weeks and as he dared not appear outside the house, the good ladies helped him to pass the time by giving him lessons in Irish. As the hunt grew hotter and hotter for all of the escapees, but especially for Fleming, their leader, Collins decided that he must leave the city.

I received word in Knockbeg to expect an important visitor on a certain day. About mid-day on that day I saw a car driving rapidly down the College avenue. I went down to the hall door to meet it, and saw a lady stepping from the car. Before this I had not the pleasure of knowing this distinguished lady. While she was introducing herself to me as Mrs. Gavan Duffy I observed another lady in the back of the car attired in a luxurious fur coat, with fashionable toque, and struggling desperately with a complication of rugs. Finally, the rugs were cast aside and a tall,

gaunt figure stepped from the car, the upper part of which was wrapped in the fur coat and the rest in male attire, and then I was introduced to the man who became one of my greatest friends, Padraic Fleming.

I recollect having heard afterwards that Mrs. Gavan Duffy expended a very large amount in order to induce the Dublin taxi-driver to venture so far into the country in the dangerous circumstances then prevailing.

We found that Padraic's health had been gravely undermined by his terrible prison experiences. My brother, Doctor Doyle, assumed medical care of him and, by the aid of dietary and open air exercises, he began slowly to improve. Gradually we began to extract from him a detailed account of his prison experiences. Amongst ourselves he came to be known as "Fionn", named after his famous warrior prototype.

Fionn, after the hectic doings in his jail days, chafed against the inactivity of his days in the College, rendered imperative by the debilitated condition of his health. One source of consolation was talks with our activist visitors who gave him first-hand information of developments on the Liberation front. After a couple of months he grew very restless, and began to worry about the condition of his own Volunteer Battalion, from which he was so long separated. He said he must arrange to review the Battalion. Though we tried to convince him of the extreme risk, seeing that it was a question of going to his home area, where police were numerous and particularly active in pursuit of the leader

of the great escape, he persisted in his determination to accept the risk. My brother, Dr. L. Doyle, of Carlow, gave us the use of his car, which his wife pluckily volunteered to drive, by way of cover.

Early in the afternoon of the day arranged, our fair chauffeuse arrived attired for tennis. After some sets with members of the staff, and fortified with tea, we prepared to start. Miss Brigid Cole, of the College staff, insisted she must come as chaperone! Just then a visitor arrived, my cousin, Father Michael Doyle, ex-War Chaplain to the British Forces. He insisted on joining the expedition, saying that inexperienced civilians required the presence of a trained warrior on such an occasion. So we set out. I sat in the front of the car with the chauffeuse, whilst Miss Cole sat between Fionn and Father Doyle in the back, the ladies very conspicuous in their white tennis costumes. We drove in wide detours towards our objective. On a long straight strip of the Athy-Castlecomer road, two R.I.C. constables suddenly sprang on to the middle of the road about a hundred yards ahead, yelling "Halt!" We thought it our best policy to do so. The constables advanced slowly and cautiously towards the car, step by step in a crouching attitude, with their rifles trained upon us. Still covering us they took a position on either side of the car. The man on my side, in obviously tense strain, began cross-questioning, which I parried as coolly and carefully as I could. When finally he asked where we were coming

from, I had a flash of inspiration. I mentioned a place some miles back, through which we had actually passed, where there was a Protestant Rectory. With two clergymen and two tennis-clad ladies in the car, my story at least sounded plausible. At least it suggested an atmosphere, however fictitious, of respectability, and loyalty to the Crown. After a few more agitated, incoherent questions, they gruffly told us to drive on, which we did at the highest speed of which the car was capable, as we felt that rifle shots from the rear were a grim possibility. Were the constables as relieved as we were? They gave me the impression of men who felt they were performing an extremely perilous duty. Who was the tall, gaunt, dark-clad 'non-player' in the back of the car? Personally, I should have felt the strain more acutely if I had then known what I afterwards learned. During the dialogue Fionn had a Webley revolver in each hand, by which each constable was covered, in expectation of a crisis in the cross-questioning. When our excitement died down the party started to "rag" me, declaring it was my "super-superior accent" which had over-awed the simple constables, and saved the situation. We deposited Fionn safely at his destination, and returned to the College. I suffered sharp pangs of conscience over the risk into which we had allowed the ladies to be drawn, and also my brother, whose car was notoriously well-known in the neighbourhood. After some days the Volunteers brought Fionn back to us, greatly exhilarated after his meeting with his old comrades.

When Fionn had first come to the College, he

committed to my safe-keeping a brown paper parcel, which I was to guard carefully until he reclaimed it. Later he told me of the contents. When he had been staying with the Misses Gavan Duffy, he had met Mrs. George Gavan Duffy, who naturally had a great admiration for the prison here. One day, in the course of conversation, she told him of her relations with Casement. When Casement was imprisoned in London, awaiting his trial, he had asked her husband to conduct his defence. At the time Gavan Duffy was working as a Solicitor in London. When it became known that he had conducted Casement's defence all the members of his staff refused point blank to have anything to do with the handling of the case. Then Mrs. Gavan Duffy, a lady with a very distinguished academic record, stepped into the breach and offered her services as clerk. In this way she met Casement repeatedly, visiting the prison in company with her husband in his professional capacity. Casement naturally had profound admiration for the distinguished lady who had come to his aid in time of need. The night before his execution he told Mrs. Gavan Duffy that he would like to leave her some memento, but that he had literally nothing but the clothes in which he stood, and that if these had any interest for her she was to take them from the gallows cell the following morning. Knowing Fionn's great admiration for Casement, she brought the clothes for his inspection, and, seeing the veneration with which he viewed them, and feeling that some pleasure was due to him in compensation for all he had suffered, she nobly and generously gave him the relic she so much valued.

It was only a few years ago that Fionn, on my urgent insistence, came to resume possession of the clothes, with a view, I understand, to presenting them to the National Museum.

It is interesting to remember that, in going through the clothes, we found, in a pocket of the jacket, a small national tricolour, otherwise all the pockets were empty.

Towards the end of the summer, my brother became alarmed about the marked deterioration in Fionn's health and informed Collins that he considered it absolutely necessary to get Fionn out of the country, away from all the tense excitement of the time, and to arrange for his transfer to a warm, dry climate, where the imminent danger to his lungs might be averted. In spite of the intense search for the escapee that still continued, Collins got him over to Liverpool, where arrangements were made for his passage to the United States. He remained there about two years and returned to Ireland restored to health.

He is now a very successful and prosperous industrialist on an imposing scale. (Shortly after this was written he passed to his reward, December 5th 1952, R.I.P.)

During the course of many conversations which I had with Fionn, there gradually evolved an account of his prison experiences. I realised, not only the propaganda, but also the historical value of his story. I insisted that it was a national duty to put it on record.

but Fionn pleaded his inexperience and absolute incapacity to commit the story to writing. I was very troubled about this and, like most people of the national movement in trouble at the time, I went to the unfailing source of help. I went to Dublin and had a talk with Collins about the matter. He said that certainly the story must be recorded, and told me with his usual unquestionable decisiveness that, if I ultimately failed to prevail on Fionn to write it, I was to do so as he related the various incidents to me. And so the collaboration began.

It was long and laborious owing to Fionn's scrupulous anxiety for minute accuracy, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. When the manuscript was finished the question arose about its printing and publication. I failed absolutely to find a printer with a sufficient sporting sense of sacrifice to take the risk of printing it. At the time, printing presses paid the penalty of a Black and Tan raid of demolition for offences hurtful to the susceptibilities of English tetrarchs in Ireland, and, thus, I had to have recourse to Collins again, bringing the manuscript with me. He told me immediately that he would have it printed. Actually, it was printed by the "under-ground" press, by which was printed An tÓglach, the official periodical of the Volunteers. I had asked Collins to write a preface, but he told me that he could not possibly find time to reach upon it, but that he would get it done. And done it was, and brilliantly, by Piarais Beaslai, editor of An tÓglach, himself one of the Mountjoy escapees. The green

cover of the booklet served as a title page which bore the following inscription: -

IN MARYBORO AND MOUNTJOY
 THE PRISON EXPERIENCES
 AND PRISON-BREAKING OF
 AN IRISH VOLUNTEER
 (PADRAIC FLEMING)
 BY AN IRISH PRIEST
 (All Rights Reserved)

Fortitudine Vincit.

On the inside of the cover was stencilled "Support Dáil Éireann Loan".

It was only a few weeks on sale in the Dublin shops when a bookseller was awarded three months in prison for the offence of offering it for sale. After this it disappeared entirely from public circulation. One treasured copy remains on my bookshelves.

When Fionn was some months in the United States, he brought out a Second Edition of the booklet, a copy of which he had succeeded in bringing with him. This Second Edition differed only in one detail from the original, namely, in that on the cover it bore my full name, at a time when the Black and Tans were still distressingly active here. From the proceeds of the sale Fionn sent me a draft for 500 dollars to be given to Collins for Volunteer funds. (It was only a few weeks ago that the County Manager for Kildare told me that he had read the book in Iowa, shortly after its American publication.

As the booklet is of genuine historical value and as it is now so scarce and practically unknown, I should append here the full text, as it written, without any attempt at emendation, but for the fact that the Secretary of the Bureau of Military History has told me that he has already acquired two copies.

(Signed)

P.J. DOYLE, P.P.

Naas, 1952.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21
No. W.S.

A WEDDING TOAST

THE MEN OF 1916.

A Toast on the occasion of the Wedding of
KEVIN O'HIGGINS, T.D.E. and MISS BRIGID
COLE, October, 27th 1921.

Mr. President, Very Reverend Fathers, Ladies and
Gentlemen -

It has fallen to me to propose the last toast of this happy and memorable day - the toast of the "Men of 1916, Dead and Living". There are some feelings so intimately sacred as to find expression only under the stress of compelling circumstance, and then are poured solely into the private ear of some friend of the soul, feelings that find public expression only under the conviction of the supreme call of duty or of loyalty. To such a call I am essaying a response to-day, willing however unworthy. Emotions raw from still gaping wounds, memory overladen with images of lethal suffering and heroic grandeur, mind congested with the crowding thoughts of five glorious years, and an Irish heart torn with gratitude and love, how except under the irresistible sense of a debt clamouring for discharge could one presume to find words adequate to such a theme? Hence may I not hope that the seeming indelicacy of the avowal is condoned and spiritualised by the quasi-sacramental holiness accruing to the open confession of a quick, human heart?

The Men of 1916 assumed their heavy and glorious task with a sense of awed and lonely responsibility. They saw the National spirit sunk in the slough of despond consequent upon the disappointment, the gross humiliation and disillusionment of the Home Rule struggle. They saw the question of our Independence slipping away into oblivion amidst the welter of England's war-politics, the international rivalries and ambitions raging amongst the war-mad nations of Europe. They realised that a great heroic gesture was necessary to exorcise the demon of despair, to fan into living flame the dully smouldering embers of the Nation's passion for liberty, to convince all men of the survival of the national soul, to herald to the world the rights that soul demanded. They felt it was the lonely duty of a few, the few elect who felt a strange stirring of the blood, the periodic eruption of the national consciousness that all through the period of foreign occupation broke forth with a strangely rhythmic recurrence, the life-pulse of the Nation with periodicity of intensity. They heard the call of Red Hugh, of Phelim O'Neill, of Sarsfield, of Tone, of Mitchell, and, perhaps most of all O'Donovan Ross, "splendid in the proud manhood of him, splendid in the heroic grace of him, splendid in the Gaelic strength, and charity and truth of him". With calm confidence and lofty exaltation of a vicarious sacrifice they did "a hard, sweet thing", almost with naked hands they "went out against the Gall", to do knightly service even unto death for

"The passionate Dark Rose whose strange surprise
Of beauty nerved them to their enterprise".

Of the living the finest and truest thing I can say is that they have nobly and unfalteringly maintained the tradition, the tradition of our heroic Dead, mindful of the message of Pearse, their Chief - "Patriotism is in large part a memory of heroic dead men, and a striving to accomplish some task left unfinished by them". Animated by the same spirit of stern duty and heroic abnegation, they have roused the whole Nation to a realization of the sacredness of the work that is afoot, its claims upon the generous service of every loyal citizen, the conviction of the ultimate triumph of right over wrong - in brief they have awakened and fortified the national will-for-liberation. As a fundamental and cohesive factor for the whole national effort they have raised and brought to a wondrous state of efficiency the Volunteer Army of Ireland. The Army has become the finest expression of the National Spirit. It has been raised for the one object - to fight on behalf of Justice and to defend the rights that Justice concedes. Its mainstay is a lofty sense of duty and the infectious enthusiasm that a complete surrender to duty always engenders, its bond a rivalry of honour - its motto the old chivalric war-cry - God and my duty! - That Army has fought the British Empire, a struggle at first sight apparently of a pigmy against a giant, but in reality it proves to be between a spirit and material force. And already the scales of victory are tilted on the side of the spirit. This success is due to the exaltation consequent on the Volunteer's mystic sense of duty, splendidly supported as it was by the re-acting, flaming sympathy of the entire people, who rapidly became infected with the Volunteer spirit of service and

sacrifice. Repression brought to bear on the civilian population only strengthened the people's resistance, suffering only further steeled their will, and to-day the National spirit is as it were a powerful spring of immeasurable latent strength, quickly and adequately responsive to every added strain. Hence the success of our Secret Service, presided over by a man of magnetic personality evocative of limitless devotion on the part of his collaborators, of both sexes, of every rank and occupation, a man of superb genius in organisation, of ruthless efficiency in his multiple activities. Hence the success of the Republican Police and judiciary system, firmly based as it was on the free assent of the Nation, for Republican Justice is more than an authority to which men mechanically submit, rather is it an expression of the National will, accepted and cherished as a proud symbol of civil liberty. And hence the splendid efficiency and success attendant on the brilliant administration of the Ministry of Local Government.

Such are the Men of 1916, this their contribution to the victory that we hope is near at hand. Need we wonder that "the boys", as the Nation affectionately styles them, have at their service all that is most tender and most exalted in the hearts of the Irish people? It is the passionate loyalty, the burning love and gratitude of the Gael that I have tried to voice to-day.

Very Rev. Fathers, Ladies and Gentlemen, I toast the Men of 1916 - the memory of our holy dead, to the long life and happiness of the beloved living, and to the full culmination of their dearest wish, the liberty, the untrammelled liberty of Ireland.

