ROINN COSANTA.

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STATEMENT BY WITNESS

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Witness

Ailbhe O Monachain,
63 Beaumont Road,
Upper Drumcondra,
Dublin.

Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers and I.R.B. Belfast 1914 -

Subject

(a) National activities 1914 - Truce.
(b) The North 1914 - 1916;
(c) Galway Easter Week 1916;
(d) Reorganisation of Irish Volunteers post 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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STATEMENT BY AILBHE Ó MONACHAIN,

63, Beaumont Road, Dublin.

I was born in Belfast and educated at Christian Brothers' School, Oxford Street, Belfast. I was apprenticed to the profession of Poster Artist and Lithographic Artist in the firm of Messrs. David Allen & Sons, at that time the biggest lithographic printers in the world.

I joined the Irish Volunteers when they were first started in Belfast about January 1914, and at the same time I joined the I.R.B. Denis McCullough was in charge. Peter Burns was also an officer. We were trained by Seán O'Neill, an ex-N.C.O. of the Royal Artillery, and Rory Hoskins, an ex-Orangeman and an ex-soldier of the British Army, and Liam Leatham, ex-Protestant Boys Brigade, and Seán Cusack, a Sergeant on Reserve of the Royal Irish Rifles.

A great many of the Volunteers bought their own rifles, which were smuggled in from England. They were Martini Enfields and cost £3. 0. 0 each, and the bullets cost 4d. each. The English firm making the rifles sent us word that they regretted having to stop supplies for a while as some busybody had set the police on their track. Originally the Volunteers was not a big body, but after the shooting at Bachelors Walk increased immensely. After the Redmondite split the numbers were reduced to the original reliables. The Volunteérs held field exercises and rifle practice on the Divis mountains.

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There were several Circles of the I.R.B. in Belfast. Denny McCullough was Centre of the Circle of which I was a member. At an I.R.B. meeting at which five or six others and I were present, McCullough announced that he would give a card to each man, and each man was to follow the instructions given on the card and not to speak about it. The instructions on my card were to meet McCullough after the meeting. Similar instructions were on the card given to another man called Harry Shiels (wounded at Church Street barricade 1916). The cards handed to the other men simply gave the date of the next meeting. McCullough brought us to his house and gave us a machine gun to bring to the house of Seán Corrigan situated in Saint Paul's Parish. Some weeks later when no one was at home except Sean's mother the Hibernians burst into the house and took the gun.

At the time of the Asquith-Redmond recruiting meeting in the Mansion House, Dublin, I was in Dublin on holidays and met Seán Lester and Archie Heron. Lester told me that there was a plan to seize the Mansion House to prevent the meeting being held and asked me would I be one of the garrison. Later he told me the plan had to be given up. I think that the police and soldiers were already in possession of it. At this time Harry Shiels and I met Frank McCabe who asked us would we take part in a raid for guns at the L.N.E. Railway stores, North Wall. We were delighted at the chance and that night we assisted at carrying several boxes of rifles from the stores to waiting motor cars.

When the Redmondites openly took the side of Britain in the War and asked Irishmen to join the British Army, a number of us (Volunteers) met and

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decided to publish the anti-recruiting bills to be distributed amongst the Volunteers (this was before the actual split). The Committee in charge of this business and who paid the expense of the literature out of their own pockets were Joe Connolly, D. McCullough, Rory Hoskin, Cathal O'Shannon, Harry Shiels, Sean McMuller - myself and some others. Seán McMullen wrote the bills Many of the Volunteers stood on the street after a parade of the Volunteers at Seán an Diomais G.A.A. grounds (Sean's Park) and distributed this anti-recruiting literature. We were all confident that we would be arrested for this but were not. Later a meeting was held in St. Mary's Hall to decide what side the Volunteers would officially take. Joe Devlin, M.P., was in the chair and the meeting was well packed with his supporters who were not at all too happy at the role they were playing. The meeting broke up in disorder. On the occasion of P.H. Pearse's visit to Belfast the Volunteer parade was not very big and the men with the rifles were put on the flanks to make a good show.

In July 1915 Liam Mellowes, Herbert Pim, E. Blythe and Denis McCullough were served with deportation orders. McCullough asked me to take on Liam Mellowes' job as organiser (Desmond Fitzgerald replaced E. Blythe), which I did. First of all I did a course of training with a moving Camp on the Dublin-Wicklow hills. J.J. O'Connell ("Ginger") and Eimer O'Duffy were in charge of the Camp. Amongst others in the Camp were Tom Ashe, Diarmuid Lynch, Frank Lawless, Joe Lawless. Dr. Dick Hayes, Albert Cotton and Joe McGuinness. The training included drill, musketry and forced marches. We came down from the hills to attend the O'Donovan-Rossa

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funeral. After the course of training I was appointed to Cavan. Bulmer Hobson gave me a list of names of people I should get in touch with, some of them were old men - Fenians. I first stayed in the hotel of Barney McCabe, an old Fenian, in the town of Cavan. There I had my first dispute with the police over signing the Irish form of my name in the hotel register. As a result of police pressure in Cavan town I had to remove my headquarters to the house of Mrs. John Dillon, the forge, Ballinagh. Mrs. Dillon or her son, John, did not care about police visits or questions. I travelled all over Cavan visiting Companies or organising new ones, not unknown to the police who followed me everywhere they could get on my tracks, as in many cases I succeeded in evading them. A great many people holding good positions in Cavan were helping the movement but kept in the background. The clergy were generally good, and of course the teachers were reliable for information in every district. One night early in October 1915 I went to Cor na Feinne to address the local Company. The Captain was Paul McShane. The meeting was held in a hall beside McShane's shop. Sergeant McMullen and Constable O'Brien listened outside the window and on their report I was ordered to leave Cavan by General Friend, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in Ireland. I was to reside in a certain restricted area in Belfast. I brought my deportment order to Dublin and went to Volunteer Headquarters and there I met Bulmer Hobson, Sean McDermott and some others. I said I would refuse to obey the order and both McDermott and Hobson agreed to this. I went back to Cavan the same night. A few days later extra police were drafted into Ballinagh.

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I was arrested on the 16th October and brought to Cavan Police Barracks, and then to the Belfast Cemtral Police Station. Next day, Sunday, I was brought to Crumlin Road Jail on remand. I remember my entry into Belfast Jail. I was brought in a police patrol van. I heard the jail gates being opened, and then clanging shut behind me, and I felt very lonely - I was duly signed over and put in a 'reception' cell - a dark place with the window high up in the wall, but lower than the ground outside. The furniture was austere, a table, a stool, and a wooden platform for a bed, placed against the side of the wall, with dark coloured blankets and a pillow folded up in it. There was a large bible on the table. I sat down and opened the book at randon and read -

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst
after justice for they shall have their fill".

(Mark, Chap. V, Verse 6).

I laughed to myself and regained my good humour. Charlie Power (now Judge) visited me and brought a copy of the charge against me. The charges were lying charges and Eoin McNeill advised that I should recognise the Court in order to expose these lying charges and for anti-British propaganda.

I was tried on the 26th October at the Belfast Court. Charlie Power defended me, but the result was a foregone conclusion. I was sentenced to three months hard labour. Dinny McCullough was being released when I went in. Ernie Blythe had gone out a few days before. When I had been sentenced I was paraded with other new prisoners for the doctor's examination. We were lined up in the central hall of the prison (hub of the wheel-spoke wings) we had to expose our chest for the doctor. I was opening my shirt when the doctor (O'Flaherty) came to me and he growled very roughly at me, "Come on, hurry up". I dropped my hands to my side.

O'Flaherty glared but had the good sense to pass on as we were both stared by warders and prisoners, the latter at least very edified. The prison rule is first seven days a plank bed - no mattress. A warder said that I should apply for use of a mattress - as all prisoners did and were granted. I said I would not ask for any favours, but the warder said "I'll put your name down, don't you suffer any inconvenience you can help". I was brought before the doctor and the warder requested the use of the mattress for me. Nothing was said but the warder came to me in my cell and said "the so-and-so has refused you the mattress but he'll never know whether you have it or not", so the mattress was left with me. Another rule was that cells were to be washed out every day - or second day - I don't remember exactly. This meant wetting the cell with cold water. I refused to wet (wash it out) my cell more than once a week and I had a row with the head warder, who threatened all sorts of things. Afterwards the warder on duty came to me and said, "he says will you let another prisoner wash out the cell for you". I said, "I will not let anyone do my dirty work, I don't object to washing my cell but I do object to staying in a wet cell", and so the matter rested.

The Deputy Governor, Mr. Harding, on his visiting rounds often had a long chat with me in my cell. The Governor was not apparently an affable man but he did not like me associating with the regular 'jailbirds', and gave orders that I was to be kept apart from them. Now it seems that this arrangement would have put a strain on the whole running of the prison as I would have to have a warder to myself, and as there was no spare warder available it would mean extra work for the warders. I was approached on the matter and asked would I agree to exercise with the other prisoners and a secret signal would be arranged so that on the approach of the Governor I would go and hide some place. I did not feel inclined to help to run the

prison system, and yet I did not want to live in isolation for I enjoyed the experience of talking to the 'jailbirds'. I agreed to the plan and every time the Governor approached the prisoners at work or exercise I disappeared. I met some terrible rascals and criminals, all I think sub-normal beings and all had a lot of good in them. Smoking was forbidden in jail so the prisoners chewed tobacco smuggled into them somehow. The chewed tobacco was dried and made into a cigarette. Tobacco was, therefore, very scare and a precious luxury, yet how often had I been offered a tiny bit of precious tobacco by these criminals. I wore my own clothes and was, therefore, an object of curiosity to the other jailbirds, but according to jailbird etiquette no one must be asked what he is in for.

The card outside my cell door "Breach of the Defence of the Realm Regulations" did not convey anything to the other prisoners. If a prisoner wants to know what another prisoner is in for, he invites his confidence by telling him what he himself is in for, and if the other is a nice person he will reciprocate confidence. My crime was not understood at all by the majority of the prisoners and from what I was told every other man in the place was an innocent victim of a police plot, or of circumstances, or co-incident. One prisoner passing through on his way to do seven years in Maryboro (he had been a short time out after doing seven years when he got into trouble again) said to me "when are you going up mack?". I said, "I have been up and sentenced". "Then you mustn't be guilty", said he, "when they let you wear your own clothes or you must be in for something respectable, embezzlement or something". I was in for Christmas. We all got a helping of pudding on Christmas Day. In additon to my share the warder brought me a second helping, and a prisoner in a cell facing mine sent me (per the warder) a third helping. I hasten to

add, this I saved up for other days. The prisoner opposite was a Scotsman - a deserter from the British Navy. He worked in the prison cook house. One day in the course of conversation I found out he had Gaelic, and his heart warmed to me. He often sent me extra food per the warder. Prison food is worked out scientifically. At first one is very hungry, but later on the fare is sufficient and one even gets fat (blubbery) on it. Prisoners are weighed periodically to test scientifically how they are doing on prison food. I was never weighed. I got fat and lost a lot of smypathy thereby when I was released.

The hard labour was harmless but very interesting. Most of the time the prisoners were engaged in cutting up the heavy guns, turrets and armoury of dummy battleships for firewood. This requires some explanation. During the 1914-1918 War England camouflaged a lot of old boats to look like battleships - and the names of real battleships were on them, while the real battleships were kept in safety for emergency. The big guns and armour of the dummy ships were all wood and canvas painted. The crews of these ships were recruited from jails and soldiers and sailors in trouble, and adventurers. Each man got £100.on joining and ordinary seaman's pay. But no pension or compensation to relatives for death or injury. I often saw these crews being marched off to join their ships, between files of soldiers with fixed bayonets. The men were dressed in scrap uniforms mostly khaki overalls. They were mostly drunk, and many of them handcuffed in pairs. I was, of course, very pleased to see so much "armoury" and so many big "guns" being cut up for firewood, for it showed that dummy war ships were being blown up. These ships, however, served their purpose well and often deceived the Germans. At least on one occasion they were instumental in causing the destruction of a great many German ships in a naval ambush.

Many of the dummy warships were fitted out in Belfast and Cathal O'Shannon sent a full description to America. This was published in some American paper. The English did a very clever thing; they had this story of the dummy battleships reprinted in a Belfast paper as a tall American yarn, yet everyone in Belfast knew that the story was true.

Prison system has probably been changed since 1915 and will probably be changed more before this manuscript is read, so that a description of prison system and routine under English rule may be interesting. The warders were generally kindly men and did nothing to make the life of the prisoners harder - providing of course the prisoners did their share and gave no unnecessary trouble. The prison system, however, was bad and seemed designed to enervate the mind. There was a bible and prayer book in every cell, very good reading of course but not relaxing for the mind. I read it from cover to cover. In the first month prisoners are allowed one story book and one educational book per week. The educational book was usually an old fashioned class reader school book. This one could be read in a few hours, and the story book in about two evenings; for the rest of the week there was the bible and prayer book. After the first month two story books were given. For those who could not read, children's picture books were provided. I always felt sad listening to the illiterate prisoners continually pacing up and down in their cells. The books were given out by a warder called the schoolmaster - in Crumlin Road Jail a Mr. Crowley known in the prison as old Charlie. A prisoner carried the tray of books. Warder Crowley was not a smiling man - at least to me, but he was nice and civil. One day the prisoner who carried the books said to me, "old Charlie is very particular about the books he gives to you, you must have a quare leg of him". I found out afterwards that I knew Warder Crowley's two

daughters very well in the Gaelic League, but did not know their father was a warder. It appears that they had given him orders that he was to be good to me. So the women ruled even the prisons. I wanted some Irish books. The only way I could get these was to get them presented to the prison Library, and then they were lent to me officially. I was not altogether dependent on the prison Library. The warders let me see the newspapers every day - secretly of course, and one particular warder let me see the Republican Political papers every Sunday. The prison Chaplin was Fr. MacAuley and his deputy was Fr. MacLeanacháin, Principal of St. Malachy's College. Fr. MacLeanacháin relieved Fr. MacAuley while republican prisoners were in Crumlin Road Jail. He was a very hearty man and his visits were always a very pleasant interlude in the dull prison life.

The prison food which was doled out scientifically was not attractive. The brown loaves were very sawdust-like, and the cocoa was insipid. The only good thing we got was a substance called "duff", that is suet pudding. I liked this in prison but never looked for it since. The prison bell was rung at seven every morning, and each prisoner had to have himself washed, his bed made up, and be standing to attention for inspection at 7.20. Breakfast was at 8, and work outside, and mat making in cells began at 9. Dinner was at 12, work again 2 till 4 and then supper and lights out at nine.

Sunday, the Catholics went to 8 o'clock Mass and came back to a cold breakfast already placed in the cells. Protestants went to Service at ten. There was one Chapel for both congregations, a curtain was drawn across the altar during Protestant Service.

In the Chapel there were high chairs, backs to the Altar

for warders to sit facing the congregation but they were never used. The warders and Deputy Governor sat anywhere they could find room, and all warders and prisoners went together to Holy Communion.

After Protestant Service there was "exercise" till 12 o'clock, a dreary, weary, dragging walk round cement ring-paths in the prison yard, the prisoners being so many paces apart to prevent them talking to each other, but this did not prevent them for every prisoner cultivates a high power ventriloquism and can talk without moving his mouth and throw the voice clearly over the shoulder to the man behind him, or telephone it forward to the man in front. I read "Valentine Vox" in prison and did not think his ventriliquism was anything remarkable compared to the ventriliquism we practised walking round the jail ring. Knives or razors were not allowed to prisoners, and all eating equipment consisted of a horn spoon (and of course tin mug and plate).

Haircutting was done by prisoners for each other and whiskers were let grow or were clipped with scissors. Prison clothes were ill fitting suits of frieze, broad stripes of black and dark grey, shirts with collars and check ties, high-low boots, grey caps. First offenders had a red star on caps. Big men get small suits, small men big suits. I wore my clothes and was an object of curiosity to the other prisoners. My hard labour did not affect me very much, and I believe Ernie Blythe took it easy too. On my being released on the 16th January, 1916, I was given my hard labour pay which amounted to a couple of shillings and which I put into the prison poorbox.

I got instructions from G.H.Q. to go to Galway to assist Liam Mellows. From this it will be seen that G.H.Q.

had reasons for having Galway very specially organised and equipped for the coming Rising. My district being mainly the Gaeltact. I had an interview with Pádraic Mac Piarais, Thomas McDonagh and Seán McDermott before I went away, and was given instructions as to what I was to do. Being just out of jail I was very well received in Galway and closely watched by the police. I had to send a report to H.Q. each week and this report going through the post was made suitable for reading by British Censors. Another full and true report was given to Liam Mellows who had it conveyed to Headquarters. My work in Galway was organising new Companies, drilling and lecturing existing Companies.

Early in March, 1916, Mellows told me to impress upon the men that there might be trouble - that the British might attempt to disarm the Volunteers, and that any attempt to do so was to be resisted. So when the word of the Rising came it was no surprise.

Volunteer parades were held throughout Ireland on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, and in Galway City nearly 600 men paraded with a few rifles, some with shotguns and a body of very big men carrying pikes. Shortly after this parade, Liam Mellows was again arrested. During the first time Mellows was in prison Commandant Pádraic Pearse visited Galway and arranged with Commandant Larry Lardiner, O/C. Galway Brigade, about a code message to give word about the Rising. The code arranged was "Collect the premiums". In addition to being a shopkeeper Larry was an Insurance Agent as well.

I was staying at No. 1 Francis Street, the house of Miss Maud Coyne, which was opposite Police Headquarters. On the 28th March I proceeded on a bicycle to attend a Volunteer

parade at Moycullen, a couple of police followed me and some distance out on the Moycullen road a motor car passed me and stopped a short distance ahead of me. District Inspector Head who was in the car, halted me and served a Deportation Order on me to leave Ireland within six days and to reside in some God-forgotten place in England. I did not go on the parade.

My house was under constant police supervision, day and night, and the police continued to follow me everywhere. One night before the six days had expired Fr. Feeney and "another Priest" called to see me. Fr. Feeney had gone to great trouble to get a man who resembled me, and dressed him as a priest. I changed clothes with this man, and then Fr. Feeney and I stood at the door talking to someone in the hall, then we cycled off through the police cordon. A motor car was waiting at Oranmore which took us the rest of the journey to Cahill's farmhouse near Craughwell. Later on I went to the house of Mr. Higgins on the Black Mountains near Castlelambert. This was so as to be near Athenry, to keep in touch with Headquarters there.

Ernest Blythe was arrested, and he and Liam Mellowes were deported to England, but the two were not sent to one place. With the help of his brother Barney and Miss Nora Connolly, daughter of James Connolly, Liam escaped from England. He landed in Belfast dressed as a priest. Liam was rather small and the priest in Glasgow who lent his clothes was rather big, but it seems that poor Irish priests on the mission in England and Scotland are not always well-dressed, and the G-man at the Glasgow boat saluted "Father" Liam without suspicion - and "Father" Liam raised his hand in Benediction, whatever his wishes may have been. In Belfast Liam stayed with the Connollys. (See Nora Connolly O'Brien's Story of a Rebel Father for details of the escape from England and journey to Galway).

/On

On Palm Sunday 1916, a meeting was held in Limerick of the Limerick, Clare and Galway Brigade delegates, and the report of the state of the Volunteers in named areas was not considered satisfactory. The Galway delegates to the meeting were Larry Lardiner, Brigade Commandant, Eamonn Corbett, Vice-Commandant and Father Feeney. On the following day (Monday) Eamonn Corbett went to Dublin to a G.H.Q. meeting in Scoil Eanna. He returned to Galway the same night, with definite orders that the Rising would commence on Easter Sunday night at 7 p.m.

Since he had not got the arranged Code message "Collect the premiums" Commandant Larry Lardiner was not satisfied with this order and next day he received a message from Dublin, signed by McNeill, that did not agree with the orders given to Eamonn Corbett. I cannot recollect the contents of this message. A meeting of officers was called and met in the house of Father Francis Feeney, Clarinbridge. Among those present were Father Feeney, Eamonn Corbett, Padraic O Fathaigh, Matthew Neilan and Larry Lardiner, and it was decided that Larry Lardiner should go to Dublin and interview Padraic MacPiarais and Eoin MacNeill and get definite instructions. Larry Lardiner went to Dublin on Holy Thursday. He did not succeed in seeing Padraic MacPiarais and Eoin MacNeill, but he saw Bulmer Hobson, Secretary of the Volunteers. Without giving any information Larry Lardiner tried to get some information. Bulmer Hobson advised him not to take any orders not signed by the President of the Volunteers, Eoin MacNeill, and Larry Lardiner understood that there was some divergence of opinion among the heads of the Volunteers.

While Larry Lardiner was in Dublin, Mrs. Frank Fahy arrived in Athenry with a despatch from Padraic MacPiarais,

/Mrs.

Mrs. Fahy remained all day waiting, but as she had to go home on the last train she consented to give the message to Eamonn Corbett, who was able to give her proof that he was in the confidence of Padraic MacPiarais and others working with him. When Larry Lardiner came back from Dublin he got the code message "Collect the premiums, 7 p.m. Sunday." That order was definite, but on the morrow, Good Friday, another message was received from Eoin MacNeill which upset all calculations again. I do not know what was in the message but as a result a meeting of Brigade officers was called in the house of Seoirse MacNioccaill in Galway City on Holy Saturday and it was decided at the meeting to send another delegate, a man called Hósty, to Dublin to see Padraic MacPiarais and Eoin MacNeill. In the meantime, preparations for the Rising were to proceed. Notwithstanding all this, word was sent late on Wednesday night to each Company Officer to instruct the men to go to Confession and Holy Communion on Easter Sunday morning and to attack the local Police Barracks at 7 o'clock on Easter Sunday night.

In the meantime, Liam Mellowes was on his way back to Galway. He stayed at Mullagh with people called Mainnin, from there he went to Loughrea to the home of Joseph O'Flaherty and on Easter Saturday night he stayed in Killeeneen at the house of Mrs. Walshe, N.T.

On Easter Sunday morning all Volunteers went to the Altar. After Mass a priest arrived on a motor bicycle in Athenry with the countermanding order from Eoin MacNeill. I do not know who the priest was. Eamonn Corbett and Father Feeney immediately brought this message to Liam Mellowes in Killeeneen, and countermanding orders were sent out to all the Companies; and it is recorded that one Company actually received the countermanding order as they took up a position

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around the local R.I.C. Barracks on Sunday night.

About 7 o'clock on Sunday night another messenger arrived on a motor bicycle from Dublin, a man called Egan. His message was from Padraic MacPiarais to say the operations had been postponed for the present. A return message was sent to say that Galway was always ready. It is said that Padraic MacPiarais got this message in the G.P.O. on Easter Monday. About one o'clock on Easter Monday, Miss Farrelly brought a message to Commandant Larry Lardiner in Athenry from Padraic MacPiarais: "We are out from twelve o'clock to-day. Issue your orders without delay, P.H.P." Mobilisation orders were immediately sent out to all Company Captains.

There was a large force of R.I.C. in Athenry Barracks and a smaller force in a hut outside the town. So far they had apparently not suspected anything, and if the original plans had been carried out, it is probable that all the barracks in the county could have been taken without a fight. In Athenry alone all the police, except one man in the barracks were at Benediction on Sunday night, and most of them went for a stroll afterwards.

It had been arranged that 3,000 of the rifles from the "Aud" were to reach Galway, and there was a man in Galway ready for each rifle. Everything had been planned with men on the railway to take the rifles at Kerry and distribute them all along the line right up to Galway, but the accidental drowning of three Volunteers in Kerry - my brother (Cathal O Monachain), Conn Ceitinn and Donal O'Sheehan - the failure to land the arms and the capture of Roger Casement upset all those plans. It is right to make it clear that Eoin MacNeill issued his countermanding order after the arrest of Casement.

/When

When the news of the Rising in Dublin came, the Athenry Company took possession of the Town Hall, under the command of Captain Prionsias Ó hEidhin, and by this time the R.I.C. garrison had also news and at once seized a house facing the barracks and fortified it and the barracks. The R.I.C. from outlying stations were rushed in. All small barracks and huts were abandoned.

British soldiers, marines and navymen were landed in Galway City, and - something that Galway City has tried to forget since - a British civilian Volunteer force was formed. This Volunteer force was only useful for newspaper propaganda work, however; the British authorities did not give them any rifles. Those who belonged to the Irish Volunteers in Galway City, or were suspected of being sympathetic, were arrested and put on board a British battleship in Galway Bay. The big British garrison in Galway City and Lough Corrib kept the men of Iar-Connacht from joining up with the Volunteers east of the city.

Tuesday morning about daybreak, Padraic Ó Fathaigh (of Ballycahlane) who bore despatches, was ambushed and arrested by R.I.C. outside Father Meehan's house at Kinvara. Thinking he would be immediately brought into Galway City, a body of Volunteers rushed to the Galway road to rescue him, but the R.I.C. brought him in the opposite direction to Limerick.

Early on Tuesday morning several R.I.C. barracks were attacked, including Gort and Oranmore barracks, The police succeeded in escaping from Gort, but Oranmore was defended until reinforcements arrived from Galway. Many R.I.C. men were made prisoners. Liam Mellowes himself covered the retirement of the Volunteers from Oranmore; he scattered the reinforcements from Galway, and it is said that eleven R.I.C. men were wounded. One Volunteer was also wounded.

/Tuesday

Tuesday evening all the Volunteers from Athenry district assembled in the Model farm near Athenry and remained there overnight. Several breadcarts, a tea-van, some loads of flour, etc. were seized by the Volunteers.

On Wednesday morning there were a few skirmishes with R.I.C. outside Athenry. About 4 o'clock a.m. Wednesday, 15 men of the Castlegarr Company, were at Carnmore Cross when 9 lorries and motor cars, full of R.I.C. and soldiers, under a Captain Bodkin, suddenly arrived on the scene from Galway City. They attacked the Volunteers. The Volunteers were only armed with shotguns but they replied to the British fire. One R.I.C. man named Whelan was killed and the British turned tail and fled, much to the surprise of the small body of Volunteers. Shortly after this, however, Volunteers from Claregalway arrived at the double. These new arrivals scared the British forces.

Over 500 men assembled at the Model Farm, but a great part of them had no firearms of any sort. In fact, there were only 35 rifles, and 350 shotguns, all told. Many men who had not been in the Volunteers at all joined up to fight, and all were in the best of humour and full of pluck. The officers in command were Liam Mellowes, G.H.Q. organiser in supreme command, Larry Lardiner, Brigade Commandant, myself, Eamonn Corbett, Vice-Commandant, Matty Niland, Adjutant, Sean Broderick, Quartermaster. Several priests, including Father Daly of Athenry, visited the Model Farm and heard Confessions. Only one man came from Galway City, Fred MacDermott (R.I.P.) and on the way to the Model Farm he met Father Tom Burke on a motor bicycle; he hailed the priest, told him where he was going and Father Burke heard his Confession on the roadside.

/From

From the beginning, on Monday evening, the Volunteers had been busy all over the county putting barricades and obstacles on roads, breaking up railway lines, and in bringing in food supplies and means of transport to the H.Q. camp. Food was plentiful, and the people of the county were very generous in supplying baked bread, milk, etc.

Scouts were sent out gathering information about the movements of the British and the people were very good in helping them. Indeed there were a great many unofficial scouts working for the Volunteers, women as well as men, and young boys. The youngsters especially were very enthusiastic scouts.

Small parties were also sent out to search abandoned police barracks. They got plenty of military equipment and uniforms, but no rifles or ammunition were left behind. The R.I.C. archives were very interesting, containing police reports, and reports of spies to the police and a lot of private letters belonging to the R.I.C. men.

At New Inn police station the Sergeant was found in bed. He said he was sick and had to be left behind. But the Volunteer found a letter from the District Inspector ordering all the men to go into Ballinasloe, but the Sergeant was to stay in bed pretending to be sick - "the Rebels won't touch you if you say you are sick" was in the letter. The Volunteers did not interfere with him apart from making fun of him.

There were several skirmishes during the week between R.I.C. and Volunteer foraging parties who were sent out to bring in supplies of potatoes. Each Company Officer was responsible for his own Company, to see that they had food,etc., and the girls of Cumann na mBan generally looked after the cooking. Bullocks were commandeered and slaughtered and the

/fragrance

fragrance of Irish Stew was very much in evidence.

On Wednesday evening the Volunteers left the Model Farm and made a camp at Moyode Castle. Small bodies of Volunteers were always out on bicycles and in motors, but in spite of many rumours of marching British troops and artillery, the Volunteers did not come in contact with any khaki soldiers.

While in Moyode, Father Thomas Fahy of Maynooth and Father MacNamara, C.S.S.R, of Esker, came out and heard Confessions. Father Henry Feeney had been with the Volunteers since Sunday.

There was always great activity in Moyode Camp, plenty of work and drilling, and the Transport Section were always practising harnessing horses and loading up cars, with the result that each driver and his assistants were able to have their own carts ready for the road within five minutes of the "All Ready" signal.

Moyode Castle was not a good place to put in a state of defence, as there were large windows all around it, but as far as possible defences were made. There were a good many prisoners to be looked after - both R.I.C. men and suspicious civilians.

All day on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, a great booming of guns was heard from the direction of Galway Bay. A special one-page issue of the "Connacht Tribune" said this booming was the British warships getting the range of Athenry, and it has since been put into several histories of Easter Week that the Volunteers were scattered by gunfire from war-ships. This is not true. Some shells did fall on land, but not within fifteen miles of the Volunteer Camp and consequently did not harm anyone - except the reputation of the gunners.

/It

It was said in Galway that a fight was going on between German submarines and the British warships which were bottled up in Galway Bay.

The Moyode garrison was well supplied with rumours, as well as with authentic information, but there was no definite news from Dublin or from the other counties of Ireland. It was known, of course, that the landing of arms from the German Ship, the "Aud", had failed; that Roger Casement had been captured, but it was hoped that the Volunteers of every county had come out. The Galway Volunteers, when they went out, did not hope to do anything big. Badly armed as they were, their only hope was to bottle up the British garrison and divert the British from concentrating on Dublin, and this they succeeded in doing. Outside the big town the Volunteers had absolute control of the county. There were about 600 square miles of Galway Free Country, from Galway City to Ballinasloe, and from Tuam to Gort. About the middle of the week, when the British realised that only Dublin, Galway and Wexford had risen, all the available R.I.C. and military were rushed to these counties All the R.I.C. from the North were sent to Galway.

One night, Volunteers in Moyode received what appeared to be an authentic report that British military were on the road from Ballinasloe to Moyode. A meeting of officers was immediately summoned and it was decided that the best plan would be to meet the artillery on the march and annoy them as much as possible with the small Volunteer force which was well armed. The position was explained to the men and any man who desired to go home was given leave to go, but he must leave his gun or rifle. Some men, for whom there were no arms, decided to go home, and one whole company went away. This was at 10 O'clock at night. The Company that went away was back again about /3 o'clock

about 3 o'clock next morning. The scouts who were sent out towards Ballinasloe failed to get any trace of the British artillery. But it was learned afterwards that the Artillery did leave Ballinasloe on that night, but for reasons of their own went back again.

On Friday morning Father Thomas Fahy came to Moyode Castle and after consulting Father Feeney and the Brigade officers he cycled to Galway City to get news about Dublin. When he returned to Moyode that night the Volunteers were gone.

On Friday night the Volunteer command decided to change camp and to go up towards County Clare and join up with the Clare Volunteers - if they were under arms. It was rumoured that day that large forces of British were concentrating on Athenry and Galway, intending to surround Moyode, and the British had orders not to take any prisoners.

Up to Friday night the news that reached the County Galway Volunteers of the events in Dublin was cheering. Mellowes and his men heard the guns booming in Galway Bay and were under the impression that the warships were sealed up in the Bay by the activities of German submarines. No shell from the warships - or warship - fell nearer than five miles away. Mellowes could feel that he had achieved his objective as his one object was to pin down the British forces in the West and prevent them from concentrating on the Dublin fighters. Poorly armed as his forces were, the Galway Volunteer leaders had no hope of doing anything else.

The isolation of the Volunteer areas from each other prevented the fighters in the various areas from knowing the real position until after the Rising. Mellowes and his officers knew of Casement and the capture of the "Aud" but hoped that the Volunteers throughout the country had risen.

/outside

Outside the larger towns the Volunteers ruled County Galway and for a week some 600 square miles of country from Galway City to Ballinasloe and from Tuam to Gort were free from British control.

When the Volunteers left Moyode Castle they marched to Lime Park where Father Thomas Fahey, who had visited them at the Castle, overtook them in company with Father Martin O'Farrell. Father O'Farrell had news of the movements of the British troops in Ballinasloe and Athlone. Father Fahey, who had cycled to Galway City on Friday, heard reports there that Dublin was in flames and that the Volunteers could not hold out any longer. Mellowes went on to Tullira Castle where a final halt was called. (Lime Park is close to the Clare border; Tullira Castle was a former residence of Mr. Edward Martyn, dramatist, and president of the Sinn Fein organisation, 1904-8.) About 2 a.m. on Saturday morning Father Fahey urged Mellowes to disband the men because it was folly to remain in the Castle where they could be surrounded by British troops almost immediately. Mellowes replied, according to Father Fahey's later account of the talk to me, that he would not disband, that death would be their ultimate fate at the hands of the British anyway, and that it was better to die fighting. Father Fahey then suggested that the matter should be put before the officers to which Mellowes consented. A meeting of the officers, fourteen in all, was held in one of the rooms of the Castle. Father Fahey gave his views to the meeting stating also Mellowe's views and adding that he himself regarded further stay in the Castle as sheer throwing away of their lives. Twelve officers voted for immediate disbandment, Mellowes and I against. I supported Mellowes but urged that I thought it better, for the better armed section of the force, to keep together, take to the open

/country,

country, and carry on a guerrilla fight. This advice was not accepted by the majority of the officers.

Father Fahey then asked Mellowes to communicate the decision of the meeting to the men. The general feeling of the meeting was that with Dublin in flames - as the Galway report stated - with the greater part of the Volunteers in the South inactive in the Rising and with the undoubted approach of strong British forces from the North and elsewhere, it would be merely slaughter to venture the weak Volunteer force in the West against them. Mellowes refused amd said that he had asked the men to follow him, that they had followed him and that he could never endure to disband them. Father Fahey then went out personally, informed the Volunteers what the meeting had decided, advised them to break up as quietly as possible and to stick to their arms as they would need them again.

One difficulty against disbanding urged by Mellowes to Father Fahey was that the six R.I.C. prisoners might identify the men. Father Fahey thereupon spoke to the R.I.C. men, who consulted among themselves, and then stated that they would give no information, a promise which they afterwards kept. Mellowes told Father Fahey that to give the prisoners their proper meals he had sometimes gone without his own. One R.I.C. prisoner fell ill during the Rising, was left behind on the road with the advice to find some house to rest in, recovered, and overtook the column again and his place as a prisoner of war.

Very soon the activity of disbanding was in full swing and the men went their several ways very sorrowfully and carried their guns with them, and very few - if any - of the Galway guns were afterwards found by the British.

The police prisoners were told they were free but they preferred not to move out until late in the morning. To

/their

their credit be it recorded that not one of them afterwards did anything to help the British to identify prisoners. A great many of the men were arrested by the British and imprisoned in England and a few were sentenced to death but none of them was executed. Very few of the active leaders were arrested.

The R.I.C. did not move out until Monday but when they did they behaved very badly, ill-treating prisoners and wrecking houses in their searches.

After the disbanding many of the men wanted to stay with Liam Mellowes but he would not agree to anyone going with him except Captain Frank Hynes of Athenry, and myself.

It was a sorrowful parting at Tulira Castle bidding farewell to the brave Galway men for although we had not any hopes of doing anything big when we went out on Monday night, our hopes began to brighten during the week when we heard the guns booming in Galway Bay, and the rumours from Dublin were heartening too - up to Friday night. Certainly the outlook appeared black on Saturday morning. England had won again and no one knew what was in store for those who had taken part in the Rising and what further "penal laws" would be put in force in the country.

Many of the Volunteers offered to accompany Liam Mellowes but he would only agree to two of us going with him - Captain Frank Hynes and myself. Frank Hynes was not liked by the R.I.C., although he was a very likeable man, very gentle and very much in earnest in working for Ireland and especially did he put his heart into the Gaelic movement. Frank was a married man. Liam Mellowes and I were single.

When all the men had gone except the prisoners who still remained in the house, Liam, Frank and I struck across the

/country

country in a southerly direction. We had tea at the house of Mr. Peadar Howley of Lime Park and afterwards continued our journey until we reached the house of Mr. Patsy Corless at Ballycahalane. Patsy Corless and his brother Martin knew at once how matters stood and made us welcome. Very soon food was prepared after which the three of us went asleep, utterly wearied out for we had very little sleep all the previous week. We slept without moving for fourteen hours. In the meantime Patsy Corless had made arrangements for us in a safer house some distance from his own place. Accordingly, on our awakening when we had taken food he brought us to the house of Mr. William Blanche of Druim na Loch. Mr. and Mrs. Blanche gave us a hearty welcome and the night was spent in talking and talking into the wee small hours. Next day, Sunday, Mr. Blanche went to Mass at Killbeaconty and brought home the news that no police had appeared at Mass.

A very amusing incident occurred on Sunday evening. A girl visitor called to see Mrs. Blanche and she was bursting with news and the three rebels in the bedroom had the pleasure of hearing this young lady's first-hand information about Liam Mellowes, what he had done and what he intended to do in the future. It is marvellous how quickly rumours grow out of nothing and spread all over the country. This young lady told Mrs. Blanche that Liam Mellowes was escaping out of the country disguised as a girl. "You know" she added, "Mellowes is very goodlooking".

The three of us in the bedroom suffered more from suppressed laughter during the young lady's talk than we had suffered from hardship in the previous week. A man also called and he was a proper cowardly blighter. He gave out yards about Liam Mellowes and all the harm he had done in the country. This person had always been very affable to Liam when he met him previously. The temptation to give him a

/good shock

good shock by appearing before him was almost irresistible to Liam.

On Monday night the three of us moved up to an old cattle shed on a hill called Corr na Gaoithe and it was not called Windy Hill without reason. There was a fine view from the shed, but absolutely no shelter. The place belonged to a man called William Hood. One side of the shed was used as a cattle shelter, the other side as a small barn, the roof was thatched and was well ventilated with holes. It was alright as a shelter against the sun but it let the rain in and the weather was broken and cold. There were, of course, no beds in the place but there was plenty of straw infested with mice. It was a terrible sensation for us trying to sleep in that straw and hundreds of mice running over us, but we got used to even that. We remained in this place three or four days. The weather was wet and our straw beds very damp. Of course we could not light a fire as the smoke would have been seen for miles around, and we could not go out for exercise.

William Blanche used to bring up food to us every night after dark, good solid hot food that kept the life in the hermits. William Blanche was himself "on the run" and liable to be arrested, for,although he was not a young man, he was a Volunteer. Attending to the wants of the men in the hut was a great sacrifice on his part for he had to spend all the day out on the hill watching for the police. Mrs. Blanche,too, was a remarkable woman. She had a very fine sense of humour which often came to the rescue when things looked serious. She had a way of separating truth from imagination in all the rumours that came her way and her humorous summing-up always showed the ridiculous side of the many stories going around.

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The man who owned the hut on Corr na Gaoithe was, of course, very sympathetic, but he was also very nervous, and no wonder, for the police and soldiers were doing great harm throughout the country and age nor sex was not respected by them. One night the man of the hut brought the rumour that the soldiers were to "comb" the hills next morning and he advised the three of us to move on to a more secure place. Next morning, at break of day, we were up and ready to go, but the morning was very wet and we decided that a hot meeting with the soldiers, if they came, would be better for our health than a wet day spent on the hills - and we stayed.

Another night William Blanche brought word that a search was to be made on the hills, but he did not advise us to move until he made sure of his infomation. Right enough, a large body of police did appear on the road below, but after the heavy rain the road to Blanche's house was flooded. Blanche was with us on the hill looking down. "It's alright" said he, "they wont come any further. Peelers are like cats, they don't like to wet their feet". And they did not wet their feet, and perhaps it was just as well for them on that particular occasion that police are like cats in some ways.

One day we heard shooting down below and this upset us greatly as we thought that the police and soldiers were shooting people - prisoners. Prisoners were given bad treatment.

During the stay in the hut on Corr na Gaoithe, a curious feeling or imagination manifested itself to the three of us. We got a feeling that there was a fourth man present. Each one of us had had this feeling before the matter was mentioned

/between

between us. It wasn't an eerie or a ghostly feeling. It was just a consciousness of the fourth man's presence. When sharing our food, there was always an instinctive tendency to share out four portions. When discussing anything, there was always an expectancy of hearing the fourth man's opinion. Waking up out of sleep, each of us felt an expectancy of seeing the fourth man. The feeling was very real and it became accepted that there was a fourth presence with us, and often, when in doubt as to what to do, we would say "Well, leave it to the fourth man to lead us right". And he did lead us safely through all danger.

At last William Blanche brought word that the three of us had better go, as the searchers were getting too near. He gave us directions where to go and gave us the names of friends of his who would help us. Mrs. Blanche prepared a big supply of food and at break of day the hut was evacuated. Early the same morning the police and soldiers searched the hills - and the hut.

The morning was fine and everything was as quiet as the grave as the three of us crossed the country avoiding, as far as possible, roads and large open spaces. By six o'clock we were in the shelter of a wood called Chevy Chase where we remained until dark. When the warm sun was shining we had a bath in the river - a much needed refreshing wash. Mrs. Blanche's supply of food sustained us all day. Liam had a map which was examined carefully and the direction we proposed to take was learned off by heart; every stream, wood, road, every landmark. There was a small house just outside Chevy Chase wood and a man, a woman and some children were about it all day but they never suspected that three men were hiding in the wood.

/After

After sunset we slipped quietly out of the wood and made off in the direction of Limerick but very shortly we were in the middle of a mountain of heather where it was very difficult to pick up any landmarks shown on the map. Liam had a pencil with a small electric bulb, but the light gave out and left us without whatever aid the map could give. We gave ourselves up to the direction of the "fourth man" and plodded along through the heather. After going some distance we came out on a flagged boirin and some distance away we saw the light from a house. The half-door was open and a stream of light stretched across the road.

When we were in the wood discussing future plans we decided to travel in the guise of cattle drovers and in case of awkward questions being asked each of us adopted new names. Frank Hynes selected these names. He called himself Pat Murphy (a name he kept for years, right through the Tan War). Liam was given the name "John O'Nolan" and I was called "Joe MacSweeney". This last name tickled Frank immensely. It seems he knew some one of that name who had a great dislike to Sinn Feiners. However, it was a good name and I kept it until 1923. I was a native of Belfast and had, therefore, a good strong northern accent. Now, as everybody knows, all the cattle dealers and the best of cattle drovers in history and legend and romance, had strong northern accents, therefore, it was decided that I (now Joe MacSweeney) in my role of cattle dealer - or drover - should go up to the house and inquire the way, and up I went. I went up to the half-door and look in. There was a young woman sitting at the right-hand side of the fire facing the door and a man was sitting in front of the fire. I spoke and they both looked at me. Then the man began to rise from the chair and he rose and rose, and rose, until from my position at the door I thought I must be seeing things. At last the man stopped rising when his head was

/somewhere

somewhere up among the rafters. Such a man - a giant - and I, not really believing my eyes yet, thought I had come across Fionn MacCumhaill. I spoke again and asked the road to Derryfada - a name I remembered seeing on the map in the Limerick direction. "You can't get there to-night" said the bean tighe, "come inside and wait till morning." I thanked her and said I had to finish the journey before morning and that there were two other men with me. "Well, bring in the other men and have a drop of tay anyway", said the woman. A drop of tea would have been very welcome, but this kind offer had to be refused and, since the strangers would not go in, the giant said he would show them the way. Of course, the big man did not believe the story he was told, that we were cattle dealers. "I think I know what you are", he said, "you are Sinn Feiners who were out fighting." This was admitted and he began asking all sorts of questions, but he wouldn't allow us to answer him. "Don't mind me talking" he said,"and don't answer any questions. Something might get out and then you would blame me for giving you away." He said that the Rising was not yet over and that fighting was still going on in Dublin. It was not true, of course, but it disturbed us very much, for we feared that we had given up on false rumours.

Frank Hynes is a fairly tall man, but he was only a gasur beside the big guide. The big man was over six feet seven in height and broad in proportion. He walked across the ground in long slow strides and when he came to a wall he just stepped across and then knocked a gap for the three of us to go through.

Eventually we reached a big road and the giant gave us full directions how to reach Limerick by the least frequented roads. He told us we were lucky we called at his house and

/not

notat the next house, for there was a peeler living there, home on holidays. We thought that it was lucky - for the peeler. "I'd like to hear from ye, boys", said he,"but I suppose you'll never think of me again." "Well, said I, "we'll not forget your size anyhow, for there are not many men in Ireland as big as you." He told us that his name was William Cooney of Gortnahornan and that he had won prizes for weight-lifting. When he was shaking hands, bidding the three of us goodbye and God-speed, he said wistfully, "Be so-and-so, boys, I'd like to be goin' with ye." The giant is gone to his reward since. Ar dheis De go raibh a anam dilis.

It was fairly late by now and there were very few people on the road. We kept well on the margin of the road, walking silently and keep a good look ahead. Suddenly Liam sprang into a shadow and sprang out again laughing. "I thought it was a peeler" he said, "but it was only an old donkey." If the donkey had known it, he was lucky that night that he was a donkey and not a peeler.

After walking a few miles we came to a by-road at a place called Cill Fionnain. According to the direction of the giant we should turn up here, which we did. We had not much sleep within the past fortnight and we were getting rather tired and sleepy and we decided to rest if we could get a sheltered place, for there was a misty rain falling. We got off the road and found a shelter behind a big rock. Frank had a good fleece overcoat but Liam and I had only waterproofs, and we had sacks on our backs inside the coats for warmth. The sacks were spread on the ground, the three of us lay close together - like the babes in the wood - and pulled our overcoats over us and slept the sleep of the just - and the weary. We slept until sunrise. It had rained rather heavily during our sleep and we were like Eamonn na gCnoc, "drowned, cold

/and

and wet". We were moving around to get our blood into circulation again when we saw a cave a short distance from where we had slept. Frank went in to finish out his sleep. Liam and I went up the hill to survey the land. It was a lively sight in the rising sun and we admired the beauty of it, but on examining the map we found we were on the wrong road, the road we should have taken was away across the hills. We did not feel inclined to go back the way we had come the night before or to risk crossing unknown country where there were so many houses and we decided to leave it to the "Fourth Man" to guide us to safety. We went down again to Frank and found him fast asleep standing against the wall of the cave.

The food provided by Mrs. Blance was all eaten except one cold potato. This was served out in three portions, "just to take the wind off the stomach". We decided to march ahead and ask for food at the first house we saw smoke coming from. We never remembered how far we walked before we saw the smoke, but at last - about six o'clock - we went up to the house and met the man of the house. He showed no surprise but bade us a pleasant good-morning. We told him that we were cattle-dealers, that we had gone astray and had been out all night. The man said nothing definite, no doubt he believed that we had gone astray and were out all night but he certainly did not believe that we were cattle-dealers in spite of my strong northern accent. But he was a Clareman and kept his opinion to himself and invited us into the house.

The breakfast things were on the table, a pot of tea at the fire and a pot of eggs bubbling on the fire. The woman of the house came in. We did not impress her favourably, and no wonder. Our clothes were rather rumpled, and not

/neatly

neatly brushed. We had more than downy growths on our chins and of course people who had been out all night are usually a sickly yellow colour. It was a good thing that the good woman did not see the sacks under our coats. But like a good Clarewoman she did not let her feelings interfere with her hospitality. She put the breakfast on the table and told us to sit in. Of course, we protested (perhaps rather weakly), said we weren't hungry, and so on, but the good woman would not listen to reason: She made us sit into the table. We tried to observe the best table manners but the hunger made this rather difficult and very soon we cleared the table. The man of the house noticed how hungry we were but he did not like to restrain us, however he told a story - a parable - about a friend of his who had not had food for some time and ate too much, and got very sick. "It is a dangerous thing" he said, in the abstract, "to eat a lot when you are very hungry." We agreed with this and no doubt thought that we had not eaten too much, although each of us had had three cups of tea, two eggs each, and had consumed a large bastible cake.

The conversation became friendly with the woman of the house too. Everything was discussed - except what had occurred the previous week. When we were ready to go, we shocked the good woman by wanting to pay for what we had got. "What did ye get" said she, "but a cup of tea? Is it to take money for a cup of tea?"

The man of the house directed us to Scariff, and he showed not the least surprise or curiosity when we said we wanted to go a short cut across the mountains - and he must have known that nothing but a crow, or a stray bullock, or someone who had reasons for avoiding the road - would go

/across

across those bogs. But he was a Clareman, and Claremen never wonder at anything. Both the good people wished us Goodspeed and they stood at their door waving to the three wanderers cutting across the bogs. These good people were Michael O'Hanrahan and his wife, of Lochan, near Tuaim Greine. Michael O'Hanrahan has since died. Ar dheis De go raibh se.

Some time later a friend of ours met Michael O'Hanrahan and said :" I hear that three of the rebels passed along here one morning". Michael O'Hanrahan never blinked an eye, but simply said "I didn't hear". This was very typical of the loyalty of the Clare people, and their remarkable genius for keeping things to themselves. Several other examples of this trait will be given further on in this account.

We now left the road and struck across the bogs in the direction of Scariff, where an uncle of Liam's lived, but as it happened, we never reached Scariff - and it was lucky for us that we did not, for Scariff was thick with police and soldiers searching the country around. Liam's uncle, thinking that Liam would make for Scariff, had scouts out in every direction to watch for him and warn him of the danger.

We decided to rest in the bog during the heat of the day and resume our journey after dark. We went well into the bog looking for a warm, sheltered, dry spot and, like the man who went into the wood looking for the highest tree, we always saw a better spot some distance further on, and wandered further in until at last we came to a secluded hollow and here we pulled heather and made ourselves beds, and it wasn't long until we were all sound asleep, and slept the sleep of the just. About midday, feeling something soft and wet on my face, on opening my eyes I gazed into the soft, sympathetic, sorrowful-looking brown eyes of a pointer

dog./

dog. The dog's tongue was doing my morning toilet. I sat up and saw Frank on his knees saying his prayers - and he had his right hand in the pocket of his overcoat. Then another look, and I saw a young man approaching, some distance off. He had a white handkerchief in his hand. There was a greyhound at his heels. The young man was rather well-dressed - breeches, leggings, tweed coat, soft hat, pleasant-looking, dark, small moustache. Frank continued his prayers, his right hand in his pocket. The young man spoke. "'Tis a fine day for travelling, thanks be to God. Ye are strangers here?" Liam sat up. We all returned the young man's salutation. After a little desultory talk, the young man said, "I think I know what you are. You were in the Rising last week. I am Captain of the Volunteers here. I myself am on the run. My name is Michael Maloney." Michael looked alright, and when he had answered some questions that only a good I.R.B. man could have answered, he was accepted as a friend. He had been in Dublin for some years and knew all the good men in the movement. It appears that a colt of his went astray the night before, but it was too dark to look for him. When he got up next morning he told his mother a dream he had. He dreamt that he went looking for the colt, and that he found three men in the bog and that they were starving. His mother didn't say anything about the dream, it was nothing strange. After his breakfast, Michael - or Miko, as he was usually called - went out after the colt. He didn't find any tracks but he felt impelled, he said, to go up a little height and look around for the colt. From the height he saw the colt grazing down in the hollow and some distance from the colt something in the heather that was foreign to the surroundings. At first he thought they were dogs - and three strange dogs in that place was odd enough

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to be investigated. Then one of the things moved and he saw that it was a man, and he had an overcoat on and that, the overcoat, was strange to a countryman. Countrymen are born scouts and the least thing unusual on the landscape is immediately noticed by them. Now, Michael reasoned, if there are three men with overcoats in that lonely place they must be three Volunteers "on the run". Three tramps would not lie out in the open and anyhow there would not likely be three tramps together. He approached the men and had his handkerchief in his hand as a flag of truce.

Michael suddenly stopped the conversation with "But here am I talking and you men starving", and promising to be back as quickly as he could with some food he went off, warning his new friends not to stir until he came back.

When Miko went home and told his mother that he had found three men on the hill and that he wanted food for them the good woman thought that his dream had gone to his head. However, he convinced her and was back again in the hollow inside an hour with a big basket of food - enough for nine men He spread a white tablecloth and set out cups and saucers and plates, knives and forks, salt and sauces, bread, butter, meat jam, tea - oh, such a spread - to which full justice was done, although the three of us were not exactly starving, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. O'Hanrahan.

There was little conversation during the meal, for Miko had brought a bundle of newspapers and we learned for the first time the details of the glorious fight put up in Dublin but it was very sad reading of all the executions. This was also the first time we had seen an account of the sad drowning in Kerry on Good Friday. Only two names were given - Con Keating and Donal O'Sheehan, and we did not know that my

/brother

brother, Cathal, was the third victim. Strangely enough, Mac an Airchinnigh, the driver of the car, later brought Frank and myself from Clare to Tipperary, and in the same car.

Miko also brought tobacco and after the food Frank and Liam, who were great smokers, lay back and puffed like factory chimneys, and they all talked, and talked and talked, until evening when Miko went off again to prepare accommodation in an outhouse, or mountain bothan, he had on Cnoc na bhFoclach. After sundown he came back for the three of us and we all went off to the bothan, where a warm straw bed had been made up with clean white fresh sheets and pillows and warm blankets. In the bothan we were welcomed by Miko's brother, Sean, and his father, and the poor old man broke down as he bade us welcome.

As it was now dark, a big turf fire was glowing and another feast was made, this time for six - the three wanderers, Mr. Maloney, Sean and Miko. It was all very pleasant, but the clean shirts and the clean fresh sheets, after a good wash and shave, made the three outlaws feel like Christians again.

We remained in Maloney's bothan on Cnoc na bhFoclach for a long time and had, on the whole, a pleasant time. The Maloneys were always kind, and never wearied of attending to their guests. Mr. Patrick Maloney, the father, was the kindest, most loyal man, we had ever met. He was good company too and many a long night he spent in the bothan when there was a sing-song on. Old Mr.Maloney sang well and had a lot of good national songs and ballads. His favourite song - and one always in demand was, "My countrymen awake, arise, your work begins anew", and the lines "Before we quit, there's something yet for Irishmen to do", he

/always

always put extra emphasis into, and his audience chorused - and determined to carry on the fight. Liam was also a good singer and Frank and myself could sing too. My songs were interesting because they were little-known northern folk songs and ballads. Other neighbours and Volunteers from the county and from Limerick visited the bothan from time to time. Among those were Tom Hogan, who learned the fiddle from Liam, Tom Connell, Jack MacNamara and Sean Fogarty of Crusheen, Mick O'Dea and Con O'Halloran brought first-hand stories of the fight in Dublin - and in Frongoch. Tom Maloney, another brother, working in Limerick, was also a frequent visitor. A friend in Tulla, named Tubridy, kept us supplied with newspapers and with the "Hue and Cry". This paper was the official police organ, published bi-weekly, and gave the names of all 'wanted' men - criminals and rebels. It was, of course, a serious paper, but the descriptions of 'wanted' men were often too funny. The three of us were in it and all our friends who had not been caught, and every weakness in our friends' personal appearances were set down baldly. Liam Mellowes had a highly developed sense of the ridiculous and when a person was described in the "Hue and Cry" as "shaves all his face except his moustache" Liam immediately imagined the unfortunate man scraping himself all over and shaving his eyebrows, eyelashes and whiskers off.

An occasional Oidhche Airneail in Maloney's house at Baile Uachtar was also pleasant where we met the mother and daughters. During our stay in the bothan we usually slept during the day and moved out at night, and at night we brought in supplies of brosna and turf, and we nearly revived the belief in fairies - if it ever died out - and here is how it happened.

/The

The season had been wet and Maloney's had a lot of turf cut in the neighbourhood of the bothan. The turf had not been put up, so the three "fairies" proceeded to put the turf up in gruagans to dry for future use. Now anybody who had seen turf spread out in the late evening and had seen it all up in gruagans the following morning must believe the fairies did it, but they would not say anything about it - for fear people would laugh at them.

Many of the neighbours, apart from those who visited the bothan, knew that there were men in the bothan, but Clare people are very close. Even in cases where two brothers knew, each did not know that the other was in the secret. One day a young boy burst into the bothan and his eyes came out on his cheeks when he saw the strangers. "Who are you?" they asked. "My name is Hogan" he said, "I was looking for a calf. I didn't know there was anybody here." "Are you anything to Tom Hogan?" "I'm his brother". "Did he never tell you we were here?" "No, he never mentioned it." "Well, come any night you like with Tom, but don't tell anybody you saw us." The incident slipped our memory, but some time afterwards we told Tom Hogan about his brother. The brother had never mentioned it to Tom.

There were two neighbours, brothers, called Russel (?). They had never been in the bothan. One day they were working in a field below the bothan when a policeman was seen crossing the fields away below them again. Brother Number One said to the other, "Run down and see what that so-and-so wants", and brother Number Two went down to the peeler, and Brother Number One slipped up to the bothan to give warning. Now, not until that time did each brother know that the other knew about the men in the bothan.

/The

The three of us were in the bothan about five weeks before we were able to send word to our friends that we were alive. Michael Maloney offered to go to Athenry and bring news to Frank's wife, who would, in turn, have sent news to Dublin. Miko arranged to go to Athenry on a fair day to buy cattle, mar sheadh, and he had on him a cheque for £100 for that seeming purpose. It was necessary for Liam to write out a message to be sent to Dublin, and this he did in tiny small writing on very thin paper, and Miko put the paper in his pipe and covered it with tobacco. Michael carried two pipes. At some station on the journey police and soldiers questioned and searched all the passengers. Michael was ordered to take off his boots. He refused, and his boots were forcibly removed. "Well" says Michael,"this is going to be a big job, so I'll have a smoke" and he reddened the pipe and smoked the message. His other pipe was found in his pocket - and it was emptied and searched. He reached Athenry and delivered his verbal message. At the hotel he had to sign the register - according to the law of D.O.R.A. He put down a false name, and in the space for nationality, the imp urged him, and he wrote "pro-German".

Life in the bothan was quiet, but not without interest and the hermits learned quite a lot of natural history of Cnoc na bhFoclach. Lying in the sun, under the shelter of a bush, we learned the habits and behaviour of small insects and birds and beasts, and often at break of day we had a seilg with Michael and his two wonderful dogs - "Fan" the greyhound, and "Bronach", the all-but-talking pointer setter. We often had game and an odd trout to eat and we learned all the various cries of the night, the belling of bandit beagles, the bark of the wandering fox, the lonely cry of the "Goat of the boiled milk" as the jacksnipe is called in Clare (gabhairin a bhainne bheirbhthe) and we often surprised a committee of hares discussing ways and means or came on a flock of wild geese on a mountainy/

a mountainy lake. It was a new life altogether for Liam and myself, who were city-born and reared. Frank was better up in natural history and knew more about country life.

The three of us were never lonely or silent; we always had a lot to discuss and argue about. We discussed the Might-have-beens of Irish History and planned future Irish History. We even got so far - in our aislingi of the future as to discuss the names of battleships and regiments of the Irish Republican navy and army. Sometimes the conversation took a humbrous turn and Liam told imaginary yarns about the future, how, when he was old, and in the workhouse, Frank and myself/who would probably be street-sweepers or doing other work of national importance, would visit him and bring tobacco. And how we would all argue about the wars for the Republic until everybody else was sick listening to us, etc. Of course, this was all good fun, none of us ever thought at thai time that those who fought for the Republic would ever want - much less end their days in the Workhouse.

Liam was a good violinist, and apropos of this a good yarn is told. I appeared to be remarkable for the extraordinary things I carried in my pocket, for instance, if anyone wanted a piece of pencil, a bit of string or wire, or a nail, I had it in my pocket. One day Liam and Frank got a supply of tobacco and filled their pipes with great satisfaction and expectation, but alas, when all was ready, there was no match to light up. The two of them walked up and down with their pipes in their teeth and despair in their eyes. Suddenly Liam said to me "Here, haven't you Eamon Corbett's waistcoat on? There might be a match in it." The waistcoat was searched and sure enough the head of a match was discovered in the corner of one pocket, and there is wher the smoking was!

/One

On day Liam got a fiddle, but the A string was missing. Liam started to tune up the three strings and while doing so he said laughingly to me, "Here, you have everything in your magic pockets, have you an A string?" And he nearly fell out of standing when I handed him a little square envelope containing an A string. It seems that I had the string since I left Belfast in July 1915. .

Another story about a fiddle: Among the spoil taken from police barracks raided in Galway during Easter Week, it appears that a fiddle was carried off. It belonged, of course, to an R.I.C. man. This peeler got in touch with a friend of Liam in Athenry and asked the friend to convey a message to Liam asking for his fiddle, he said it was a valuable one and he prized it highly. The message reached Liam who gave orders for the fiddle to be found and returned to the owner - and this was duly done.

For a long time there was a big garrison of R.I.C. and khaki soldiers in Tulla, a few miles from the bothan, and often the lorries were heard passing on the road a few hundred yards away, but they never stopped near the bothan. The R.I.C. Sergeant at Tulla was a protestant and, therefore, Dublin Castle had confidence in him and did not suspect him of Sinn Fein sympathies, but the British soldiers did not recognise fine distinctions, to them he was an Irishman and, therefore, a rebel, and they were very insulting to him and to the other peelers with the result that the disgusted sergeant refused to work with the British soldiers, good or bad, and swore that there were no Sinn Feiners in that country at all. The little rift was all to the good for the three of us on Cnoc na bhFoclach - and to all the Sinn Feiners in the district. After about three weeks the soldiers were withdrawn.

/At

At last Liam got orders from Headquarters in Dublin that he was to go to America on official business. He would have preferred not to go and wanted Frank to go in his place, but Frank would not. Liam had, therefore, to prepare to go. Michael Maloney, the ever versatile, measured the three of us for new suits and had them made. Liam got a nice brown suit, Frank a black and I got a respectable minister grey. Michael also procured a bottle of hair dye for Liam. (No hair dye would have worked on Frank, he was black as a raven. I was dark brown).

The hair dye was brown and one day the patient Frank got a toothbrush and proceeded to dye slowly, singly and carefully every hair on Liam's head and eyebrows. Liam was very fair and the effect of the brown hair dye on his almost yellow hair was a very nice auburn. He had heavy eyebrows - not very noticeable on account of being so fair - but when they were dyed they looked very severe. The disguise was splendid and his brown suit matched the auburn hair. He looked quite a dude. Frank was just putting the finishing touches to the dyeing and admiring his artistic work when Michael Maloney arrived to say that a motor car was waiting down at the house and that Liam must go at once. The three of us bade each other goodbye. Liam and Michael went down the fields, Frank and I standing in the doorway of the bothan waving him Godspeed and feeling very lonely after him.

Near Christmas Frank was taken to Tipperary and I was left with another man called Kenny who was also on the "run". Before Christmas Kenny and I were taken away and we travelled in the "Maxwell" car which had gone into the River Laune with my brother Cathal, Con Keating and Domnall O'Sheehan who were drowned on Good Friday. Mr. MacInerney, the same driver who was saved from drowning, also drove us. I was brought to the

/house

house of Messrs. Tom and John Culligan, Shinrone. (Kenny travelled farther, and later was brought to America). I met Frank Hynes again in this house and we had every comfort that Tom and John Culligan and their good housekeeper, Nancy, could give us. The brothers Culligan were cattle-dealers and had a very big place including gardens, farm, bog and woods, and we spent a pleasant time about the place but, of course, kept out of the way of the police. Frank was again taken away and later I travelled to Dublin on a cattle train with Mr. Tom Culligan. I went to the house of a friend, Mrs. Ward, 19, Upper Sherrard Street, and on the night of my arrival there, a boarder - Frank McCabe - (who had evaded arrest after Easter Week) was arrested. He came to the house with some Detectives to get some clothing. He came into the sitting-room. No one noticed the police standing outside the room door. McCabe was introduced to me as "Mr. McSweeney". Frank knew me and just nodded and said "I'm arrested", and smuggled a revolver to Mrs. Ward. Detective Smyth, known as the "Dog", and Detective Hoey stood at the sitting-room door, but of course did not hear my right name. The "Dog" had been making enquiries about me at the house of Mrs. Byrne, Seville Place, where my brother, Cathal, stayed. Next day the "Dog" Smyth, Hoey and others searched the house and I slipped out by the back door. An English military officer's uniform was found in the attic. The two "G" men, Smith and Hoey, were subsequently shot dead. I went to see Father Albert in Church Street and he thought it was best for me not to go back to Sherrard Street. He also thought that I was a bit run down in health and suffering somewhat from nervous strain. He arranged with Sister Colm (Bon Secour), who was in charge of the North Dublin Union Hospital, and I went into Hospital as a patient. There were a few others who were "on the run" in the Hospital, including Fintan Murphy of Liverpool. When the Hospital Doctor was doing his rounds and came to my bed, Sister Colm

/told

told him I was a friend of one of the members of the Corporation. The Doctor examined me and said that he thought I wasn't going to die anyhow. "What do you think is wrong with you?" he asked naively. "I think it is constitutional", I said. "I think it is"the Doctor agreed. I spe nt some time in the Hospital and had a good rest. Then Father Fahy came for me and brought me to Maynooth College where, after some camouflaged preliminaries I was enrolled as a College "NAAV" or male servant. Already working there before me were Frank Hynes, Jack Broderick and another "on the run" man Tom Coakley of London (originally,of course, Cork). Many of the professors and students knew who we were. These included Father Tom Fahy, Father Tom Duggan, Father O'Neill - later Bishop of Limerick, Father O'Doherty - later Bishop, Father Griffin, later murdered by the Tans, and many others who acted as intelligence officers in the College and reported on talk or suspicion amongst the students. We were, however, not noticed at all by students as being in any way different to the other "NAAVS". My name in Maynooth was Joe Maguire. In 1916 the President of Maynooth College was Rev. Dr. Hogan and however it came about the "Butcher" Maxwell was invited to or attended a Dinner in the College. All the professors had other engagements that day and it was found politic to confine all students to their own quarters. Only Dr. Hogan and Maxwell were at the dinner, and as Maxwell was passing along showers of books and boots descended on him from the windows above, and hoots and cat-calls - and worse greeted him from the students. We all left Maynooth at the break up for holidays. I knocked around a bit and later went to Clare for the election in July 1917 with Seamus Dobbin, Alphonsis Dobbin, Paddie McFadden and Liam Gaynor of Belfast. After the election I went to Cork according to arrangements made for me by Rev.

/Father

Father Tom Duggan. I went to people called Hyde at Baile Shioda, Beal Atha an Easaig. I had again resumed my own name but when Paddy Hyde met me in Cork he told me that I was still in the "Hue and Cry", and I again took the name "Joe McSweeny". I had a very pleasant time on Hyde's farm, and realised a dream I always had of learning farming. I learnt all kind of farm work including ploughing. I also became a jockey. I met Frank Hynes again in Cork City where he was working at his trade, a house carpenter. He, his wife and family were living under the name of Murphy. The Hydes were trainers and breeders of hunters. It was given out, for the benefit of the peelers, that I was from Dublin, that I had been in the Rising and had lost my job in consequence, and that I was living in the country to recuperate my health after a term in jail. The story was credible and evidently accepted by the peelers who did not bother me. There was another "on the run" living in Hydes. This man was Denis O'Beirn (under the name of Dinny O'Connor). Denis was a deserter from the English Army, and it was his officer's uniform that was found in the attic of 19 Upper Sherrard Street. Denis was called up in England where he was at College. He asked to be attached to an Irish Regiment. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant in, I think, the Munster Fusiliers, and sent to Trinity College to continue his studies and train with the Cadets. When the Rising began in Dublin he refused to turn out and absented himself. When the fighting was over a Doctor friend gave him a medical certificate covering Easter Week. Another Cadet had, however, in the meantime informed on him, and as nothing could be done against him in face of the Doctor's certificate he was ordered to prepare for France. The Colonel congratulated him on the way he took the news. Denis pretended to be delighted that he was going to the Front,

/knowing

knowing, in his own mind that he wasn't. He got a few days leave and got in touch with Mick Cremin who arranged for his desertion and his hiding place in Cork. I was soon at work again with Denis "O'Connor" in organising and drilling Volunteer Companies. I was elected Commandant of the 9th Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade and met all the Volunteer leaders in Cork including Terry McSweney and Thomas McCurtain. There was some trouble in Clare in 1917 and we, in Ballinhassig, thought we should do something to create a diversion and prevent a concentration of police in Clare. We brought up a case of an evicted farmer near Kinsale and got an order from the Sinn Féin Coisde Ceanntair (in Bandon) to plough up this farm. The evicted farmer himself had not much pluck in the matter. But then our interest in him and his farm was to draw the police off Clare. One day Volunteers from Bandon to Nohoval descended on "Snugmore" farm and ran ploughs all over it. Very soon a big contingent of peelers and soldiers arrived on the scene; one policeman was disarmed by Sean Hyde. Mike Hyde was cut off and arrested, but all ploughs were got safely away. After this many of us had to go on the "run", and I went with Paddy Hyde up to Beal Atha an Ghaorthaigh. Many of the Cork City Volunteers were also "on the run" up there, Terry McSweney, Thomas McCurtain and others. When the hue and cry quietened down Paddy Hyde and I returned to Ballinhassig and resumed hard work organising and drilling and arming the Volunteers. We had not many rifles but had a fair share of shotguns, and we decided to get bayonets for these. I was sent into Cork to get steel for these. I went into the iron department of the Munster Iron Company and told the man in charge - a very tall oldish man, that I wanted some steel to put on the heels of a butt (a kind of country cart). The steel he had seemed a bit heavy for my purpose. The big man suggested I should take a sample and see would it suit, and

/then

then he added in a confiding whisper "We have any gods amount of that stuff". The bayonets were fixed on to the shot guns with winged nuts. I went to Naughtons for these, was shown some samples and asked the price. They were sixpence a dozen. "I think" said I "I'll take a couple of dozen, they are very useful things to have". "They are" said the young dude behind the counter. "Take about six dozen". I agreed to this and asked "How much is that?" "Sixpence" he said. "Sixpence" said I in surprise. The young man lowered his voice - "Sure wouldn't I rob these so-and-sosfor you." The bayonets were made by a blacksmith on the Quay in Cork City - I forget his name. He worked over-time every night making bayonets and the only reward he wanted was, as he said "My name in the song".

We got some few guns from Morten's gun shop. These were duly reported to the police as having been stolen and a skylight was left open to prove the truth of the story. Farmers in Cork had a very good class of shotgun; they were converted rifles. When conscription was threatened there was a great influx of men into the Volunteers, now the Irish Republican Army, and we were very busy drilling and forming new Companies. When the conscription danger passed things quietened down again. I went to Belfast for the elections in 1918, and a very exciting time it was there. But this story will be told by some of the Belfast men. I stayed for a while in Dublin and in Wexford and eventually went back to Cork. At the time of the German Plot the Cork City and County men were warned beforehand and very few were arrested. At the time that Terry McSweney was arrested at a Republican Court, many of the City Army leaders were arrested also, and things looked very bad for the organisation, but when these

/arrested

arrested men were paraded for identification before the police, not one peeler identified one of them and they were all released. The person who was responsible for giving information to the English about the Republican Court was a man named Walsh who was subsequently shot in a City Hospital where he was in hiding.

I remember also after the murder of Thomas McCurtain every Company of the I.R.A. was supplied with a list of the names of every peeler who took part in that deed. This list contained the policeman's name, place of birth and the police station to which he was attached at the time of the murder. But this story, no doubt, will be written by the Cork City men. Seán Hegarty knows all the details about the City. For stories relating to Ballinhassig, Kinsale etc., see Maurice Healy, Ballinaboy, Ballinhassig, Michael Walsh, Ballyheeda, Tom Hales, Ballinacurra, Bandon, and Thomas Kelleher, Upton.

I should just like to record the name of one old man in Ballyheeda, Ballinhassig. He was William Meskill. He had been a Fenian in his young days and he gave us a barrel of powder that he had hidden for fifty years, since the night that it was taken from the Martello Tower at Foaty by Captain Mackey at Christmas 1867. We also heard from another old Fenian in Bandon, a man called Shine, that the cargo of the "Erin's Hope" (rifles and ammunition) was landed and the arms hidden in various places from Kinsale to Ring. We eventually located one field where rifles were report to be buried. We had not the means of searching for these, and I have failed in all my efforts to get our museum authorities or our Army interested in the matter or to believe the story.

Signed: Ailbe Ó Monsiain

Date: 30/9/1949

Witness: Seán Óbeasnáin