

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
DURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. **W.S.** 541

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 541

Witness

Dr. Nancy Wyse-Power,
3 Wellington Place,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Executive and
Secretary of Central Branch of Cumann na mBan,
1915-1916.

Subject.

- (a) Origin of Inghini na hEireann;
- (b) Early days of Sinn Fein;
- (c) Holy Week and Easter Week 1916;

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. **S.222**

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

Statement of Miss Nancy Wyse-Power,

3, Wellington Place, Dublin.

First Instalment.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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Early Nationalist Influences:

Discussions on Irish politics were in my ears from the time I could hear anything, as both my parents had been actively engaged in public affairs.

Father's connection with the revival of Irish and foundation of the G.A.A.

My father had been interested in the Irish language movement from an early age. Although his parents were Irish speakers, he himself did not learn Irish until he was about sixteen years of age, when he had his interest aroused by a priest in Blackrock College where he was at school. Although his family lived only two miles from the city of Waterford, my great-grandmother who died about 1895 spoke no English, which indicates how rapidly the Irish-speaking areas have shrunk in the last 50 years. My father was an early member of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish language and assisted John Fleming in editing the Gaelic Journal. On leaving school he entered the Civil Service but was dismissed because of his membership of a society called 'The Young Ireland Society'. He subsequently became a journalist and in that capacity accompanied Parnell on his American tour. He was one of the group of five or six who founded the G.A.A. at Thurles. He was imprisoned for six months during the Land League.

Mother's part in the Ladies' Land League:

My mother had also grown up in a nationalist atmosphere. Her father's house in Dublin was a resort for

/Fenians

Fenians and one of her brothers had gone straight from Synge Street school to Tallaght on the day of the Rising planned in 1867. As a result of the snow he got pneumonia and died.

As a girl she joined the Ladies' Land League which had been founded by Anna Parnell. Modern writers tend to give credit for this to Anna Parnell's sister, Fanny. This always annoyed my mother considerably in the interests of historical accuracy. Fanny Parnell, she stated, was in fact in America during almost the whole of the Land League Period. The Ladies' Land League's activities have been described in a lecture by my mother, of which I have handed in a copy to the Bureau. (Appendix A). As happened with later organizations of the same type the members of the Ladies' Land League carried out a great deal of work of a kind not included in the objects for which they had been founded. While they collected funds for the benefit of evicted tenants, were present at evictions, set up Land League huts for the evicted in the vicinity of their former homes, assisted the dependants of prisoners and provided comforts for the latter, they also carried out a considerable amount of undercover work of a less legal character. Of this type was a task undertaken by my mother for the printing and circulation of lists of the names and addresses of the members of juries in agrarian trials. These lists she had printed in Liverpool with the assistance of Mr. Patrick O'Brien who was M.P. for Kilkenny up to 1917. It was at the by-election caused by his death that Mr. W.T. Cosgrave was elected.

When the lists had been printed they were sent over to Dublin and delivered at the offices of the Land League. The person in charge, having glanced at one bundle, refused delivery and they were returned to the stores at the North Wall. My

/mother

mother secured a carriage and coachman from a rich friend (Mrs. Molony, Treasurer of the Ladies' Land League), drove to the North Wall, claimed the goods and drove around Dublin until she had deposited the bulk of the documents here and there dumping the balance in my father's lodgings in his absence, the landlady having no idea of what she was taking in.

The members of the Ladies' Land League were, with very few exceptions, very young and of an age to enjoy these activities. For instance at the Hacketstown evictions my mother was present representing the Ladies' Land League and asked for assistance to be sent down. The help arrived in the person of a 14-year old girl, Patricia Cantwell, whose elder sisters were members. Hacketstown was in the area to which my mother's family belonged and a cousin of hers, Tom O'Toole, a local farmer, gave her help of another kind. A company of soldiers had been drafted into the town to assist the police and bivouacked in the square. During the night, their arms disappeared. The officer called on my mother who he thought was responsible and offered to do anything in his power if she would save him, but she knew as little as himself. The weapons had been taken by O'Toole and a servant and concealed in the belfry of a church. The servant duly gave information and O'Toole was tried and sent to jail. The informer went to America where he was shot immediately on arrival.

Mother's association with Inghinidhe na h-Eireann and Sinn Fein.

Both my parents were ardent Parnellites and after the death of Parnell took no part in politics until the new movement began to take shape about the beginning of the present century after the visit of Queen Victoria during the

/Boer

Boer War. A committee of women, including my mother, was set up by Miss Maud Gonne for the purpose of discouraging Dublin children from attending a loyalist outing in the Phoenix Park to which all were invited. The committee set itself to provide an alternative treat for the "patriotic" children at Clonturk Park, Drumcondra. Out of this committee the society known as Inghinidhe na h-Éireann developed. Before very long Sinn Fein was founded and my mother was a member of the executive of that organisation up to the split in 1922 when it more or less broke up. She was one of the Honorary Treasurers from 1917 to 1922.

About 1901 or 1902 she went to Paris with a group from Ireland including Arthur Griffith, James Lagan, Miss Mary Annin (later Mrs Dudley Digges). I do not remember hearing what was the reason of this visit. They stayed with Miss Maud Gonne who had not then married John MacBride.

She emerged into public life about this time having been elected to the Board of Guardians of the North Dublin Union. As a result she became a keen advocate of the break-up of the British Poor Law system and was one of the members of the Dáil Éireann Poor Law Commission which in the years 1920-'22 put an end to the workhouses as they had previously existed.

N.P.

Joining the Gaelic League:

I began to learn Irish about 1901 or 1902 when the Árd Craobh of the Gaelic League announced a class for children on Saturday afternoons. The teacher was Máire ní Chinnéide - who was a member incidentally of Inghinidhe na h-Éireann - and she gave her services free, as was usual in those days. On the first Saturday an immense crowd of children arrived which was entirely beyond the capacity of the organisers to cope with and it was realised that a second teacher would be needed. In time, of course, the size of the classes was reduced to reasonable proportions but that first rush is an indication of the rising enthusiasm in Irish affairs which was then becoming apparent. A year or two later my family began

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to go to Ring for the summer. We were almost the first 'foreign' visitors there, being preceded only by Dr. Michael Sheehan of Maynooth who had a cottage at Helvick. A few years later more visitors appeared and Ring Irish College had its humble beginnings when Dr. Henebry, who was staying with Dr. Sheehan, set up a blackboard on a windowsill in Ballinagoul each evening for the purpose of teaching the boys and girls of the village to read and write Irish. At that time no word of Irish was taught or spoken in the local national school nor in the church (as regards the church the same is largely true to-day). How Irish survived in these conditions is a mystery. It could not have done so without the devoted enthusiasm of Dr. Sheehan. On one occasion in the early years when he said the ordinary parish Mass on Sunday he preached a short sermon in Irish and the people - especially the old people - were in tears, as they had rarely if at all had such an experience previously.

Slow progress of Sinn Féin Movement. Its struggle with Irish Parliamentary Party influence:

Meanwhile in Dublin Sinn Féin was advancing slowly. A great deal of its activity in the early days was devoted to raising the standard of local administration and municipal elections were regarded as issues of major political importance. In Dublin the standard-bearers of Sinn Féin were Tom Kelly, Sean T. O'Kelly and Walter Cole. When a man was prosecuted for having his name in Irish on a cart, the Dublin Corporation put Irish inscriptions on all their vehicles, (I notice that they have reverted partly to English in recent years). Some local bodies objected to using envelopes printed with the words "On His Majesty's Service" and substituted the legend "I Seirbhis na h-Éireann." One of these was the North Dublin Guardians of which my mother was a member. When the nuns in charge of the Union hospital invited Lady Aberdeen to visit the institution, the Sinn Féin

/members

members of the Board succeeded in preventing the visit from taking place. In such minor ways the Sinn Feiners fought every step of the road in an effort to combat the national apathy which was almost universal after the Liberal party had come to power in England in 1906. John Redmond's party had tied themselves to the Liberals in the belief that Home Rule would result. It was argued that a Home Rule Bill could not be passed until the power of the House of Lords had been curtailed, which would take time. Even then the question of Welsh Disestablishment was to have priority and the Irish Party must be content to wait.

The years of waiting were used by the Irish Party in advancing their followers. As adherents of the Government the party were in a position to secure such positions as postmasters, postmen and all such minor offices for their nominees. The better-off classes were flattered by being appointed Justices of the Peace. Writers on the Freeman's Journal were made Local Government Inspectors and in the legal world, patronage was supreme. Practically everyone was benefiting in one way or another and there was almost universal resentment of the Sinn Féin policy which was that no Irishman should serve an alien government in any capacity. Accordingly, the Sinn Feiners were always in the minority on local councils and had usually a hard fight to be elected at all. Many enlightened persons who approved of the constructive side of the movement, industrial development etc., were unable to support its political side, above all the suggestion that the Irish representatives should withdraw from Westminster. At a time when for the first time in history, patronage had passed to the hands of Irishmen! The term "Sinn Feiner" in those days was almost as opprobrious as the word Communist is to-day.

Matters came to a head when Charles Dolan, M.P. for Leitrim, resigned his seat in Parliament and stood again at the ensuing bye-election as a Sinn Fein candidate on the abstention issue. He was, of course, defeated but the election, which was fought with exceeding bitterness, focussed public attention on the Sinn Fein policy. I was present at an enormous public meeting held after the election in the Round Room of the Rotunda. Among the speakers was Seán MacDiarmuda who had been active during the election and who then became an organiser for Sinn Fein. The Councils Bill had received a bad reception and had been rejected by a United League Convention, although sponsored by John Redmond and the Party Leaders and the Parliamentary forces were weakened by the split which occurred between the elements who favoured the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the O'Brien-Healy group who were opposed to that organisation. These factors appeared to favour the growth of Sinn Fein.

Irish becomes compulsory in the newly-founded National University.

My own first efforts in public affairs were connected with the campaign for compulsory Irish in the Matriculation examination of the National University. The Parliamentary Party were opposed to the demand which was being pressed for by public bodies throughout the country at the instigation of the Gaelic League. I joined a committee supposed to be composed of students - in fact save for myself all were graduates - to organise student opinion. We arranged for the signing by pupils of secondary schools throughout the country of a memorial requesting that Irish be made an essential subject for admission to the University. There were difficulties in some cases in getting permission from the heads of the schools to collect the signatures but on the whole the scheme was remarkably successful and it was stated subsequently that this

/memorial

memorial - signed by many thousands from among those who might be expected to become University students had an effect on the decision of the University senate when it accepted the compulsory Irish principle. Many of the members of the Committee have since died, including Dr. Dundon, whom I met again on Easter Monday, 1916, Dr. Fearon, a T.D. who opposed the Treaty and Mr. John King, Solicitor, of Newcastle, Co. Down, who in 1922 was expelled from the Six Counties. Among those still alive are Mr. P. Little, T.D., Dr. Seamus Ó Ceallaigh, Judge O'Byrne of the Supreme Court and Dr. MacCartan.

Sinn Fein efforts prevent Municipal Reception of King George and Queen Mary.

In 1911 King George V. visited Dublin on his accession to the throne. All the force of the Sinn Fein element was pushed into preventing a Municipal reception at Dublin. In these efforts The O'Rahilly was especially prominent. Riotous scenes occurred outside the City Hall on the day when the resolution to present an address of loyalty was to be debated as the Lord Mayor (O'Farrell) who was known to be in favour of the motion had restricted admission to the public gallery. For some odd reason he had given instructions that no women were to be admitted and when some members of the Council endeavoured to bring in the Countess Markievicz, both she and her escort were ejected forcibly. However, the Corporation decided against being loyal. As no money was made available to decorate the streets, a committee of citizens decided to collect funds for the purpose and called a meeting in the Antient Concert Rooms. They must have been simple folk for no restrictions were put on admission and the meeting resolved itself into a series of speeches from the floor by O'Rahilly, Sheehy-Skeffington, Sean Milroy and the Countess. Eventually stewards were

/summoned.

summoned and efforts made to remove the interlopers but the meeting finally broke up in confusion.

A suggestion had been made in the newspapers that every Irishwoman with the Christian name of Mary should participate in an address of welcome to Queen Mary. This effort was popularly known as "collecting Marys". A scratch committee got together in 6 Harcourt Street of which I was Secretary, to cope with this matter. They followed up cases where employees of business houses were asked to sign, as well as doing newspaper propaganda against the proposal. They also had leaflets printed for distribution among crowds standing to see the Royalties - these leaflets set out the national position.

While the preparations were going on public meetings were being held nightly in different parts of the city to rouse nationalist feelings. It was on the occasion of one of these meetings that Miss Helena Molony threw a stone through a picture of King George which had been erected at Yeates's corner. She was arrested and admitted to bail that night. The following day was that when the Corporation meeting referred to previously took place and when we had all - including Miss Molony - been thrown out of the City Hall, we crossed over to the Police Court where she was brought up. The magistrate failed to understand the incursion and threatened to have the Court cleared. Then with the remark that he would "not brook any Simon Tappertit, male or female", he sentenced her to a term of imprisonment with the option of a fine. She refused to pay the fine and was taken to Mountjoy, whence she was released mysteriously a few days later, as the fine had been paid anonymously.

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Later in the summer Miss Molony, in company with Sheehy-Skeffington, was again arrested - this time for seditious speeches made at a Sunday morning meeting at Beresford Place.

Expectations of Home Rule keep country loyal to the Irish Parliamentary Party:

After the Parliament Bill was passed curtailing the power of the House of Lords, Home Rule appeared to be approaching and in spite of all the work of Arthur Griffith and those who anticipated that nothing would result, the country settled down to support of the Irish Parliamentary Party. For this the growth of the A.O.H. was no doubt largely responsible, assisted by the policy I have mentioned of distributing the (minor) spoils.

The Volunteers and the War:

I was out of Ireland during the years 1912 - 1914 and when I returned, things had undergone a complete change. The Volunteers had split, the British Army was being represented as an Irishman's natural home and in Dublin it would have been dangerous to suggest that the First Great War was not being fought for the benefit of small nations.

Foundation of Cumann na mBan:

Cumann na mBan had been founded to assist the Volunteer movement at the end of 1913 or the beginning of 1914. I understand that the idea of such an organization emanated from Thomas MacDonagh. Miss O'Farrelly was the first President. The promoters may have had in mind an auxiliary association of women acting under the general instructions of the Volunteer Executive but the organisation immediately declared itself to be an independent organisation of women determined to make its own decisions.

Split on Volunteers and Cumann na mBan:

After the Volunteer split on the outbreak of the War, a convention of Cumann na mBan was held to determine the future of the organisation. There was a strong element which was anxious not to involve itself in the split; they desired to remain neutral and to assist both Volunteer bodies. The convention, however, voted that the resources of the Society should be pledged to the Irish Volunteers. The principal speaker on this side was Miss Mary MacSwiney, and she was supported by Mrs. O'Donovan of Limerick and Miss Min Ryan. Miss O'Farrelly resigned with a number of others and when the convention decision was conveyed to the Branches, many members followed suit, whole Branches disappearing in some cases.

I was not a member of Cumann na mBan at this time but was in and out of its offices a good deal and a good deal of its work was done at my home as my mother had taken over the chairmanship. At this time the office was in D'Olier Street where a room had been provided by Seán MacDiarmuda adjacent to the editorial office of Irish Freedom for which he was responsible. When the Irish Volunteers secured premises in Dawson Street, the Cumann na mBan secured a room there.

Joins Central Branch of Cumann na mBan:

I joined the Central Branch of Cumann na mBan in 1915 somewhat doubtfully. At that time their programme did not appeal to me but from the trend of events I felt a desire to belong to some organised body. There were two branches in the City of Dublin, the Central Branch which met weekly at the Gaelic League Offices, 25 Parnell Square and the Inghinidhe na h-Éireann Branch which met at 6 Harcourt Street. It is necessary here to draw a distinction between the old Inghinidhe na h-Éireann, a society which developed from the Committee formed by Miss Conne on the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit and the Cumann na mBan branch bearing the

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same name. The branch included members who had not been in the old body and there were some Inghinidhe who did not join Cumann na mBan.

Castle activities against Sinn Fein:

The events of 1915 which stand out in my mind are chiefly trials. I remember being in Court when F. Sheehy-Skeffington, Sean Milroy and Sean MacDermott were sentenced for anti-recruiting speeches and at the Green Street trial of Sean O'Hegarty and a companion for seditious offences.. In the latter case the accused were defended by Tim Healy. I went down to Bray with The O'Rahilly and others when Desmond Fitzgerald was sentenced for disobeying an order restricting his movements. These events partook of the nature of social functions.

Propaganda activities were important. Arthur Griffith's weekly paper was repeatedly suppressed and it was necessary on each occasion to find a new name for the paper and a new printer. I think that in spite of these difficulties hardly a week elapsed without a paper appearing.

Prominent Sinn Feiners frequent Wyse-Power Restaurant:

Arthur Griffith, John MacBride and Henry Dixon met every day for luncheon at the restaurant owned by my mother at 21 Henry Street. Others knew where to find them and it followed that I saw a great deal of the people concerned with events of the time, especially The O'Rahilly and Sean MacDermott who called in constantly.

Preparations for the Rising:

In the winter of 1915-1916 I was asked to help with the making-up of First Field Dressings for the Dublin Volunteers. At first I gave an hour or two daily to the work but as time went on it became necessary to give practically whole-time

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service to this task. As I was not tied to any occupation I could do this. Others came in and helped from time to time but the regular work was done by myself and Miss Eileen Walsh, Captain of the Inghinidhe branch, now Mrs. Martin Murphy. It was only in Holy Week that the requisite number of packets was ready - we were working on Good Friday and the final batch for the North County Dublin men was collected by Frank Lawless of Swords from my home on Easter Saturday when we removed everything from Dawson Street.

Palm Sunday:

On Palm Sunday night a concert was held in the Foresters' Hall, 41 Parnell Square, to raise funds for the Volunteers. It was organised by Min Ryan, a member of the Cumann na mBan Executive, and the hall was crowded. Miss Ryan was in close touch with Sean MacDermott and it seems strange now that she went ahead with it, presumably with his encouragement. The money to be expected would hardly exceed £50, an insignificant amount and with a Rising planned within a week it could not be put to any useful purpose. I assume that it was exactly for these reasons that Miss Ryan may have been encouraged to hold the concert as it would suggest to the authorities that nothing immediate was in contemplation.

It may have been for the same reason that Bulmer Hobson was invited to deliver a speech during the Concert. I cannot recall a single word of that speech but I do remember the consternation created by it as its drift was that the duty of the Volunteers was to husband their strength and not allow it to be exhausted by futile and premature efforts.

When the concert was over I walked down to the G.P.O. with Desmond Fitzgerald. Hobson and someone else walked behind us. I was told afterwards - I forget by whom - that

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*I have since spoken to Mrs Maloney who informs me that she asked Hobson to speak merely to fill a gap caused by the non-appearance of an artist. When she told Sean MacDermott that she had asked Hobson he was annoyed. Accordingly the conclusions drawn in adjoining paragraphs are not correct.
N.P.*

on that night Hobson's life was in danger of being taken and that it might have been saved by the fact that he was with a group.

Portents of the Rising:

Throughout Holy Week it was evident to anyone in touch with the Volunteers that matters were moving towards a climax. I recall that on Tuesday, Denis McCullough of Belfast came into the room where Miss Walsh and I were working. Jim Ryan was with him. Mr. McCullough stood around aimlessly and it was clear that something had occurred which had moved him very much. Finally he took his farewells as if he would see me no more and I concluded that he had received some news of great import. Curiously, he has no recollection of this incident.

Ash Wednesday: Mission to Cork:

On Wednesday I was asked by Bulmer Hobson to take a message to Terence MacSwiney to Cork. It was a bulky foolscap envelope. Before I left home for the afternoon train Sean MacDermott came in to ask for the use of a room for a meeting that evening. I am practically certain that this meeting, which my mother discussed with me afterwards, took place on the Wednesday. I was gone before the meeting but my mother told me that six or seven people attended, including Pearse and Tom Clarke. The presence of the latter, who was not on the Volunteer Executive, and the small number present suggests that the meeting consisted of the signatories of the Republican Proclamation. At the end of the preceding week the Volunteer Executive had met once in the house.

When I boarded the train for Cork at Kingsbridge I sat in a corner and put my bag beside me, between me and the /window.

window. The carriage was not very full until we reached Limerick Junction when it became crowded and in order to make room I was forced to put the bag on the rack above my head. I was fully immersed in a book I was reading and was merely conscious that there was a priest sitting beside me. The various passengers alighted at one or other of the stations between the Junction and Mallow. There was then a whole string of stations at which the train stopped - Emly, Buttevant, Knocklong, Kilmallock. At Mallow the carriage emptied itself and I found myself alone. It then occurred to me that my bag might perhaps be searched at Cork, in view of the mounting tension. I thought it improbable, however, that I would myself be searched so I decided to slip the envelope I had been given into the lining of my coat. Whereupon I ripped a few stitches and took down the bag. Immediately I realised that the bag in my hand was not mine. The train was about to start and I jumped out with the idea of staying as near as possible to the scene of my loss.

I decided to go to the station-master and explain that my bag had been taken in error and ask him to telephone back to the various stations to enquire if perhaps the person who had taken it had discovered his mistake and left it at the station. My difficulty was that I could not be sure where the priest - if it was he - had got out. The station-master began operations by opening the bag which had been left and we found in it a packet - like a book or photographs - addressed to "Father Hayes". Inquiries had meanwhile been made from passengers off the train and a man came forward to say that Father Hayes of Hospital had got off the train at Knocklong. The station-master then telephoned

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to Knocklong but nothing was known there. I inquired as to the best means of getting to Hospital but there was no hope of a train in that direction that night - the last had just gone - so there was nothing to do but wait for the last train to Cork which was due in a few hours time.

While I waited I remembered all the stories I had heard of how various Fenians had dropped letters in the street or left them lying around for the Castle to find and I remember thinking that it was nonsense to say that people's hair could go white in a night. If such a thing were possible, mine would certainly be white as snow. My only consolation was that a priest was unlikely to go to the police. Eventually the train arrived and I set out on the last stage of my trip to Cork. I realised that I was in another difficulty now as I did not know the MacSwineys' address. It was written on the envelope and I had only glanced at it before locking it in my bag. I only knew that the name of the road began with "Glen". When I got to Cork I took a car and told the driver to take me to Glen Road, mumbling the last syllable. He promptly said, "You mean Glen - Road", giving the right word. When we reached the road he asked me what part of the road I wanted and of course I had not the faintest idea. I had hoped for a short suburban road and intended to knock at the first house where there was light and ask for the MacSwineys' address. Instead, I found myself in a road as long as Drumcondra Road. However, when I saw a light in a downstairs room of one house I got rid of the car and knocked. The door was not opened but a woman's voice asked who was there. At once I recognised the voice of Miss Mary MacSwiney and induced her to open. She told me that when she heard the knock she thought it was the police as few people were abroad at such an hour.

/Holy Thursday.

Holy Thursday:

I told my sad story and she was really very nice about it. I stayed in the house for the remainder of the night and very early next morning Miss MacSwiney got in touch with her brother who sent word that the best thing to do was to go back to Hospital and retrieve the bag. I set out on the first train and at Knocklong hired a car to take me to Hospital which was some miles distant. I was hoping to get back to Knocklong in time to catch the down train from Dublin as by this means I would be able to get back home on the afternoon train from Cork.

The car was an open Ford and the roads were soft and thick with mud. Arrived in Hospital, we discovered that there were two priests' houses at a considerable distance from one another. For some reason we drove first to the more remote of the two and found it was not the one we wanted. Arrived back at the other, the door was opened by a woman with the worst impediment in her speech that I had ever encountered. After a considerable time during which I was on tenterhooks as every minute was of importance, I understood that Father Hayes had driven to the station to bring back the bag he had taken by mistake. By going first to the wrong house we had missed him.

Off we went again for Knocklong station and shortly before reaching it we met Father Hayes coming towards us. He told me my bag was at the station, but that I could not possibly catch the train to Cork. However, I was determined not to give up and after a delay of not more than a minute we drove on. I retrieved the bag and flung myself into the train. As I parted from the priest he called after me, "Did that bag belong to the Bishop of Cork?", and the meaning of that question has often puzzled me.

/When

When I got to Cork, I went to Thompson's restaurant where Miss MacSwiney had arranged I should meet her brother who was not stopping at his home. It was on account of this appointment that I had been so anxious not to miss the train. I gave Terence MacSwiney the envelope addressed to him. He opened it while we were talking and I noticed that it contained a number of enclosures, also in envelopes. Curiously, in view of Father Hayes's question, one of these was addressed to the Bishop of Cork. I assumed that it contained a copy of the document which had been read by Alderman Kelly at the meeting of the Dublin Corporation on the previous Wednesday.

I returned to Dublin that night. I know that it was Holy Thursday because on leaving the restaurant I went into a church off Patrick Street and there was an Altar of Repose.

On my return to Dublin I found that Countess Markievicz had taken up her quarters in our house. She had explained to my mother that she and others like her were anxious to sleep within the city proper, fearing that the British might hold up the canal bridges and that persons in the suburbs could not get through. She remained until the end of the week, but on Easter Sunday night moved elsewhere, her bed being taken for the night by Dr. Kathleen Lynn.

As an act of friendship she warned my mother on Good Friday that the neighbourhood would be unsafe in a few days time and advised the removal of any valuables. That night she showed me her uniform in which she took childish delight - ladies in trousers were less common then than now.

Good Friday:

All day on Good Friday I continued to work on the First Field Dressings. Being a holiday, there were more workers
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than usual, five or six I think. One whom I remember was Brigid Dixon. On Holy Saturday she was in a quandary. Somebody - I don't know who - had given her a heavy bag of money to deliver to the house of Seamus O'Connor at Phibsborough. When she got to the house it appeared to be locked up and empty and her difficulty was to find the person who had given her the bag.

On Good Friday Bulmer Hobson asked me to take away some documents for custody. They were routine matters - such as petty cash books - belonging to the Volunteers. I concealed them in an attic chimney where they perished when the house was burnt.

Holy Saturday:

On Saturday morning, the O'Rahilly called me out of the room where we were working. He was ghastly pale and told me that he had just met a girl - it was Miss Cregan, Bulmer Hobson's fiancée - who had told him that a Rising was planned to take place the following day. Being a loyal and zealous member of the Volunteer Executive he was deeply distressed that he should have been kept in the dark if there was truth in the story. Being supposed to know nothing I had to say that I had no information but I felt badly about it and hurried home with my story. My mother passed it on to the Countess who agreed that the O'Rahilly should have been told and stated that she would take the responsibility of telling him herself. From that moment on, however, events moved with such rapidity that she probably never met him.

I still think that it was a tragedy that the O'Rahilly should have been so treated. He may not have been a member of the I.R.B. - I don't know - but his zeal, loyalty and enthusiasm were unimpeachable. He was known to be a close

/friend

friend of John MacNeill which may have affected the matter but if the leaders had taken him into their confidence - as his position entitled him to expect - his influence with MacNeill at the crucial moment might have been valuable. It should have been evident to anyone who knew him that once a Rising was inevitable he would not be missing. When I saw him in the G.P.O. in the following week he explained his presence by saying that for two years past all his energies had been devoted to securing arms and ammunition and that when the people to whom he had supplied these things were making use of them, it would be unbecoming for him not to be with them.

EASTER WEEK.

Sunday:

Some time early on Easter Sunday, someone brought in the Sunday Independent with MacNeill's order. Shortly afterwards my brother came in from Mass and asked me to arrange for the collection of a gun, the whereabouts of which had been brought to his notice while coming from Mass. A young man who knew his appearance had spoken to him and explained that he was a teacher in Belfast, on his way to Kerry for holidays. In the train from Belfast the previous evening ~~a man whom he knew~~ ^{Mr Joseph Connolly} had asked him to bring the gun in his luggage through Amiens Street station where detectives were always stationed and had ~~provided~~ ^{promised} that it would be collected later in the evening. The promise had not been kept and the young teacher did not know what to do as he was continuing his journey that day. My brother asked me to go first to a house in Hardwicke Street and to ask for a man named Tobin (I understand that Tobin - who was no relation of Liam Tobin - was on the Supreme Council of the I.R.B.) - failing him to go to Liberty Hall.

*had
Mr Connolly called to my
house on Saturday
evening to deliver some
First Aid equipment
sent by Mrs Connolly
from Belfast. N.P.*

/At

At Hardwicke Street I saw a very frightened looking woman who told me that her husband had not been home all night. As I left a young man followed me and told me that if I was looking for Mr. Tobin he was at Liberty Hall. I went there and found the place in a commotion. The hallway, passages and stairs were packed with people coming and going so that I did not know where to turn. However, I saw William O'Brien and explained that I wanted to see someone in authority. He produced Commandant Mallin, who was already in uniform, and who undertook to send for the gun at once.

At some time during the day, I think, the Countess Markievicz returned to the house, which she had left early before the paper came. She explained that she would not be back that night but was sending Dr. Kathleen Lynn to occupy her bed.

Rumours of mysterious happenings in Kerry had been current in the city on Saturday, and on Sunday through some medium we heard that Sir Roger Casement had been taken.

At 6 p.m. I went to the mobilisation point of Cumann na mBan, the Black Church, even though I realised that there would be nothing doing, and was sent away.

Monday:

Very early on Monday morning my brother roused me and said I must go to the country on a message. He gave me a sealed envelope addressed to Dr. Dundon of Borris, County Carlow. He said that the arms ship had been sunk. I set off for Kingsbridge station on foot and caught an early train, reaching Borris about 12 o'clock. I had met Dr. Dundon previously at the time of the Compulsory Irish campaign

/when

when he was a member of the Students' Committee. After I reached his house there was delay before he appeared. I realised afterwards that he had been out all night carrying out the orders to demobilise and was asleep when I arrived. He opened the envelope I handed him and immediately dashed out of the room. A few minutes later he returned and showed me the message. This ran as follows, written in pencil on a half-sheet of notepaper :-

"We rise at noon to-day. Obey your orders. P.H.P."
'Ginger' O'Connell was in the house and it was to show him the message that Dr. Dundon had run out. 'Ginger' was a strong MacNeill supporter and was inclined to be critical of my news. This was very natural in the circumstances. There were few Volunteers in the County Carlow and there could have been no question of a rising en masse in that county. There were, however, small groups in key positions at long distances from one another and the two officers had spent the whole of the previous night into the morning in driving all over the country dismissing these men to their homes and stopping them from carrying out the tasks which had been assigned to them, such as blocking the railways. Quite clearly it would have been impossible to get word round again a few hours later. Further, the element of surprise had been lost, and there was the further psychological factor that people once keyed up and then let down could not rouse themselves to the same pitch immediately afterwards.

I decided I had best get back quickly to Dublin but, before I set out, Seamus Doyle of Enniscorthy arrived. He already had word and had come over for consultation. 'Ginger' went back with him to Enniscorthy and some time after I got the train.

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It was necessary to change at Bagenalstown and when some time had passed without the Dublin train arriving I realised that the revolution had indeed broken out and that communication with the capital had been cut off. It was a curious sensation, which I can still recall, to stand on a crowded platform knowing that no one else in the crowd had an inkling of the reason for the failure of the train to arrive. A young British officer was in a state of fuss as his leave was up and he had hoped by catching the mailboat on Monday night to reach France the following day. He was closeted for some time with the stationmaster and I then decided to move in some other direction. If I could not get to Dublin, neither could I stay in Bagenalstown, so I decided to make for Kilkenny and from there go, as chance offered, either to Waterford where I had relatives or to Wexford to the home of the Ryans. However, I had no money to see me through what would probably be a troublesome journey, so there was nothing for it but to return to Borris and borrow money from Dr. Dundon. The return journey had to be made on an outside car. Dr. Dundon was very kind and gave me £5. As it was by now late in the evening he suggested that I should remain until morning - by that time 'Ginger' would probably be back from Wexford and might have some news. He did, in fact, return during the night but had little to report.

Tuesday:

Both the Doctor and myself had fully expected to be arrested before morning as my arrival twice in a small village must have been noticed, but, in fact, nothing happened and he was not arrested until a week later. He was at the time engaged to be married and went through the ceremony before his arrest. His fiancée, Miss Flood, drove

/with

with me to Kilkenny and it was arranged that if we were stopped she would say that I was seriously ill and that Dr. Dundon had arranged for me to be admitted to hospital in Kilkenny.

Before I left, 'Ginger' gave me a long list of instructions for Mr. de Loughry who was, apparently, the Volunteer officer in Kilkenny. I memorised the instructions which were to collect all possible arms and ammunition and have his men ready to obey further orders. During the morning one of the local Volunteers, an engine-driver named Byrne, came in. He was a very brave man who was prepared, if ordered, to block the railway-line by running his engine off. He pointed out, however, that it might be well to keep the line from Borris to Pallas clear so as to facilitate communications with North Wexford. His visit and the Kilkenny instructions caused me to leave Borris in a somewhat happier frame of mind as it seemed to me that something might happen after all in the district.

Kilkenny was reached without incident. Life there appeared to be going on as usual and I visited Mr. de Loughry who did not appear to be very pleased to see me. I explained the circumstances which brought me there, delivered my messages and walked out of the shop. I was not asked where I was going or how I proposed to get there. Altogether I felt that my room was more appreciated than my company.

Going to the railway station to take the first train going in either direction I had the luck in the afternoon to be on the spot when a train moved out in the Dublin direction. It was explained to the passengers that there was no guarantee that it would get beyond Kildare but, in fact, it ran to Kingsbridge.

/Realising

Realising that my family lived in the shadow of the G.P.O., I did not know what I would find on arrival and after my chilly reception in Kilkenny I felt very down but was cheered up somewhat when a man who was leaving the train at Carlow stopped to give me some reading matter and whispered, "I saw you in Borris yesterday." I knew he meant to show fellow-feeling and the incident heartened me.

At Kingsbridge a line of soldiers was drawn up across the bridge and it was announced that no men would be allowed to pass. I got through to the North quays and then found it almost impossible to get any further. At every corner in the neighbourhood of the then Royal Barracks (now Collins Barracks) a sentry was stationed who would allow no one to pass. Night was beginning to fall and I eventually got into a network of small streets behind the quays. There was no street lighting and the neighbourhood was unfamiliar. I decided to take a detour by the North Circular Road but was turned back by people who told me that there was fighting in the Phibsborough region. As it got dark I got afraid that I might be attacked and robbed as I was carrying a travelling bag and law and order had clearly been the first casualty. However, I reached Smithfield which was in pitch darkness and I can still remember the uneasiness with which I left the path to cross this enormous empty space. I had a feeling that perhaps I might wander round in the centre until morning if I failed to move in a straight line but I reached the other side safely, falling in there with a man who had his wife and child with him. He told me that they had been forced to leave their home on the other side of the quays as the military were taking possession of houses there to command the Four Courts. We parted at the next corner and I again turned east hoping to make my way through Little Mary Street to the G.P.O. A few minutes later

a barricade manned by Volunteers appeared before me - it was just in front of the Richmond hospital. I asked for the officer in charge and was taken down to the Four Courts where I saw Commandant Ned Daly, who sent a man to accompany me to the G.P.O. The escort's name I remember was Denis Cuffe. We walked along the darkened quays which were completely deserted and I can recall the crunching of broken glass under our feet. The only lamps lighting were those on O'Connell Bridge itself - I understand that these were controlled by the Port and Docks Board.

I entered the Post Office by a side-door in Prince's Street used by vans. The door was opened by George Plunkett who took me into the front part of the building where most of the leaders were. I reported the result of my travels to Pearse and then spoke to The O'Rahilly and Seán MacDermott. Seán told me that Miss Gavan Duffy was upstairs in charge of the commissariat but suggested to me that before taking up duty I should go round the corner and tell my mother that I was back. So far as he knew, he said, the house had not been vacated.

I went home then and found that a barricade had been erected across the street in front of our house and that furniture was being taken out to build into it. Almost immediately my parents and sister came out and told me that they were heading for the house of some friend or other. I thought it best to accompany them so that I would know later where they would be. We walked up Parnell Square and round to Mountjoy Square where we knocked at the house of Mr. Walter Cole. He received us most hospitably as he was to do with numerous refugees during the following days.

A few weeks previously he had given a big party in his beautiful house and many of the national leaders had been

/present -

present - Seán MacDermott, Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Rahilly among them.

It had grown very late and I decided to get some sleep, if possible, having had little the previous night.

Wednesday:

Next morning, after being awakened by the bombing of Liberty Hall by the Helga, I went back to Henry Street with my mother who was anxious to fetch provisions. The Volunteers were in possession and we divided up everything, the bulk of the food being carried into the G.P.O. not through the street but along inside the houses where holes had been broken through the walls. About this time I met Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington who was making inquiries about her husband. She had not seen him since Monday. My mother told her that he had called on Monday and that she had made him take tea before he set out for Rathmines, which was about 6 p.m. It was, of course, his last journey but at the time nor for weeks later did anyone know the facts.

Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington came into the G.P.O. with me and undertook to convey provisions to the College of Surgeons where there was said to be a shortage. While I was talking to Seán MacDermott, Seán McGarry came up and said that Captain Weafer had just been killed at the opposite side of the street.

I worked in the kitchen for some time. Miss Gavan Duffy was in charge and by this time could not stand as her feet had swollen from standing for days on end. After a while The O'Rahilly came to me and asked me to do something for him. He believed that there would be a fight to a finish in the G.P.O., that the Volunteers could hold out for a fortnight in

/the

the cellars and that the last survivors might escape. If he were among them he proposed to shed his uniform, taking the clothes of some of the prisoners. It would be essential to him to have a safe place of retreat, a house owned by someone reliable but completely unknown. He asked me to find such a house. At the same time he wrote a note to his wife which he asked me to deliver. I sewed the note in the hem of my skirt and was able to deliver it only when his death was already known of. In the same way I found the house required - it had to be on the north side - but it was never needed.

James Connolly had asked me to try to get him some razor-blades, so I set out on my two messages. O'Connell Street was too dangerous a thoroughfare by daylight, so it was necessary to go back through the holes in the walls of the Henry Street houses. To find a house to fit O'Rahilly's requirements was beyond me personally, so I went back to Mr. Cole's to get my mother's help. It was she who located a woman who would not be afraid and when we returned to Cole's, Min Ryan and Phyllis arrived there on their way back from doing messages for Seán MacDermott in the Drumcondra district. Both were exhausted and were glad to sleep on the premises, although little sleep was possible with continuous rifle fire.

Thursday:

Towards morning I fell asleep and was wakened by Min Ryan who was already fully dressed. I gave her a note for O'Rahilly with the address he wanted and got ready to follow her myself. However, the half-hour which intervened was vital. While Min and Phyllis got through I was unable to get beyond Findlater's Church. During the

/night

night the process of surrounding the G.P.O. had begun and all approach was impossible. From the high ground at the top of Parnell Square I saw a procession of women bearing a white flag crossing O'Connell Street at the Parnell monument. These were inhabitants of the Moore Street - Parnell Street area leaving their homes for safety.

During that day two emissaries sent out from the G.P.O. reached Cole's - both were setting out for the country - one was a Miss Higgins, a member of Cumann na mBan; the other was a man whose name I never heard. By nightfall it was evident that the O'Connell Street area was burning.

Signed: Neany de Paop

Date: 5th January, 1951.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 541

Witness: S. in Cwóran

Mrs. Nancy Wynn Power
3 Wellington Place
Dublin

First Instalment

Early Nationalist Influences

Discussions on Irish politics were in my ears from the time I could hear anything, as both my parents had been actively engaged in public affairs.

Father's ~~first~~ connection with the Rev. Father and other friends of the G.A.A.

My father had been interested in the Irish language movement from an early age. Although his parents were Irish speakers, he himself did not learn Irish until he was about sixteen years of age, when he had his interest aroused by a priest in Blackrock College where he was at school. Although his family lived only two miles from the city of Waterford, my great grand mother who died about 1895 spoke no English, which indicates how rapidly the Irish-speaking areas have shrunk in the last 50 years. My father was an early member of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish language & assisted John Fleming in editing the Gaelic Journal. On leaving school he entered the Civil Service but was dismissed because of his membership of a society called the Young Ireland Society. He subsequently became a journalist and in that capacity accompanied Parnell on his American tour. He was one of the group of five or six who founded the G.A.A. at Thurles. He was imprisoned for six months during the Land League.

My father's mother had also grown up in a nationalist atmosphere. Her father's house in Dublin was a resort for Fenians and one of her brothers had gone straight from Sionest. school to Tallaght on the day of the Rising planned in 1867. As a result of the snow he got pneumonia & died.

As a girl she joined the Ladies' Land League which had been founded by Anna Parnell. Modern writers tend to give credit for this to Anna Parnell's sister Tanny. This always annoyed my mother considerably in the interests of historical accuracy. Tanny Parnell, she stated, was in fact in America during almost the whole of the Land League Period. The Ladies' Land League's activities have been described in a lecture by my mother, of which I have handed in a copy. ^{to the Bazaar (G. P. Parnell)} As happened with later organizations of the same type the members of the L.L.L.

mother's
part in the
Ladies' Land
League

carried out a great deal of work of a ~~type~~ ^{kind} ~~not covered by~~ ^{included in} the objects for which they had been founded. While they collected funds for the benefit of evicted tenants, were present at evictions, set up Land League huts for the evicted in the vicinity of their former homes, assisted the dependants of prisoners + provided comforts for ~~the~~ the latter, they also carried out a considerable amount of undercover work of a less legal character. Of this type was a task undertaken by my mother for the printing and circulation of lists of the names and addresses of the members of juries in agrarian trials. These lists she had printed in Liverpool with the assistance of Mr Patrick O'Brien who was M.P. for Kilkenny up to 1917. It was at the by-election caused by his death that Mr W.T. Cosgrave was elected.

When the lists had been printed they were sent over to Dublin + delivered at the offices of the Land League. The person in charge having glanced at one bundle refused delivery + they were returned to the stores at the North Wall. My mother secured a carriage and coachman from a rail friend (Mrs Molloy, Treasurer of the L.L.L.), drove to the North Wall, claimed the goods and drove around Dublin until she had deposited the bulk of the documents here + there dumping the balance in my father's lodgings in his absence, the landlady having no idea of what she was taking in. The members of the L.L.L. were, with very few exceptions, very young and of an age to enjoy these activities. For instance at the Hacketstown evictions my ~~own~~ mother was present representing the L.L.L. and asked for assistance to be sent down. The help arrived in the person of a 14-year old girl, Patricia Cantwell, whose elder sisters were members. Hacketstown was in the area ^{for} to which my mother's family belonged and a cousin of hers, ^{Tim O'Toole} a local farmer, gave her help of another kind. A company of soldiers had been drafted into the town to assist the police + bivouacked in the square. During the night, their

arms disappeared. The officer called on my mother who he thought was responsible and offered to do anything in his power if she would save him, but she knew as little as himself. The weapons had been taken by O'Toole and a servant and concealed in the belfry of a church. The servant duly gave information and O'Toole was tried and sent to jail. The informer went to America where he was shot immediately on arrival.

^{including my mother} ~~both my parents~~ were ardent Parnellites and after the death of Parnell took no part in politics until the new movement began to take shape about the beginning of the present century after the visit of Queen Victoria during the Boer War. A committee of ^{including my mother} women was set up by Miss Mead Gurney for the purpose of discouraging Dublin children from attending a boys' club outing in the Phoenix Park to which all were invited. The committee set itself to provide an alternative treat for the "patriotic" children at Clontarf Park, Drumcondra. Out of this committee the society known as Injinnic na h-Eireann developed. Before very long Sinn Féin was founded and my mother was a member of the executive of that organisation throughout ~~the~~ up to the split in 1922 when it more or less broke up. She was one of the Honorary Treasurers from 1917 to 1922.

She emerged into public life about this time having been elected to the Board of Guardians of the North Dublin Union. As a result she became a keen advocate of the break-up of the British Poor Law system and was one of the members of the Dail's Poor Law Commission which in the years 1920-22 put an end to the workhouses as they had previously existed.

^{Joining the Gaelic League}
 I began to learn Irish about 1901 or 1902 when the 2nd part of the Gaelic League announced a class for children on Saturday afternoons. The teacher was Máire ní Cúinníde - who was a member incidentally of Injinnic na h-Eireann - and she gave her services free, as was usual in those days. On the first Saturday an immense crowd of children arrived which was entirely beyond the capacity of the organisers to cope with and it was realised that a second teacher would

be needed. In time of course the size of the classes was reduced to reasonable proportions but that first rush is an indication of the rising enthusiasm in Irish affairs which was then becoming apparent. A year or two later my family began to go to Ring for the summer. We were ^{almost} the first foreign visitors there, being preceded only by Dr. Michael Sheehan of Maynooth who had a cottage at Helinsk. A few years later more visitors appeared and Ring Irish College had its humble beginnings when Dr. Heneghy, who was staying with Dr. Sheehan, set up a blackboard on a windowsill in Ballinacool each evening for the purpose of teaching the boys and girls of the village to read and write Irish. At that time no word of Irish was taught or spoken in the local national school nor in the church (as regards the church the same is ^{largely} true to-day). How Irish survived in these conditions is a mystery. It could not have done so without the devoted enthusiasm of Dr. Sheehan. On one occasion ⁱⁿ the early years when he said the ordinary parish Mass on Sunday he preached a short sermon in Irish and the people - especially the old people - were in tears, as they had rarely if at all had such an experience previously.

~~Low Progress of Sinn Fein movement. Its struggle with Irish Disfranchisement Bill~~
 Meanwhile in Dublin Sinn Fein was advancing slowly ^{to a great} deal of its activity in the early days was devoted to raising the standard of local administration and municipal elections were regarded as issues of major political importance. In Dublin the standard-bearers of Sinn Fein were Tom Kelly, Sean T. O'Kelly and Walter Cole. When a man was prosecuted for having his name in Irish on a cart, the Dublin Corporation put Irish inscriptions on all their vehicles (I notice that they have reverted partly to English in recent years). Some local bodies objected to using envelopes printed with the words "On His Majesty's Service" and substituted the legend / Seirbhíse na hEireann. One of these was the North Dublin Guardians of which my mother was a member. When the nurse in charge of the Union Hospital invited Lady Aberdeen to visit the institution, the Sinn Fein members of the Board succeeded

in preventing the visit from taking place. In such minor ways the Sinn Féiners fought every step of the road in an effort to combat the national apathy which was almost universal after the Liberal party had come to power in England in 1906. John Redmond's party had tied themselves to the Liberals in the belief that Home Rule would result. It was agreed that a Home Rule Bill could not be passed until the power of the House of Lords had been curtailed, which would take time. Even then the question of Welsh Disestablishment was to have priority and the Irish Party must be content to wait.

The years of waiting were used by the Irish Party in advancing their followers. As adherents of the Government the party were in a position to secure such positions as postmasters, postmen and all such minor offices for their nominees. The better-off classes were flattered by being appointed Justices of the Peace. Writers on the Freeman's Journal were made local government inspectors; ~~assistants~~ were appointed as and in the legal world, patronage was supreme. Practically everyone was benefiting in one way or another and there was almost universal resentment of the Sinn Féin policy which was that no Irishman should serve an alien government in any capacity. Accordingly, the Sinn Féiners were always in the minority on local councils and had usually a hard fight to be elected at all. Many enlightened persons who approved of the constructive side of the movement, industrial development etc., were unable to support its political side, above all the suggestion that the Irish representatives should withdraw from Westminster. At a time when for the first time in history, patronage had passed to the hands of Irishmen! The term 'Sinn Féiner' in those days was almost as opprobrious as the word Communist is to-day.

Matters came to a head when Charles Dolan M.P. for Leitrim resigned his seat in Parliament and stood again at the ensuing bye-election as a Sinn Féin candidate on the abstention issue. He was of course defeated but the election - which was fought with

exceeding bitterness focused public attention on the Sinn Féin policy. I was present at an enormous public meeting held after the election in the Round Room of the Rotunda. Among the speakers was Sean Mac Diarmada who had been active during the election and who ~~in~~ then became an organiser for Sinn Féin. The Councils Bill had received a bad reception and had been rejected by a United League Convention, although sponsored by John Redmond & the Party Leaders and the Parliamentary forces were weakened by the split which occurred between the elements who favoured the Ancient Order of Hibernians & the O'Brien-Healy group who were opposed to that organisation. These factors appeared to favour the growth of Sinn Féin.

~~Irish became compulsory in the newly founded National University~~
 My own first efforts in public affairs were connected with the campaign for Compulsory Irish in the Matriculation examination of the National University. The Parliamentary Party were opposed to the demand which was being pressed for by public bodies throughout the country at the instigation of the Gaelic League. I joined a committee supposed to be composed of students - in fact save for myself all were graduates - to organise student opinion. We arranged for the signing by pupils of secondary schools throughout the country of a memorial requesting that Irish be made an essential subject for admission to the University. There were some difficulties in some cases in getting permission from the heads of the schools to collect the signatures but on the whole the scheme was remarkably successful and it was stated subsequently that this memorial - signed by many thousands from among those who might be expected to become University students had an effect on the decision of the University Senate when it accepted the Compulsory Irish principle. Many of the members of the Committee have since died, including Dr Donohoe, whom I met again on Easter Monday, 1916, Dr Fearon a T.D. who opposed the Treaty and Mr John King Schinck of Newcastle Co. Down who in 1922 was expelled from the Six Counties. Among those still

alive are Mr P. Little T.D., Dr. Seamus O'Connell, ~~and~~ Judge O'Byrne of the Supreme Court and Dr. McLayton.
 In 1911 King George V visited Dublin on his accession to the throne. All the force of the Sinn Fein element was pushed into preventing a Municipal reception at Dublin. In these efforts The O'Rahilly was especially prominent. Riotous scenes occurred outside the City Hall on the day when the resolution to present an address ^{of loyalty} was to be debated, as the Lord Mayor ^(O'Farrell) who was known to be in favour of the motion had restricted admission to the public gallery. For some odd reason he had given instructions that no women were to be admitted and when some members of the Council endeavoured to bring in the Countess Markievicz, both she and her escort were ejected forcibly. However, the Corporation decided against being loyal. As no money was made available to decorate the streets, a Committee of Citizens decided to collect funds for the purpose and called a meeting in the Ancient Concert Rooms. They must have been simple folk for no restrictions were put on admission and the meeting resolved itself into a series of speeches from the floor by O'Rahilly, Dechy Sheffington, Sean McBrye & the Countess. Eventually stewards were summoned and efforts made to remove the interlopers but the meeting finally broke up in confusion.

A suggestion had been made in the newspapers that every Irishwoman with the Christian name of Mary should participate in an address of welcome to Queen Mary. ^{the spirit of popular indignation collecting Marys} A scratch committee got together in 6 Harcourt St. of which I was secretary, to cope with this matter. They followed up cases where employees of business houses were asked to sign, as well as ~~by~~ doing newspaper propaganda against the proposal. They also had leaflets printed for distribution among crowds standing to see the Royalties. These leaflets set out the national position.

While the preparations were going on public meetings were

being held rightly in different parts of the city to rouse nationalist feelings. It was on the occasion of one of these meetings that Miss Helena Molloy threw a stone through a picture of King George which had been erected at Yeates's corner. She was arrested & admitted to bail that night. The following day was that when the Copration meeting referred to previously took place and when we had all - including Miss Molloy - been thrown out of the City Hall, we crossed over to the Police Court where she was brought up. The magistrate failed to understand the innuendo and threatened to have the Court cleared. Then with the remark that he would "not brook any Simon Tappertit, male or female" he sentenced her to a term of imprisonment with the option of a fine. She refused to pay the fine and was taken to Mountjoy, whence she was released mysteriously a few days later, as the fine had been paid anonymously.

Later in the summer ~~at~~ Miss Molloy, in company with Sheehy-Keppington, was again arrested - this time for seditious speeches made at a Sunday morning meeting at Beresford Place.
^{Expectations of Home Rule kept} ~~country loyal to the First Parliamentary Party~~
 After the Parliament Bill was passed curtailing the power of the House of Lords, Home Rule appeared to be approaching and in spite of all the work of Arthur Griffith and those who anticipated that nothing would result, the country settled down to support of the Irish Parliamentary Party. In this the growth of the I.O.H. was no doubt largely responsible, assisted by the ~~policy~~ ^{policy I have mentioned} of distributing the (minor) spoils. ^{The Volunteers and the War}
 I was out of Ireland during the years 1912-1914 and when I returned, things had undergone a complete change. The Volunteers had split, the British Army was being represented as an Irishman's natural home and in Dublin it would have been dangerous to suggest that the First Great War was not being fought for the benefit of small nations.

Foundation of Cumann na mBan

Cumann na mBan had been founded to assist the Volunteer movement at the end of 1913 or the beginning of 1914. I understand that the idea of such an organization emanated from Thomas MacDonagh. Miss O'Farrelly was the first President. The promoters may have had in mind an auxiliary association of women acting under the general instructions of the Volunteer Executive but the organization immediately declared itself to be an independent ^{and} organization of women determined to make its own decisions.

After the ^{split in Volunteers and Cumann na mBan} Volunteer split on the outbreak of the War, a ^{of Cumann na mBan} convention was held to determine the future of the organization. There was a strong element which was anxious not to involve itself in the split; they desired to remain neutral and to assist both Volunteer bodies. The convention however voted that the resources of the society should be pledged to the Irish Volunteers*. Miss O'Farrelly resigned ~~and~~ with a number of others and when the Convention's decision was conveyed to the branches, many members followed suit, whole branches disappearing in some cases.

See bottom of page

I was not a member of Cumann na mBan at this time but was in and out of its offices a good deal and a good deal of its work was done at my home as my mother had taken over the Chairmanship. At this time the office was in D'Olier St. where a room had been provided by Sean MacDiarmada adjacent to the editorial office of Irish Freedom for which he was responsible. When the Irish Volunteers secured premises in Dawson Street, the Cumann na mBan secured a room here.

Dear General / Branch of C. na mBan

I joined ^{the central branch of} Cumann na mBan in 1915 somewhat doubtfully. At that time their programme did not appeal to me but from the trend of events I felt a desire to belong to some organized body. There were two branches in the City of Dublin.

* The principal speaker on this side was Miss Mary MacSwiney and she was supported by Mrs. O'Donovan of Limerick and Miss Min Ryan.

The Central Branch which met weekly at the Gaelic League offices 25 Darnell Square and the *Brigit na hEagann* branch which met at 6 Harcourt Street. It is necessary here to draw a distinction between the old *Brigit na hEagann*, a society which developed from the Committee formed by Miss Gonne on the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit and the *Cumann na mBan* branch bearing the same name. The branch included members who had not been in the old body and there were some *Brigit* who did not join *Cumann na mBan*.

~~Castle Archdale, excerpt Sean Fear~~
 The events of 1915 which stand out in my mind are chiefly trials. I remember being in Court when F. Sheehy-Skeffington, Sean McBry + Sean MacErmot were sentenced for anti-recruiting speeches and at the Green Street trial of Sean O'Hegarty and a companion for seditious offenses. In the latter case the accused were defended by Tim Healy. I went down to Bray with the O'Rahilly + others when Donald Fitzgerald was sentenced for disobeying an order restricting his movements. These events portend of the nature of social functions.

Propaganda activities were important. Arthur Griffith's weekly paper was repeatedly suppressed and it was necessary on each occasion to find a new name for the paper and a new printer. I think that in spite of these difficulties hardly a week elapsed without a paper appearing.

~~throughout my life frequent Wye River Restaurant~~
 Arthur Griffith, John Keble and Henry Dixon met every day for luncheon at the restaurant owned by my mother at 21 Henry Street. Others knew where to find them and it followed that I saw a great deal of the people concerned with events of the time, especially the O'Rahilly and Sean MacErmot who called in constantly.

~~Preparations for the Rising~~
 In the winter of 1915-1916 I was asked to help with the making-up of First Field Dressings for the Dublin Volunteers. At first I gave an hour or two daily to the work but as time

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Palm Sunday.

On Palm Sunday night a concert was held in the Frosters' Hall, 41 Barnell Square to raise funds for the Volunteers. It was organised by Miss Ryan a member of the Cumann na mBéan Executive & the hall was crowded. Miss Ryan was in close touch with Seán MacDermot & it seems strange now that she went ahead with it, presumably with his encouragement. The money to be expected would hardly exceed £50, an insignificant amount & with a Rising planned within a week it could not be put to any useful purpose. I assume that it was exactly for these reasons that Miss Ryan may have been encouraged to hold the concert as ~~the~~ on it would suggest to the authorities that nothing immediate was in contemplation.

It may have been for the same reason that Palmer Hobson was invited to deliver a speech during the concert. I cannot recall a single word of that speech but I do remember the consternation created by it as its drift was that the duty of the Volunteers was to husband their strength & not allow it to be exhausted by futile & premature efforts.

When the concert was over I walked down to the G.P.O. with Desmond Fitzgerald. Hobson and someone else walked behind us. I was told afterwards - & forget by whom - that on that night Hobson's life was in danger of being taken & that it might have been saved by the fact that he was with a group.

~~Book Wednesday~~

When I boarded the train for Cork at Kingobridge I sat in a corner & put my bag beside me, between me & the window. The carriage was not very full until we reached Tamerick Junction when it became crowded & in order to make room I was forced to put the bag on the rack above my head. I was fully immersed in a book I was reading & was merely conscious that there was a priest sitting beside me. The various passengers alighted at one or other of the stations between the Junction & Mallow. There was then a whole string of stations at which the train stopped - Emly, Battered, Knocklong, Kilmallark. At Mallow the carriage emptied itself & I found myself alone. It then occurred to me that my bag might perhaps be searched at Cork, in view of the mounting tension. I thought it improbable however that I would myself be searched so I decided to slip the envelope I had been given into the lining of my coat. Thereupon I ripped a few stitches & took down the bag. Immediately I realised that the bag in my hand was not mine. The train was about to start and I jumped out with the idea of staying as near as possible to the scene of my loss.

I decided to go to the station master & explain that my bag had been taken in error & to ask him to telephone back to the various stations to enquire if perhaps the person who had taken it had discovered his mistake and left it at the station. My difficulty was that I could not be sure ^{where} the priest - if it was he - had got out. The station master began operations by opening the bag which had been left & we found in it a packet - like a book or photographs - addressed to "Father Hayes." At the same time inquiries had meanwhile been made from passengers

off the train & a man came forward to say that Father Hayes of Hospital had got off the train at Knocklong. The station master then telephoned to Knocklong but ~~the~~ nothing was known there. I inquired as to the best means

of getting to Hospital but there was no hope of a train in that direction that night - the last had just gone - so there was nothing to do but wait for the last train to Cork which was due in a few hours time.

While I waited I remembered all the stories I had heard of how nervous Fenians had dropped letters in the street or left them lying around for the cattle to find and I remember thinking that it was nonsense to say that people's hair could go white in a night. If such a thing were possible, mine would certainly be white as snow. My only consolation was that a priest was unlikely to go to ^{the police.}

Eventually the train arrived & I set out on the last stage of my trip to Cork. I realised that I was in another difficulty now as ~~the~~ I did not know the MacSweeney's address. It was written on the envelope and I had only glanced at it before locking it in my bag. I only knew that the name of the road began with "glen". When I got to Cork I took a car and told the driver to take me to Glen---- Road, mumbling the last syllable. He promptly said "you mean Glen - Rd" giving the right word. When we reached the road he asked me what part of the road I wanted and of course I had not the faintest idea. I had hoped for a short suburban road & intended to knock at the first house where there was light & ask for the MacSweeney's address. Instead I found myself in a road as long as the Dramconra Road. However, when I saw a light in a downstairs room of one house I got out of the car and knocked. The door was not opened but a woman's

voice asked who was there. At once I recognised the voice as that of Miss Mary McSwiney & induced her to open. She told me that when she heard the knock she thought it was the police as few people were abroad at such an hour.

July Thursday. I told my sad story and she was really very nice about it. I stayed in the house for the remainder of the night & very early next morning Miss McSwiney got in touch with her brother who sent word that the best thing to do was to go back to Hospital & retrieve the bag. I set out on the first train & at Knocklong hired a car to take me to Hospital which was some miles distant. I was hoping to get back to Knocklong in time to catch the down train from Dublin as by this means I would be able to get back home on the afternoon train from Cork.

The car was an open Ford & the roads were soft & thick with mud. Arrived in Hospital we discovered that there were two priests' houses at a considerable distance from one another. For some reason we drove first to the more remote of the two and found it was not the one we wanted. Arrived back at the other the door was opened by a woman with the worst impediment in her speech that I had ever encountered. After a considerable time during which I was on tenterhooks as every minute was of importance, I understood that Father Hayes had driven to the station to bring back the bag he had taken by mistake. By going first to the wrong house we had missed him.

Off we went again for Knocklong station & shortly before reaching it we met Father Hayes coming towards us. He told me my bag was at the station, but that I

not possibly catch the train to Cork. However, I was determined not to give up + after a delay of not more than a minute we drove on, ~~and~~ I retrieved the bag and flung myself into the train. As I parted from the priest he called after me "Did that bag belong to the Bishop of Cork?" and the meaning of that question has often puzzled me.

When I got to Cork I went to Thompson's restaurant where Mrs. MacBumey ^(who was at the hotel at the time) had arranged I should meet her father. It was on account of this appointment that I had been so anxious not to miss the train. I gave Terence MacBumey the envelope addressed to him. He opened it while we were talking + I noticed that it contained a number of enclosures, also in envelopes. Curiously, in view of Father Hayes's questions, one of these was addressed to the Bishop of Cork. I assumed that it contained a copy of the document which had been read by Alderman Kelly at the meeting of the Dublin Corporation on the previous Monday. Wednesday.

I returned to Dublin that night. I know that it was Holy Thursday because on leaving the restaurant I went into a church just off Patrick Street and there was an Altar of Repose.

(see next page)

went on it became necessary to give practically whole-time service to this task. As I was not tied to any occupation I could do this. Others came in and helped from time to time but the regular work was done by myself and Miss Ellen Walsh, Captain of the Inghinidhe Branch, now Mrs Martin Murphy. It was only in Holy Week that the requisite number of packets was ready - we were working on Good Friday and the final batch for the North County Dublin men was collected by Frank Lawless of Swords from my home on Easter Saturday when we removed everything from Dawson Street.

^(insert her footlock chest marked X)
 Throughout Holy Week it was evident to anyone in touch with the Volunteers that matters were moving towards a climax. I recall that on Tuesday, Denis McCullough of Belfast came into the room where Miss Walsh and I were working. Jim Ryan was with him. Mr McCullough stood around aimlessly and it was clear that something had occurred which had moved him very much. Finally he took his farewells as if he would see me no more and I concluded that he had received some news of great import. Curiously, he has no recollection of this

^{incident}
 On Wednesday I was asked by Bulmer Hobson to take a message to Terence MacSwiney to Cork. It was a bulky foolscap envelope. Before I left home for the afternoon train Seán MacDermot came in to ask for the use of a ^{pre meeting} room that evening. ^{Seán practically certainly that the meeting which my mother attended with me of the way, was a failure on the whole of it.} My mother told me that 6 or 7 people attended, including Pearse and Tom Clarke. The presence of the latter, who was not on the Volunteer Executive, and the small number present suggests that the meeting consisted of the signatories of the Republican proclamation. ~~At~~ At the end of the preceding week the Volunteer executive had met ^{in the house} ~~once~~ ^(insert here from foolscap page marked H)

Having delivered my envelope to Terence MacSwiney - who was not sleeping in his home - ^{from my} I returned to Dublin on Thursday

deeply distressed that he should have been kept in the dark if there was truth in the story. Being supposed to know nothing I had to say that I had no information but I felt badly about it and hurried home with my story. My mother passed it on to the Countess who agreed that the O'Rahilly should have been told and stated that she would take the responsibility of telling him herself. From that moment on however events moved with such rapidity that she probably never met him.

I still think that it was a tragedy that the O'Rahilly should have been so treated. He may not have been a member of the J.R.B. - I don't know - but his zeal, loyalty and enthusiasm were unimpeachable. He was known to be a close friend of John MacNeill which may have affected the matter but if the leaders had taken him into their confidence - as his position entitled him to expect - his influence with MacNeill at the crucial moment might have been valuable. It should have been evident to anyone who knew him that once a Rising was inevitable he would not be missing. When I saw him in the G.T.O. in the following week he explained his presence by saying that for two years past all his energies had been devoted to securing arms + ammunition + that when the people to whom he had supplied these things were making use of them, it would be unbecoming for him not to be with them.

~~& ^(Continuation is on separate sheets)
~~Coastal Sunday morning~~ brought the Sunday Independent with MacNeill's orders. Before it arrived the Countess had departed, leaving behind her the clothes into which she intended to change when the fight was over and the Republic challenged. During the morning my brother came in from Mass in the Dro. Cathedral and told me that a young man had spoken to him to ask for help in a difficulty. He was a teacher in Belfast on his way to Kerry for his holidays. In the train the evening before he had been asked to take charge~~

of a gun, the owner of which thought he might be searched at Amiens St. He took the gun to his hotel but the owner had not claimed it & he was leaving Dublin that afternoon. I went forth to retrieve the gun, going first to a man named Tobin who lived in Hardwicke St. Tobin was not at home so I went down to Liberty Hall which appeared to be crowded with people coming and going. The hall was like a busy railway station. After some parleying I saw Michael Mallin who took down the address and promised to have the matter attended to at once.

Otherwise Easter Sunday was a dreary day of anti-climax. Cumann na mBan had been mobilised for that evening at the Black Church. Even though I knew that everything was off I went to the appointed place & was told to go home again - I don't know by whom and my recollection is clear that those who came were not told to return next day.

Easter Week

Some time early on Easter Sunday, someone brought in the Sunday Independent with Mackeill's order. Shortly afterwards my brother came in from Mass & asked me to arrange for the collection of a gun, the whereabouts of which had been brought to his notice while coming from Mass. A young man who knew his appearance had spoken to him & explained that he was a teacher in Belfast, on his way to Kerry for holidays. In the train from Belfast the previous evening a man whom he knew had asked him to bring the gun in his luggage through Amiens St. station where detectives were always stationed & had promised that it would be collected later in the evening. The promise had not been kept & the young teacher did not know what to do as he was continuing his journey that day. My brother asked me to go first to a house in Hardwicke St. & to ask for a man named Tobin (I understand that Tobin - who was no relation of Liam Tobin - was on the Supreme Council of the I.R.B.) - failing him to go to Liberty Hall.

At Hardwicke St. I saw a very frightened looking woman who told me that her husband had not been home all night. As I left a young man followed me & told me that if I was looking for Mr Tobin he was at Liberty Hall. I went there & found the place in a commotion. The hallway, passages & stairs were packed with people coming & going so that I did not know where to turn. However I saw William O'Brien & explained that I wanted to see someone in authority. He produced Comdt. Mallin, who was already in uniform, & who undertook to send for the gun at once.

At some time during the day I think the Countess Markiewicz returned to the house, which she had left early before the paper came. She explained that she would not be back that night but was sending Dr. Kathleen Lynn

to occupy her bed. ~~Pat~~

Rumours of mysterious happenings in Kerry had been current in the city on Saturday & on Sunday through some medium we heard that Sir Roger Casement had been taken.

At 6 p.m. I went to the mobilisation point of Cumann na mBan ^{the Black Church} even though I realised that there would be nothing doing, and was sent away.

Monday

Very early on Monday morning my brother roused me and said I must go to the country on a message. He gave me a sealed envelope addressed to Dr. Dunder of Borris, Co. Carlow. He said that the arms ship had been sunk. I set off for Kingsbridge station on foot & caught an early train reaching Borris about 12 o'clock. I had met Dr Dunder previously at the time of the Compulsory Irish campaign when he was a member of the Students' Committee. After I reached his house there was delay before he appeared. I realised afterwards that he had been out all night carrying out the orders to demobilise & was asleep when I arrived. He opened the envelope I handed him & immediately dashed out of the room. A few minutes later he returned & showed me the message. This ran as follows, written in pencil on a half-sheet of notepaper: -

"We rise at noon to-day. Obey your orders. P.H.P."
"Ginger" O'Connell was in the house & it was to show him the message that Dr Dunder had run out.

"Ginger" was a strong MacNeill supporter & was inclined to be critical of my news. This was very natural in the circumstances. There were few Volunteers in the Co. Carlow & there could have been no question of a rising en masse in that county. There were however small groups in key positions, at long distances from one another & the two officers had spent the whole of the previous night into the morning

in driving all over the county dismissing these men to their homes & stopping them from carrying out the tasks which had been assigned to them, such as blocking the railways. Quite clearly it would have been impossible to get word round again a few hours later. Further, the element of surprise had been lost, and there was the further psychological factor that people once keyed up and then let down could not rouse themselves to the same pitch immediately afterwards.

I decided I had best get back quickly to Dublin but before I set out Seamus Doyle of Enniscorthy arrived. He already had had word & had come over for consultation. 'Ginger' went back with him to Enniscorthy & some time after I got the train.

It was necessary to change at Baginbunstown & when some time had passed without the Dublin train arriving I realised that the revolution had indeed broken out and that communication with the capital had been cut off. It was a curious sensation, which I can still recall, to stand on a crowded platform knowing that no one else in the crowd had an inkling of the reason for the failure of the train to arrive. A young British officer was in a state of fur as his leave was up & he had hoped by catching the mailboat on Monday night to reach France the following day. He was closeted for some time with the stationmaster & I then decided to move in some other direction. If I could not get to Dublin neither could I stay in Baginbunstown so I decided to make for Kilkenny and from there go, as chance offered, either to Waterford where I had relatives or to Wexford to the home of the Ryans. However I had no money to see me through what would probably be a troublesome journey so there was nothing for it but to return to Boris and borrow money from Dr Dandson. The return journey had to be made on an outside car.

Dr Dunder was very kind and give me £5. As it was by now late in the evening he suggested that I should remain until morning - by that time Gunge would probably be back from Wexford & might have some news. He did in fact return during the night but had little to report.

Tuesday Both the Doctor & myself had fully expected to be arrested before morning as my arrival twice in a small village must have been noticed but in fact nothing happened and he was not arrested until a week later. He was at the time engaged to be married and went through the ceremony before his arrest. His fiancée Miss Flood drove with me to Kilkenny & it was arranged that if ^{we} were stopped she would say that I was seriously ill and that Dr Dunder had arranged for me to be ~~admitted~~ admitted to hospital in Kilkenny.

Before I left Gunge gave me a long list of instructions for Mr de Loughry who was apparently the Volunteer officer in Kilkenny. I memorised the instructions which were to collect all possible ^{arms &} ammunition & have his men ready to obey further orders. During the morning one of the local Volunteers, an engine-driver named Byrne came in. He was a very brave man who was prepared if ordered to block the railway-line by running his engine off. He pointed out however that it might be well to keep the line from Borris to Pallas clear was to facilitate communication with North Wexford. His visit & the Kilkenny instructions caused me to leave Borris in a somewhat happier frame of mind as it seemed to me that something might happen after all in the district.

Kilkenny was reached without incident. Life there appeared to be going on as usual & I visited Mr de Loughry who did not appear to be very pleased to see me. I explained the circumstances which brought me

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here, delivered my messages and walked out of the shop. I was not asked where I was going or how I proposed to get there. Altogether I felt that my room was more appreciated than my company.

Going to the railway station to take the first train going in either direction I had the luck in the afternoon to be on the spot when a train moved out in the Dublin direction. It was explained to the passengers that there was no guarantee that it would get beyond Kildare but in fact it ran to Kingsbridge.

Realising that my family lived in the shadow of the G.P.O., I did not know what I would find on arrival and after my chilly reception in Kilkenny I felt very down but was cheered up somewhat when a man who was leaving the train at Carlow stopped to give me some resting matter and whispered "I saw you in Boon's yesterday." I knew he meant to show fellow-feeling and the incident heartened me.

At Kingsbridge a line of soldiers was drawn up across the bridge & it was announced that no men would be allowed to pass. I got through to the North quays and then found it almost impossible to get any further. At every corner in the neighbourhood of the Ken Royal Barracks (now Collins Barracks) a sentry was stationed who would allow no one to pass. Night was beginning to fall & I eventually got into a network of small streets behind the quays. There was no street lighting & the neighbourhood was unfamiliar. I decided to take a detour by the North Circular Road but was turned back by people who told me that there was fighting in the Phibsborough region. As it got dark I got afraid that I might be attacked & robbed as I was carrying a travelling bag & law & order had clearly been the first casualty. However I reached Smithfield which was in pitch darkness and I can still

remember the uneasiness with which I left the path to cross this enormous empty space. I had a feeling that perhaps I might wander round in the centre until morning if I failed to move in a straight line, but I reached the other side safely, falling in there with a man, who had his wife & child with him. He told me that they had been forced to leave their home on the other side of the quays as the military were taking possession of houses there to command the Four Courts. We parted at the next corner & I again turned East hoping to make my way through Little Mary St. to the G.P.O. A few minutes later a barricade manned by Volunteers appeared before me - it was just in front of the Richmond Hospital. I asked for the officer in charge & was taken down to the Four Courts where I saw Comdt. Ned Daly, who sent a man to accompany me to the G.P.O. The man's name I remember was Denis Cuffe. We walked along the darkened quays which were completely deserted & I can recall the crunching of broken glass under our feet. The only lamps lighting were those on O'Connell Bridge itself - I understand that these were controlled by the Port & Docks Board.

I entered the Post Office by a side-door in Paines St. used by vans. The door was opened by George Plunkett who took me into the front part of the building where most of the leaders were. I reported the result of my travels to Pearse & then spoke to the O'Rahilly & Sean McDermott. Sean told me that Miss Gavan Duffy was upstairs in charge of the communication but suggested to me that before taking up duty I should go round the corner & tell my mother that I was back. So far as he knew, he said, the house had not been vacated.

I went home then & found that a barricade had been erected across the street in front of our house & that furniture was being taken out to build into

it. Almost immediately my parents & sister came out & told me that they were heading for the house of some friend or other. I thought it best to accompany them so that I would know later where they would be. We walked up Barnell Square & round to Mountjoy Square where we parked at the house of Mr Walter Cole. He received us most hospitably as he was to do with numerous refugees during the following days.

A few weeks previously he had given a big party in his beautiful house and many of the National leaders had been present - Sean MacDiarmada Sean T O'Connell O'Rahilly among them.

It had grown very late & I decided to get some sleep if possible having had little the previous night. ^{after being awakened by the bombing of Liberty Hall by the Helga} Next morning I went back to Henry St. with my mother Wednesday who was anxious to fetch provisions. The Volunteers were in possession & we divided up everything, the bulk of the food being carried into the G.P.O. not through the street but along inside the houses where holes had been broken through the walls. About this time I met Mrs Sheehy-Sheffington who was making inquiries about her husband. She had not seen him since Monday. My mother told her that he had called on Monday & that she had ~~made~~ made him take tea before he set out for Rathmines which was about 6 p.m. It was of course his last journey but at the time nor for weeks later did anyone know the facts.

Mrs Sheehy-Sheffington came into the G.P.O. with me & undertook to convey provisions to the College of Surgeons where there was said to be a shortage. While I was talking to Sean MacDiarmada Sean McManus came up & said that Captain Wexler had just been killed at the opposite side of the street.

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I worked in the kitchen for some time. Miss
Finn Duffy was in charge & by this time could
not stand as her feet had swollen from
standing for days on end. After a while
the O'Rahilly came to me & asked me to do
something for him. He believed that there
would be a fight to a finish in the G.P.O., that
the Volunteers could hold out for a fortnight
in the cellars & that the last survivors might
escape. If he were among them he proposed to
shed his uniform, taking the clothes of some of the
prisoners. It would be essential to him to have
a safe place of retreat, a house owned by
someone reliable but completely unknown. He
asked me to find such a house. At the same
time he wrote a note to his wife which he
asked me to deliver. I sewed the note in the
hem of my skirt & was able to deliver it only when
his death was already known of. In the same way
I found the house required - it had to be on the
North side - but it was never needed.

James Connolly had asked me to try to get him
some razor blades so I set out on my two messages.
O'Connell St. was too dangerous a thoroughfare by
daylight so it was necessary to go back through
the holes in the walls of the Henry St houses. To find
a house to fit O'Rahilly's requirements was beyond
me personally so I went back to Mr Cole's to
get my mother's help. It was she who located
a woman who would not be afraid & when we
returned to Cole's Miss Ryan & Phyllis arrived here
on their way back from doing messages for Sean
Mac Dermot in the Drumcondra district. Both were

exhausted & were glad to sleep on the premises, although little sleep was possible with continuous rifle fire.

wednesday Towards morning I fell asleep & was wakened by Min Ryan who was already fully dressed. I gave her a note for O'Rahilly with the address he wanted & got ready to follow her myself. However the half-hour which intervened was vital. While Min and Phyllis got through I was unable to get beyond Finlaker's Church. During the night the process of surrounding the G.P.O. had begun & all approach was impossible. ~~After~~ From the high ground at the top of Parnell Square I saw a procession of women bearing a white flag crossing O'Connell Street at the Parnell monument. These were inhabitants of the Moore Street - Parnell Street area leaving their homes for safety.

During that day two emissaries sent out from the G.P.O. reached Coles - both were setting out for the country - one was a Miss Higgins, a member of Cumann na mBan, the other was a man whose name I never heard. By nightfall it was evident that the O'Connell Street area was burning.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO-STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 541

Shortly after the formation of the Ladies' Land League was announced I called at its offices at 39 Upper O'Connell St. and saw for the first time Miss Anna Parnell. I was very young and somewhat nervous as I came without an introduction, but she put me at my ease at once. She was then about 27 years of age, of medium height and slender figure, very attractive with her fair complexion, humourous blue eyes and thick golden hair. Looking back on the strenuous years which followed, I am confident that the success of the Ladies' Land League and the mark it left on its time was due primarily to Anna's Parnell's strong personality and iron will, but those qualities now seem less remarkable to me than her exceptional ^{skill} of meeting emergencies successfully and her high courage. ^

To do justice to her memory and that of her sister Fanny, one must recall the circumstances of those days and the political economic and social elements of the national struggle. In the autumn of 1879 it became evident that the country was confronted with another '47. Famine menaced the poorest districts, those that were most Irish and most thickly populated. Nevertheless the landlords proceeded to enforce their rights and in view of the dire need of the tenants a conflict became inevitable.

Writing later on the situation Anna Parnell said:

"When O'Connell saw a famine approaching he ran to the English Government for help--something like a sheep appealing to a wolf to protect her lambs. The Young Irelanders wrote poetry. The Land League went neither to the British Government nor to the muses but set about trying to stop the famine themselves. As rulers they became a government de facto. Had they only continued as they began there might be only one government in Ireland, and that not the English"
 These words indicate her clear vision and bold national outlook.

With the founding of the Ladies' Land League in 1881 her

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her

organised public work began. The Land League leaders foresaw their probable arrest and the chaos that would ensue. Realising what would then be the condition of the evicted tenants and the families of the prisoners, they decided to call into existence an organisation of women to carry on the necessary work when the English government would attempt to cripple the national movement. Anna Parnell's strong sense of responsibility showed itself at the outset. She resisted a suggestion that the new league should be run on the lines of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and claimed for it full power not alone to provide for the victims of the struggle but also to direct a national organisation working in co-operation with the Land League. When the latter was ~~suppressed~~ suppressed in October 1881 her prophetic wisdom was seen. Over 1,000 men were arrested and lodged in Kilmainham, Galway, Naas and other jails. In each jail centre catering arrangements had to be set up, supervised and paid for by the women, in addition to the care of the evicted tenants and their families. The work was further increased when the national newspaper "United Ireland" was suppressed. The Editor, Mr. William O'Brien was already in jail and after the proclamation the entire staff was arrested. No man could safely enter the offices at 33 Lower Abbey St. and the whole work devolved on the girls of the Ladies' Land League. They kept up a continuous issue, arranging for the printing in various centres--sometimes at Liverpool or even as far away as Paris--but more often on the paper's own machines, and then getting it carried away for distribution.

All the forces of the British Government were thrown into the fight against us and as well we had to suffer deunciation by *Influential authorities at home* certain Church dignitaries, one of whom declared in a pastoral that our members should not be admitted to Catholic sodalities. *Arch bishop of Cashel* On the other hand Dr. Croke published an ~~elegant~~ letter, defending the women from attack and praising the work they were doing.

3

To Anna Parnell must be given the chief credit for all this activity of the first national organisation of Irishwomen. Her organising powers ~~and~~ her strength of will were responsible for its success. For 18 months she gave her entire time to this task not merely in Dublin, but addressing public meetings all over the country at a time when many of our members were arrested.

In view of the difficulties to be overcome and the large ~~number~~ number of our branches, it is pleasant to recall the harmony that existed among the members of the controlling committee. Anna Parnell's exceptional personality helped the cordial relations that existed between all of them. Her kindly ways and her great sense of humour banished anything that might mature into unpleasantness and the fact that the work in hand was recognised by all as of great national importance left little time for disagreement between the members.

She was the pioneer of the organised advanced women of Ireland. She never lost an opportunity of urging the cause of the tenant farmers. Her speeches were always incisive and courageous and she did not hesitate when necessary to denounce the conduct of the Crown forces and the intimidation practised by them. In January, 1882, the Ladies' Land League was proclaimed as illegal. She and her colleagues decided to continue their work openly. An Order signed by her and her co-secretary Miss N. Lynch instructed all branches to meet publicly at 3 on the following Sunday. The unanimous answer to this call nullified the proclamation. With other members of the central branch I went to the offices in O'Connell St. All members of the Executive ^{were there} but I may say that we did little ~~business~~ business beyond rejoicing in the success of our coup. Next morning the Press recounted how Miss Anna Parnell had outwitted "the powers that were" and made a laughing stock of those in authority.

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The organisation continued to flourish. No eviction occurred without the presence of one of our members whose task it was to provide shelter for those driven from their homes. The police attempted to prevent the erection of wooden houses for the victims and when all other ways of fixing responsibility for this barbarity had failed Miss Parnell succeeded by a bold stroke. On a fine summer afternoon ^{as} ~~the~~ Lord Lieutenant ~~drove~~ down Westmoreland St. surrounded by cavalry with drawn swords, Anna Parnell walked up to the horses' heads, took hold of the bridle, stopped the parade and asked the Lord Lieutenant for an explanation of his conduct. The bystanders gasped in amazement but when the courageous questioner was finished she walked calmly back to the footpath, returned to the office and continued her work as usual.

Unlike her younger sister, Fanny Parnell's national work was done - not in Ireland - but in America where her activities were of the greatest assistance to the Ladies' Land League at home. Although she was not here when the women were in charge of the struggle she played a big part in their success by her appeals for financial aid from Americans for the organisation. Without ^{her help} the programme of assisting the people and defying the English government could not have been carried through as it was. Vast sums of money were necessary for the maintenance of the evicted tenants. The amount required was an ever-increasing one but the women at home could always rely on the weekly contributions from America gallantly organised by Fanny Parnell.

She is often thought of as the poet of the movement and many are unaware that she was also a very practical worker in the national cause. She was not however, as is sometimes stated, the organiser of the Ladies' Land League; that was the work of ~~her sister~~ Anna, *the younger sister*.

Fanny will always be remembered as the author of the poem "Shall mine eyes behold thy Glory, O my country?" Some other ~~verses~~

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verses of hers in appeal to the Farmers of Ireland were at the time considered to constitute a most treasonable document. In the trials for treasonable conspiracy ^{against the leaders} in the autumn of 1880 these verses were read out and put in evidence by the crown prosecutor. In conclusion I shall read some verses from this poem which will indicate the intense and glowing patriotism which animated their author.

Now are ye men or are ye kine
Ye tillers of the soil?
Would ye be free of evermore
The rich man's cattle toil?
The shadow on the dial hangs
That point the fatal hour
Now hold your own or branded slaves
Forever cringe and cower.

Oh! by the God that made us all
The seigneur and the serf
Rise up and ~~plant your feet as men~~ swear this day to hold
Your own green Irish turf
Rise up and plant your feet as men
Where now you crawl as slaves
And make your harvest fields your camps
Or make of them your graves.

The birds of prey are hovering round
The vultures wheel and swoop
They come, the coronetted ghouls
With drumbeat and with troop
They come to fatten on your flesh
Your children's and your wives
Ye die! but once hold fast your lands
And if ye can your lives.

and the ripening grain
bar sinks beneath their
curse
his ill-got gain.

Three hundred years your crops have sprung
By murdered corpses fed
Your butchered sires, your famished sires
For ghastly compost spread
Their bones have fertilised your fields
Their blood has fallen like rain
They died that you might eat and live
God! have they died in vain?

Movement

Side Light to on Home Rule page 93

When Parliament met in '81 Forster's

"Suspect Act" was at once introduced

after a debate lasting several days

Davitt was arrested & the local leaders
committed to gaol. under the Act.

This brought Miss Anna Parnell
into the field: & the formation
of the L. Land League

out - manœuvred the Govt -

ROINN



COSANTA.

*Referred to on P. 2 of W.S. 541
as 'Appendix A'.*

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

DOCUMENT NO. C.D....193.....

Description

Text of lecture on
"The Ladies' Land League" given
by the late Mrs. Wyse-Power.

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