ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 779 (Section 1)

Witness

Robert Brennan,
42 Lower Dodder Road,
Rathfarnham,
Dublin.

Identity.

Acting Comd't. Wexford Brigade, Irish Vol's. 1916;
O/C. Sinn Fein Press Bureau, 1918-1921;
Under Sec. Foreign Affairs, Dail Eireann, 1921-'22;
Irish Minister at Washington, 1938-1947.

Subject.

Text of his book "Allegiance" with some additional notes.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT OF MR. ROBERT BRENNAN
42 Lower Dodder Road, Rathfarnham,
Dublin.

Shortly after I arrived to take up the position of Director of Publicity for Sinn Féin - at least, that was not my title; my title was Officer in Charge of the Sinn Féin Press Bureau - in March, 1918, odd journalists began to call, all of whom wanted to interview Mr. de Valera.

I remember an American who had a long interview with de Valera and I was amused to observe the methods used by the American reporters as contrasted with any of the others. This man was more interested in the personality of the man rather than in the politics of the day, such as, offering him a cigarette and getting a refusal - "You don't smoke?" "No". Of course, that was a point to be noted. "You don't drink?" "No". And so on, in order to get a picture of the personal tastes, background and outline of the man's character.

Very few of the British journalists came to headquarters at that time but we had men from Portugal, Spain, Japan, France and Italy as well as from America.

On one occasion there was a big group of journalists in the Shelbourne Hotel. They had come over from London where they had assembled for some big project. Many of these were Americans but there were also journalists from the Continent and one man was a Boer from South Africa. Harry Boland and myself saw them and gave them an outline of what Sinn Féin stood for. They asked us a great many searching questions, the main one being whether we would

be satisfied with Dominion Home Rule. We had, of course, pamphlets to give them, outlining the programme and policy of Sinn Féin and arguments on which our case for complete independence was based.

Sometimes in the later stages, when we had left No. 6 Harcourt Street, a journalist would call there and invariably some passer-by told him how to get in touch. On one occasion it was a boy who sold newspapers at the corner of Cuffe Street and Harcourt Street. This poor fellow was afterwards arrested and tried for an offence which he did not commit, the shooting of Detective Wharton. He was sentenced to fifteen years. I can't remember his name at the moment. He must have been released at the time of the Treaty because he was afterwards accidentally killed during an encounter between the rival forces in the Civil War.

I have explained in my book, "Allegiance", how the journalists were able to get in touch rapidly with the Sinn Féin organisation.

My office continued handling publicity in No. 6 Harcourt Street after the setting up of Dáil Éireann in January, 1919. The Dáil, however, had set up a Publicity Department, of which Larry Ginnell was Chief with the title, Director of Publicity.

When Ginnell was arrested, Desmond Fitzgerald took his place. He carried on in my office in Harcourt Street until such time as we left it. On account of the number of raids, the continued occupation of No. 6 Harcourt Street became impossible and we went to Mount Street - Mrs. Nugent's house. We all worked together. After some time

we left Mrs. Nugent's house in Mount Street and, for a while, worked in another place she had in Baggot Street where her business was. Later again, we moved from there to offices in Molesworth Street. We had two rooms on the second floor of it.

This continued until I left the Publicity Department to establish the Foreign Affairs Office. That was in January or February of 1921. I took offices then in Denzille Street in the house beside Oriel House.

Before we left Harcourt Street, the staff consisted of Micheál Nunan, Vera McDonnell, Kathleen McKenna and Frank Gallagher. I think that is all we had up to the election in 1918, the time of my arrest. Subsequently there were in the joint offices Larry Ginnell, later Desmond Fitzgerald, Anna Fitzsimons Kelly. Kathleen McGilligan, Sheila Murphy and her sister came later. There was also a messenger boy by the name of Jimmy Hynes.

In my Foreign Affairs office in Denzille Lane (now Fenian Street) there were Mairín Cregan Ryan, Frank Kelly, Jim Bolger (my brother-in-law), James Carty (now in the National Library) and a Miss Marie Molony.

Some time early in 1921 I had occasion to see de Valera. It was either in the house at Strand Road, Merrion, or else in the house he went to in Blackrock, off Merrion Avenue. While I was waiting in the hall, de Valera came out with a tall, loose-limbed man, whom I took to be an American, a journalist, and de Valera introduced us. The man went off at once. Evidently he had a cab waiting. A few days later I was travelling on top of an open-top tram proceeding towards Baggot Street

when I had an encounter with this man, whose name was Jim Connolly from Boston as I afterwards learned, the circumstances of which I set out in an article which I wrote for 'Irish Writing' in 1952. This article was re-printed in the 'Irish Digest' for October, 1952.

There were a few of the British journalists who were more or less friendly, one of them being Desmond McCarthy and the other, Hugh Martin, but in the main they were hostile. The American journalists as a rule were friendly.

Some time during the Tan War the French novelist Monsieur Pierre Benoit - author of "La Chausée Des Géants" was very friendly.

Maurice Bourgeois was very unfriendly, mainly because he shared the view held by many people in France that the insurrection of 1916 was a stab in the back for the allies. In my book, "Allegiance", I have told the circumstances which compelled him to change his attitude.

Concerning the book, "Allegiance", what happened was this. One night in Washington there were a few friends in - Americans mainly - and they asked me to tell them something about my experiences during the Tan War. Next day my secretary, who had been present, produced a typescript copy of what I had been saying. When I read this, I thought it was so much better than I could have done if I had written it, that we said whenever we would get a few minutes to spare, we would proceed on the same lines and I would talk as if I had an audience. In that way, when I came back to Ireland, I had three parts of the book written, so I had only to fill up a few blanks.

I was married in 1909. It must have been two or three years before that that I was enrolled by Sean T.

O'Kelly in the I.R.B., as described in the book, with a group of others.

When I was about to get married, I felt uneasy because I wanted to tell my future wife that I belonged to this organisation and that I might be called out to fight, but I could not tell her because one of the very strict rules of the organisation was that you could not give any such information to anybody who was not a member. I said they would have to accept her as a member. I put it before my own people first and they said, "Why not go up to Dublin and tell them?" I went up to Dublin. Seán T. O'Kelly happened to be in Wexford some time later and swore Úna in as a member of the organisation. About that time somebody told me that there was only one other lady a member.

The first occasion on which I came to a Sinn Féin Ard Fheis as a member of the Ard-Chomhairle for Leinster, the two Hegarty's - P.S. and Seán - attacked Griffith on the grounds that he was hobnobbing with William O'Brien,M.P. There was a bitter argument which went on for hours and finally Griffith said that on four occasions he had been approached to stand for a seat in Parliament, twice by the Redmondites and twice by O'Brien. On each occasion he had refused point-blank. The matter was not pursued then. Afterwards either Madame Markievicz, in whose house at Belcamp Park we stayed that night, or Helena Molony told me that Hobson, who had been silent during the discussion, was at the back of the whole thing.

In March, I believe, of 1916 Pearse lectured in Enniscorthy. On that occasion he arranged to send cipher messages to the various Commandants, indicating the date of the Rising. The arrangement he made with Seán Sinnott,

the Commandant of the Wexford Battalion and Vice Commandant of the Brigade, was that a number of school-desks were to be delivered on a certain date and that he, Seán, was to add or deduct - I forget which - seven days from the day mentioned, which would indicate the date of the Rising.

On the Thursday before Easter Sunday, a lady arrived in Wexford. I believe it was Miss Min Ryan, afterwards Mrs. Richard Mulcahy, who delivered a message to Seán Sinnott, which showed that the Rising was fixed for Easter Sunday.

I know it was Min Ryan that my wife met on the Sunday. She - my wife - went to Enniscorthy to be there when I arrived. Our plans were that we were to march to Enniscorthy and I wanted her there when we got there. It must have been Sunday when she left, herself and Miss Hegarty.

Miss Hegarty was a teacher student at the Loreto Convent in Wexford. She was from Ballingeary and is now Mrs. Ó Tuama. I met her in Cork City years and years afterwards and I believe her husband was working in the city of Cork then. She accompanied my wife to Enniscorthy.

<u>Commentary on my Book, "Allegiance"</u>:

Page 51 - re name of despatch rider - Tom Furlong.

I think it was Lawlor who came to see me following a letter from Eamonn Comerford about my statement regarding the message from Kilkenny in Easter Week, 1916.

Page 65 -

Máire O'Neill was a writer. She was in the Unionist camp.

Page 68 -

During the Black and Tan raids we used to keep any documents we had to keep, or some that had historic value, in bundles ready to be sent to a hiding place. On several occasions Miss Gaul, who was a governess - a Wexford girl - employed by Mrs. Kirkwood-Hackett who lived next door to us stored bundles for us. Another person who used to store bundles of this kind for us was Miss Cunningham, the Matron of Trinity Hall.

After The Truce I tried to recover these documents and one bundle was missing. In this bundle was the letter from Colonel French. Miss Gaul was sure she had given back all the stuff she had secreted for us.

Seven years elapsed, and one day I was in a tram and I heard two women talking. One of them said, "Another thing she is boasting about is that she has a lot of letters signed by Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith". The two ladies left the tram at the next stop. Suddenly it dawned on me that they were talking about Mrs. Kirkwood-Hackett and that they were talking about my letters. I had never seen these two ladies before or since.

It happened that about a week later Mrs. Hackett came to an office I had in Messrs. Kean & Company, Dame Street, when I was organising the 'Irish Press'. She wanted some data about the I.R.A. in connection with a play she was writing, of which I was to be the central figure. I said nothing about the papers but she invited me to her house in Dundrum to look at a draft of the play. It concerned the escape of an I.R.A. leader by getting through a skylight and down a ladder and being concealed by the woman of the house in a theatre basket.

During the interview she asked me whether letters signed by Collins and Griffith would have any commercial value. I said I would like to see them, whereupon she produced a few letters signed by Collins and Griffith and some copies of "The Irish Bulletin". There was no sign of my Colonel French letter. Then I told her that these letters had belonged to me and she said she found them under the stairs adjoining the return room in her old house in Belgrave Road. I told her that there was one letter I was very anxious to get, signed by Colonel French. She said she had burned some of the material but that she had some other documents. When I assured her that this was not Lord French, she produced the letter. I told her I was taking this and that she could have all the rest. Mrs. Hackett's play was later produced at the Abbey under the title "Number Ten (or perhaps Twelve) Belgrave Road" and by that time the central figure, according to Mrs. Hackett, had become Michael Collins.

Page 79.

I was about a week in Waterford.

Page 85.

Re. Courtmartial. I do not remember the names of the people who tried me. The only one I knew was the Advocate-General on the preliminary hearing. He was a young Irish barrister who was a friend of Charlie Power. I can't remember his name. He might have been Hanna. He used to attend the Court Sessions in Wexford. I said something to him about Charlie Power which Charlie told me afterwards nearly got him into trouble.

Page 146.

I wrote the 16 episodes of Danny Dwyer to keep myself from going mad and I am glad to say it served the purpose. I did not embody the story in my book "Allegiance" as I first thought of doing. It is now ready for publication and I hope

to have it produced shortly.

That is the explanation of the gap in the typescript copy I am giving to the Bureau. You will notice there is a jump from Page 240 to 397.

Page 153 - re Brugha and Griffith:

After 1916 there were at least three different movements either in fact or in embryo. Griffith was keen on retaining the Sinn Fein movement on the same lines as prior to 1916. The main plank in the programme, so far as Britain was concerned, was that we would not negotiate with Britain on the question of Ireland's status until they, the British, recognised their own Act of Parliament, called the Renunciation Act of 1782, I think, by which the British enacted that only the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland should legislate for Ireland. The second movement was the one that was in embryo, the thought in the minds of all the people who had been out in Easter Week that we should avail of the Sinn Féin movement and remould it along Republican lines. The third was an organisation which Count Plunkett had set up, called, I think, the Liberty League, which was far more to the left than either of the two foregoing.

As soon as we were released from Pentonville Jail - there was 120 of us there - de Valera began to work for the unification of all the parties to these three movements, and he finally succeeded by getting them all to accept a formula that the aim of the organisation was the independence of Ireland and that a plebiscite would be held as soon as that independence was attained, so that the Irish people could decide the form of government they wanted.

They were all in agreement, so much so that when we were going into the Ard Fheis in October 1917, and while there was still considerable debating as to whether de Valera or

Griffith should be President, they were debating it in the queues outside the Mansion House and a lady from Monaghan spoke to me. She said she was entirely in favour of Griffith and I said that, while I had a great admiration for him, I was going to vote for de Valera.

I have told in the book about the two caucuses which were working; one for the I.R.B. under the direction of Michael Collins, and his list placed Eamon de Valera No. 1; and the other, organised by Darrell Figgis with, it was supposed, Arthur Griffith's approval, and on this list Griffith's name appeared first. I have told of how Harry Hanrahan courageously exposed the two caucuses and denounced them at the Ard Fheis, receiving, as it seemed from the applause, the almost unanimous agreement of the gathering. The culmination of all this came when, to the surprise of practically everybody present, Griffith proposed de Valera for the presidency. I do not know a thing about a meeting beforehand at which Griffith was asked to give way to de Valera.

Page 162. Re. Desmond Fitzgerald - Did he feel any resentment about the Publicity post?

No, because when I met him, I had written to him. When I spoke to him about it, I had not realised that de Valera had me in mind; and in the letter to him I told him then that I was applying. When next I met Desmond Fitzgerald, about a week after I arrived in Dublin, he banteringly referred to my conscientious chivalry.

Paddy Sheehan was de Valera's secretary at the time I arrived in Dublin. He told me a couple of days after I arrived that P.S. O'Hegarty had been mentioned for the post, that Collins was very keen on his getting it and that de Valera when he heard that he had not been married in a Catholic church said "No".

Page 166. Re. suggestion that Collins was organising the Volunteers for a showdown, for action, on his own responsibility.

That was in my mind. There was something else preceding that which I told in the book. When I went to No. 6 Harcourt St. I took a desk in the General Secretary's office and was working there. De Valera, when he heard I was there, brought me up to his room and said: "You are to work here. I do not want them to direct the publicity of this organisation". "Them", in my mind, at that time, meant Griffith and Darrell Figgis. It was clear to me that de Valera was trying to hold the balance evenly between the moderates in Griffith's camp and the extremists in Collins's camp. With that background, you can see how easy it was for me to believe that the I.R.B. could contemplate action and build up to a point where action would have to be accepted as a fait accompli.

Cathal Brugha had broken with the I.R.B. He was Minister for Defence. If anything was intended, it might not be discussed at a formal meeting of the Volunteer Executive.

Page 170. Darrell Figgis tells that story also and that he was the man concerned?

He was like a jackdaw for collecting material. There must have been another incident of this kind because Fintan Murphy - I believe it was Fintan Murphy - told me that he had gone to Mayo to pick up a consignment of guns that were landed from a German submarine. Now, as well as I recollect, the section of the map showing the place on the Mayo coast where the guns were landed was not Achill. That is my recollection, whereas Fintan Murphy said the place he went to was Achill. It must have been another incident.

Page 171. Re. large blonde lady about 30 years of age?

Yes, she told me who she was. She said she was the wife of a very important Sinn Féin leader, who was a lawyer in Belfast. I know who she was. She was Mrs. Alexander Lynn. Alec Lynn was here in Dublin for years afterwards. I met him in the Four Courts myself. I never mentioned this to him. I never met her afterwards. She was not living with her husband at the time. I did not know it at the time, but I learned it afterwards. She had left Ireland at the time and had gone to the Continent.

I had very grave doubts when she asked me certain questions. She showed me the questionnaire. The fifth or sixth question was: "What was the strength of the Volunteers? How far were they in a position to carry out works of sabotage in London, such as, railway termini, power plants?" An elaboration of that question was that a sum of £1000 would be paid for each attempt and £5000 for any successful attempt. So, reading this, I thought the Germans would never be so stupid as to make an offer of this kind because they must have known that we would have been very glad to blow up anything in London without any financial reward. That was what put the suspicion in my mind first.

I must have been wrong in suspecting her, because Collins told me afterwards that she was all right and that, actually, he was using the invisible ink, of which she brought the formula. I don't know if he kept up the connection.

There was no sequel as far as I was concerned, but, as far as Michael Collins was concerned, yes, to the extent I have stated.

It was shortly after the German Plot arrests and that is why I was being so careful. There was a German Plot to this extent, that the Germans were trying to contact us to get us to carry out such works of sabotage and, as a matter of fact,

you have it much later on, that we were negotiating for the landing of arms; therefore, while there was no actual German Plot in the sense that Lloyd George described, there were certainly contacts between the Germans and ourselves with a view to getting arms mainly.

Briscoe was in Germany trying to buy arms and there was another man from Tipperary whose name I forget now. The complaint that our representatives in Germany - Nancy Power and Chartres, and particularly John T. Ryan of America - made was that this man went around in a very remarkable Stetson hat (not Briscoe, but the other fellow) which would attract attention in Germany or anywhere. Briscoe and he were working together for a while, but, whether they continued to work together, I don't know. His name could be McGuinness. He was the type of man who would wear a Stetson hat. That was 1921. It was in the Truce period I was there. I was not out of the country before that.

The last I heard of the blonde lady was that she and Mick had a rendezvous in Joe MacDonagh's house. I have said in the book that I got Mick Nunan to conduct her to the house Mick had selected for the meeting, which was Joe MacDonagh's house. I was forced to the conclusion that her visit there brought this raid about when, in actual fact, it might be coincidence. She was an Irishwoman. She knew German. She was Alec Lynn's wife. I know nothing else about her. You could find out through Alec. He is practising in Belfast.

Regarding Mrs. Llewelyn Davis being a spy, the idea is absolutely ridiculous. There is not a shred of truth in the statement that Mrs. Llewelyn Davies was an agent or spy for the British. She came of a family which had a very tragic history. Her father was James O'Connor, an M.P. for Wicklow, who had been a Fenian and who, when Sinn Féin started, told Simon Maguire, the editor of the Wexford "Free Press", which

was violently anti-Sinn Féin, that he, Maguire, was making a big mistake in opposing the activities of the young men. James O'Connor, though he loyally supported the Parliamentary Party of which he was a member, held all his lifetime that the young men who wanted to fight were right. One day the family ate mussels which had been collected on the foreshore, I think, near Seapoint and, as a result, the whole family died, with the exception of the father and a little girl of six who had not eaten the mussels. The mother and five other children all died.

So far as the spy charge is concerned, this lady was passionately devoted to Ireland. She had married a man named Llewelyn Davies, who was a prominent supporter of the Liberal Party in England. She had lectured in various parts of England on behalf of the Liberal Party and her husband became solicitor to the Post Office, being appointed thereto by Lloyd George, presumably as a token of gratitude.

I first met this lady in Bushy Park Road in Mrs. Childers' house. Mrs. Childers had invited Desmond Fitzgerald, Frank Gallagher and myself to meet her. Subsequently, she called to my house at 10 Belgrave Road and said she had just dropped in on her way to see Bob Barton who, at the time, was staying in Mrs. Ceannt's house in Oakley Road. She told me then she was anxious to do what she could to assist Sinn Féin, and thought of taking a house in Dublin. I would say that would have been in 1919, because Childers had visited me in 6 Harcourt Street, so we had not left Harcourt St. and he too had said he was coming over to throw in his lot with Sinn Féin. They (the Childers) took a house in Wellington Road and were there some months before moving to Bushy Park Road, but still I think 1919 had not ended by the time I speak of.

Subsequently, Mrs. Davies invited myself and my wife to the Shelbourne Hotel to meet her husband. They were staying in Ireland for a few days. It may be a few weeks had elapsed and it may be that his visit was occasioned by the taking of a house, which is very likely.

After Mrs. Davies had taken the house at Raheny, my wife and I visited her there several times and, on one occasion, I remember Lily Brennan was also a visitor.

Mrs. Davies showed me the heads of a pamphlet she was writing and asked my opinion about it. I told her to go ahead, that it was very sound. Subsequently, she sent me the manuscript of this pamphlet. It was fairly voluminous for that period and ran to about thirty-two pages. There was no name, and I believe she told me she did not want her name on it. I consulted Mrs. Childers about the pamphlet and she suggested the name, I believe, of John Cobden Bright. If it was not that name, it was another combination of two wellknown Liberals' names. I am pretty certain about Bright. When a consignment of the printed pamphlets arrived in London Mrs. Davies, during a call to Art Ó Briain's office, saw it and flew into a rage. Art Ó Briain told me, she said: "You ought to burn the whole thing". The only explanation for this was that she did not want anyone to know of her labours for an English political party and that the combination of these great Liberal names with the pamphlet was rated by her as a deliberate attempt to reveal that connection.

Mrs. Davies told me on one occasion that, when de Valera escaped from Lincoln Jail, Michael Collins called to her house - I think in London. As she was not well and was in bed she asked Mick to come up and see her, which he did, and he showed her the key which had opened the jail gates for de Valera. It was quite clear that she was very much affected by this incident and I came to the conclusion that though, as I say, she was passionately devoted to Ireland, the culminating point in determining her to come to live here was her infatuation for Collins; an infatuation which, however, he seemed to be quite unaware of, and more or less indifferent to.

At the end of December 1920, Mrs. Davies invited my wife and myself to spend Christmas at her house, which we did, and thereafter I stayed there off and on several times. I had long since given up my house in Belgrave Road which was untenable owing to the frequent raids.

I knew that Collins called to see Mrs. Davies from time to time. He never stayed overnight. She told me that she had the greatest difficulty in talking to him and she did not know what to talk to him about. She was constantly engaged in writing articles, many of which were used from time to time in the various publications we sent out from the Publicity Department. Also, she did a great deal of research in the newspapers. She was very shrewd in her judgment of the matter she selected.

On the day Mrs. Davies was arrested, Joe O'Reilly came to my office and told me, so that I should not visit the house which, at the time, was occupied by the British forces. The statements that she got special treatment while in jail are probably true; but should this not be proof that she was not an agent? Obviously if she had been an agent, they would never draw attention to her by giving her special treatment. They would be shrewd enough for that. It is quite possible that, even if her husband had lost his post in England, he still would have sufficient influence to see that she did not endure the worst rigours of the prison.

I am quite prepared to believe that, from the time she was released, Mrs. Davies was using every effort to bring the conflict in Ireland to an end. If she was in touch with Cope, the Under Secretary, as was stated, so too were such figures as Father O'Flanagan and Mrs. Larry Nugent, and this is not held to their discredit. It was, in fact, in Mrs. Nugent's house in Upper Baggot St. that some of the meetings took place between Father O'Flanagan and Sir James O'Connor,

who was acting with Cope, and it may be the case that Cope was present at some of these meetings.

Collins told me Mrs. Davies was arrested because the British had found letters which proved that she was in constant communication with him, Michael Collins, and, as he said, she left letters foolishly lying about.

During the negotiations in London, I am sure that she was very useful in bringing people together and that Collins found her so. Gavan Duffy, who was in London at the time, when I asked him about the alternative (amended) oath which the delegation brought back to Dublin and who had drawn this up, said: "I would not be surprised to learn that it was Mrs. Llewelyn Davies". John Chartres, who was one of the secretaries to the Irish Delegation in London, may have had a hand in drawing up that oath.

I was told by one of Mick Collins's lieutenants that Mrs. Davies had been, in 1923 or 1924, writing a Life of Michael Collins, and that they, by personal threats, forced her to desist in her intention of publishing this. The lieutenants of Michael Collins resented Mrs. Davies' attentions to Mick, as they would have done in the case of any other woman, particularly a married woman, and they feared that his personal reputation would suffer if such a book were published.

Subsequent to the army mutiny of 1924 or 1925, the mutineers frequented her house in Bushy Park and many of them stayed there. This would seem to show that the incident about Mrs. Llewelyn Davies writing a history of Michael Collins was of a later period and that up to that time she was in the same camp as the mutineers. I have no idea of what became of the manuscript of her book.

Mrs. Llewelyn Davies had a great and attractive

personality and, like most positive characters, she aroused feelings of admiration and hostility, according to the viewpoint you took.

With regard to Batt O'Connor's book "With Michael Collins through the Fight for Irish Independence", I know that she collaborated with him in the writing of this.

I daresay that also she would have given Michael Collins a certain amount of material for speeches because, as I have said, she had a great instinct for research.

She is referred to in "Fiche Bliadhan Ag Fás" by Muiris Ó Suilleabhain, which book she translated into English.

After the Mansion House Pact between Collins and de Valera, Collins went to London and, when he returned, he made a speech in Cork which virtually broke the Pact. There was a great deal of conjecture as to the pressure that must have been put on him in London, and it was later suggested that it was because the British had found some evidence which connected the I.R.B. with the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson. During the Civil War, when I returned from the south and set up the Department of Publicity for the Republicans, a document came to me from our Intelligence Department, which suggested that, two or three days before Wilson was assassinated, one or two of Mick Collins's men were in London and had been in association with Reggie Dunne and O'Sullivan, the two men who were subsequently executed for the assassination of Wilson. Some years later, when I was in America, I mentioned this document to Liam Tobin who was visiting there, and I wrongly gave him the impression that I had seen it before the attack on the Four Courts. His comment was: "Why did they not show me that at the time? We were all working together then". Later, I told Liam that I had made a mistake, that I had not seen this document until

some time during the Civil War. I got the impression that Liam Tobin himself was the man, or one of the men, who had been in London.

My own idea is that the assassination of Wilson had been determined on very much earlier and that it might have happened before the Truce even, if they had been able to accomplish the deed, and that no countermanding order was ever given.

Page 174. Re. name of Mr. Blank - I am not going to give that

Page 176.

In the matter of the £2000 which James O'Mara gave to me, there was no question whatsoever of a loan. He had asked me how much it would cost to get two men out to the Continent, as I have stated, and I calculated that the figure would be about £2000 for the men to go to the Continent and stay there for a period of an indefinite number of months. He came in and left the money on the desk in front of me and said: "There's your £2000; get your man out".

In, I think, 1937 or 1938, James O'Mara came to America. He told me that the income tax people were making it practically impossible for him to carry on in Ireland and said he was thinking of living in Bermuda. I was well aware of these moods on the part of James, because a long time before he had gone to Majorca, and when he came back he told me he thought of living there and raising pigs. On this occasion, however (the later occasion in Washington) he asked me for a letter outlining the circumstances under which he had given me the £2000 in 1918, because he was going to claim an exemption of his income tax in respect of that sum.

Page 178. Who was John Christophe?

Mario Esposito who was a son of Signor Esposito, the Director of the Academy of Music. He was not actively in the movement, but very sympathetic. Frank Gallagher vouched for

him. If you say to me that he visited the Continent at an earlier stage on behalf of Sinn Féin or the I.R.B., I would say I would not be surprised. He certainly was very familiar with the movement.

Page 239. Re. 1918 Election Manifesto.

With regard to the election manifesto of 1918. What happened was that the National Executive appointed Father O'Flanagan, Harry Boland and myself to draw up a manifesto. Father O'Flanagan suggested, when the three of us met, that each of us should draw up a manifesto independently of the others. This was done. The three manifestoes were so different in character and content that Father O'Flanagan said: "I will bring these down to Keohane in Gill's."" Keohane was Father O'Flanagan's mentor. Keohane suggested some slight changes in my manifesto and that was the one they got out.

Page 258. Re. Quin.

I deliberately changed the name to Quin because of his people who are still in Wexford. I knew his family. I had a dozen letters from people saying I gave the name wrongly, that it was not Quin, but Quinlisk. I had known this man's family in Wexford and I had also seen him in a photograph of a dozen or more officers of the Irish Brigade which appeared in the "Gaelic-American". His father and his uncle had both been in the R.I.C. and both had been cashiered out of the R.I.C. One of his uncles, Willie, I knew very well. He was later employed by the railway on the train running from Wexford to Rosslare.

Page 262.

I would say he had Broy before that. I imagine one of them was Brennan, who was afterwards murdered by the Black and Tans in the Castle.

Page 270. What do you know about John Chartres?

Only what I learned when I first met him in Griffith's office. I imagine that would have been in 1918, just before Griffith was arrested for the German Plot. It might have been very much earlier. I got the impression at that time that he had known Griffith for years and had been friendly with him and had written articles for Griffith's paper. I think, too, that Chartre's wife, Anna Vivanti, had contributed some articles to Griffith's paper. I never met her. I think she was in Italy or Switzerland at that time.

John Chartres might have been in the British Civil Service. He looked like an Englishman; you would take him to be an Englishman in appearance, accent and everything, and when, later on, he was appointed one of the secretaries of the delegation to London, de Valera asked me what did I know about him. (I daresay Griffith mentioned him to de Valera). He said: "How do you know that he is not an English agent?" I told him that he had been a friend of Griffith for a long time. De Valera said: "Well, after all, you must concede that the British are no fools and they might have planted such a man". I gave him my opinion that there need be no fear at all on the score of John Chartres. (Of course, Nancy Power would be able to tell you about him).

His intellectual capacities were considered of a high order and that was the reason he was sent for? Yes.

Page 272. You were in London and being chased by a G-man?

I was very proud of that trick I played on him.

What took you to London on that occasion?

I had a mission of some kind. I imagine that was the time that I went over to arrange for the publication of the "Bulletin" in London in case it became impossible for us to get it out in Dublin.

Pages 277-9. Re. "Captain ....."

Captain Thompson was the name he mentioned. It is not outside the bounds of possibility that he meant Sir Basil Thompson, the head of Scotland Yard, but as he referred all the time to Captain Thompson, it is hardly likely.

This man, Hardy, made the statement that there was a price of £10,000 on Michael Collins's head and that there were £5,000 on the heads of Cathal Brugha and Robert Brennan. He mentioned three people that were badly wanted and that is in the account in the 'Independent' which I gave in the book. I was listening to this behind the screen and you can imagine the surprise that I got.

Did you see any police posters re. a reward for the capture of Michael Collins? I don't think so.

Collins told me, when he came back from London, when the Treaty Debates were on, that Churchill had said to him: "We put a price of ten thousand pounds on your head! The Boers only offered a hundred pounds for mine!" "And", he added, "it shows you how the cost of living has gone up" and Collins replied: "You mean the cost of dying".

Page 284. Re. a certain Bishop.

That is obvious. It was Fogarty. Griffith got the shock of his life. When he came out, we walked down the streets towards the Pillar and I suppose we had gone fifty yards when Griffith said: "What do you think of that?" and I said: "It is terrible".

Page 285. Moylett's efforts for peace. A.G. tried for peace - was that on his own initiative?

No, because it was generally agreed on. I would say it was a Cabinet move. I would say that was the impression that was left on my mind. That would be the end of 1920.

Page 285 (contd.)

Griffith was in jail. Was it true that he was put there purposely so that peace negotiations might be initiated?

I daresay it would be true that, if they had him under their thumb, discussions for peace might be entered into, and de Valera was away and was not back until Christmas.

There was no chance that Griffith was doing these moves on his own?

I think it was that he was approached by various people, just as de Valera was being approached by various people when he came back.

It would be an astonishing thing if de Valera had not been approached in America about making peace. Remember, de Valera was trying to find a formula. I don't know when it was, but it must have been about March of 1921 when that interview took place with Childers and de Valera in Mrs. O'Rahilly's house.

Some clarification of that position? It has been said by some that, when de Valera came back from America, he threw cold water on actions of the I.R.A. and was anxious for peace?

He never said the like at all in my hearing. All the time he said it should not be impossible to get a formula which we could accept and which the British could accept, but he, for the first time, got the Cabinet to stand over the actions of the I.R.A., which they had never done before, after he came back - that is in the book - which would go to show the opposite.

Re. Speech in Dáil by Liam de Roiste, January-February, 1921.

I would say Liam de Roiste was a man who was anxious for peace at all times.

Sweetman also said the people were tired of the fight and they could not carry on. I have mentioned that, too. The These people who were so anxious for peace were simply prolonging the war by letting the English think we were tired of the fight and so hold out for stiff terms.

Page 287. Re. the murder of Dick McKee and others.

They were dead when he was talking to me on my way home from Dollymount. It could be that it was the next day I was told that because I saw Henry O'Connor again next morning and it must have been twelve noon. It could have been on the second occasion that he told me.

Page 289. No doubt about Madge Clifford being in Abbey Street?

No, no doubt. You could not mistake Madge for anybody else.

Page 295. Re. secretary to Lloyd George.

I can't remember that man's name. It was not Jones, but it was a Welsh name, I know.

Page 297. Re. Irish agent for an American firm who received code messages every day in the course of his business.

That was a man named Devine, who was an agent for Armour's Meat-packing Company. He was afterwards associated with Joe McGrath in the Spa Hotel, Lucan.

Page 304. "British agent ..... I will call him Jones"?

His name was Carl Ackermann. He is now a Professor of Journalism in Columbia University. I took Harry's word for it that he was a British agent. I warned Mick and de Valera about it. De Valera said: "No", and Mick said "Yes".

Page 339. Re. Dan Smith.

I won't give his name.

Signed: Robt. Brennan
(Robert Brennan)

Date: 31st Dec 1952
31st Dec'r. 1952.

Witness: S ni Chiosáin
(S. Ni Chiosain)

ORIGINAL

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

By Robert Brennan.

FOREWORD

A friend who read the M.S. said in effect:

> "The story is incomplete inasmuch as you were writing only for the initiated. It deals mainly with your own connection with the struggle for Irish independence, but there is little or nothing to show the why and wherefore of that struggle."

He advised me to write a foreword summarising, in a few lines, the history of the independence movement, and here they are.

In the year 1169 the Normans, who in a single battle had conquered England a hundred years before, invaded Ireland. They easily secured a footing on portions of the East and South coasts, but they met with persistent resistance elsewhere and more than four hundred years elapsed before they were able to occupy the whole island. Of course, they were hampered by the fact that when the Anglo-Norman conquerors had resided in

Ireland for a few generations they suffered a sea change. Succumbing, no doubt, to the charm of the country and its people they, in the words of the Viceroy, became "ipsis Hibernicis Hiberniores" - (more Irish than the Irish). They adopted the Gaelic language and the Irish way of life and many of them joined the Irish in the fight against the invader.

However, Elizabeth and her successor James I found themselves in possession of all Ireland, but not in undisputed possession for the Irish persisted in their resistance to the occupation. There was almost a continuous state of rebellion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Just before the dawn of the nineteenth century there occurred what was probably the most significant rising up to that time, because the actual fight was headed not as heretofore by native chieftains or Anglo-Irish lords, but by leaders from amongst the people. This rebellion was, strange to say, deliberately fomented by the British authorities who hoped to crush it easily and thus pave the way for the destruction of the semi-independent Irish Parliament. This rebellion of 1798 was a bitter and bloody struggle. Owing to a miscarriage of plans the fighting was confined to only a few counties. The Irish had many initial successes and they were defeated only when

the British general was enabled to bring against them a force greater than that which overcame Napoleon at Waterloo. For a war of the period the carnage was terrible, the fatalities amongst the Irish amounting to 150,000 and amongst the British 20,000.

The rebellion crushed, the Dublin parliament, which was composed entirely of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, was induced by bribery to vote itself out of existence and the Union with England was accomplished.

But the insurrections continued. In 1803, Robert Emmet made his ill-fated attempt to throw off the foreign yoke. The Tithe war of the eighteen-thirties and the Land war of the eighties were but phases of the struggle for national independence. The Young Ireland rising of 1848, though it was a failure, inspired the Fenian attempt of 1867 and survivors of the latter movement were to be executed in the so-called Sinn Fein Rising of 1916 which was crushed but which, in its aftermath, ~~succeeded in breaking the power of British rule throughout the land~~ and partially achieved the dream of centuries, a free Ireland.

CHAPTER I

The main objective of the Irish Parliamentary Party was to win by Parliamentary action a measure of Home Rule. It was brilliantly led by Charles Stewart Parnell until his downfall in 1890 when the Party split. It was reunited in 1900 under the leadership of John Redmond.

The Irish language was the everyday language of the people down to the end of the 18th century when it was gradually displaced by English. In 1893 when the Gaelic League was founded, not more than one-sixth of the people spoke Irish.

About the time I was leaving school, spectacular demonstrations were being held in honour of the rebellion of 1798, the occasion being the centenary of that event. Nowhere were the demonstrations more enthusiastic than in my native county of Wexford whose people had played such a heroic part in that fight. With much playing of bands, waving of flags and marshalling of processions, the battlefields of '98 were visited and there were floods of oratory. If any of us had thought that the purpose of all this noise was to encourage us to follow in the footsteps of the men of '98, we were quickly undeceived. We were specifically warned not to do so. The members of the Irish Parliamentary Party and their adherents who were the principal speakers of these gatherings, were careful to point out that though their aims were the same as those of the men of '98, their methods were different. In the future, we were to rely on the ballot instead of the bullet and we were to return

members who were pledged to sit, act and vote with the Party who, on the floor of the British House of Commons, would wrest Ireland's rights from her cruel oppressor.

We all joined in the celebrations and roared ourselves hoarse, as a matter of course. Then we returned to our every-day lives and the nation continued to become each day less Irish and more English. We were not all, of course, conscious of this, but looking back now, it is easy to see that the period from the death of Parnell down to the end of the century was as dark an hour as there had been in the history of the nation. Ireland's ancient culture was forgotten, and debased English standards had taken its place. The word literature applied only to English literature and precious little of what was great in that literature was read. The working-man's mental recreation was provided by the cheaper English Sunday newspapers. The theatre was given up to third-rate English strolling companies or fifth-rate English music-hall troupes. The political destinies of the nation were in the hands of the warring factions which once had been the great Irish Parliamentary Party, whose members had now become mere tools of the British Liberal Party.

In the reaction which began to set in about this time, led by Arthur Griffith in "The United Irishman" and D.P. Moran in "The Leader", we found it easy to ascribe all of Ireland's

ills, political, economic and cultural, to the Irish Parliamentary Party. By directing the eyes of the nation to Westminster, and by teaching the people to rely entirely on the British Parliament for the redress of their wrongs, they had destroyed the spirit of self-reliance which should imbue the nation, and they had induced in the people a supineness which destroyed initiative. Moreover, they had ignored the heritage of the national language and thus helped to anglicise the nation.

In all this, we conveniently forgot, or we did not know of the great achievements the Parliamentary Party had to its credit.

When they started their once great movement, the Irish Parliamentary Party found the tenant-farmer little more than a serf. His occupation of the land depended entirely on the goodwill of the landlord. He could be thrown out at any time. The rent he paid could be raised every year and he had no redress or court of appeal. If he improved his holding his only reward was an increased rental. The assessment and expenditure, not merely of the national revenue but even of the local rates, was in the hands of the British Government. The national revenue went, of course, to London and was disbursed when and how the British Government ordained. The local revenue for each county was controlled by a body

called the Grand Jury which was hand-picked by the British-appointed officials of Dublin Castle.

The Irish Parliamentary Party had broken the stranglehold of the landlords. They had won security of tenure and fixed rentals for the people on the land. They had, indeed, begun the great movement for the transfer of the ownership of tithe from the landlord to the tenant-farmer. They had not won control of the national revenue but their ceaseless agitation had succeeded in having the management of the local rates transferred to the people.

We had forgotten, or had not learned all this, a fact which helped to increase the bitterness of the quarrel when, a little later, Sinn Fein opened up its attack on the Irish Parliamentary Party.

I had been reared in a household which had been, for a long time, in a state of poverty. My earliest recollections were of a house in John's Gate Street, Wexford, which faced the chapel yard and at the rear of which was a large yard with stalls which were nearly always filled with cattle, sheep and pigs. These were all the property of my father who also owned a smart pony and trap in which the family used to drive out on Sundays.

In after years I used to wonder how my father had amassed this property, for I never met anyone who was less

fitted for business and particularly for the keen hard-eyed business of the cattle and pig dealer. I have never known a more credulous man or one who could be more easily imposed upon.

Apparently he lost everything, including the house and, for a while we all - father, mother, three girls and a boy - lived in one room over a bakery in Cornmarket. It was, however, a big room and I do not remember any discomfort.

One day the bakery went on fire and the whole house was burned to the ground. My mother secured a house across from the bakery - a narrow house adjoining the Town Hall and to ensure that the wolf who was always at the door, would not come in and devour us, she took up her old profession of dress-making. She bought a sewing machine which she was to pay for in instalments of 2/6d. per week. Whenever she did not have the instalment - which was often - she used to think up the most extraordinary stratagems to mollify the collector. These were always a subject for subsequent merriment for, in spite of our troubles, or maybe because of them, everything that happened was a source of fun. My mother was never despondent and, of course, her children had no thought of being so. Every evening she used to recount the happenings of the day with a wealth of comic detail, mostly imaginary,

and all the funnier because my father believed every word. We were very poor and we were very happy.

When she was working, my mother sang and she had a great repertory. She knew nearly all of Moore's melodies, every one of Stephen Foster's negro songs, all the solos in "The Bohemian Girl" and "Maritana" and a hundred Irish ballads. I learned them all.

The fortunes of the family improved almost imperceptibly. We moved to a better house and then to a better one again. A great event was my winning an exhibition worth twenty pounds in the Intermediate examinations. On this capital my mother started a little shop, sweets, candles, matches, cigarettes, vegetables, etc., and immediately our fortunes took a new turn. The shop brought in a profit of one pound a week and there we were in the lap of luxury, almost.

I got a job in the office of the County Surveyor at a salary of six shillings per week and as the hours were from ten to four I had plenty of time to spare. I attended in the evening the Technical schools - drawing, mathematics and chemistry - and later on I passed the Matriculation examination in the Royal University. I cycled the ninety miles to Dublin and back again to save the railway fare and I thought it great fun.

I was a member of an amateur negro minstrel troupe which was invited to contribute to the half-hour concerts organised

in aid of the Wexford '98 Memorial. It was explained to us that we need not give a minstrel show if we did not wish, that it might be black and white or, indeed, all white if we liked. One of our items must have been the most incongruous ever staged. Dressed in long dark pants with white shirts crossed by green sashes, we marched on to the stage carrying tin pikes. Our chorus was an English translation of "The Marseillaise". At appropriate moments in the chorus we assumed the "charge" position with the pikes. We took it all very seriously and so, apparently, did the audience, for we got a great deal of applause. My solo item was something that had the audience puzzled. A few weeks before I had picked up a copy of Danny Devereux's penny book of '98 ballads in which there were a few songs in the Irish language, one of them being Dr. Hyde's translation of "Who Fears to Speak of '98?" Aided by the elementary knowledge of the language which I had gained in the Christian Brothers' schools, I memorised the ballad and sang it at the concert. Though I did not realise it then, it was the first time in half a century that the people of Wexford had heard a song in Gaelic. I was the object of a good deal of banter from the lads in the troupe and they did not hesitate to imitate what they considered the barbarous sounds.

The incident was to have a profound effect on my future for because of it I was thrown into the role of a pioneer for the Irish Ireland movement in the district. A few days after the concert, Nicky Cosgrave, a man who had a considerable bakery business in the town, called me into his shop and told me that he and a few others who had heard the song were anxious to learn the language. He asked me to meet a few people that night. Amongst those present I remember were Nicholas O'Hanlon Walsh, M. J. Fulton and old Ben Hughes, who was the mayor of the town. Someone suggested that we should invite Dr. Douglas Hyde to come down and start a branch of the Gaelic League. I well remember the day we awaited the arrival of Dr. Hyde. As we sat on over-stuffed chairs in a genteel drawing room, we listened to old Ben Hughes droning on endlessly about the reasons why he had sided with the young Irelanders against O'Connell away back in the eighteen-forties. We were all a little nervous about meeting the great Dublin ~~University Professor~~ Scholar and when Dr. Hyde entered we got a bit of a shock. Instead of the carefully groomed, bespectacled ~~college professor~~ Scholar we had expected, we saw a big, wide-shouldered man, carelessly dressed in homespuns and wearing a tweed cap. His broad face and heavy drooping moustache were not prepossessing, but his eyes held one. Deep grey and set wide apart, they were full of kindliness and humour. In his

greetings he showed that astonishingly youthful enthusiasm which remained with him all his life and behind his genial manner I observed something which I later identified as the old-world courtesy which one happens on frequently in the remote places in Ireland. Answering Ben Hughes, the Mayor, he proudly stated that everything he wore was Irish, adding with a disarming smile, "I see you were before me in that". Mr. Cosgrave explained rather shamefacedly that we had not secured the support we expected for the first meeting. Dr. Hyde waved that circumstance aside. He would rather have an audience of twenty than five hundred. Later, after tea, I walked with him through the narrow streets of the old town. I told him that in our Irish lessons in school one of the texts had been his own "Ceithre Sgealta" ("Four Stories") and how we had enjoyed the exploits of Paudeen the Giant. With unfeigned delight he recalled some of the incidents in the story, laughing aloud and gesticulating like a boy. I was painfully aware that the critical eyes of the town were upon the stranger and myself, but he did not seem to notice it. If ever he observed the ridicule which attended his course in those days, he never gave any indication of doing so.

Six years earlier he had founded the Gaelic League in Dublin and day in and day out he had travelled to and fro on

his bicycle, unpaid and mostly unheeded, teaching the language in the various classes. Already he had captured earnest groups in Dublin and though neither he nor anyone else realised it then, in those little classes there were gathered the young men and women who, one day, thanks to the spirit Hyde infused in them, were to break at long last, after seven centuries, the stranglehold of the foreigner on the Irish nation.

At our meeting that night we had fifty people. It seemed a forlorn start, as our motley gathering filled only a little space in the hall. Hyde did not seem to mind. He spoke to us as if we were the Irish people. We could save the soul of the nation, which was its language. He quoted Thomas Davis to the effect that a nation's language would guard its frontiers more securely than fortress or river. He poured scorn voluble and scathing on the <u>seoinins</u>, the little Johns who tried to ape the English. He drew a contrast between the heroic Gaelic Ireland of the past and the shoddy English-speaking Ireland of the present and mourned the fact that the thoroughbred racer felt no shame in being taken for a donkey. I could not help feeling in my youthful superiority that his movements were gauche and some of his similes too

homely, but I saw that the little group was listening and hearing what he had to say. And of the people who were there that night nearly one third remained with us to the end. When I got home I fished out his "Love Songs of Connacht" and discovered for myself that this modest and sincere zealot was a poet. The small hours of the morning found me still enthralled by the songs which, despised then by the intellectuals, he had garnered from the humble workers of the fields and the fishing grounds in the west. It was the songs of simple beauty that held him, such as -

"Dear God were I a fisher
And back in Benedar
And Nellie a fish who
Would swim in the bay there
I would privately set there
My net there to catch her
In Erin no maiden
Is able to match her."

and -

I thought often that you were more
Like God's lamp shining to find me
Or the bright star of knowledge before
And the star of knowledge behind me."

Sixteen years later when he had been President of his beloved Gaelic League for twenty-two painstaking years he left the chair. The tide of politics which had always threatened the League had at last engulfed it. The

enthusiasts who demanded that it should throw off its non-political mask had had their way. His attitude everybody admitted was logical, holding as he did that you can lose political freedom and regain it and lose it again, but the language once lost could never be regained. As he left the hall that night, behind his wistful smile was a heart very sad and well-nigh broken. He did not realise that his work was already done, that the forces he had set loose were to tear down the mighty and seemingly everlasting pillars of an alien civilisationand to set up in itsplace an Ireland in line with its ancient Gaelic culture - that like "An Craoibhin", his pen-name, the beautiful little slender branch which by its slightest movement affects the whole forest, he had stirred the land from end to end. He could not, in fact, then foresee that on a May day twenty-three years later all sections of the nation, Gael and Saxon, Dane and Norman alike, were to unite to bestow on him the proud title of the first President of a new Ireland - becoming Gaelic and all but free.

CHAPTER II

Sinn Fein opposed the policy of sending Irish representatives to the British Parliament and advocated the setting up of a National Council in Dublin to direct a policy of passive resistance to the British Government.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood (the I.R.B.) was a secret oath-bound organisation founded in 1865. It aimed to set up an Irish Republic by physical force.

We started our branch in Wexford and I was appointed teacher at five shillings per week. We began with an attendance of seventy or eighty, which dropped to twenty or so at the end of the season. A few months later another branch was started in Castlebridge and the following year one in Tagoat. I was teaching in all three until we became stronger and we were able to bring in a native speaker as teacher.

In order to spread the light, half a dozen of us used to hire a pony and car every Sunday and travel to various villages throughout the country.

We used to hold a meeting in the village we visited and tell the people of the new movement. After the meeting we would dance a four hand reel and sing a few Irish songs. It was not all work and we got a good deal of fun out of it. Besides, we were ourselves learning. We had begun reading

Arthur Griffith's paper "The United Irishman" learning from him the principles of Irish nationality and Sinn Fein. When Griffith himself came down for our first Wexford Feis it was a great occasion. He cycled the whole ninety miles from Dublin with a few friends, including Seumas O'Sullivan, Seumas Connolly, Tomas o hAodha, Seumas O'Connor and Tom Cuffe.

When Griffith decided to establish his Sinn Fein movement we organized Wexford County in the cause and became the best organised county in Leinster outside Dublin. We even succeeded, after some heartbreaking defeats, in getting a few of our members elected to the Wexford Corporation. In spite of this, we were still a very small minority of the general public who seemed to think we were a little mad anyway. The adherents of the Irish Parliamentary Party, enraged at our policy of withdrawing the ~~Party~~ Irish Members from Westminster, decided we were the real enemies of the country. One of the local newspapers, an Irish Party organ, openly preached the doctrine that we should be driven from the town and county.

All this time we had been hearing rumours that the I.R.B., (Irish Republican Brotherhood) or Fenian organization, was still in existence and we got a thrill when it waw whispered that some of the heads of the Gaelic Athletic Association were in it and that they were followed about by detectives.

We made enquiries and, as a result, one memorable day eight or nine of us were sworn into the organization by Sean T. O'Kelly, the locale being John Barker's house in South Main Street, Wexford.

The amazing thing about Sean T. at this time was that he was a grown man, a responsible citizen when the rest of us seemed to be still in our boyhood. Though he was younger than many of us, and though he was as full of fun as any, he knew and talked on equal terms with bishops, while the rest of us hardly dared to speak to a parish priest and certainly not on equal terms. In one respect he was rather like a priest himself. At a gathering you always found him in a corner hearing someone's confession, or so it seemed. Everyone confided in him. He travelled all Ireland enrolling young men into the secret organization whose members were pledged to take up arms to establish the Republic whenever the call came. Everywhere he went Sean T. made a courtesy call on the bishop of the diocese who, to say the least, would have been very much surprised had he known of his visitor's Fenian activities.

There was an unwritten rule in the I.R.B. that women were not to be admitted into the "organization" - the name we always gave to the I.R.B. When I was about to get married

the pledge of secrecy I had given disturbed me. I felt I had no right to withhold from the lady who was to be my life partner, the fact that I was pledged to the cause. I could tell her, however, only if she was a member also. I put this up to the authorities and was so stubborn about it that Una was sworn into the organization by the same Sean T. O'Kelly. I was told later that only one other woman had ever been admitted. I think it was MaudeGonne.

I had seen Maude Gonne only once at that time. It was just after the turn of the century when she came out on the stage of St. Teresa's Hall in Dublin, an old woman in her bare feet, in the part of Cathleen ni Houlihan. I was so carried away by the beauty of the play that I ventured backstage to ask if I might be permitted to thank her. She was surrounded by a group of admirers and I had not the nerve to interrupt. I had heard she was the most beautiful woman in Ireland - I thought she must be the most beautiful woman in the world.

The effect of the play on the young men and women of the Gaelic League and Sinn Fein was profound. Many of them had already dedicated their lives to Ireland. Yeats and Maude Gonne brought into the forefront of their hearts the simple grandeur of that sacrifice. To the question which Yeats asked thirty-six years later:

"Did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot?"

I can without hesitation answer "yes".

Our little Group in the I.R.B. managed to buy a German Mauser rifle and we even had some target practice with it on a few occasions. This and the distribution in the dead of night of handbills dissuading Irishmen from joining the British forces, and the hanging up of black flags for the King's visit, provided plenty of excitement, especially when we were chased by the police. One of our fellows in the I.R.B. got conscience stricken during a mission and told his confessor - a visiting Redemptorist Father - that he was in a secret society. The priest told him to send his superior officers to see him. So Ned Foley, who was the center and I, who was the secretary, went in fear and trembling to see the priest. He asked us what it was all about. We told him.

"Have you got many men?" he asked.

"Not many."

"How many?"

"About twenty or so in the town."

"Why have you not got more?"

"We have to be very careful to get the right men."

"Have you got any rifles?"

"One."

[redacted]

"You're only fooling yourselves", said the priest in a rich Dublin accent. "You should either drop this or go at it seriously. Go and get rifles and men and make your men sharpshooters. There must be lots of material in Wexford."

We were grinning with delight when we left him.

What with the Gaelic League, in which I was, by this time, a volunteer teacher, Sinn Fein, of which I was County Secretary, and the I.R.B., of which I was also County Secretary, I was kept pretty busy, but it did not seem that we were making much headway amongst the people. We were still a very small minority. Furthermore, in the absence of any programme of work in Sinn Fein to which the individual could devote himself, branches were continually falling off so that by the time the Home Rule Bill of 1912 was introduced we seemed to be going backward as rapidly as the Redmondite Party, stung into activity by our opposition, was going forward.

Griffith decided to launch a Sinn Fein Daily Paper, and we went at the work of collecting the necessary funds. It was uphill work. Big John O'Mahony, who was a traveller for

a confectionery firm, happened to visit Wexford and I enrolled his services in my collection. He complained afterwards, with great delight, that I had persuaded him to get shaved three times in one day and that we got only one pound for his torture.

The Sinn Fein daily was an evening paper. Griffith believed that since most successful continental papers were published in the afternoon, his paper was more likely to succeed if it also was an afternoon issue. This was partly the reason why it failed because his followers were largely scattered through the country and they had no chance of getting the paper till next day.

The paper failed and our hopes ran low. On a visit to Dublin shortly afterwards, I called to see Griffith in his dingy office in No. 17, Fownes Street. In his brisk, curt, shy way, he asked me how the organization was going and I had to tell him that the failure of the paper had had a bad effect and that the branches and membership had fallen off sharply, whereas the Redmondites were going strong. He was quite undismayed.

"This setback is only temporary," he said. "The English are not serious about Home Rule and they will let Redmond down. Then the people will turn to Sinn Fein. It's as certain as night follows day."

His optimism was contagious. It was impossible not to feel full of buoyant hope when listening to him. He brought me to tea in the DBC where he was to meet some friends and, while waiting for the latter, we played a game of chess.

We were joined by Alderman Walter Cole and O'Leary Curtis. After a while I heard a shout from the doorway and looked up to see the pale bright face of Sean McDermott, a man who had more personal charm than anyone I have ever known. Laughing gaily and dragging his crippled leg, he came towards us saying:

"Well, Bob, so you have joined the Green Hungarian Band."

The moment he said it, I knew he was sorry. The mocking name had been bestowed on Sinn Fein by D.P. Moran of "The Leader", the reference being to Griffith's book "The Resurrection of Hungary - a Parallel for Ireland".

Cole and Curtis stiffened and Griffith looked surprised.

"I'm sorry," said Sean, "you know Griffith, I didn't mean that."

"That's all right, Sean", said Griffith relaxing with a smile, "won't you join us?"

"I'm sorry, I can't. I have an appointment."

I was sorry he could not join us because one of the

objects of this visit was to try and close a widening breach between Sean's group and that of Griffith. Sean was one of the leaders of Cumann na n Gaedheal, a newly ~~forged~~ revived organization, which had for its objective not the restoration of the Constitution of 1782, but the establishment of the Irish Republic. It was a rival organization to Sinn Fein. I thought I saw a way of bringing the two groups together. I failed on this occasion, but a few months later there was an amicable settlement.

As he was leaving us, Sean leaned over to me and said in a loud whisper:

"I understand that there is electric light in Carlow."

He laughed gaily as he moved away. Griffith asked what was the joke and, as his companions thought there was something sinister behind the phrase, I explained that it referred to an amusing experience I had had some years before.

"Come, let us have it," said Griffith, and I did.

I had travelled to Dublin for an examination and I was met at the railway station by three Wexford friends of mine, John Moloney, his brother Peter and Fred Cogley, all students. They were all staying at the same digs in Lennox Street and they had arranged for me to stay there also. We were hardly well inside the house when the three of them rushed to the

front room door crying, "Here she is." I joined them and saw a very good looking girl. She came up the steps of our house and entered and the attentions of all three of them were transferred to the doorway through which she could be seen tripping lightly up the stairs. They said to me:

"Isn't she grand?"

I agreed and asked what she was like.

"Well, haven't you seen her for yourself?"

"But what is she like to talk to?"

They didn't know. They had never spoken to her, because they had not been introduced. She was a lodger like themselves. Her name was Kiernan and she was a Native of Carlow. I thought it strange that in the course of several weeks they had been unable to strike up an acquaintance. They wanted to know how.

"Well," I suggested, "you could, for instance, run up the stairs when she's coming down and bump into her and beg her pardon and there you are."

"But," said Pete, "what could we talk to her about?"

"I don't know," I said, "maybe if you get talking to her you could think of something. I suddenly remembered she was from Carlow. "Why not talk about Carlow?"

They knew nothing about Carlow, did I?

"The only thing I know about it," I said, "is that they have electric light there."

At that time Carlow was the only provincial town in Ireland so blessed.

The next day I left the library and walked up into Grafton Street. What was my amazement when I saw Peter Moloney on the opposite side of the street standing talking to Miss Kiernan, or rather he was standing looking at her, his round, fair, innocent face like the rising sun. When he saw me he sent out signals of distress and I joined him and was introduced.

"This is Mr. Brennan, Miss Kiernan."

I looked at her and saw the bluest eyes I had ever beheld. They were paralysing. I managed to say:

"How do you do?"

"I'm well, thanks," she said, and she was blushing too. I made a violent effort to concentrate.

"It's a fine day," I said.

"Yes," she replied.

Then I tried in vain to think of any further word in the English, Irish, or any other language. The silence was solid. At last I blurted out:

"Which way are you going?"

She indicated the direction of Stephen's Green.

"That way," she said.

"So am I."

The three of us walked towards Stephen's Green. I tried to think of something to say and Peter's obvious embarrassement did not help me. At last I had an idea. Of course, I could not know that Peter had said it already.

"I understand," I said, "that you are from Carlow, Miss Kiernan."

"Yes."

I saw now that Peter had already said it, but it was too late to draw back.

"I believe," I said, and there was desperation in my voice, "that you have electric light there."

"Yes."

We entered Harcourt Street without another word. The perspiration was rolling off me. It was clear that what Peter was saying to himself should have blasted me from the earth. We were half way up Harcourt Street when we saw Cogley coming down. I thanked God.

He stopped and was introduced.

"How do you do," he said and I was horror stricken to see that her eyes had the same effect on him.

"I'm well thanks."

He managed to say "It's a fine day."

"Yes."

After a very long pause, he said: "I think I'll go back with you."

And the four of us walked on. The silence was now fourfold. Of course, Fred got the same idea. I saw it dawning in his mind and I kicked him. This only spurred him on.

"I believe, Miss Kiernan," he said, "that you come from Carlow."

"Yes."

He knew now. It was evident from the quiver in his voice.

"I understand," he said, "you have electric light there."

"Yes."

It was terrible. There was not a word spoken till we turned into Lennox Street. John Molony was ~~standing~~ sitting on the steps of the house. I hastened on in front.

"John," I said in a tragic whisper, "don't say anything about electric light in Carlow."

And aloud he said: "What about electric light in Carlow?"

She heard him and she passed indoors, her head held high. She never looked at any of us again.

A visit to Dublin in those dark days was like a tonic. Every person one met seemed to be a rebel of some sort and one felt it was only a matter of time until all Ireland would follow Dublin's lead. This stimulating atmosphere was not by any means confined to the political field. There were poets, essayists and artists galore and one met them everywhere. In the Library one could talk to Padraig Colum - boyish, cantankerous, enthusiastic, and invariably bursting his way out through the wrong turnstile. He had just published his first book of poems "Wild Earth". There, too, were James Stephens, whose strange poems were appearing in the "United Irishman" and who was not unlike one of his own leprechauns, and William Dara of "The Light on the Broom". George Moore who looked like a very large pink cigar was in and out. He was contributing what we thought was a scandalous series of notes for Yeats' magazine "Dana". Joe Campbell showed me some of the beautiful verses which were to appear in "The Gilly of Christ".

One night a crowd of us went to the Gaiety Theatre to protest against a play called "Sappho". We knew nothing about the play except that Moran in the "Leader" had said it was immoral. We kicked up such a row that the play could not proceed. The police were sent for and when they arrived

they threw out mostly the wrong people, amongst them a small Jew who kept yelling out that he had paid his money and wanted to see the play. One of our fellows was, however, taken to the police station but a bunch of us called at the station and explained that he had had nothing to do with the row and that his father was a very important justice of the peace in County Limerick. We got him out.

Next day we were hilariously discussing all this on the Library steps when a fairish, thin-faced fellow came out of the Library and joined the group. He carried a mackintosh over his arm and an ashplant in his hand. He never said a word but his attitude was so icily contemptuous that the conversation petered out and was not renewed till he took one of the group by the arm and walked away. I asked who he was and was told his name was James Joyce and that he had just had published a slim volume of rather poor poems under the title "Chamber Music".

SARSFIELD KERRIGAN Sarsfield Kerrigan

Many years later I happened to be in Paris and I heard that Joyce was thinking of returning to Dublin. I rang him up and asked if I might come and see him. He asked me to come right away. He was almost completely blind and felt his way about the room by touching the furniture. He sat down and talked for nearly over half an hour. I soon learned that

the alacrity with which he received me was because he thought I might have some influence in having John Sullivan, the opera singer, invited to Dublin to give a concert - this as a stepping-stone to an American tour which would bring him some money. I had no great hopes for the project as Sullivan was, at this time, about fifty and many thought past his prime, but I promised to do what I could. We talked of Dublin and it was rather pathetic to see how eager he was for details of his old friends. I asked him when he was coming back.

"Not until they make some amends for burning my book on the steps of the National University", he said bitterly.

A.E. came to Sinn Fein headquarters one day to talk to us about banking. It was a very clear and exact discourse, but Edward Martyn, who was in the chair, slept all through it. I left with A.E. and was surprised that he remembered I had sent him a story, though he had notpublished it. He recounted for me his famous vision of the young man sowing seed across the face of the land. He did not seem to notice that I was wheeling a bicycle and that his headlong pace was bringing me into conflict with the many passers-by. We went to the vegetarian restaurant in College Street where I was compelled to eat a strange and unappetising dish called a vegetable chicken.

A quarter of a century later I walked with A.E. through the streets of Washington and his talk was as vivid, fresh and spontaneous as ever. There was not the slightest indication that he had only a few months to live. His gait was, as usual, headlong and I had great difficulty in keeping him from walking into the whirling traffic. There was a blimp lazily sailing in the clear air over the Capitol. It advertised Goodyear tyres. A.E. looked up at it and groaned:

"They even pollute the heavens with their blatant advertisements", he said, and added: "When you and I enter through the sacred portals of heaven we will be greeted by an American banker yelling at us about the virtues of his own particular brand of Ambrosia."

We had walked to the waterfront behind the Lincoln Memorial when I ventured to say I had an appointment.

"Why, so have I," he said, "what time is it?"

It was a quarter past three.

"My goodness," he said, "I was to meet Mr. Wallace at 2.15."

We got a taxi and I left him at the Department of Agriculture ten minutes later. He had kept the Cabinet Minister waiting an hour and ten minutes.

One day I went to the Gaelic League offices to see Sean T. O'Kelly. He was out for the moment and I sat down to wait. There was an earnest looking young man sitting at a desk, absorbed as if thinking what to write. He jotted something down on a slip of paper. Then he looked up and asked me if I spoke Irish. I said "a little" and he handed me the slip of paper. The words on it were:

"Leanam lorg na Laochraidhe".

"Do you understand it," he asked.

"Yes," I said, "Let us follow in the footsteps of the heroes."

"Isn't it grand", he said, and I agreed. He was writing an article on this topic for the Claidheamh Soluis, the Gaelic League organ. When Sean T. came and fetched me, I asked who the man was and he told me it was Padraig Pearse.

CHAPTER III

After the 1910 General Election the 84 Irish Nationalist members held the balance of power between the Tories and the Liberals and Home Rule seemed certain. The Orange Society in Belfast and adjoining areas set up a Provisional Government to take over Ulster in defiance of the Imperial Government if and when Home Rule should come into force.

The home atmosphere was very unlike that of Dublin. The first enthusiasm had disappeared and trying to make any headway seemed like rolling a stone up an endless hill. This applied to everything except the Gaelic League in which we were all still strenuous workers. The yearly Feis which was held alternately in Enniscorthy, New Ross and Wexford, was easily the chief County festival of the year and it had grown to be the biggest Feis in Ireland. Moreover, it was respectable because the priests were with us. In Sinn Fein, however, matters were far different. The county branches had fallen off one by one and in the town we were finding it increasingly difficult to pay the rent of the rooms we had taken. One night we decided we should come out into the open and focus attention on our policy. The method agreed on was to hire the town hall and stage a lecture and concert. After a great deal of debate, we decided to invite Father Willie Harper, one

of the few priests active in Sinn Fein, to lecture on "The Manchester Martyrs" and I was instructed to issue invitations to all the principal citizens in the Wexford area. Amongst the names given to me was that of ~~James Barry, the Father of the American Navy.~~ a man named Barry from the South county who was stated to be a kinsman of Saucy Jack Barry the Father of the I, of course, wrote to Mr. Barry and invited him to attend. The night of the lecture arrived and, to our amazement, the hall was crowded. I was taking tickets at the door of the hall when a man in rough tweeds came towards me and asked if I were Mr. Brennan. When I replied in the affirmative, he told me in a very impressive manner that he was James Barry and he added that he was a cousin of Saucy Jack Barry, the Father of the American Navy. I thought to myself that the description was unnecessarily wordy but I conducted Mr. Barry to the supper room and asked him if he would mind proposing a vote of thanks to the lecturer.

"I'll do that," he said, "with the greatest of pleasure. You have standing before you a man of patriotism handed down from generations, a lover of liberty and a hater of oppression."

He was going on and on when I hastily excused myself on the plea that I had to superintend the arrangements. Mr. Barry thereupon began to stride up and down the floor, rehearsing his speech in a barely audible voice. Shortly afterwards, Jem Breen, the Chairman of the Branch, arrived and when he saw Barry he approached me aggressively.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"That's Mr. Barry", I replied. ~~Mr. James Barry, of Glade.~~ He has promised to speak, to propose a vote of -".

"My God," said Jem, "we're ruined."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Don't you know about him?" he asked. "Why, he's the man who broke up the Young Men's Debating Society, a Society which was in existence for twenty-five years until he joined it. He talked everyone blind and bothered. If you let him get on his feet tonight, we're ruined."

He called the other members of the Committee together and explained the situation. They all agreed I should tell Mr. Barry he could not be allowed to make a speech. I indignantly refused, but they were adamant, and so I approached Mr. Barry.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Barry," I said, "to have to tell you that the Committee had already made arrangements for someone to propose a vote of thanks. I did not know -".

"I'll second it," said Barry.

"But they have a seconder."

"I'll support it," he said.

I went back to the others who had overheard this conversation and it was agreed that we would get Mr. M.J. Furlong to propose a vote of thanks, Mr. Breen to second it, and then

rush on the concert so quickly that Barry would not have a chance to get to his feet. But we reckoned without our man. The lecturer had hardly said the last word when he was up.

"Rev. Chairman, Rev. Fathers, Ladies andGentlemen" he began, and Mr. Furlong who had risen to propose the vote of thanks subsided. "It gives me the greatest pleasure to be here tonight amongst the young priests and people of Wexford. It reminds me of my cousin, the fearless and dauntless saucy Jack Barry, the Father of the American Navy."

As he spoke he flayed the air with his arms and gradually he cleared a ten-foot circle around him. It was amusing enough so long as he dealt with the lecture, but suddenly he branched off.

"I am proud of Wexford, "he said, "and never so proud as when I think of our illustrious and distinguished fellow townsman John Edward Redmond leading his eighty Irish terriers to bait the British Lion on the floor of the English House of Commons."

For a moment we thought he was being funny, but no.

"And I'm humiliated to think that here on Irish soil we have creatures, mean-souled, unpatriotic, ungenerous vile creatures who would traduce the name of that great man."

As we were the only people who were engaged in this

nefarious activity, the effect can well be imagined. The crowd in the back of the hall seeing the joke against us began to cheer the speaker vociferously. I was called to the supper room where I found the members of the Committee pacing up and down and literally tearing their hair. The Chairman was groaning "Oh Lord, think of the Free Press (the Redmondite organ) and the laugh they will have at us this week." Suddenly he made a run at me, "You, you," he said, "you're responsible for this." The members gathered round me demanding that I should go out and stop Barry. For some time I resisted their appeals. The proceedings in the hall were becoming more and more hilarious. Finally, I decided to try and bring Barry's speech to a halt. I made my way through the crowded chairs and touched the speaker on the arm. "I beg your pardon, Sir -" Barry turned and looked at me and pushed me away. "Stand back, young man," he said, and launched into a new peroration.

The crowd in the back of the hall yelled at me amid shrieks of laughter to leave the man alone. I retired in the utmost confusion. Later, I tried vainly on two separate occasions to stem the flow of Barry's oratory - in vain. After some time, the more staid members of the audience began to file out. We saw it was hopeless to think of going on with the concert. The performers, very irate, had crowded

into the supper room and they left the building in high dudgeon. Gradually, even the ribald crowd at the back of the hall grew tired of the performance and left, but Barry kept on talking. He was near-sighted and apparently did not notice that his audience was dwindling away. Near midnight, there were only three or four of us left and we decided to tell the caretaker to turn off the lights at midnight. I was on my way home when I thought it was unfair to leave him to make his way alone out of the dark hall, so I went back. Paddy Bryan, the caretaker, was beginning to turn off the lights so I went in and collected Barry and brought him down the stairs.

"How did I do?" he kept saying.

"Fine," I said. "How are you going to get home?"

"I have the yoke down at Harper's Lane," he said.

I went down there with him and I had to listen all the way to various passages of the speech.

"Do you know," I said, "that the Committee that got up this affair are all against the Party?"

"You don't tell me," he said.

"I do. The Sinn Fein movement is dead against the Party and against Redmond."

"Begob a man", he said, "if I had only known that."

"What would you have done?"

"I'd have told them what I thought of them," he said.

With Sinn Fein matters went from bad to worse, while the Irish Party's fortunes continued to rise as Home Rule seemed to come nearer. Griffith had put up a Sinn Fein candidate for a parliamentary vacancy in North Leitrim and had taken a heavy defeat though Griffith called it a moral victory. Years afterwards I heard Jerry Boland say "I'm sick of these moral victories. After every one of them I'm in jail and in debt."

As the support for the Party increased, their attacks on us redoubled and this at a time when our numbers were getting fewer and fewer. Sir Thomas Esmonde, who had left the Party to join Sinn Fein and who had, as a consequence, been subjected to the most vile abuse, suddenly as a result of a convention in Enniscorthy, decided to rejoin the Party.

About this time I was employed by the County Council as an assistant County Surveyor. More than once it was conveyed to me that the members of the Council, who were at least ten to one on the side of the Party, did not quite like my political activities though they were well aware I did not allow such activities to interfere with my work. Indeed, some members of the Council were against me because I was zealous in bringing venal road contractors to account. An accident

on the Deeps bridge, which spanned the Slaney river, gave my critics their chance. A horse belonging to a Captain Walker, a bitter enemy of the County Surveyor's, broke a leg as the result of a faulty plank. There resulted a Local Government inquiry and in the upshot the County Surveyor was called on to resign. I had not been alarmed because it was clear from my instructions that the inspection of the bridge was not one of my duties. Notwithstanding this, the Council passed a vote of censure on me. I was within a month of being married but Una and I decided at once that I should resign and I did so. Fortunately the position of Wexford correspondent of the Enniscorthy Echo became vacant and the editor, Mr. William Sears, who was with us in the Sinn Fein movement, agreed to give me the job and pay me one pound per week. Una and I made out a budget and found that after making all allowances for rent, food, clothing and all contingencies, we would have tenpence over from my one pound at the end of a week. Sure enough we had tenpence left over at the end of the first week but we never had it afterwards, at least not till very many years later.

After the arduous work I had had surveying four hundred miles of roads on a push bicycle, mostly in the depth of the winter, I found life as a reporter very comfortable. Moreover, it was gratifying to find my erstwhile enemies on the

County and District Councils very anxious to be nice to me, because of their fear of the press. I am glad to say I never tried to get back on them though the temptation, at times, was terrific. I had now an opportunity to indulge my flair for story writing. I had already won a prize for a short story in a local newspaper and I had had published a few stories in "Ireland's Own". I was furious to find that the ending of one of the latter had been altered. I called on the proprietor, Mr. John M. Walsh, and he told me he had altered the story as it was too highbrow for his readers. He told me I could write the sort of stories he wanted if I tried. So I invented a quaint detective character called Crubeen Patch and he was an instant success. I wrote well over one hundred short detective stories in three years. I used to start each story on Thursday evening, when my last despatch to the Echo had been sent off and, writing continuously, finish it about four in the morning and then go down town to post it at the G.P.O. before the 5 a.m. collection, so as to be in time for publication. As each story contained about seven thousand words, it will be seen that this was hard work. The series, according to Nick Murphy, the traveller for the magazine, - long afterwards superintendent of the Civic Guard - sent the circulation up from thirty

thousand to eighty thousand, but I was paid at the same rate all the time, namely half a crown a column, which amounted to twenty-five shillings for seven thousand words. The money, small as it was, was very helpful, particularly as we had, unfortunately, invested in a farm. This consisted of ten acres of land and an old rambling house situated on the outskirts of the town. Una and I both had had grandiose notions of making money from poultry and gardening. Alas for our dreams! Everything in connection with the farm went wrong, except the bees, to which I gave a good deal of attention, but even these went against us at the end when a blundering old retired army officer imported some stocks from England and with them the Isle of Wight disease, which put all beekeepers in the area out of business. We might have done better had I not allowed an expert gardener to talk me into engaging his services. He showed me on paper that there was a lot of money to be made by providing something that everybody was pining for, namely a glass frame for the raising of plants from the seed. We could make them for ten shillings and sell them for double the money. We made some and advertised them in the Dublin papers, as well as in the local press. We never had even an enquiry. Then he said we might as well use the frames to raise plants and sell

them. So we raised plants enough for a hundred thousand acres but apparently nobody wanted them either, so we planted what we could in our own garden and had to throw the rest away. Our man was not dismayed. He talked me into building a greenhouse for the raising of grapes and tomatoes. I balked at the grapes but consented to the tomatoes. He certainly gave us a bumper crop but there was something wrong for in order to gather the crop we had to go into the greenhouse on our hands and knees, so luxuriant was the foliage. When we had gathered the crop and assessed its market value, I found that if we had a full crop for forty-two years, we might be able to pay for the cost of the greenhouse.

When I sold the place the head rent due almost swallowed up the purchase price and I still owed the bank the greater part of the three hundred pounds I had borrowed to buy and stock the place. Such was the stress of the succeeding years that I was able to pay off the last of that debt only in 1930, twenty years after it was contracted.

One Sunday in 1911, Una and I were on our way to Mass down Summerhill, when round the corner from Hackett's Spout a little band of boys in green uniforms came marching. They were the Wexford troop of Fianna Eireann, which had been organised by Sean Sinnott a few months earlier. The Fianna, ~~was a project that Countess Markievicz had inaugurated~~ two years before, an open Republican Boy Scout organisation had been founded by Madame Markievicz two years before.

~~started by Sean Sinnott a few months before.~~ I had, of course, seen them marching before, but this time there was something in their bearing which sent my heart beating a little faster. In front of the column with Sean was a boy with a crop of unusually fair hair. When they came abreast of us, Sean halted the column and brought the stranger over to us. I experienced an unexpectedly strong handclasp and found myself looking into the blue eyes of Liam Mellows, full of good humour, enthusiasm, optimism and comradeship.

The boys were bound for the mountain on a route march. Later that day they came in to us for tea and thereafter Liam stayed with us nearly every time he came to Wexford. Our place was an ideal one for him to drill the boys and he took full advantage of it. Liam's father had spent his life as a regular soldier in the British army. Intending Liam for the same career, he had sent him to school to the Hibernian Military Academy. The old man had been badly cut up the day Liam told him that if he was going to fight, it would be for Ireland and on Irish soil. Liam was now giving the benefit of his military schooling to the boys all over Ireland. To some of us who had been many years in the I.R.B. the prospect of a rising seemed remote, but Mellows' optimism was infectious. We would get our chance soon he said, when

England and Germany would go to war.

On the parade ground Liam was a stern, rigid disciplinarian. He drove the boys hard. Off duty he was a light-hearted harum-scarum practical joker and he was an inveterate punster. I give two classic examples of the puns of his later days, when the Black and Tans were on the rampage in their Crossley lorries, raiding the countryside. Liam and I lay side by side in a house one night when the lorries rumbled nearer and nearer and slowly passed. He whispered: "When I hear any lorry, I lay me down and dee". A few days later, the district we were in was surrounded by the raiding Black and Tans. Liam said: "Solomon in all his glory was never in a raid like one of these."

We often stayed at the Mellows' home in Dublin and, I must say, that if ever there was a happy family, it was that of the Mellows' in those days. They lived in a small, but very comfortable house in ~~Mountpleasant Avenue~~ Mount-shannon Road, near Dolphin's Barn. Hanging on the walls there were many group photographs of British soldiers, in all of which the old man appeared. Concerning the treasonable activities of his family, Mr. Mellows was puzzled but tolerant. The mother, however, declared that since she was a Wexford woman she could be nothing but a rebel. In the evening Liam would

tramp in in the heavy hobnailed boots he always wore and give us a light-hearted and lively account of the day's doings. After tea, Liam, Barney, Fred and Jenny, the only girl, would play quartettes - piano and strings - always arrangements of Irish airs. Fred and Jenny died before the Rising and the father and mother visibly grew older, but they bore their sorrows very bravely and never complained.

One day after the great war started, I journeyed up from Wexford, and Liam and his father met me at Harcourt Street station. As we emerged into the street, a battalion of British soldiers were marching past. We stood on the footpath with hundreds of others to watch them. "Now don't you see," said the father to Liam, as if resuming an argument.

"Yes, of course I do," replied Liam testily. He was immediately aware that he had shown some temper and he turned to me with a grin.

"Father thinks the Volunteers do not put on as good a show as the British."

"You know well they don't," said the old man, "they haven't the precision, the order, the bearing or anything else. Look at the way these fellows walk."

Liam patted him affectionately on the shoulder.

"Wait till you see the way they'll run," he said.

The old man was about to explode. He turned to me gravely.

"Don't make the mistake," he said, "of under-estimating the British soldiers."

"He's afraid we are going to beat them," said Liam with a grin.

The old man must have found it strange when the Rising started and his two remaining children were out with the rebels, one away in Galway and the other with his company in ~~the South~~ Dublin Union, ~~within a stone's throw of his house.~~ Barney told me later, when we met in ~~Newbridge prison~~ Richmond Barrack, that the old man managed to reach him on Wednesday or Thursday of the fight when the garrison of the South Dublin Union was being sorely pressed. He had crossed the canal under fire and came to say to Barney that his mother was bearing up well under the strain.

"That's not what you came to say to me," said Barney.

His father regarded him thoughtfully for a while.

"Why don't you enfilade those fellows?" he asked.

"How?"

If you send ~~half a dozen~~ a couple of men with rifles across the canal to such and such a position you can turn their flank."

"Good old Dad!" said Barney, "We'll do it." And they did.

The old man was broken, however, and he died before Liam, who had escaped to America after the Rising, had returned.

CHAPTER IV

With the backing of the Tory Party an Ulster Volunteer Army was organised in 1912 to oppose Home Rule. A year later the Irish Volunteers were organised "to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland".

The Home Rule Act was passed in 1914 but its operation was suspended until the end of the war and an amending act was promised which seemed to foreshadow the partition of Ireland.

One day during the great Dublin strike of 1913, Liam Mellows came down and asked us if we could put up two Dublinmen who were fugitives from justice. We knew, without being told, who the fugitives were because the papers had given very full accounts of their depredations. They were the Two Men who had Thrown a Policeman into the River Liffey and had Hurled a Barrel in after him. They were two of Larkin's men and the Hue and Cry was out for them. The affair had occurred during one of the numerous clashes between the police and the strikers and as the policemen had been rescued it seemed to me that there was much ado about very little. We were told, however, that they were dangerous men and that the police had it in for them. We, of course, agreed to take the two men and to try and arrange to have them smuggled on a Wexford schooner to England. In due course, the men arrived. One of them, Stephen Hastings, was a big fellow, not unlike Larkin himself. He had, indeed, been requisitioned at times

to impersonate Larkin so as to lead the police on a false trail. After a couple of weeks, we managed to smuggle him on board a schooner and get him away. The other man, Higgins, remained on our hands and, to our dismay, he developed a troublesome cough which threatened to betray his presence in the house. We had to keep the men in one room all the time because we had sharing the house with us a family who were not at all friendly to the cause. For several weeks we waited and though Mike Morris, the Captain of the Schooner ~~Edith May~~ Alice T., was willing to take him on his boat, he could not sail as the weather was unfavourable.

"Just like the Armada", said Hellows, who was now on the scene frequently, "the wind and the waves are fighting for England."

Finally, we thought it safer to send Higgins to the country for a while and Larry DeLacey found a house for him in Oulart, his native village. He placed him in the home of a bachelor, right in the village. It was the first time the little Dublin man had been in a house in the country and it was all very strange to him. His bachelor host entertained him for some time, but when night came on, the former remembered that the circus was paying its annual visit to the village and he did not intend to miss the circus for Higgins, or Larkin, or any man in Ireland. Higgins was terribly upset

when he heard this.

"But what am I going to do if they come in for me?" he asked.

"They won't come in for you," said the other, "no one knows you are here and there will be no one coming in anyway."

He completely forgot that he had a lodger - the local schoolmaster - and that the latter would be coming home while he was at the circus.

As Higgins still protested, his host handed him a bill-hook and put him sitting on the stairs facing the door.

"Now," he said, "if anyone comes in, all you have to do is to chop the head off of him with this."

So off the bachelow went to the circus and he was enjoying it thoroughly when he suddenly remembered the schoolmaster. He stood up in his seat and crying out "Oh, my God, the schoolmaster!" he rushed across the ring and out, nearly taking the tent with him. He ran all the way to the cottage and, bursting in, nearly got his own head off.

We brought Higgins back after a while and managed to get him away to England, but he was arrested shortly afterwards. He got a ten years sentence.

When the volunteers were formed in 1913, we all joined up. We had about fifty recruits to start with and the numbers

gradually increased. In the beginning, we drilled in a malthouse loft, our instructors being successive ex-sergeants of the British Army. One such instructor was Jack McEvoy, whose personality underwent a drastic change on the parade ground. Normally he was a quiet, unassuming citizen, obviously an ex-soldier who had served many years in tropical climes. On the drill ground, he was not merely a martinet but a tyrant. His whole appearance, manner and voice were changed. He became an inexorable, overbearing master, dominating not merely our movements and our wills, but our very thoughts. When he spoke we trembled - all of us. He did not confine himself to drilling us. He arrested us in the middle of a movement to lecture us on the conduct of war.

"What is the greatest weapon a soldier possesses?" he would cry, his voice ringing with seemingly suppressed fury.

"I don't know, sir," said the man he was glaring at.

"I didn't ask you," cried Jack. "No, thank God, I haven't yet lost the little bit of wit God gave me. Come on, what is the greatest weapon the soldier has? Cannon, you say! Artillery, you say! I say Bah! Bosh! Nonsense! I say the rifle. Give me the rifle. With twenty picked riflemen I can disable the heaviest battery of artillery they

they can send against me." He was pacing about like a caged lion and he suddenly stopped in front of me and bellowed, "Give me twenty picked riflemen!"

The eye he fixed on me was baleful. It was as if I was failing in my duty in not supplying then and there twenty picked riflemen. Fortunately, when I felt I could no longer keep silence under the strain, an incident occurred to relieve me. It was a very warm night and we were all perspiring freely under the low roof of the loft. A fly had alighted on the nose of the man beside me and, as we were all standing at attention, the poor fellow could do nothing about it except jerk his head whenever he thought Jack's eye was not on him. The fly, however, was persistent. Finally, the man could stand the torture no longer and, when he thought Jack's attention was diverted, he made a hasty movement with his hand to brush his tormentor away. Unfortunately, Jack turned at the moment and saw the movement. He was on to the delinquent like a shot.

"You," he cried, "You! What's wrong with you?"

"There was a fly on me nose, sir."

We all trembled for the poor fellow.

Jack took three or four strides up and down, his body taut as a stretched bow, his teeth clinched.

"A fly on his nose," he breathed, "a fly on his blasted nose! Here's a fellow who's going out to fight the bloody British Empire and he's afraid of a goddam fly on his goddam nose!"

On Monday, 26th July, 1913, when I entered John L. Doyle's shop, as I did nearly every morning, the place being a rendezvous for all the Sinn Feiners, John called out:

"How many men can you drill in Heffernan's loft?"

"Well, it's pretty full now with over a hundred men."

"You'll have to get another loft," he said and handed me a paper. The news was sensational. On the previous day, the Dublin Volunteers had marched to Howth and had received a thousand rifles which were landed from a white yacht (Erskine Childers' yacht "The Asgard"). Marching back to Dublin, the Volunteers had been intercepted by a large body of police and soldiers and some of the rifles had been captured. The soldiers returning from the scene had been booed by an irate crowd and some stones were thrown. The military fired on the crowd, killing three people and wounding many more.

The incident seemed to show that there was one law for the Orangemen and another for the Nationalists. During the Spring and Summer, the Ulster Volunteers had openly landed tens of thousands of rifles from Germany without interference

on the part of the authorities.

That evening so many recruits poured in that we had to adjourn to the Sports Field where, eventually, we had between 600 and 700 men on parade and there were not enough instructors to handle all the newcomers. This happy condition continued until the war started and Redmond began to talk of the "double duty" of the Volunteers, one duty being to defend Ireland, and the other, apparantly, to defend the British Empire. Many of his followers in our ranks joined up in the British Army, others fell away and many split from us and formed the National or Redmondite Volunteers, while we, the Republican or Sinn Fein Volunteers (as we came to be called) were left with about forty men. We carried on, however, and we met semi-secretly two or three times a week in a hayloft outside the town which was lent to us by Mr. Fitzsimons. Such was the bitter feeling against us at this time that Mr. Fitzsimons ran no small risk in thus obliging us. Our whole time here was given to rifle practice.

Shortly after the war started I went to Dublin to attend a Leinster Council meeting of the I.R.B. Such meetings, at that time, were fixed to coincide with some important Gaelic Athletic fixture. This was to enable the members to travel without attracting unnecessary attention and also to allow them to take advantage of the reduced railway fares. On this occasion, The Wexford football team were playing for the Leinster semi-final. At all such important meetings of the I.R.B., a member of the Supreme Council presided and this time Tom Clarke was in the chair. As soon as the meeting was called to order, Tom said that if any of us had hitherto taken our duties lightly we were to do so no more because there was a war on now and that meant business. We would get our chance to rise before the war ended. He then asked if anyem present had been followed to the meeting place. After a pause, the delegate from Athlone said that there had been a G. man after him at the Broadstone Station but that he had thrown him off.

"Are you sure?" asked Tom.

"I'm nearly sure."

Tom looked at the young man sitting nearest the door.

"Are you armed?" he asked.

"No."

"You?" - to the next.

"No."

I was next.

"You?"

I answered quite calmly "Yes" and I produced the 32 calibre automatic pistol I had been carrying for some time.

"All right," said Tom, "take your place at the door and see that nobody enters."

I stood at the door and, I must say, I heard very little of what went on for the ensuing half hour. My mind was in a whirl for I knew that in this building, the Forresters' Hall in Parnell Square, there were ten or twenty meetings going on at the same time, for the place was a rendezvous not merely for the Republican Clubs, but also for various Gaelic Athletic Clubs and other societies. If anyone were to stray into our room by mistake, what was I to do? Tom should have been more explicit in his instructions, or I should have asked for some. However, no one paid any attention to me. They were all listening to Tom.

Up to that time the G men had been treated as more or less of a joke. They were the plain clothes political constabulary who kept tab on all suspects. So efficient were they that later, at my courtmartial, they had records

to show every time I visited Tom Clarke's shop during the previous three years. It was common knowledge that one of our fellows from the west whenever he alighted at Broadstone Station picked out the G man who was waiting for him, and said:

"You can have the day off. I'm going to the usual spots and you can go to the races. I'll turn up in Mooney's pub at nine o'clock tonight."

It was said that the G man generally agreed to this arrangement.

Tom's talk had much to do with these G men. We were not to let them follow us any more. One of the delegates suggested that the Supreme Council should establish an Intelligence Service to deal with possible enemy agents within our own ranks. An old Dublin man stood up immediately and denounced the proposal.

"I saw such a thing in operation before," he said, "and it was disastrous. It culminated in the assassination of an innocent man at Seville Place and the subsequent hanging of Joe Poole, another innocent man, for his murder."

Tom agreed and said we need have no fear because our organisation was sound. The rest of his talk had to do with discipline, being prepared, getting guns and learning to

shoot.

"The old enemy is in the toils," he said, "we'll get our chance now."

From the meeting I went to Banba Hall and found Bulmer Hobson. I had brought £28.10s. with me, all subscribed by our Company. It was to buy 12 rifles and 1200 rounds of ammunition, but Hobson was able to let me have only eight rifles and eight hundred rounds, so I paid him £19. He gave me a permit for the guns and ammunition, addressed to a Mr. Cullen at an address in Clontarf.

At Croke Park where our team beat Dublin, so that we were all in high spirits, I collected three of our lads and we went out to Clontarf. I entered the house and Mr. Cullen and his wife helped me to select the guns from a small arsenal they had behind the kitchen. We handed the guns and ammunition over the back wall of the garden to the three lads who were waiting. I then rejoined the latter and we carried the rifles through the streets. People we passed looked at us but, apparently, did not wonder very much. Such a sight was not unusual at this time. We had tea in the North Star Hotel, just across from the station, and we parked our rifles against the table. We wondered when we were in the train whether the police would try to take the guns from us when we

got to Wexford. We had arranged for some of the boys to meet us. Tom Clarke had told us not to allow our guns to be taken, so we loaded them and when the train stopped at Wexford, we got the boys into the carriage and apportioned out our eight rifles. There were several policemen on the platform but they made no attempt to intercept us as we proudly marched out with our rifles on our shoulders.

These rifles, they were really carbines, were a hasty job. We had to correct all the sights. They were made in Birmingham and took .303 ammunition. This was about the first consignment of the 300 rifles we had in the Wexford Brigade when the Rising started, by which time, outside of Dublin, we were the best armed County in Leinster. We had started making pikes also. A man named Judge in Dublin who had been prominent in the Howth gun-running, printed a design for a pike but it was found to be altogether too heavy. In Enniscorthy, Seumas Rafter kept two forges busy night and day and Pat Keegan and Jim Cleary forged hundreds of pikes. In Wexford, Pat Furlong, a house painter, set up his own forge behind his workshop. We never got a chance to use the pikes in the Rising, so that the very much debated question as to whether they would have been any good to us, was never settled. In the later stages of the war, we did not think of them, as we were thinking in terms of rifles, revolvers, grenades and,

later still, Thompson guns and land-mines.

The great war was only a short time under way when the British authorities made the discovery that Wexford might have to be taken seriously. They had posted a notice warning the farmers that if the Germans landed in Ireland, the farmers were to burn their fodder and drive their livestock before them into the midlands. We do not yet know whether the notice was what it purported to be, or just another recruiting device. Everybody in Ireland, even the British supporters, laughed at the plan. However, we posted up hand-written notices to the effect that if the Germans landed they would come as friends and that we should, in the modern American phrase, give them the glad hand. Of course, the police raided the houses of those suspected of posting the notices and amongst them was the house of Larry DeLacey in Enniscorthy.

What they found in the house astonished and alarmed them. There were literally stacks of Roger Casement's seditious pamphlet "Ireland,Germany and the Freedom of the Seas". This had been printed secretly in the "Echo" office. In addition, they found a collection of crude, home made grenades - cocoa tins filled with gelignite and scraps of iron - as well as yards of fuse and hundreds of detonators. ~~Luckily, DeLacey was absent when the raid occurred but~~ Two

other men found in the house, Jack Hegarty and Jim Bolger, were arrested. The latter but DeLacey escaped. Bolger was my wife's brother and he, like DeLacey and myself, was on the staff of the "Echo". Hegarty had been employed in the Cork Post Office and he had been ordered by the British authorities to leave Cork because of his seditious activities. He had come to Enniscorthy on a visit to DeLacey, a kindred spirit.

The discovery and the arrests created a sensation. The Dublin newspapers gave the event big headlines. The two prisoners were kept incommunicado and they were whisked away in the dead of night to Arbor Hill barracks in Dublin. We learned that the opinion of the police was that they would be courtmartialed and shot. I got orders from the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. that I was to go to Dublin to try and secure an interview with Bolger, and Una came with me. After many futile calls on various officials, we were directed to see Major Price, the Chief of the British Intelligence Service in Ireland. He had a very sinister reputation and all our Dublin friends warned us that we were to be very careful about what we said to him as he was dangerous. I was surprised to find that he was child's play. We saw him at the Headquarters of the Irish Command near the entrance to the Phoenix Park. He was a tall handsome man with suave and polished manners and he was even polite to the orderly when he told

him he wished to be alone with us.

I said that we had come up to see Bolger and told him of the relationship. He replied that the young man was in great danger and that he might be executed. He had been found sleeping in a house which was, undoubtedly, the headquarters of the rebels in the Wexford area. I protested that I was sure Bolger had nothing to do with any rebel movement, that he was a most law-abiding citizen and that he knew nothing of what was going on in that house.

"He's in bad company," said the Major.

"I am sure he was not aware of that," I replied.

"Very well," said the Major. "If that is so, you can see him. Get him to write down the names of all those who frequented that house. If he does that, he can go home with you. Will you promise me that you will ask him to do that."

"Sure I will," I replied.

So we saw Bolger and when I had conveyed to him the information that the Dublin men were raising a defence fund for him and that they were going to move Heaven and earth to have them tried by jury, I said loud enough for anyone who might be listening to hear:

"Major Price says that all you have to do to get out is to write down the names of all those who frequented that

house."

He did not laugh though he knew my own name would be one of the first on the list.

"I couldn't do that," he said. "The only ones I saw there were ourselves. I always left early in the morning and got back late at night."

Subsequently, after two trials in which Tim Healy and Charlie Wyse Power appeared for the defence, the two were acquitted on all charges of treason, sedition, creating disaffection, etc. They had been charged, amongst other things, with knowing that the seditious literature and the explosives were in the house and with not informing the authorities. The jury found they were not guilty, though neither of the two men could get in or out of bed without climbing over stacks of the literature, and they could hardly move anywhere in the house without knocking over one of the pernicious cocoa tins. Tim Healy was largely responsible for the acquittal. He made it appear that Hegarty was being persecuted not for his political activities, but for his religion. His plea was based on the fact that one of the witnesses for the prosecution, who testified that the pro-German notices were in Hegarty's handwriting, was a Belfast man who had himself, as he was forced to admit in cross-examination, preached in the streets of

De Lacey's old housekeeper shown the yards of fuse said of course she had seen it. She had cut off a length of it to tie the little dog to the bed post

Cork with a Sankey and Moody band. Hegarty, said Tim, had been hounded out of his employment and out of his native city by the bigots who had come down from Belfast to insult the people of Cork by preaching against their religion. Tim made a great point of the fact that Hegarty when he left Cork City first went to Gougane Barra.

"This terribly dangerous man who is conspiring to bring about the downfall of the British Empire is driven out of Cork. Where does he go? Is it to the great city where such subversive activities could be carried on? No. He goes to Gougane Barra, the loneliest spot in all God's creation. The poet has testified to its loneliness." He proceeded to recite with great feeling ~~Gerald Griffin's~~ J. J. Callanan's poem ~~"In Lone Gougane Barra".~~ "There is a green island in lone Gougane Barra"

CHAPTER V

The Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) was not a mere police force. Its units, armed with rifles, occupied fortified posts in every town and village. Specially trained men kept close watch on the movements of all Nationalists. The British Chief Secretary for Ireland said that through the work of the R.I.C., he had Ireland under the microscope.

During this trial I had the experience one evening of seeing how severe Tom Clarke, usually very gentle in his personal relations, could be with any man who showed signs of weakening. There was a rumour to the effect that one of the big men of the I.R.B., who had been served with a deportation order, contemplated going to America. I went up to Tom's shop to see about some detail in connection with the trial. Tom mentioned the name of the man in question and asked me if I had seen him. I said I had not. Tom said he heard the man was in town and that he had sent for him. As he spoke the man entered - (let me call him Jack Smith). I knew that he and Tom had been associated in the extremist movement for upwards of a dozen years.

"Hello, Tom," he said.

Without any preliminary, Tom said:

"I hear that you are thinking of going to America, Jack. Is that true?"

"Well, you see, Tom," said Jack rather lamely, "my business is not in the best of shape. If I am arrested, it will be bad. So I thought if I went to America for a little while -"

"All right," said Tom, "goodbye Jack."

He turned his back on Jack who looked sheepishly at me and left the shop. Tom never spoke to him again.

Bolger was still in jail awaiting trial when one day I had an extraordinary experience. On returning from a walk, Una and I were told by our next door neighbour that there had been a man knocking at our door several times. He was a stranger and he looked like a police officer in plain clothes. As deportation orders were being served on various suspects, I thought that this man might be the bearer of mine. Later that evening the man called. I brought him into the sitting-room and he himself closed the door.

"Can we be overheard?" he asked.

I assured him we could not and he told me his name. It sounded like Harold. He said that I was recommended to him by Mr. Phillips, the chief reporter of the Irish Times, for which paper I was, at that time, the Wexford correspondent. The visitor went on to tell me that he had called first at my previous home "Summerville", as that was the address Mr. Phillips gave him. His mission, he said, was a delicate one.

As I was a reporter, I would find what he wanted me to do an easy task. No one but himself and myself would know what I was doing. He assumed I had heard the stories that were going about the activities of German submarines on the Irish coast and the rumours that they were getting supplies from the shore.

I was bewildered by all this, but I sparred for time, wondering whether he was an agent trying to trap me into some admission. I said that, of course, I had heard such stories and that I was positive that there was no truth in the rumours of help from the land, because the longshoremen were, as a rule, very anti-German. My visitor proceeded to say that what he wanted me to do was to investigate such rumours and to report to him what I found out. He said he was working for the Intelligence Division of the British Admiralty.

Naturally, I was dumbfounded, but I did not let him see it. I could not but reflect that if this proposal was genuine, the man was a very bad bungler. If he had asked the first policeman he met in the town who would be the last man he should approach with a proposition of this kind, the answer would have been myself.

"But surely," I said, "the police make such enquiries and they could keep you informed."

"I am not in touch with the police," he said. "I have had nothing to do with them since I resigned."

Suddenly it dawned on me who my visitor was.

"What did you say your name was?" I asked.

"Harrell," he said.

"Oh, then you are Sir David Harrell?"

"No," he said, "Sir David Harrell is my father."

"But you are the man who got into trouble over the Bachelor's Walk shooting?"

"Exactly."

Commander William Vesey Harrell, the ex-Assistant Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, the man who had been relieved of his post to save the face of the British Government over the butchery at Bachelor's Walk when the British soldiers had fired on the people of Dublin.

"You have my sympathy. Everybody believes you were made the scapegoat to save somebody's skin."

"That's exactly what happened," he said, "and now you can realise why I am not in touch with the police. My present work is entirely independent of them and they know nothing of my activities. I report direct to the British Admiralty."

I realised by this time that the man had made a genuine mistake. He had, for instance, gone to my former residence

at Summerville and I recollected that that address was still being used by the Irish Times. Phillips, the Chief Reporter, no doubt knew nothing of my politics. To him, of course, I was just a provincial reporter.

Harrell went on to explain that all I had to do was to send the reports to the address he gave me in Monkstown, Dublin. I would be paid for my work as if it was ordinary newspaper work. I assured him that as there was nothing to these reports, it would be a waste of time and money, but he insisted that that was his concern. Before he left, he warned me not to say a word to anyone about his visit.

Una was aghast when I told her. She said that I should drop the whole thing right away, but I convinced her that I might be able to turn the business to account. I brought into consultation Sean Sinnott and Ned Foley, the local leaders of the Volunteers and the I.R.B., and told them my plan. I was going to get the authority of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., to let me go ahead ostensibly as one of Harrell's agents. I would manage it so that I would win the confidence of the latter and, as time went on, we might, by working in with Germany, help to lead the British fleet into a trap. This may sound extravagant but I managed to convince the lads, and a couple of days later

I went to Dublin to lay the plan before Tom Clarke. It was the occasion of the O'Donovan Rossa funeral and, unfortunately, I failed to see either Tom Clarke or Sean McDermot. However, I told the whole story to Sean T. O'Kelly and he promised to put the matter before Tom.

Two weeks passed and I had no word from Dublin. I had, however, a letter from Harrell asking for a report. I typed out a report saying that I heard such rumours as he had mentioned and that I had gone to Carne, Kilmore and other places on the coast and found there was no truth in the rumours. This report I sent him. A couple of days later, Sean T. came down and told me that Tom's advice was that I was to drop the whole thing at once like a hot potato.

I was terribly disappointed. I asked Sean T. if he had put forward all the arguments I had given him.

"I did," said Sean T., "and he says you are to drop it."

Not satisfied, I went to Dublin and saw Tom. He was adamant.

"The risk for you is too great," he said. "Even if you had a letter from the Supreme Council sanctioning this, something might get out in ten or fifteen years time and all the water in the sea would not wash you clean."

I said I was willing to take that risk. He said he

appreciated my motives and admired my self-sacrificing offer, but that he would not countenance it. He took me by the collar of the coat and glared at me, saying, "Drop it!" Then he gripped me by the hand and gave me one of his rare smiles.

"We'll beat them without that," he said.

I received two pounds in postal orders from Harrell, and this went into our arms fund. I also received a couple of further letters from him which I ignored. The strangest part of this story is to come.

The Rising was over, and I had spent more than a year in English prisons, and a spell in Cork prison. In 1918, I was in Dublin occupying the prominent post of Chief of the Sinn Fein Publicity Bureau when I got a letter re-directed from my old address in Wexford. It was from Harrell and it had been written about a week before. He said that he would be in Wexford shortly, at White's Hotel, and that he would look me up.

I immediately cycled out to Batt O'Connor's house in Donnybrook to see Mick Collins. By an extraordinary coincidence, Sean T. was there with Mick. I produced the letter and told Mick the whole story. His attitude was very different from that of Tom Clarke.

"You must go down to Wexford and meet him," he said.

Sean T. and I pointed out the impossibility of this course. I was now something of a public character in Wexford and I could not contact anyone like Harrell there without everybody, including the police, knowing all about it and thereafter Harrell would soon know all about me. We agreed to get someone to act in my place but by the time we got our message through to Wexford, Harrell had come and gone. I never heard from Harrell again but Mick put his letter to good purpose. He had Harrell's mail intercepted, copied and re-posted. He had special technicians in the post office doing such work for him. Mick told me later that he had thus discovered all Harrell's correspondents. He did not tell me what use he made of the information. He probably enrolled some of them at least in his own organisation. That was his way.

In March 1916, Pearse came to Enniscorthy and delivered a public lecture. Our fellows attended from all over the County. There was about this gathering an atmosphere of impending crisis, which was heightened by the presence of a guard of Volunteers in full uniform with rifles and fixed bayonets, under the command of Captain Pat Keegan. It was clear to every Volunteer who heard ~~him~~ Pearse speak that night that the struggle was coming very soon and, from that time forward, we became rather grim about our preparations for the Rising. About a week later, Captain Seumas O'Sullivan, an officer attached to G.H.Q.

wards married Miss Daly of Limerick, and now of came to Wexford. In the presence of the Brigade Vice-Commandant, Sean Sinnott, he told me he had a special order for me from Commandant Pearse. I was to take the vacant position of Quartermaster of the Brigade with the rank of Captain. Of course, I accepted at once, but without elation. I had hitherto refused to take a commission. I did not like the business of soldiering and I had strong doubts that I could ever be a good soldier. So I had remained in the ranks. Now I was in for it, whether I liked it or not. I had but the faintest idea what the duties of a Brigade Quartermaster consisted of, but I did what I could to increase our scanty supply of arms and we had long bicycle rides nearly every night carrying guns, ammunition and pikeheads, to the outlying towns and villages.

For some time we had been collecting all the explosives we could get our hands on, for the purpose of making grenades. One day, Tom Treanor, the Assistant County Surveyor, reported to me that there were about thirty pounds of gelignite in a little shed in the front garden of the courthouse. He arranged to leave the door of the shed open for us that night. Ned Foley and I went down about midnight to collect the stuff. We passed two policemen standing in silence in a gateway in the vicinity of the courthouse and we had to make a detour.

We managed to get into the little courthouse garden after some nervous fumbling with an iron gate. We had to be careful to make no noise for fear of awaking the caretaker. It was fairly dark and it was with difficulty we managed to keep off the gravel walk. We got safely to the door of the shed when misfortune befell us. Ned, thinking that the door opened inwards, pushed it, and the lock clicked shut.

"Bedambut," said Ned.

He tried, in vain, to open the lock with various keys and a penknife. We were both frozen into immobility when we heard the ponderous feet of the two policemen approaching. They stopped just outside the little gate.

"Be janey mack they have us," whispered Ned. I clutched his arm, as much to steady my own nerves as his, and I remember saying to myself that they must be strange and wonderful men who take up burglary as a profession. After what seemed an hour - it was really three minutes - the two policemen moved away. When the sound of their footsteps seemed sufficiently remote, we moved away also.

Next day, I decided to get the stuff before it could be removed to the quarries that evening. So, at midday, I went down to the courthouse and asked one of the County Council clerks, Seumas Cadogan, for his key to the shed. I knew he kept his bicycle there. He looked at me for some time, a

question on his lips. He did not ask it, but he handed me the key with a wry smile. I went to the shed and boldly entered it and picked up the gelignite which was in a large brown paper bag. It was much heavier than I expected and it grew heavier with every step I took. As I left the garden, I knew that the eyes of Seumas were on me from the window overhead, but I knew he would say nothing. As I walked along the quayside, I reflected that it was a most unusual thing for me to be carrying a brown paper parcel and that it would be considered even more unusual if I were to be seen carrying it up the long lane that led from the quayside to my house. So I decided that I would not take the lane but that I would march boldly up Main Street. When I turned into Main Street, I felt that everybody must be looking at me and my brown paper parcel, which by this time had become a ton weight. Almost the first person I met was the County Inspector of Police. This old fellow, knowing that I always avoided even a nodding acquaintance with any of the police, used to amuse himself by stopping me whenever he met me and jibing me good-naturedly about my pro-Germanism. He always had the same joke. I would be under the bed when the Germans came. He waddled over to me now, his eyes on my parcel.

"What devilment are you up to now?" he asked, with his

disarming smile. A few yards behind him, two members of his force were patroling the street, their eyes also on me.

"You've a greatchance now," I said to the inspector, "this is a parcel of gelignite."

He burst into a loud guffaw and turned into John L. Doyle's newspaper shop, ~~which was a sort of rendezvous for all our fellows.~~

"D'ye hear this Doyle," he shouted, "this blackguard, Brennan, is going around with a parcel of gelignite!"

I walked on past the two glowering policemen and got my parcel safely home. But I arranged for the lads to take it away that night. I allowed that the Inspector would see through the joke when the loss of the gelignite would be reported. As it happened, it was never reported.

During all this time I was carrying on my ordinary work as, of course, were all the Volunteers. In the course of my duties as a reporter, I had to attend meetings of the public bodies and of the Courts and hardly a day passed but I had to report fulsome and false speeches lauding the British and reviling the Huns, heaping scorn and ridicule on the Sinn Feiners, the cowardly poltroons who looked on calously while little Belgium was being martyred. This was, of course, because all the councils were manned largely by followers of Redmond. But we managed to get some fun even out of this.

On one occasion during a public meeting at the Redmond Monument, Peter French, the local M.P. was vigorously denouncing the enemies of the Party. He paused and raised his hand.

"The policy of the ostrich," he cried, and paused again.

A man in front of me who was very enthusiastic, concluded that the ostrich must be against the Party.

"To hell with him," he cried.

One day at the Quarter Sessions, the County Court Judge gave in himself an example of how war passions will transform the best of us. He was normally a kindly and courteous man with a very keen sense of humour. He had just adjourned a case to the following sessions, when the defendant, a poor old woman, in descending from the witness box asked when would the next sessions be held.

"Next September, ma'am," said the Judge, beaming at her.

"Oh, plaze God," she said, "the Germans will be here by that time."

She was already half way to her seat before His Honour recovered from his astonishment.

"What's that," he cried, his face convulsed with fury, "bring her back here."

The poor woman was brought back.

"What's that you said?" he shouted. "Did I hear you say

that please God the Germans will be here by that time? Why, madam, you might as well say the devils out of hell will be here by that time."

He launched into a terrific tirade against the Germans and then went on to deal with the Americans, the people who were "too proud to fight", an allusion to a famous statement of President Wilson's. Finally, he said he had reconsidered the adjournment of the case and, it went against the defendant. The poor old woman was almost stunned. As she passed the press box, however, I heard her mutter:

"Well, maybe I'm right at that. Maybe by that time they will be here."

The poor people, particularly in the rural districts, had no fear of the Germans, despite all the propaganda. The old regime had not been particularly kind to them and perhaps a change would be for the best. But it was not that thought which influenced them so much as that if the Germans should come, the old oppressor would have been already beaten. Mellows and I had an experience which showed that this was the idea.

We had been travelling in a motor car through Wicklow, over the route Mellows hoped the Wexfordmen would take to reach Dublin when the Rising should come. Something went

wrong with the car in the hills and two of the lads who were with us decided to walk to Bray to get help. Mellows and I ~~decided we had~~ having a couple of hours to wait ~~and we~~ climbed a hill. Away up high we came to a farmer minding his sheep and we stopped to chat with him awhile. We praised the wonderful view of the sea and the mountains.

"Won't it be grand for the Germans when they see it," said the farmer. I remarked to him that he could not have been reading the papers for, according to them, the Germans had the most nefarious designs on Ireland and particularly on the Irish farmers.

"Why, they'll take all your land," I said.

"Well, we haven't very much," he said, "and we haven't had it very long. And in any case if the Germans get here, I'll know they'll be after batin' the other fella."

Mellows was jubilant as we came down the hill. He kept repeating:

"They'll be after batin' the other fella. There's poetry in them there words."

CHAPTER VI

Eoin MacNeill, Chairman of the Volunteer Executive and Chief of Staff, favoured defensive action only. Other Executive members determined there should be a Rising before the war ended, if only to redeem the National honour. MacNeill discovered their plans three days before the Rising was timed to start.

On Thursday, April 20th, 1916, it was my turn to cover the Petty Sessions at Taghmon, seven miles from Wexford. The day was three days before Easter Sunday, but I did not think of that till afterwards. I went down to the office of Mr. M.J. O'Connor, solicitor, who was giving me a lift in his car. As we motored along Selskar Street, I saw a lady amongst the people who had arrived by the mail train from Dublin. I did not know that she was the bearer of a message that was to alter not only the course of my life, but that of everyone I knew.

O'Connor, at that time, was probably one of the most influential men in Ireland. He was the power behind the throne, the confidant and advisor of John Redmond. Through his influence, his brother James had become Solicitor General for Ireland, ~~and, later, Lord Chief Justice~~. I had occasion to say very little on the journey as O'Connor

talked all the time, his subject being the futility of Sinn Fein and the Sinn Feiners. His shafts were pointed, but they were nearly always witty too. Nothing could shake the absolute determination of the Sinn Feiners to keep on talking about fighting. They were ready to die to the last man - in bed. Perhaps he should say that they were ready to die to the last German. God had given me some intelligence but, apparently, not enough to enable me to see on which side my bread was buttered.

"Not by bread alone -" I ventured. He laughed.

"I said butter, too."

We got back to Wexford about four o'clock and Una met me at the door.

"Have you heard the news?" she asked, with elation. "You are going out on Sunday."

I cannot say that I was elated, but the relief of the news brought was certainly tremendous. The last month had been a terrible strain, particularly since the order issued by MacNeill, the Chief of Staff, that we were to defend our rifles on any and all occasions, which meant for most of us inviting war on our own homes. I saw Commandant Sean Sinnott immediately and he confirmed the news. The girl I had seen that morning in Solskar had brought him a message from Pearse.

Ostensibly it was an order for furniture to be delivered on a certain date. Decoded it meant that the Rising would start on Sunday at six o'clock.

Thursday night brought disquieting news, a rumour that all was not well in Dublin, because MacNeill was against the Rising. We were all very glum and we were particularly so the next day when a dispatch rider from Kilkenny arrived with the definite news that the Kilkenny Brigade would not come out since there was disagreement in the staff at G.H.Q. As Kilkenny was to work in with us, this was a serious blow but we determined that if a start was made in Dublin we would be in the fight. The succeeding three days were hectic, what with rumours and alarms and our feverish efforts to remedy our poor preparedness.

Sunday morning, however, dawned bright and fair. A shrewd observer in any of the Catholic Churches might have guessed that there was something afoot because of the numbers of our fellows who received the Sacrament. As Una was to be out in the Rising as well as myself, we had brought our daughter Emer, then nearly six years old, to Coolnaboy, to stay with her grandmother. Una said goodbye to me on Sunday morning and set out for Enniscorthy where we were to meet again when I arrived with the Wexford Battalion.

We took advantage of the fact that there was a hurling and football fixture at Wexford Park and we ordered our lads from Wexford and vicinity to mobilise there at 5.30. We were to set out for Enniscorthy at six o'clock. Earlier on Sunday I had the task of notifying such of our men as had not yet received the mobilisation order. I was dismayed to find that several had made up their minds not to come out. I had underestimated the effect of the disastrous rumours we had heard of dissention at G.H.Q.

At five o'clock I was at the Park Gate making a mental note of the little groups that were assembling here and there in the Sports Field and on the roadway outside, when Myley Redmond, a lieutenant in one of the Wexford Companies, came racing up on his bicycle.

"The whole thing is off," he said, "Commandant General O'Connell is in town. He says the Rising has been called off."

"Where's General O'Connell?" I asked.

"He's down in Sean Sinnott's house."

I cycled down to Sean's house, where O'Connell confirmed Myley's message. The whole thing had been called off. I said we had heard that MacNeill was against the Rising but what about Pearse and Clarke and the others.

"They wanted to go on," said O'Connell, "but they all agreed to call it off."

There was nothing we could do but stand around sunk in the deepest gloom. I thought it was the end because now we would all be arrested and there would be no chance of doing anything in our time. They were all talking but I was afraid to say anything for fear I should begin to cry while they thought I was being strong and silent. I walked down to my mother's house, forgetting I had a bicycle. Two policemen followed me but I barely noticed the fact. I was utterly deflated and I suppose that because of the reaction I was showing the effects of the strain I had been under, for my mother asked me what was the matter. I told her, and instead of upbraiding me, she said:

"Never mind. God is good. You'll find everything will come out for the best. Go upstairs and say a prayer to the Sacred Heart and then lie down and get a sleep. You are dead out."

I lay down but could not sleep. A line of Rooney's kept running round and round in my brain:

"All the bright dreamings we cherished
Went down in disaster and woe."

At nine o'clock a messenger arrived to say an order had been received from Pearse postponing the Rising.

Next morning, the Dublin papers carried MacNeill's order cancelling all movements of volunteers over the week-end. The Independent stated that the order had been published in the later issues of the Sunday edition. In the late-news column there was a report that a mysterious stranger had been arrested on the Kerry Coast. He had presumably landed from a submarine as a collapsible boat had been found in the vicinity. I guessed it was Casement.

Una returned from Enniscorthy on the morning train. She said the opinion there, too, was that now there would be wholesale arrests and that meant goodbye to the Irish Republic.

However, at two o'clock, John Barker sent for me.

"Did you hear", he asked, "that Dublin has been cut off for the past two hours?"

"What do you mean by cut off?"

"There are no telephones or telegrams. No one can get in touch with Dublin. I had it from the Free Press Office."

I hurried down to the newspaper office and learned from Willie Corcoran, the proprietor of the Free Press, that the news was correct. He knew nothing definite but there were rumours that those damn fool Sinn Feiners were fighting. I rushed down to Stafford's workshop.

"Dublin is out!" I said to Sean Sinnott.

"If so," said Sean, throwing down the saw he was using, "we're out too."

He told me I was to find Lieutenant Myley Redmond, get him to mobilise the lads for nine o'clock that night and help him to do so. Later in the evening, I was on my rounds when I got word I was to go at once to Sean Sinnott's house. I did so and found General O'Connell there. He had been to Borris in the meantime. He said we were not to stir. What had happened was that Connolly had made a mess of things by going out at the head of a handful of the Citizen Army men. The Volunteers were standing firm. He said he had got this news in a dispatch he had received at Borris. I argued that the Volunteers would never allow the Citizen Army to go out alone. By this time, they too would be out. He was positive they were not.

"Well if you are right," I said, "there should be a train in from Dublin in an hour or so. There should be news then."

He agreed and we all adjourned to my house where Seumas Doyle, the Adjutant of the Brigade, who had come from Enniscorthy, was waiting for us. I set out for the railway station just before ten o'clock when the Dublin train was due to arrive. As soon as I stepped outside the house, I

saw there were groups of the Royal Irish Constabulary standing about here and there in the vicinity. I was surprised to find I was quite cool. I had my revolver ready to hand and I was determined to fire should they attempt to arrest me. Under pretence of searching for a cigarette and lighting it, I counted the number of police within view. There were twelve, but I afterwards noticed others lurking in the doorways. I returned to the house and told the others. It was urged I should not go out alone, but I held that if two or more of us appeared, they would be more likely to try to take us.

"They probably know you are all here and they have the house surrounded, so they will be in no hurry to fight outside over one man, and in any case they are probably waiting too for the news the train will bring."

When I entered the railway station, there were few people about. The station master, Mr. Farrell, and a plain-clothes policeman named Sloan, were talking in the office.

"What time will the train be in, Mr. Farrell?" I asked cheerfully.

"What time will the train be in," he echoed, "maybe you could tell me."

"What's up?"

"What's up! These bloody friends of yours in Dublin are shooting up the place."

"Good Heavens, you don't say so?"

Sloan spoke up. "It's a bad business, Mr. Brennan," he said.

"You should not complain," I said. "You have been following me about for the past couple of years and you won't have to do it any more. Tomorrow you'll get a chance of taking a shot at me, with you behind one ditch and me behind another."

"Well, Mr. Brennan," he said with great sincerity, "whatever happens, I would like you to believe that I never did you any harm and I never will."

I turned to the station-master.

"You would never think," I said, "that he has probably given them enough evidence to hang me."

"Damn it man," said Farrell, "this is no laughing matter. This is gone beyond a joke. And who the heck is talking about hanging anyway?"

After some coaxing, he told me that there was a train on the line, that it was making slow time, and that it might be in by two o'clock, not before. I returned home rather jubilant. If the Citizen Army alone had gone out, they could not have caused such dislocation. As I approached my

house, I saw that the police were still about.

"Good night, men," I called to them, and got no reply. They must have noticed my awkwardness in opening the door. I had to use my left hand as I had my revolver grasped in my right hand pocket. Inside the house, all except O'Connell shared my view of the Dublin situation. We argued over the question till shortly before two o'clock, when I set out for the station again. As the street lamps had now been extinguished, it was pretty dark, so I walked straight from the door on to the roadway and kept in the middle of the road. I did not want to be grabbed at from a doorway. The police did not speak but one or two of them coughed derisively.

Only the station master, Farrell, and the detective, Sloan, were at the station. They had no more news, they said. The train arrived in about ten minutes. A lone passenger alighted. She was an old woman who sold apples and oranges from a basket. She ran down the platform yelling:

"Oh, let me get home! The murderin' rascals! Let me get home!"

I ran to the guard's van.

"What's up, John?" I said to John Doyle, the guard.

"What's up?" he said jovially, "Why, the Sinn Feiners are up. They've taken the railway station and the post office

and everything. They've taken Dublin Castle! We had to get a permit from Countess Markievicz to get this train out."

Sloan, who had followed me into the van, asked in a frightened voice:

"Have they taken the Castle?"

"Sure they have," said John, "they've taken everything."

The detective and I went through the exit together, both running. A surprise awaited me at the house. The police were gone. To make sure, I shouted round a bit. O'Connell refused to believe the news. He suggested that my enthusiasm accounted for some of the details. Somebody's enthusiasm, or imagination, must have been responsible for the bit about Dublin Castle, as we afterwards found out, but the invention was not mine. Finally, O'Connell said that whatever the position was, he was not going to countenance any movement until he got a definite order from Dublin, and that he was going to bed. He did. The rest of us, after a consultation, decided to start as soon as we could get the fellows mobilised. Before leaving for Enniscorthy, Seumas Doyle decided to have another try with O'Connell and, after a while, he came downstairs to say the latter was getting up and that he was coming out with us. He was going to Enniscorthy with Seumas. Before they left, we sent a man to Rosslare Harbour to wreck the railway line at the viaduct so as to hamper the movements

of any reinforcements for the British who might be coming from England by that route.

At six in the morning, Sean Sinnott and I started out for the rendezvous, John Furlong's house at Skeeterpark, on the side of the Three Rocks mountain. It began to rain as we pushed our bicycles up the steep hill past the reservoir. It was a persistent drizzle and we were soon wet to the skin. It was a depressing start. We were cheered, however, when we came to Tom Fielding's house. Tom was the Lieutenant of the local company. His uncle, Phil Doyle, was in the yard sponging manure into a cart. He was a retired contractor and builder and he had always been a strong supporter of the John Redmond.

"God bless the work," we called out. Phil leaned on his sprong and stared at us.

"You too," he said. "What's up?"

"Dublin is up," said Sean, and I added, "Dublin Castle is in the hands of the Irish."

"The Lord be praised," said Phil, taking off his hat. He turned to the house and called: "Tom! Tom, come out! Get your gun and come out."

Tom came running out and we had to tell him again. He shouted in delight and Sean told him we were on our way to

John Furlong's house.

"Jack" - (his brother) "and I will be there in two shakes," said Tom.

As we were mounting our bicycles, Phil Doyle called out:

"Tare an' ouns, you're not going like that. Come in and have something."

"We haven't time," said Sean.

"Well, the blessin's of God be on yous," called Phil. He had forgotten all about the Parliamentary Party.

When the little mountain road brought us to the main road - the Duncannon line - neither of us knew whether John Furlong's house lay to the right or left. We saw a young lad of about twelve outside a labourer's cottage and we asked him where John Furlong lived. He said he did not know. This was unbelievable for we knew the house must be only three or four hundred yards away.

"Do you know anybody of the name of Furlong around here?" asked Sean.

"Not around here. There are Furlongs across the other side of the mountain in Barntown."

We mounted our machines and rode off but we had not gone twenty yards when the boy hailed us. We dismounted and he ran up to us.

"You wouldn't be Captain Sinnott?" he said to Sean.

"Yes, that's who I am."

"Aw, now I know," said the lad with a wide grin. "Why didn't you tell me who you were. You might be anybody, the police or anybody. Sure I know where John lives. Why wouldn't I? It's the second next house you come to on the left."

We thanked the boy and rode on. When we entered Furlong's haggard we saw John and his mother in the kitchen. John came to the door and his mother peered over his shoulder.

"Hello, boys," called John.

Sean jerked his head, beckoning him.

"I want a word with you, John," he said.

"Come on in," said John, "you can shout out loud anything you have to say here." He grinned broadly and asked: "Are we going out?"

"We are," replied Sean.

"I thought so by the look o' yous," said John cheerfully.

His mother felt our clothes.

"Glory be to God," she said, "the craturs are drownded. Take off your wet clothes and dry them at the fire." There was a blazing fire of furze branches. The old woman went on:

"So yous are going out. Thanks be to God I lived to see

this day."

This old woman had three sons and all three of them were going out to risk their lives or liberty in what had for ages been a forlorn cause and her words were "Thanks be to God I lived to see this day." In my own experience in 1916, I encountered hundreds of women whose men, husbands or sons, brothers or lovers, were involved and, with one or two exceptions, no woman tried to hold her man back. This is a different picture from that of the querulous weeping women one sees depicted in story stage and screen versions of the various Risings. I suppose there is more dramatic value in the picture of the man going out despite the wails of his adoring wife, or sweetheart.

Mrs. Furlong gave us dry socks, and we dried ourselves piecemeal at the roaring fire and ate a hearty breakfast. After a while the lads began to drop in and one of the first was the boy we had encountered on the road. He proudly carried a huge fowling piece on his shoulder. John Furlong who had heard our story about him, began to rag him.

"So you nearly sent the Captain astray, Tom."

"Indeed an' I didn't," said the boy, sitting down at the fire and holding the gun between his knees. "I was only gaugin' them. How did I know but what they might be peelers comin' for you."

"And what are you going to do with that big gun?"

"Ah, John," he protested, "you know well enough. Didn't you promise me that when we were going out you'd give me a carbine for the fowling piece. You know well enough you did."

"But who told you we were going out?"

The boy's face fell.

"Don't say you're not going out!"

"And if we were itself, you're too young to come with us."

"I'm not. I'm thirteen."

I broke in. "What does your mother say?"

"She said I'm big enough to go out with you's. She says sure if I can't do anything else, then I can boil the spuds for the fighting men."

"It's damn few boiled spuds we'll get," said John with a grin.

Pat Furlong, John's brother, who had cycled out from town told us to leave the boy alone and the boy, Tom Stafford, showed his gratitude by standing up and gravely saluting.

Perhaps I had better tell the story of Tom Stafford's capture here. After the Rising, when we had surrendered, the police carried out a very thorough drive in the neighbourhood of the Three Rock mountains. They were searching for the arms which

they believed had been hidden there. During the raid, Tom Stafford was taken outside his mother's house by two policemen and told he would have to divulge the whereabouts of the arms. Tom said he knew nothing about them. The Sergeant said that if he did not tell he would be shot.

"All right," said Tom, "shoot away."

"Very good," said the Sergeant, "you're leaving me nothing else to do." He ordered the Constable to level his rifle at Tom. "Now," he said, "if you don't tell me before I count ten, it will be too late." Tom looked towards the window where he could see his mother. She was kept inside the house by another policeman. He heard her voice, faintly "Tell them nothing, Tom." The Sergeant began to count very slowly. He halted at nine and said to Tom: "Well, now is your last chance." Tom said, "Why don't you shoot?" The Sergeant motioned to the Constable to lower his rifle.

"It's no use," he said.

When the police had gone away, Tom's mother took him in her arms. She was crying.

"Were you afraid they would kill me, mother?"

"I was," she replied, "but I was more afraid you might tell."

"Much chance of that," said Tom.

The moment he arrived, Pat Furlong got busy. He brought down from the loft pike-heads and shafts, and proceeded to put the pikes together. He had hammered on the heads of thirty or forty when he looked up at me with a grin.

"There's not many living men," he said, "who can say they have struck as many blows for Ireland as I have."

All that long dreary rainy day the boys kept coming in from districts all over South Wexford. The Bannow men had cycled some fifteen miles in the drenching down-pour. As soon as they arrived, they collected carts and horses from the neighbouring farms for the march to Enniscorthy, and there was only one case where there was an unwillingness to give.

CHAPTER VII

The Rising, originally fixed for the 23rd of April, began on the 24th. British artillery wrought great destruction on the City, the centre of which was in flames when the rebels surrendered on the 29th.

Sean Sinnott returned to Wexford during the day to make a survey of the situation in the town. This was because Lieutenant Myley Redmond had reported that the police had withdrawn from the streets, apparently expecting an attack from us. Later, Sean sent me word that it would be risky for the Wexford men to venture out before nightfall as they might be surrounded and their guns taken.

During the evening, the neighbouring boys and girls dropped into Furlong's house and there was a real old fashioned hooley. If any of them feared disaster and woe from the coming events, they showed no sign of it. There was the care-free lightheartedness one always finds in a dance in the Irish countryside, the same good friendly repartee and even the same lugubrious songs. One boy sang an interminable ballad entitled "The Grand Dissolving View".

We had set ten o'clock as the zero hour to start for

Enniscorthy. We had hoped to be able to take Killurin Police Barracks on the way, but we knew that would be difficult now as the element of surprise was ruled out. These barracks, as subsequent events showed, were substantial structures capable of being defended by a few men against heavy odds, unless they were taken by surprise.

At a quarter to ten, we all knelt down and Pat Furlong invoking a blessing on our efforts in the coming struggle for the freedom of our country, gave out the rosary. The prayers were finished and we were forming up to march off when someone shouted that Myley Redmond had arrived with a despatch. Myley ran in at the same time and said out loud:

"General O'Connell has sent an order from Enniscorthy, 'Don't stir Dublin is smashed. The British landed a division of troops in Kingstown yesterday and the fight is lost.'"

There was nothing I could do but dismiss the men even had I wished to do otherwise. I could see that the effect of the message was disastrous. I addressed the men saying that the news might be true and it might not; that they were to return to their homes and safeguard their weapons and maybe I would be able to send them a different message on the following day. I have never seen men more disconsolate as they went their various ways.

In the morning, I cycled down the hill into Wexford and, as Una had again gone to Enniscorthy, I went to my mother's house for breakfast. When she saw me she said:

"You're not out?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"We were sent back."

"And your lads in Dublin are fighting with their backs to the wall."

Now, she had always been against my getting mixed up in the movement. Over and over again she had inveighed against my participation. "There will be nothing for you in it," she said, "but heartbreak and misery. The people you are fighting for will stand by and see you hanged or jailed. Look at Robert Emmet. The people deserted him. Look at Parnell. ~~Look at O'Connell. He deserted the people~~. You're not the sort to take this up and get out of it easy. Give it up in time."

And here she was now upbraiding me for not doing what God knows I was longing to do.

"What happened?" she asked.

"There were orders and counter-orders. There is no one to give us the order to go out."

"Why don't you give the order?"

"I have no authority."

Then she said:

"Go up there to the room and kneel down in front of the Sacred Heart and you'll get your authority."

I did not tell her what I meant to do - to get to Enniscorthy and see what could be done there. It was the only place in Wexford where we now had a chance. We had three hundred men there. I was amazed to learn, from all we could hear, that Dublin was still fighting gallantly and that there was no sign of surrender. I heard that Una had arrived from Enniscorthy and I went home. To my surprise, General O'Connell was there, after travelling with her from Enniscorthy. O'Connell and I had a bitter quarrel and he left. Subsequently, someone told me that he was on his way to the South Station to take a train for Waterford. I cycled to the station and found him just as the train was about to start. I asked him not to try to stop the Waterford and Kilkenny men from joining us if we rose. He said he would have me court-martialed. As the train was steaming out, I was threatening to have him court-martialed. Of course, this was mutiny, but I did not see it like that at the time. And, indeed, the action of the insurgents in Dublin might have been construed as mutiny also, but the Irish people condoned it, if such it was.

From Tony Mulvey - Mr. A.J. Mulvey (afterwards M.P. for Tyrone) - a fellow reporter who was in our confidence, I learned

that a strong detachment of British troops was on its way from the Curragh to Wexford and also that reinforcements for the British were coming from England via Rosslare to attack Dublin. This news made it imperative for me to get to Enniscorthy. Instead of being confined to barracks, as they had been the previous day, the police were now swarming all over the place. I feared an attempt might be made to arrest me before I could leave town. Any attempt to procure a car I knew would invite arrest and to cycle out might lead to the same result. I prepared my usual news report for the "Echo" and, with Mulvey, I went down to the railway station to send it on the Dublin-bound mail train, which was the usual procedure. Having registered my letter, I remained chatting with Mulvey and a few other people who were waiting for the train to depart. Constable Sloan and several other policemen were on the platform. I knew they were closely watching me and I made a pretence of not seeing them. The guard blew his whistle and the train began to move. It was already well underway when I jumped on the footboard of the train, opened a compartment door and stepped in. The look of surprise on the faces of the policemen was comical.

The sensational news they heard in Wexford next morning was that Enniscorthy was 'Up' and, of course, they attributed the

blame, or the credit, to me. It belonged more to Seumas Doyle and Sean Etchingham and their Enniscorthy comrades.

The moment I arrived in Enniscorthy, I found that everybody was of the opinion that we should come out, orders or no orders. Seumas Doyle, the Adjutant of the Brigade, told me that Etchingham was in town. He had met him on the bridge, about to cycle to Dublin to get into the fight. Doyle, Etchingham, Seumas Rafter and a few more of us met and decided to act at once regarding the news I had brought of reinforcements for the British from the south. We sent two men out to take up sections of the railway line so as to prevent any British troop movements from the south. After a couple of hours, word came in that these two men had been ambushed by the police from Oylegate and that, after a gun battle, they had been captured. We immediately sent out orders to mobilise the Volunteers. Towards nightfall, Brigade Commandant Paul Galligan arrived from Dublin whither he had gone for instructions. He had seen James Connolly and the latter told him we were not to leave Wexford County, but we were to prevent, as far as we could, any reinforcements for the British passing through our territory. Galligan at once confirmed our action in mobilising. The town was occupied without incident, the police retiring to their barracks. Some three hundred men

reported at once for duty and we made the Atheneum our headquarters. Seumas Doyle wrote and posted the notice proclaiming the Republic. A train arrived from Wexford and we took possession of this and held it under steam ready for the emergency of our being ordered to Dublin. We posted a notice ordering in all arms in possession of private citizens and it was surprising to see the motley array of weapons which resulted. The country houses whose owners were unwilling to comply with this order, were raided by our men and all arms found collected. Michael Delacey undertook to form a volunteer police force and such was its success that not a single disorderly incident occurred during the time of our occupation. We issued food tickets to the families of the men who were out and ordered the shopkeepers to honour them, and I heard of no instance in which there was any abuse in this matter. On a report that some of our men were beginning to indulge in liquor, we closed all the public houses and made it a penal offence for anyone to sell liquor.x One offender was arrested and had the keys of his premises confiscated. Indeed, there was such an absence of disorder during the whole period that when, several days later, we had agreed to surrender, a deputation consisting of the Chairman of the Town Commissioners and several private citizens came along to us to voice their

admiration and praise. Mr. John Roche, whose castle adjoining the Athenaeum we had occupied, also came along to assure me that he had found everything in the Castle undisturbed. I am dwelling on this because after I came out from prison, I was shown a magazine article written by Moira O'Neill which gave a fantastic and mischievous account of our depredations.

We did not try to take the Police Barracks. Our men fired a few shots to isolate the building which we hoped would surrender owing to lack of provisions before we should evacuate the town. We were anxious to get the arms and ammunition it contained.

On Thursday, Commandant Galligan occupied Ferns and the surrounding area. The police vacated this section and were concentrating on Arklow. We got word that the British forces, to the number of two thousand, had arrived in Wexford and that they had outposts as far as Ferrycarrig Bridge, three miles north of the town. Recruits were pouring into our ranks so fast that we could hardly handle them, not merely from Enniscorthy, but from practically every town and village in North Wexford. Apart from this, we were constantly getting messages, like the following from the Parish Priest at Marshallstown: "I have two hundred men assembled in Marshallstown. We have fifty shot guns and the rest have only pitchforks. We are all

ready when you want us."

Owing to the unaccustomed nature of the work we were now engaged in, the long hours we were on duty and the enforced inactivity, the strain was telling badly on some of us and one of our lads temporarily lost his mind. He suddenly drew a gun on one of his companions, a life-long friend. They had to disarm him and send him home. Someone told me that his threats had been against me and not against the man he drew the gun on. In the small hours of the following morning, I was alone in the billiards room of the Athenaeum, which we had made our headquarters, intently figuring out some plan on a map. I must have been very deep in my map because I heard no one enter. Looking up suddenly, I saw our friend whom I had had disarmed, standing at the other end of the billiards table quietly selecting ammunition from the pile on the table and loading a revolver. He was staring intently at me.

"Hello, Eamon," I said cautiously. (I'm not giving his correct name.)

He didn't answer but continued to glare balefully at me. Assuming a calmness I did not feel, I casually arose from my chair. As I did so, he pointed the gun at me. I stretched my arms, pretending to yawn, and then said:

"That's the wrong ammunition for the gun, Eamon."

I started strolling towards him as I spoke. He was three yards off. I tried to be as casual as I could, though I noticed the knuckle of his trigger finger whitening as he pressed on the trigger. I continued talking, saying that he would break the gun by using the wrong ammunition. When I got within reach, I put my hand on the gun and wrested it from him. The poor fellow collapsed and began to cry. My own knees were wobbly enough after that horrible three yards walk down the room. I got a couple of the lads to bring Eamon home.

A comical incident I recall was in connection with the "separation" women - the names given to the wives of the men who were fighting in the British forces and who were getting a separation allowance from the British authorities. A deputation of them came to us and pointed out that as the post-office was closed, they could not get their allowances. We decided that they should get permits for provisions similar to those given to the families of our own men. Shortly afterwards, I overheard two of them talking as they came out of a provision shop carrying parcels. I expect that the allowance was more generous than they had been getting, because one of them said to the other:

"Glory be to God, Katie, isn't this a grand Government."

On Friday, Father Cummins headed a deputation of three consisting of himself, the Chairman of the Town Commissioners and Mr. Buttle, a prominent local merchant. They asked for a permit to go to Wexford for the purpose of discussing terms with a Colonel French, the Officer Commanding the British Forces there. I told him I would allow nothing of the sort. They then asked for permits to leave the town and, of course, I could not refuse this. They returned on Saturday bearing with them a special edition of one of the Wexford papers which contained, in block type, an account of Pearse's surrender in Dublin. Father Cummins said that he had discussed the situation with Colonel French who was very anxious to come to terms with us. The deputation was satisfied that the terms would not be too severe.

We refused to consider the matter on the grounds that, firstly, we had no knowledge that Pearse had surrendered, apart from a newspaper report and that we were sufficiently acquainted with British methods to know they would stoop to such a device to undermine our morale, and, secondly, we were going to fight it out anyway.

The deputation asked me if I was willing to take the responsibility of having the town of Enniscorthy shelled. They were aware the British had field guns and

that they would shell the town if we resisted. I assured them they need have no fear because we would not defend the town, we would take to the hills.

In all this I had several things to consider. One was genuine doubt about the Dublin surrender and another was that even if the news was true, we had a group which included Pat Keegan, Nat Holbrook, Jack Lacey, Jim Cleary, etc., who would not surrender lightly, if at all.

When the deputation withdrew, we debated the whole matter for a long time and finally decided that we should hold out for a verbal order from Pearse. Accordingly, I wrote a letter to Colonel French stating that if it were true that Pearse had surrendered and was now a prisoner in the hands of the British, it would be an easy matter for them to arrange that two of our officers should see him. If this was agreed to, Captain Doyle and Captain Etchingham were ready to go to Dublin for the purpose. This epistle had a real international tone being addressed from Irish Republican Headquarters Enniscorthy to Colonel French commanding the British forces in Wexford.

Here I might mention one of the two characteristics which differentiated the Easter week Rising from all previous attempts during one hundred and twenty years. There was no disposition to try to avoid the consequences of defeat. To

none of us did it occur that we should try to escape. In all previous attempts when our people were beaten they scattered and fled the country, in many cases, no doubt, in the hope of lying low for the time being and renewing the fight later. I have tried to find a reason for this difference and the only thing I can ascribe it to is the new spirit of independence in the individual inculcated by the teachings of the Gaelic League. The other characteristic I might also mention, and that was that we had laid the ghost of the informer. In every previous rising, the British Government had been kept well informed. This time they were completely blinded. All our officers, and many of the men throughout Ireland, knew of the impending Rising on the Thursday of the previous week and yet Dublin Castle was taken completely by surprise by the event.

The deputation carried this letter to Wexford and they returned late on Saturday night. To our amazement, they carried a letter from Colonel French agreeing to our proposal, thus disposing of any doubt we may have had about Pearse's surrender. The letter set a new headline by giving us our military titles and even alluding to "Commandant Pearse". I had been hoping they would not fall in with our demand and thus give us the excuse of retiring to the hills and con-

tinuing the fight as so many of our men wanted to do. There was now nothing for it but to let Seumas Doyle and Etchingham go to Dublin and they set out straight away for Ferrycarrig where the British were to take them over. The deputation had said that Colonel French had taken it for granted we would not attack any British posts while awaiting the return of the two officers and we had agreed to this.

On Sunday morning I was at my post in the Athenaeum when Jack Lacey, one of the most active of the militant group in Enniscorthy, came in to me in a state of the most violent agitation and dashed his cap to the ground.

"In the name of God!" he cried, "is this what we've been working for/for the last three years?"

"What's up?" I asked.

"Come here," he said and led the way to the front door.

There was great commotion in the street. An open motor car was drawn up in front of the Athenaeum and an angry crowd, many Volunteers amongst them, surrounded it. There were cries of "Pull them out and lynch them!" Seated in the car, which bore a white flag, were four persons. One was Father Owen Kehoe, ~~a parish priest from~~ the Catholic Curate of Camolin, ~~a north country parish~~, the other three were plain clothes policemen, one of whom everybody recognised as a special political detective who

had recently been transferred from Enniscorthy. He had a particularly bad reputation. As I reached the door, I saw this man, who was white with fear, make a significant motion. His hand stole towards his inside breastpocket. I realised he was reaching for a revolver and that there was no time to be lost. If he fired nothing could save him and his comrades. I saw Sean Murphy, one of our officers, trying to keep back the crowd. I addressed the priest in a loud voice.

"What's the meaning of this?" I asked.

"I don't know," replied the priest. "I was asked to accompany these men to see you under a flag of truce."

I turned to Sean Murphy.

"Arrest these men!" I said loud enough for all to hear. "Place them in the guard room and report to me."

Now there was no guard room and Sean knew that as well as I did, but he behaved as if there were. He beckoned to two of his men and they hurried the occupants of the car through the doorway and down the hall. He placed them in a dressing-room at the rear of the premises, left his two men on guard and returned to me.

"You did that well," he said, "but do you think we ought to keep the priest down there. He wants to speak to you."

"I'll see him after a while."

"What are you going to do, courtmartial them?"

"I'll courtmartial you."

"For what?"

"For not disarming them."

"But they had no arms."

"All right, we'll see. Bring them up here."

In a few moments they all filed into the room. The priest was about to speak when I silenced him with a quite Napoleonic wave of the hand.

"Disarm these men," I said to Sean.

"Hand over your guns," said Sean.

Two of them sheepishly produced their revolvers and handed them over.

"What about you?" said Sean to the third.

"I've no gun," he said and turned to me. "My name is Barney McGovern, I'm the District Inspector at Arklow. I was directed to come here and give you this order from Commandant Pearse."

He handed me a paper which purported to be a written order from Pearse telling us to surrender or disperse. I read the document and handed it back to him. I said (still Napoleonic):

"We are aware of the contents of this document. Two of our men have gone to Dublin to see if it is authentic.

Meanwhile there is an armistice between our forces and those of the enemy, but I do not think that will prevent me from dealing with your two men here as they deserve. I have no option but to detain you all here under guard pending their trial."

"My God!" said McGovern, "what for?"

"For transgressing the laws of war by coming in here under a flag of truce while bearing arms."

"Good heavens," said McGovern, "you don't mean it."

"You'll see," I said, "as soon as I can convene the courtmartial I shall have them tried and shot."

None of them pointed out that I was sentencing them before trial. Instead, Father Kehoe said:

"Could we go to Mass. We're all Catholics."

I agreed, on their all giving an undertaking they would not try to escape or communicate with anyone. They had a strong escort to Mass and back to the Atheneum. The priest sent a message saying he wanted to see me. When he came in he asked me whether I was still determined to shoot the two policemen. I replied that I was.

"There's only one point I would put," he said, "what good would it do our cause?"

Then I was forced to show my hand.

"Tomorrow," I said, "if this order of Pearse's is

authenticated we shall have to surrender, at least so far as the officers are concerned. Our men will be left unprotected. Their lives may be forfeit because of the evidence those two men will be able to give. I cannot take that chance."

"Let me speak to the D.I. about this," he asked.

"That will do no good."

"Let me try."

"All right."

After a while, the D.I. sent word he wanted to speak to me, but I let him wait for two hours. Then I allowed them to hear a rumour that the courtmartial was assembling. I got a note from the D.I.

"For God's sake," it said, "let me talk to you."

I had him brought in and the poor man was desperately in earnest.

"I have never broken my word," he said, "but I'm not asking you to take my word. I'm willing to go down on my knees in the presence of the priest and swear that neither of these men will give any evidence direct or indirect or divulge anything of what they have seen here."

I pretended to hold out and finally I went through the process of relenting.

I gave them an escort out of the town and I am glad to

say that the D.I's promise was kept. [Nothing that I did during the Rising caused me as much subsequent embarrassment as did this incident. Barney McGovern, the District Inspector, apparently gave a glowing account of what he called my magnanimity and, when I returned to Wexford the following year, policemen I had never known used to stop me in the street to tell me how much they appreciated my action in saving the lives of Barney McGovern and his two men.

Late that night, Seumas Doyle and Etchingham returned. They had interviewed Pearse in Arbour Hill Barracks and he had confirmed the order. Seumas said Pearse was very grave. He had said to him, apparently as one reason for the surrender, "They (the British) shot down women and children in the streets, I saw them do it."

CHAPTER VIII

Owing to MacNeill's countermanding order, the Rising was confined to two or three isolated districts outside of Dublin.

Of course, there was nothing we could now do but surrender but I tried to get the condition that whereas the six officers amongst us would surrender unconditionally for themselves, the men should be allowed to go unmolested. The deputation carried a letter to this effect to Wexford and when they returned they said this condition had been granted but Colonel French had said he could not give them a letter embodying it, and this caused me to doubt if it would be carried out.

Meanwhile, we had a very tough job persuading the Enniscorthy men to agree to surrender. They wanted, rightly or wrongly, to fight it out in the hills. Finally, we succeeded in convincing them that we had to obey Pearse's explicit order.

It was arranged late on Sunday night that we were to assemble at 2 p.m. on the following day for the formal surrender. We had got an undertaking that the military and

not the police would take the surrender. Colonel French kept the letter of his undertaking by taking the surrender himself, but we were almost at once handed over to the police and marched off to the police barrack. There were six of us, namely, Seumas Doyle, John R. Etchingham, Seumas Rafter, Michael deLacey, Dick King and myself.

Perhaps here I should refer to the fantastic account of this affair published at the time in the "Irish Times" and, later, repeated in every book I have seen on the Enniscorthy Rising, even in Dorothy Macardle's usually meticulously accurate book "The Irish Republic" ~~and in John McCann's book "War by the Irish"~~ and in Desmond Ryan's recent book on the Rising. It stated that the British advanced from Wexford under cover of an armoured train which had been christened "Enniscorthy Emily", that the rebels, outfought in the town, retreated to Vinegar Hill where they finally surrendered. The fact was that the British did not enter the town until twelve hours subsequent to our decision to give up and that we never even heard of "Enniscorthy Emily".

After a short delay we were brought to Wexford by road with a heavy police escort. The news of our coming had evidently got out, for George's Street barracks to which we were bound was surrounded by a large hostile crowd composed, in the main, of people whose relatives were fighting in the

British forces. The crowd left no doubt in our minds as to what they wanted done to us. Through the window of the barracks I could see my mother's house across the street. While the Head Constable was searching us, I asked the County Inspector if I could speak to my mother. He said I could not without the consent of the Military who were in charge. I left the matter so. We were brought out to the cars again and whisked off to the Military Barracks. As we entered, I was surprised to see a number of the Redmondite Volunteers in green uniforms mingling with the British soldiers. They joined the British in jeering at us.

We were placed in a sort of block house standing in the centre of the barrack square. There was but one room and someone had thrown a heap of straw on the floor. The only light came from a small window. A policeman with a drawn revolver stood with his back to this. Outside there were soldiers with fixed bayonets all around our building. We lay down in the straw and Etchingham, who was irrepressible, started to compose several limericks about the Redmondite Volunteers we had seen. In a little while, Sean Gannott was put in with us; he had been arrested that morning. I fell fast asleep. Some time afterwards I was awakened. It was pitch dark but someone came in with a bicycle lamp and

in its light we saw gleaming mugs of tea and a basket of bread and butter.

"Hello, Mr. Brennan, how are you doing? Take some of this tea and bread and butter."

It was Sergeant Collopy, a police officer who had no reason to love me. I had many times refused to speak to him and I particularly disliked him because of his supposed officiousness. He was now here to heap coals of fire on my head.

"I had to fight to get this stuff in to you," he said. "Those fellows would starve you if they could."

I thanked him and took the provisions. We all found we were very hungry. The sergeant, kneeling on one knee, leaned over to me.

"Whisper," he said, "I shouldn't tell you this. They're going to courtmartial you and shoot you in the morning."

"Thanks, Sergeant," I said. "What time is is?"

"It's midnight," he said, and added: "You're taking it very easy."

"What way can I take it?" I asked, "but thanks for the news all the same."

"Father Mark Byrne tried to get in to see you," he said, "but they wouldn't let him."

"But surely," I said, "they'll have to let us have a priest anyway before they shoot us."

"Make sure you insist on that," said the sergeant.

When he had gone I began to doze again. I realised only now that I had been ten days practically without sleep. Suddenly the door opened and there entered two orderlies carrying a small table, a chair, some candles, pens, ink and paper. When they had lighted the candles and placed the pens, etc., in the correct positions, they made way for a procession consisting of the Resident Magistrate, the District Inspector of the Constabulary and a couple of military officers, one of whom, an impertinent young fellow, conducted the proceedings.

My name was called. I raised myself on my elbow in the straw but did not get up. The officer read a document from which it appeared I was charged with waging war against His Brittanic Majesty's forces, with conspiring with the enemy in time of war, with creating disaffection amongst His Brittanic Majesty's loyal subjects, and so on, and so on. The officer asked if I had anything to say and I replied that I had not.

Seumas Doyle was called next and there was a like result. Then they called Etchingham's name. He, too, was charged with waging war on His Brittanic Majesty's forces, with

conspiring with the enemy, creating disaffection and rebellion, etc. Had he anything to say?

Etchingham raised his head.

"Is there any reason," he asked, "why you would not let us out under the First Offenders' Act?"

The rest of the proceedings lost their gravity so far as we were concerned, while the court became more and more irate. As they left, the young officer blew up.

"You swine!" he cried, "I'd like to take you all out right now and finish you off."

We felt he would have done it, too, if he had the authority and the strange thing is that this young officer was, according to Seumas Doyle, three years later fighting in the ranks of the I.R.A. in Dublin against the British forces.

I was dozing again when I heard Etchingham, who after all, should have been as sleepy as I was, launching into a speech, addressed to the solitary policeman who, presumably, was still with us, though we could no longer see him because of the darkness. Etchingham dwelt on the fact that the war was being fought in the interests of small nations. It was the policeman's duty to defend small nations. Mr. Asquith had said so. Why, therefore, did not the policeman go up to Enniscorthy to defend the small nation we had proclaimed free. He should do his duty.

King spoke up.

"For God's sake, Patsy, will you shut up and let us go asleep."

"I can't," said Etchingham, "and you should not be trying to sleep when there's a dead man in here with us."

"Who's the dead man?"

"That policeman is dead."

"Nonsense," said King.

"Oh, he's dead all right," said Etchingham, "I've been talking to him for the best part of two hours and no living man could stand that without answering back. It's a terrible pity. Think of his poor old mother wondering where's her wandering boy tonight and she not knowing that he's after dying in an ould stable in Wexford Barracks, and that he's not even lying down but standing up against a wall stiff and stark - "

"He's not dead," said King.

"Oh, he's dead all right," said Etchingham.

"All right," said King, "I'll find out whether he is or not" - and he began to move in the straw, whereupon, to show he was not dead, the policeman began to shuffle his feet on the concrete floor.

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Somebody punched me into wakefulness. There was a grey light of dawn coming through the little window. Some of the fellows were on their feet.

"Get up," said Seumas Doyle.

"What's up?" I asked, "are they going to shoot us?"

"I don't know," said Seumas, "they're taking us out anyhow."

The door opened and we could see a file of soldiers with rifles. An officer beckoned to us to come along. Nothing more terrifying than handcuffs, however, awaited us when we emerged. We were marched down to the South Station surrounded by a squad of police. O'Hara, the District Inspector, was in charge. As soon as the train started he removed our handcuffs and told us we were bound for Waterford jail. He was a quiet, decent man and he did not relish his present job one bit. His wife was a personal friend of Madame Markievicz's and Madame had appeared in some dramatic productions organised in Wexford by the D.I. When we arrived within the portals of Waterford jail, Etchingham held up the proceedings by formally proposing a vote of thanks to the D.I. for his courtesy and kindness. After a few flamboyant sentences, he turned gravely to me and asked me to second the vote. Before I could reply, Seumas Doyle blurted out angrily:

"Look here, Patsy - you're going too far with this play-acting."

"It's too bad," said Etchingham, "I'm always being misunderstood."

O'Hara shook hands with us, as if he were seeing us for the last time. He had confided to me his fear that we would not escape the firing squad.

We all called Etchingham "Patsy" because for years he had been writing a column in the "Echo" after the style of "Mr. Dooley" called "Patsy Patrick". He had been a jockey in his younger days and afterwards had become a very able journalist. For years I read every line he wrote in his "Gorey Notes" and his "Patsy Patrick" column. He had the real journalist's flare for turning everything he saw and heard into interesting reading matter. One day in Enniscorthy at a football match I said something about Diogenes. He asked me who Diogenes had been and I told him all I knew about the old philosopher. The following issue of the "Echo" contained a long dissertation by Patsy Patrick on Diogenes and the latter's opinions on the current Irish political situation. Etchingham was one of the best sports writers in Ireland and, notwithstanding his poor health, the extent and variety of his activities were amazing. He was a member of

almost every local council and he seemed to revel in being the central figure in all the squabbles which are a feature of such councils. He had hundreds of friends all over the County and, indeed, all over Ireland, but he had also many bitter enemies particularly in his native Gorey. He did not try to placate them; indeed, he stung them into fury with his biting sarcasm and boisterous raillery and he was not at all scrupulous about his methods of attack. Once, during a heated debate in the Gorey District Council, Etchingham rose up and said he could afford to ignore the attacks made on him by a man who had let his poor old father die in the poor-house. That was about the worst taunt any Irishman could throw at another. Half a dozen members had attacked Etchingham on a question on which, for once, right seemed to be on their side. None of them knew who was the one Etchingham referred to and there ensued an embarrassed silence during which Etchingham got away with the point he had been making. Afterwards, I asked him which of them had let his father die in the Union.

"I don't know if any of them did," replied Patsy, "but I was in a tight corner and I had to get out of it."

Seumas Doyle said to me "I never could make out whether Patsy was in earnest or not about the fight until I met him on the bridge of Enniscorthy with a bicycle. He was going to cycle to Dublin to get into the fight there, as it seemed

nothing was going to be done in Wexford."

There are a hundred stories about Etchingham's ready wit and about the mischievous pranks he played on friend and foe alike but few realised his gay light-heartedness concealed a spirit strong as steel. His health never was good but no one ever heard him complain. In Dartmoor jail he nearly died of starvation because he could not eat the coarse food supplied but, again, he did not complain. Instead, he composed funny songs about the two ounces of margarine he was allowed and about other items on the menu. In years and appearance he was considerably older than the rest of us but he was far more youthful in spirit than any of us. Only in the last few months before he died did I notice a change and then Patsy was a broken man. It was clear that the execution of Liam Mellows - they were devoted to each other - had smashed him and he talked of nothing else. But an hour before he died, Seumas Doyle called to see him. Patsy knew he was dying but he contrived to make a joke out of the fact that he was dying of the same disease which had killed President Wilson. "It's apparently an honour reserved only for the most distinguished men," he said.

In Waterford jail we were drawn up in line and subjected to the most ridiculous medical examination I have ever heard

of. Without divesting us of a single garment, an aged doctor with a flat felt hat, which he did not remove, skipped literally from one of us to the other stabbing a stethoscope to our chests.

"It's only a genius can do things like that," said deLacey. "Any doctor could examine you the other way."

The warder who registered our names, ages, weights, etc., was inquisitive about our arms.

"Did ye give them up?" he asked.

We were being wary and lied that we did.

"That's a nice bloody how d'ye do," he said. "Now the English can come over and conscript the whole God damn lot of us."

The first time we were allowed out for exercise we had ample evidence that the promise we had got that our men would be unmolested, had been broken. We saw filing out into the exercise ground practically every able-bodied man in Enniscorthy and many who were not able-bodied. Next day, the original six of us were taken out and handcuffed. We were told we were being removed but were not informed of our destination.

"The English seem to be very fond of handcuffs," said Etchingham to the warder who was fastening his. "Why didn't they tell us so that we could have brought our own along."

"That's right," said Seumas, "we had plenty of time in Enniscorthy waiting for them to come and take us, when we could have walked away."

"Our honour was our handcuffs them," said Seumas Rafter with a grin.

We thought we were to go alone but soon we saw that all the other prisoners were being brought along too. The train journey was a long drawn out affair and we realised we were bound for Dublin. We stopped at nearly every station to take on more prisoners. There were only prisoners and soldiers on the train. It seemed that the journey would never end but, at last, someone said we were at Kingsbridge. It was pitch dark when we alighted. We were lined up between two files of soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets, all very grim. An English voice came from somewhere:

"If there's any attempt at escape, shoot at once. Let them have it!"

We shuffled off through dark and gloomy streets. The soldiers' nerves were on edge for whenever one of us accidentally stumbled or bumped into one of them, they cursed savagely and threatened to use the bayonet. The English voice repeated its warning from time to time. We all hoped no one would try to escape. We could see nothing but the

dim outline of high walls and buildings. The air was full of gloom and there was a smell of smoke from the charred ruins of the city. Finally, we were halted and a great gate swung open. We entered a barrack square which we soon learned was Richmond. We were herded into various buildings and served with rations of tea and hard biscuits as we entered. Our building was a large single chamber. It was the first chance we had of talking to the Enniscorthy men we had left behind. We learned from them that as soon as we were in custody, the police and military raided practically every house in the town and made wholesale arrests. Irwin, the manager of the "Echo", and Sears, the editor, told me that everybody employed on the "Echo" had been taken, including the commercial staff, the reporters and printers and even the messengers. It seemed to be a bad joke that the military had also served on the proprietors a notice suspending publication of the paper indefinitely. It was nearly a year before publication of the paper was resumed. We slept on the floor that night and soon discovered that the place was crawling with lice.

Next day, some more prisoners came in and all of them were known to someone with the exception of one man. He knew no one and no one knew him. He seemed ill at ease. Then someone noticed that his boots were newly polished and

pointed out that he could not have been in the fight. The whisper went around that he was a spy. Whenever he joined a group, the men quietly moved away. The poor fellow sat down by himself, looking very self-conscious. I thought it unfair and joined him. I told him who I was. He brightened.

"I know about you," he said. "My name is Joe Mooney."

"There was a Joe Mooney," I said, "who contested a seat in the Dublin Corporation in the Sinn Fein interest."

"Yes," he said, "I'm the culprit."

"Then you know Griffith?"

"Sure I do and Dan McCarthy and Sean MacDermot and all the boys."

"How is that your boots are so clean?"

"When the surrender came I managed to get away and I went home and cleaned up. Then an old one came along and said the British soldiers had been fired on from my house in Meath Street. So they took me."

I told him the others had taken him for a spy.

"No," he said, and after a pause, "I suppose its natural enough. I never met anyone here before but if any of the Dublin fellows were here, you'd see."

I vouched for Joe and we became great friends. Two years later when it was practically impossible to get supplies

of petrol which we badly needed for transportation in the elections all over Ireland, Joe managed to supply all our needs.

Someone passed around a much read copy of a Dublin evening newspaper in which there was an official British announcement to the effect that Pearse, MacDonagh and Tom Clarke had been executed the previous morning. We all wondered at this, for one of the soldiers had told us that dozens had been shot. Some new prisoners came in and they had a list of sixteen of the leaders who they said had already been executed. Sean MacDermot's name was on the list and so we were agreeably surprised to find him still very much alive a couple of days later. The original six of us had been transferred from one room to another and, finally, we were put into a large room which was very crowded. There were some Dublin men, including Gearoid O'Sullivan, Barney Mellows and Sean MacDermot. I told Sean I had been praying for the repose of his soul.

"It won't do a bit of harm," he said with his old gay laugh, "I'll probably need those prayers tomorrow."

It wasn't surprising to find that Sean was the most

popular man in the room. He "had a way with him" and he had even charmed the guards into allowing him to go to the canteen to buy stuff for us. From the Dublin men we learned that the courtmartial was sitting every day and that two or three executions were taking place every morning. Sean went out to go to the canteen. He did not come back and, from the windo windows, we saw him limping across the barrack square with an escort. They were bound for the building where the courts-martial were sitting. On the steps of this building there was a group of men, amongst whom I recognised Harry Boland and Jack Shouldice. They were awaiting trial.

At midday, two soldiers carried a huge bucket of soup into the room. A powerfully built Sergeant Major superintended the operation. I recognised him at once as Tommy Gorman, a Wexfordman who, in my childhood days, had been a resplendent figure in the gorgeous uniform of the British Lancers. His people lived in the street where I was born. I told him who I was and he recalled the names of some of his old time neighbours. He was very good-humoured about it and, at the same time, very condescending towards me. It was clear that he did not want to discuss present day politics.

Later that day from the windows we saw a large number of prisoners being lined up in the barrack square. They were, someone said, bound for a concentration camp in England.

Some of our Wexford comrades were there and they waved goodbye to us as they were marched off. Barney Mellows told me that another batch had been sent off the day before and that Sean MacDermot had been amongst those lined up. Just before they were marched off, however, two of the G. men walked along the line and took MacDermot out.

To our surprise, Sean came back to us in the evening. The trial, it seemed, had been only a preliminary hearing for the taking down of evidence. The courtmartial was to come later.

Sean and I lay side by side that night after lights-out. He told me the whole story as to why and how the plans for the landing of the arms from Germany had gone wrong. The story is substantially as it appears in Dorothy Macardle's book "The Irish Republic". Once his story was interrupted. Someone had switched on a light in the room. Immediately a floodlight from the barrack square was turned on us and a voice cried "Put out that light!"

Sean said quietly: "Put out the light and lie down everybody." The order was obeyed. There was a confused whispering in the room. Sean's voice was tense as he said:

"Quiet! They're only looking for a chance to massacre ye. Go to sleep everybody." He whispered in my ear: "We

must save all the men we can to carry on."

"You think there's a chance for you, Sean?"

"Not an earthly," he said. "I know I'm going."

He was not at all bitter about MacNeill. "We all did the best we could," he said and these were almost the same words MacNeill himself used when speaking to me of Pearse and MacDermot a year later in Lewes Jail.

"You're satisfied, Sean?"

"I am," he said serenely, "we put up a great fight. The lads were grand. We have awakened the old spirit. YOU'll see."

As I was silent, he said:

"I mean I hope you will. You're thinking you may not be here to see it."

"Yes."

"You're reconciled?"

"Sure I am."

"I can see that," he said. "It's a great life, Bob."

They took him away from us in the morning. He shook hands with us all.

"I've given away all my souvenirs," he said to me, "I've only a penny left." He scratched his initials on the penny and gave it to me. They later found it secreted in my clothes and confiscated it.

CHAPTER IX

General Maxwell had a pit dug in Arbour Hill Barracks to receive the bodies of 150 men he intended to execute. After fourteen of the rebel leaders had been executed on various dates between May 3rd and May 12th, the executions ceased owing to the indignation aroused in Ireland, England and especially the United States.

Next morning, the six of us were brought over for our preliminary hearing. To my surprise, the examining officer was a barrister whom I had met frequently at Wexford Quarter Sessions. He was a friend of Charlie Wyse Power. I asked him how Charlie was. A long time afterwards, Charlie told me that my innocent query nearly cost him his liberty, if not his life. The police officers from Wexford gave their evidence and it appeared that the only real evidence against us consisted of my letters to Colonel French.

Next day came the courtmartial. Outside the building we encountered several of the police witnesses. They were anxious to be friendly. I utilised the services of one of them to send a letter to my mother. The poor man used this fact afterwards when the tide had turned, to prove he had been in our confidence all along. While we were waiting, an English soldier had a talk with Seumas Doyle. I overheard

Seumas refusing him something.

"What does he want?" I asked.

"He's a Catholic," said Seumas, "and he wants my rosary beads as a souvenir."

"Why don't you give it to him?"

"I may want it myself," said Seumas.

"You'll never want it half as bad as he does," said Etchingham.

The English soldier joined in the laugh.

"You may not believe it, Chum," he said, "but I have a great deal of respect for you fellers."

"Your heart is in the right place," said Rafter, "but your rifle isn't."

After a long wait we were ushered up a couple of flights of stairs and along a narrow passage. Here, I encountered the second Wexfordman in the British forces. He was standing at a door with a rifle and fixed bayonet and he glowered at us. His name was Martin and he came from Bride Street.

"Hello, Martin," I said cheerfully, "how are they all in Bride Street?"

His reply was unprintable and when Etchingham gently reproved him, he threatened to use his bayonet. He was the special orderly on the door of the courtmartial chamber.

At length we were ushered into the presence. Three very weighty, not to say, beefy men, resplendent in uniforms and decorations presided, in a room so small that the six of us crowded the floor-space. A precise gentleman, also in uniform, who stood at the side of the bench, read the charge "waging war on His Majesty's forces, etc.,etc." He then read the evidence which had been taken down the previous day.

I don't know what I had expected, but the demeanour of those men surprised me. They apparently took their position very seriously, which was not to be wondered at considering they were imposing death penalties day after day, but there was an air of righteousness about them which was astonishing. How could there be righteousness when there was no right? The same thought was in Seumas Doyle's head. He whispered to me, wonderingly: "These fellows actually believe they're right."

I replied: "What they need is a course in Irish history."

"That would be a long way round," said Seumas, "and it's a bit late now."

Meanwhile, they were a machine which could only kill or refrain from killing.

My thoughts wandered.

I see a broken body on the ground
The English guns have silenced Padraig Pearse
With heavy tread the soldiers march away
Their work is done. A poet now lies dead.

No longer will they see him in the West
Around the little cabins of the poor
Nor will he walk again in Kilmashogue
Or sail in Bealadangin by the sea.

But far and near beyond those granite walls
His song is stirring in the people's hearts.
The people whom he loved have heard his song
The poet's words are rising to their lips.

And you will hear them on the people's tongue
When your false gods are falling and your might
Is like a helpless raven in a storm
The poet's words will thunder in your ears.

The Judge Advocate finished reading the evidence and asked had we anything to say. No, we had nothing to say.

"Like Wolfe Tone," murmured Seumas, "we have no wish to delay the court."

The Presiding Officer said: "We have heard the charges and the evidence and the sentence will be promulgated in due course."

We were about to file out when the Judge Advocate addressed me:

"At the preliminary hearing," he said, "you stated there had been several people arrested in Enniscorthy who were not

connected with the uprising. I am instructed by the court to say that an officer will wait on you and ask you to write down the names of such people. Their cases will be specially considered."

We filed out and immediately began to debate whether we should give such a list or not. The idea of complaining about the wholesale arrests had originated with Seumas Doyle and Michael DeLacey who thought we might be able to get the older men released, as well as people like Irwin and Geare who could get the "Echo" going again. Now we were in a fix. If we wrote down any names at all, we were thereby implicating in treasonable activities all the others. However, when the appointed officer came around we gave him half a dozen names and added that there were hundreds of others who were unknown to us and who consequently could not have taken any part.

We were lined up with many other prisoners in a roadway leading to the exit in front if a wooden hut whence an officer came from time to time with slips of paper. The names of six of us were called and we took our places at the head of the file. The British sergeant, who indicated our places, said to me, not unkindly:

"You know what this means?"

"I have a fair idea," I replied.

"You're for it," he said.

"So it seems."

"You're a bally game lot," he said, without enthusiasm.

King said: "What the hell do they expect us to do - start roaring and bawling?"

An escort formed up beside us and we were marched out into the street. Little groups of people gathered here and there, gazed at us curiously as we walked the few hundred yards to Kilmainham Jail. Opposite the jail gate a ballad singer in front of a public house was singing "It's a Long Way to Tipperary."

"You never said a truer word," said Patsy.

Kilmainham was the gloomiest jail ever built. To make it gloomier, they had moral mottoes inscribed over the interior archways - "Cease to do evil, learn to do well", etc. We were each put in a separate cell in which there was no furniture of any kind save a stinking bucket in one corner. I began to take off my clothes with the idea of trying to rid myself of the vermin I had picked up in Richmond barracks. I stopped when I heard a click and saw an eye at the spyhole in the door. A voice said:

"Are you from Wexford?"

"I am."

"Wait there a minute," said the voice. As if I could do anything else but wait there.

The door opened after a few minutes and a weather-beaten man in the British uniform entered. He was very grave and seemed prematurely aged. His regiment was the Royal Irish.

"What's your name?" he asked. I told him.

"Are you a son of Bob Brennan?"

"I am."

"Did you ever hear of Anthony Doyle, the lime burner?"

"Yes, he lives just outside the town near Drinagh."

"I'm a son of his."

There was an awkward pause. The poor fellow was terribly agitated. I thought: "This is the third Wexfordman in British uniform I've met here."

"This is terrible," he said. "You know where you are?"

"I can guess."

"These are the condemned cells."

"I thought that."

"You're not takin' it hard."

"What's the use?"

"Maybe they won't go on with it," he said. "They say Asquith is going to stop the executions."

"Do you know George Holbrook?" I asked.

"Sure I do, well. It's often he gave me a shave."

"Don't you think he's a philosopher?"

"He's certainly a comical folla."

"Well, George says you might as well die of a Tuesday as of a Wednesday."

"I dunno about that."

He stepped nervously to the door and peeped out into the hall. Turning he said:

"I thought I heard wan of them prowling around."

"Who?"

"Wan of these English bastards. Is there anything I can do for you?"

I asked him if I could have a bath. He said it was impossible.

"Could you get me a bucket of water and a towel. We all picked up a lot of lice in Richmond barracks."

"I'll see what I can do."

He locked the door and went off. In five minutes he was back with a bucket of water and a greasy towel.

"It's the best I could do," he said, "I'll be back."

He locked the door again and I stripped naked and washed as well as I could.

When Doyle came back, I asked him if he would get me some

paper and envelopes. I had a pencil.

"I'll see," he said, "I have to be careful because these English have eyes everywhere. If I don't come back before I go off duty, you'll understand."

He did come back, however, and he had several sheets of paper and a few envelopes for me.

"Don't write any tonight," he said, "because they'll be watching you. Write your letters in the morning before the guard comes on at six o'clock. If I can manage it, I'll post your letters for you."

I knew the risk he was running and I thanked him.

"That's all right," he said, "I wish to God I could do more for you."

He went off and I put in some time getting rid of at least the more conspicuous of the vermin. Then I lay down on the floor and slept soundly. Daylight was breaking when I woke. I sat up immediately and started to write my letters. I was in the middle of a letter to my mother when I heard a movement in the hall downstairs. There were sounds of men marching and doors opening. I thought a new batch of prisoners had arrived and I went on with my letter. A few minutes later, I realised that something more sinister was afoot. The marching men were now in the yard outside my cell. Suddenly

there came a queer silence. I could see nothing because the cell window was too high and, in any case, the vents in it were pointed skywards. I heard the click of the rifle bolts as the cartridges were shot into place. Another silence, and then a loud volley.

After a pause, I went on writing my letter. I told my mother that I had just heard the volley which killed Sean MacDermot and I prayed that the Lord might have mercy on his soul. Maybe, I said, we should be praying not for him, but to him. I heard the confused noise of men moving off the ground outside and voices low and indistinct. I went on to deal with the subject about which I had been writing to my mother. I stopped. The noise in the hall downstairs was repeated. This time, I waited, tense. I followed the movements of the men out of the hall and into the yard outside. Again, there was the click of the rifles, the awful pause, and then the volley. This time it was a ragged, sickening volley. I went on with my letter.

When the door opened shortly after six o'clock, Doyle appeared. He seemed to be out of breath. He opened his mouth once or twice to speak, and then said:

"Are you all right?"

"Sure I am."

"Somebody told me there had been executions this morning. I don't sleep in the prison. They were pulling my leg, I suppose."

"There were two executions," I said. "I think one of them was Sean MacDermot."

He stepped to the door and looked down into the hall.

"Yes," he said, "his cell door is open. How did you know if was him?"

"I just guessed."

I did not tell him how I knew it was Sean. I knew as well as if I had been there with him. One moment he was alive and the next he was dead, and yet I felt no break in our companionship. We were still together. Death was no break, it was a continuance in another phase.

But I was troubled to know who had been the second. I asked Anthony Doyle to find out.

"It may be de Valera or Tom Ashe," I said.

"I'll see," he said. He turned at the door and said with a wry smile.

"I'm glad it wasn't you."

He was gone for a good while. When he came back, he said: "It was a man who wasn't in the prison at all. James Connolly. He was in a hospital somewhere. They carried

him in here on a stretcher."

That day we were shifted downstairs to the cells the dead men had occupied. I was only a little while there, when a soldier opened the cell door and entered. He had spotted my black pigskin leggings and he wanted them. He was a tall hm heavily built Saxon, a private.

"Come on, take them off"he said.

"Why ?"

"I want them, that's all. You'll have no use for them tomorrow."

I did not care whether he got the leggings or not and if he had asked civilly for them, I probably would have given them to him. Now I was determined he should not have them.

"I'm sorry I can't give them to you," I said.

"Why not?"

"I promised them to the Sergeant Major."

This was a long shot. I did not even know there was a Sergeant Major. The Saxon's face fell.

"Oh," he said, "was he in here?"

He backed out without another word.

Later, when Doyle slipped in to see me, I told him of the incident.

"That fella," he said, "is a dirty bastard. He's robbing all the prisoners."

"I'd like to let you have the leggings," I said, "I've nothing else to give away."

He brushed the matter aside.

"I'm not thinking of that," he said, "I'm thinking of you all the time. I can't sleep a wink. I wish to God you were out of it."

The poor man was terribly upset. It seemed to me he was visibly growing older.

"Look here," I said, "those others died well, didn't they?"

"Sure, they did. Even these damn English say they never saw men die so game."

"Well, we must all go sometime, and isn't it a fine way to go when you are in a mood to go out and face death cheerfully, when you are reconciled, and not afraid."

"I wish to God you were out of it," he said sadly. He took my letters, concealed them in his clothes, and went off.

A couple of days passed and there were no executions. Then, one day I realised suddenly that I was very hungry. I concluded it must be past dinner time. As breakfast

consisted only of a pint of tea and eight ounces of bread, we welcomed dinner, such as it was, at midday. I rang my bell, but nothing happened. I rang again, and again. At last a voice answered me through the door.

"What's up with you?"

"What time is it?" I asked.

"What the hell is that to you?"

"What about dinner?"

"Shut up," said the speaker. He went on to tell me what he would do to me if I didn't keep quiet. The conversation must have been heard by the other lads, for all at once they began to ring their bells, but as nothing happened, we grew tired and the clamour died down. Later, I heard someone shouting it was four o'clock and this fact seemed to increase my hunger. I felt famished. I heard the doors being unlocked and when mine was opened, Anthony Doyle was standing there, his face white as chalk.

"The officer is here with the sentences," he said.

"What about my dinner?" I asked.

"Did you hear what I said? You are going up to hear your sentence."

"I can only think of how hungry I am," I said.

He shook his head as if to say I was hopeless.

We were marched into the huge dim hall. There must have been forty or fifty of us. I was first in the line. A dapper little officer, looking very important, stepped forward and glanced at the papers in his hand. He called my name.

"Here," I said. He read a document. It appeared that I had been charged with waging war, etc., etc., that the courtmartial had found me guilty and sentenced me to death and that the general officer commanding had reviewed the evidence and the verdict and had confirmed the sentence. He then passed on to deLacey. A similar sentence. The same for Doyle, King, Rafter and Etchingham. The next man got life imprisonment, and the next ten years, and so on.

I find it hard to describe my feelings at that moment. I had not been without hope that we would escape the death penalty, particularly during the past few days when there had been no executions. Thus, the sentence was heavier than it would have been a week earlier. I knew, however, and this gave me great joy, that I was not afraid and that I would walk out to meet death as easily as the others had done.

Then came the anti-climax. The little officer returned to me and read another document to the effect that the

general officer commanding had been pleased to commute my sentence to five years penal servitude. He went on to delacey so say the same thing. I got a shock. I had not wanted to die, not by any means, but I had been screwed up to a high pitch. I felt as a man would who, having been relieved of an immense burden, had it placed on his shoulders again.

Etchingham made some joke and I dutifully smiled, but I was still a bit dazed when I got back to my cell door. Anthony Doyle was there, his face bright with joy.

"I'm glad," he said, "I'm terribly glad. That five years is nothing. Here," he said, and pushed a big loaf into my hands. I told him I could not eat and asked him to give it to the other fellows, but he looked so hurt that I broke off a piece. It was an hour afterwards that I remembered Etchingham's joke.

"That death sentence," he had said, "saved our lives."

He meant that if the English had had the sense to execute no one but to kick us all out, our political opponents would have ridiculed us to death.

CHAPTER X

Prime Minister Asquith stating that the old machinery of Government in Ireland had broken down, the time had come for a new departure.

The British Ambassador in Washington reported that Britain could not count on American help or sympathy. "The attitude towards England has been changed for the worse by recent events in Ireland."

Next morning we left that horrible place and were taken to Mountjoy Jail, where we were treated to the luxury of a warm bath and clean clothes, even though they were prison clothes. After the squalor of Kilmainham, the cell I was put into seemed beautiful. The only reading matter, however, was the bible. (The English, said Etchingham, are always leaving bibles lying around for their enemies to trip over them.) I was glad when the door opened and a cheerful, if anaemic warder came in. He left the door ajar and took the only stool, leaving me standing.

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

"Fine."

"You're glad they didn't shoot you?"

"Sure I am."

"They're finished with their shooting," he said, with a grin. "You've put the fear of God into them. They're going

to give Ireland Home Rule now."

"Again?"

"Again," he laughed. "Asquith said so in the House of Commons last night. They're going to put it in force at once. I have to laugh."

And he did.

He gave me more news. The men who had been sent to concentration camps in England the night before had been surrounded by cheering crowds on the Dublin quays. The deportees had cried out such things as "Stand fast by the Republic", - "We're coming back to fight again," and so on, and the crowd went wild.

"Think out something good to say," he counselled me, "something good to shout out. The papers will print it."

He got up to go.

"Home Rule tomorrow! 'Clare to God! I have to laugh." He laughed again as he went out.

My next visitor was not so pleasant, though he should have been more so, being a priest. He, too, took my stool. (These must be Mountjoy manners, I thought.) He discoursed airily on the futility of our fight. We were dreamers and visionaries, not wise enough to be as dangerous as we would like to be. The British had shown wisdom in not executing

more of us.

"As they had every right to do!" I said.

"Oh, no, I'm not saying that."

"But I am," I said. "Surely if they have a right to be here, they have every right to protect their power here by shooting those who would undermine it."

He waved the point aside disdaining to argue with me. I did not interrupt him again but as loud as I could in my own mind, I said:

"You are a conceited ass and an ill-mannered person. You think yourself a polished gentleman and yu come here and abuse the laws of hospitality by taking my only stool without 'by your leave'. You insult me to my face, besmirch the good name of my dead comrades, deride our motives without trying to understand them, and all because of your privileged position."

He may have sensed my thoughts, for he suddenly stopped and said:

"I hope I haven't hurt your feelings?"

"Good Lord, no," I replied, "I haven't got any."

He left almost immediately.

We were allowed out for exercise next day in a spacious yard where there were more than one hundred prisoners marching

round and round, single file, in circles. We saw many old friends there. We were not supposed to talk and every now and then a robust warder yelled out to remind us of the fact, but we talked all the same. I was behind Harry Boland and he heard my account of Enniscorthy and he told me of the Dublin fight. Later, Tom Ashe dropped in behind me and I got a thrilling account of the fight at Ashbourne. I recalled later that both Tom and Harry pointed out to me a morose looking man, serious for his years, with extraordinary long legs and a head that was small for his large frame. It was de Valera.

DeLacey devised a rough and ready way we could communicate with each other while we were locked in separate cells. It was a code to be tapped out on the hot water pipe which ran the length of the cells. One tap was for A, two for B, and so on. E, however, was a stroke and every fifth letter was an additional stroke. Thus, the letter D. was four taps, while W was four strokes and three taps. I memorised it and practised it all one afternoon.

Una came to see me the following day. We had our interview in the same cage in which she and I had seen her brother a year earlier. She was learning the path to the jails. Before the troubles were over, she might have been a guide to

nearly all the jails in Ireland. . She brought me a great deal of news about the situation in Enniscorthy and Wexford generally, and I was anxious to pass it on to deLacey and the others as soon as possible. So the moment I got back to the cell, I started tapping out a message to deLacey. It took me half an hour to tap out.

"I had a visit from Una."

The reply took nearly as long:

"Who is Una?"

Evidently deLacey's code had passed into other hands.

I dropped the code.

There were a dozen of us on the boat journey to England, a long choppy crossing, followed by a seemingly interminable train trip. One time in the darkness of a foggy night we were halted at a station. We had been warned to keep the blinds drawn. Tom Ashe lifted a corner of the blind and a policeman looked in. Tom got great satisfaction from the fact that the policeman said:

"Is Eireannach mise."

Dick Hayes[X] had little patience with Tom's ready

[X] Dr. Richard Hayes afterwards film censor, director of the Abbey Theatre and author of "The Last French Invasion" and other historical works.

enthusiasms.

"I can't get much consolation from that," he said.

They both,however, got great amusement recalling a line in a recent Abbey play.

"It's unpatriotic to say we were bet."

Both of them had got life sentences but they were not worried. We all took it for granted we would be released together. Ashe had a greater store of Irish songs than anyone I had met up to that time. I was delighted to find I had two airs he did not know. He memorised them. He told us many stories of his experiences in America, whither he had gone a few years earlier to collect money for the Gaelic League. Amongst them the following:

On the first day he arrived, he was advised to call on a wealthy Irish-American who might be good for a big subscription. He was warned he would have to use all his blandishments in order to succeed. He got an appointment and found his way to a hotel which was as high as the cliffs of Moher. As he entered the lift, he began to whistle softly in order to tune himself up for the coming interview. As they were passing the third floor, the liftboy, without turning round, said:

"That's not right."

"What's not right?" asked Tom.

"If that's the 'Little Red Lark' you're trying to whistle, it's not right."

"Why not?"

"'The Little Red Lark' goes like this," and the lift-boy whistled a bar or two.

"You're wrong," said Tom, "If I don't know the 'Little Red Lark', I'll swim back to Ireland."

"Then you'll swim."

"Maybe," said Tom, "it's the 'Foggy Dew' you're thinking of."

"No, it's not. The 'Foggy Dew' goes like this," and he whistled another bar.

"That's one version of it," said Tom. "That's the one some people sing 'The Jacket's Green' to. Listen to this one," and Tom gave a couple of bars.

"That's not 'The Foggy Dew'" said the boy, "that's 'As I roved out'."

By this time, the lift had gone right up to the top of the building and out into a little box on the roof. They could see out before them the beautiful stretches of New York Harbour, but neither of them took any notice of the view. They compared notes and had arguments on "The Wind that

Shakes the Barley", "Spailpin a Ruin", "The Return from Fingal", and many other Irish airs. Half an hour passed and Tom suddenly remembered his appointment.

"Glory be to God," he said, "I'm ruined. There's a man on the tenth floor waiting for me for the past half hour."

"That's nothing," said the boy, "think of all the people who are waiting for me on the ground floor."

"Well, let's go down," said Tom.

"If it's all the same to you, we can go on talking," said the boy, "your friend will have given you up and I'll be sacked anyway."

"You won't," said Tom.

"Sure, I will. Listen to that buzzer. It's going like that for the last half hour."

"You really mean you'll be sacked?"

"I wish I was as sure of Heaven."

"I tell you what," said Tom, "I'm going to see mr. Blank and he's been staying in the hotel a long time."

"As long as I remember."

"Well, if he said a word for you?"

"It might help."

They went down to Mr. Blank and found him in a good humour. He was so delighted by the story Tom told him that

he not only gave him a big cheque but he went himself to see the manager about the liftboy. The manager had fully made up his mind to sack the boy. Instead, he complimented him on his skill in entertaining the visitor. He even took him out of the lift and gave him a job at the Reception Desk, where, as he said, he would have to keep his feet on the ground.

One of the soldiers in our escort, with a sense of humour, gave us an English weekly magazine on the cover of which was a cartoon showing Asquith distracted over a jigsaw puzzle. The puzzle was the map of Ireland in pieces.

Finally, we arrived in Plymouth, where we were loaded into lorries. On bumpy hard seats we were whirled through a pleasant wooded country and then into a high desolate region of grey rocks and furze and moorlands. Having read many of Eden Philpott's books, I recognised the Devon Tors. We seemed to be on top of the world, but also we seemed to be climbing all the time. DeLacey said we would have built a cathedral up there instead of a prison.

When it seemed we would never get to our destination, we suddenly rounded a corner, drove through a little street and entered the gloomy portals of Dartmoor Prison. I had read descriptions of the place in many novels and detective

stories, but none of them was a bit like the real thing. That may have been because we were housed in an old wing which had not been occupied for several decades. We were lined up in a vast, dim hall where there were flights of black iron steps leading up to galleries five stories high. Facing us, not two feet away, was a line of warders, staring at us in grim silence, each of them having a baton swinging by a leather thong from the right wrist. I remember wondering whether they were selected for their noses, for it seemed to me they had the biggest noses I had ever seen. After a very cursory examination by the doctor, we were marched to the bathroom and told to undress, this being the preliminary to a most revolting personal search. Then we had a bath and were given ill-fitting convict clothes, after which we were measured, weighed, finger-printed and photographed. We were placed in separate cells. I had ceased to be a person and had become convict No. Q.103, as the cloth badge on my cap and right sleeve indicated.

Hearing sounds of marching men in the yard, I climbed on my stool and looked out through the window. There was a score of convicts marching around in a circle in single file, while several warders watched them, with batons swinging. I thought the convicts were the most villainous

lot of men imaginable. I did not realise till some days later that they were some of our own comrades who had arrived earlier. The prison haircut, the unshaven chins and the convict garb, had changed them into the most criminal-looking types. My survey was interrupted by a voice hissing through the door:

"Get down off that stool!"

I got down and, since there was nothing else to do, I paced the floor - five short steps to and fro, to and fro. I failed to warm my feet, so I took off my shoes and, pretending I had a skipping rope, I began to skip. It was my first skipping exercise in several years, but before I left that prison I had become adept in a dozen different skipping steps and I could go on indefinitely without becoming winded. My feet became warm and I was putting on my shoes again when I heard the cheerful voice of Harry Boland just outside my cell. He was replying to a warder who was giving him orders regarding the polishing of the steel rail of the staircase. As he started polishing, Harry began to sing:

"It was a long time before the Shamrock
The green isle's loved emblem
Was crushed beneath the weight
Of the Saxon lion's paw."

A shocked voice said: "Silence!"

"What's up!" asked Harry.

"You're not supposed to sing here."

"That's funny," said Harry, "in Ireland we encourage a fellow to sing. He works better when he's singing."

"Well, you can't sing here."

"Oh, all right," said Harry. A few minutes later he began to whistle, but this was stopped also.

"You must keep silence here," said the warder.

Of course, Harry knew this very well, but he asked the warder why.

"Why what?"

"Why must we keep silence?"

"Because it's the rule."

"But why is it the rule?"

"Well,because it's the rule."

"Well,it's a rotten rule," said Harry, "and someone should tell the Governor, or whoever is responsible for it."

"You must stop talking," said the warder.

"Couldn't I see the Governor about it?"

The warder began to get cross.

"I told you to stop talking."

"Well, ain't a fellow supposed to have any rights? Can't I see the Governor?"

"You can put down your name to see the Governor tomorrow morning."

"Oh, that's good," said Harry, "thanks."

I couldn't see them, of course, but I knew Harry was smiling his disarming smile.

"But if I were you," said the warder in a more amiable tone, "I wouldn't see him about that rule."

"Why not?"

"He can't alter it. These orders are made by the Prisons Board."

"Oh, I see." After a pause, "But couldn't I see them?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because nobody can see them."

"And do they ever see us?"

"That'll do. Shut up."

"It's funny," said Harry, "that a bunch of people who never come here can -"

"That'll do, I think you've done enough cleaning. Come along."

"But I've only just started."

"No matter. Go back to your cell."

"Oh, all right," said Harry, "if that's the way it is."

As he was going back to his cell, I heard him saying: "There's no spirit of co-operation around here."

The same warder came in to my cell a few minutes later. He showed me how to fold the bedclothes. One had to fold each of the two sheets, blanket and quilt three-fold and hang them neatly over the bedboard leaning against the wall. At dinner recess, one had to undo the whole thing and roll them all into a neat cylinder which was then placed at an angle on a high corner shelf. Also, he told me to keep my tins polished; and the ashphalt floor was to be kept shining. Later, he came in again, with sacking, needle and thread and instructed me how to make sandbags. I was glad to have something to do and I managed to turn out my quota.

We were kept in close confinement for a month and then we were all assembled on the floor of one wing, seated on stools, three feet apart, and we worked at sandbags, mailbags and light harness straps. It was deadly monotonous, four hours in the morning, four hours in the afternoon. Any attempt at communicating one with another was quickly suppressed. Anyone caught talking was brought before the Governor and sentenced to not less than three days in solitary confinement on bread and water. Some of the lads were sent down there and they came back looking as if they had seen a ghost. Two of the

Galway lads were particularly unfortunate. They had just arrived in the prison and did not know the ropes. They were only a couple of hours in their cells, which adjoined each other, when they noticed everything was very quiet in the hall. It was the silent hour, which succeeds the serving of the midday meal, when all the prisoners are locked in. The newcomers did not know there was a warder in the hall, moving about on padded soles. So one of them knelt down at the door of his cell and said through the ventilation slit which slanted downwards:

"Hello, Jimmy, are you there?"

"I am, Tommy," replied Jimmy fromthe other cell.

"How are you?"

Of course, Tommy had just left Jimmy a couple of hours before and he did not need to enquire for his health. He merely craved for some companionship.

"I'm well," said Jimmy, "how are you?"

"I'm all right," said Tommy, "have you any news?"

This question was, of course, equally unnecessary because Tommy knew all the news Jimmy had anyway. The warder intervened at this stage. He hammered on both doors, told them to shut up and reported them. They went to the dark cells for three days.

And when they came back & each of them looked as if he had seen a ghost.

CHAPTER XI

By mid-1916 it was clear that Germany would win the war if America did not intervene. To mollify American opinion, Lloyd George offered Redmond immediate Home Rule. The scheme was angrily rejected by Redmond's followers because it involved partition.

After a while we were transferred, during working hours, to a large workshop. It, also, had not been in use for a long time. It had been built from ships' timbers for French prisoners in the time of the Napoleonic wars. A great portion of the low roof was glass and when the hot weather came, as it did very soon, the heat in the place was stifling. Here, instead of stools, we sat on backless benches, making bags. There were over sixty of us there, with three or four warders pacing up and down, swinging their eternal batons.

We were little more than a month in the place when we had our first excitement. One evening, after we had been locked in our cells, I heard the sound of marching men in the yard. I quickly climbed on my stool and was surprised to see a small group of prisoners being marched in, amongst them Eoin MacNeill, Sean McEntee, Austin Stack and Con Collins. In spite of the silence rule, news always got about and next

morning there was an air of suppressed excitement. We were lined up in the dark central hall for inspection, standing in dead silence, with the grim warders facing us. Down the iron stairs in the middle of the hall came a small body of men, the first being Eoin MacNeill. We were all conscious that the prisoners had mixed feelings about him, as he had prevented the Rising from being what it might have been. To our amazement, de Valera stepped out from our ranks and faced us. His voice rang out:

"Irish Volunteers! Attention! Eyes left!"

The command - a salute to MacNeill - was obeyed with military precision.

"Eyes front!". Again the command was obeyed and de Valera stepped back into the ranks, leaving us all a bit dazed by his amazing chivalry and courage. This was rank mutiny, one of the two offences involving corporal punishment. De Valera was marched off to the separate cells. We did not know what was going to happen to him. As it turned out, nothing did, except that he was returned to us in the afternoon. The Governor had wisely decided that harsh measures would not mend matters.

We had been a few weeks in the workshop when one day Principal Warder Thomas Stone called me aside and asked me if

I thought I could fill the job of assisting the instructor in cutting the materials for the bags. I realised I owed the offer to deLacey, who, by playing up to the vanity of the Principal Warder, had succeeded in gaining his confidence so far that he had been placed in charge of the stores. It was deLacey who supplied us with needles and served out our numbered scissors. This he did with an air of concentration and gravity which deceived no one but the warders. He contrived, at the same time, to convey such scraps of news as he managed to pick up. So when I was called on to take a special job, I knew deLacey was behind it and I readily agreed. It meant that instead of sitting for four hours at a stretch on a hard bench, I could stand at a counter and move about. The instructor, an energetic little officer with a brisk manner, showed me how to cut the materid. It was pulled taut along the counter to the required measurement and then slit with a knife inserted in a steel groove. It was easy, but the instructor worked me nearly to exhaustion during the first couple of days. We worked in almost complete silence. On the third day, as I worked, I heard a voice say:

"Which is MacNeill?"

I was so startled that I stopped working and looked up. The instructor said sharply:

"Now then! What's the matter with you? Get on with your work."

When I did so, he whispered, keeping his face averted from me:

"Now, don't look up this time. Just tell me, which is MacNeill."

I worked away and as I did I located MacNeill. Then speaking without moving my lips - as we all learned to do this very quickly - I told him that MacNeill was the second man from the left in the third bench forward. The instructor looked at him.

"He was against the Rising, wasn't he?"

I dried up at once. If they wanted information, they would have to look for it elsewhere.

"I don't know," I said.

"You're being cautious," said the instructor and I knew he was smiling to himself. "I don't blame you." After a long pause, he said: "Did you know James Connolly?"

"I did."

Then the officer surprised me, when without pausing for a moment in his work and, apparently, without paying any attention to me, he said:

"I spoke on the same platform with Connolly in Salford. He was a great man."

He spoke with evident conviction, but I was still on my guard, until he told me that his people came from Ireland a long way back, that he had a great love for Ireland and that they had tried to keep him out of our workshop because he was a Catholic. He asked me if the Chaplain passed on the Irish papers he was receiving for us.

"No," I said, "I didn't know he got any papers for us."

"He does. He gets two or three Irish newspapers every morning and they are intended for you fellows."

I said that if he could get hold of the papers, read them and tell me what was in them, it would be a great help. He undertook to do so, but it was long afterwards I learned that he had failed to get the papers from the priest and that he had himself subscribed for them through London. Thereafter, we were kept informed of the day's news from Ireland and as, up to that time, we had been completely cut off, this was a great boon. Every day our friend would give me a summary of the news. I would then go up to deLacey's desk with a slate on which I had an account of the number of bags cut. I dictated the figures to deLacey and though there was a warder standing only a few feet away, I managed to convey the news at the same time. DeLacey took it down in shorthand on a slate and in a few minutes he had succeeded in circulating

whatever news there was throughout the room. It was surprising, however, how the news changed in its travels. One day there was news of a minor naval engagement in the North Sea. Three British patrol boats and a mine sweeper had been sunk. I gave out this news at ten o'clock. By twelve noon, it returned to me via Davy Kent. The British losses had become three battleships and a whole fleet of cruisers.

Life in the prison was deadly dull and the routine maddeningly monotonous. In the early morning, when the prison bell rang and the cells were opened, we held up our sheets for inspection to show we hadn't hanged ourselves with them during the night. From that time until lights out at eight o'clock at night, every minute was planned with the same deadly regularity, day after day. We were under surveillance for every minute of the twenty-four hours. Often during the night, an officer moving on noiseless feet in the corridor outside, would apply his bull's eye lantern to a disc in the doorway, illuminating the cell while applying his eye to the spy-hole. After breakfast - porridge, cocoa and bread - which, like all the meals, was served to each man in his cell, we were paraded for search in the exercise ground and we could always tell in advance what the warders were going to

say. For instance, the beefy warder in charge of our squad, would say each morning:

"Halt! Left turn! Extend on the left! Unbutton!" Then, looking along the line, he would always wave his baton and say, no matter whether the line was straight or crooked, "Back a bit on the left."

One day I whispered to Dick Hayes: "How can you explain the fact that a wooden-headed people like these could keep us in subjection for seven hundred years?"

"That's easy," he said, "if you get twenty Englishmen into a room, one of them, by the grace of God, has an idea and the ability to voice it. So they all do what he says. But if you get twenty Irishmen together, everyone of them can think of a brilliant plan, any one of which might succeed, if only they would all accept it."

In spite of the silence rule, we did manage to pass an odd joke now and again. One day in the exercise ground, when the misty rain which came in from the moors was beating in our faces - the skull cap affording no protection - I overheard Dick Hayes addressing a Galway farm labourer who was beside him. Dick purposely exaggerated the Irish idion, saying:

"Is it how that it is the way ~~it is~~ that you forgot your umbrella?"