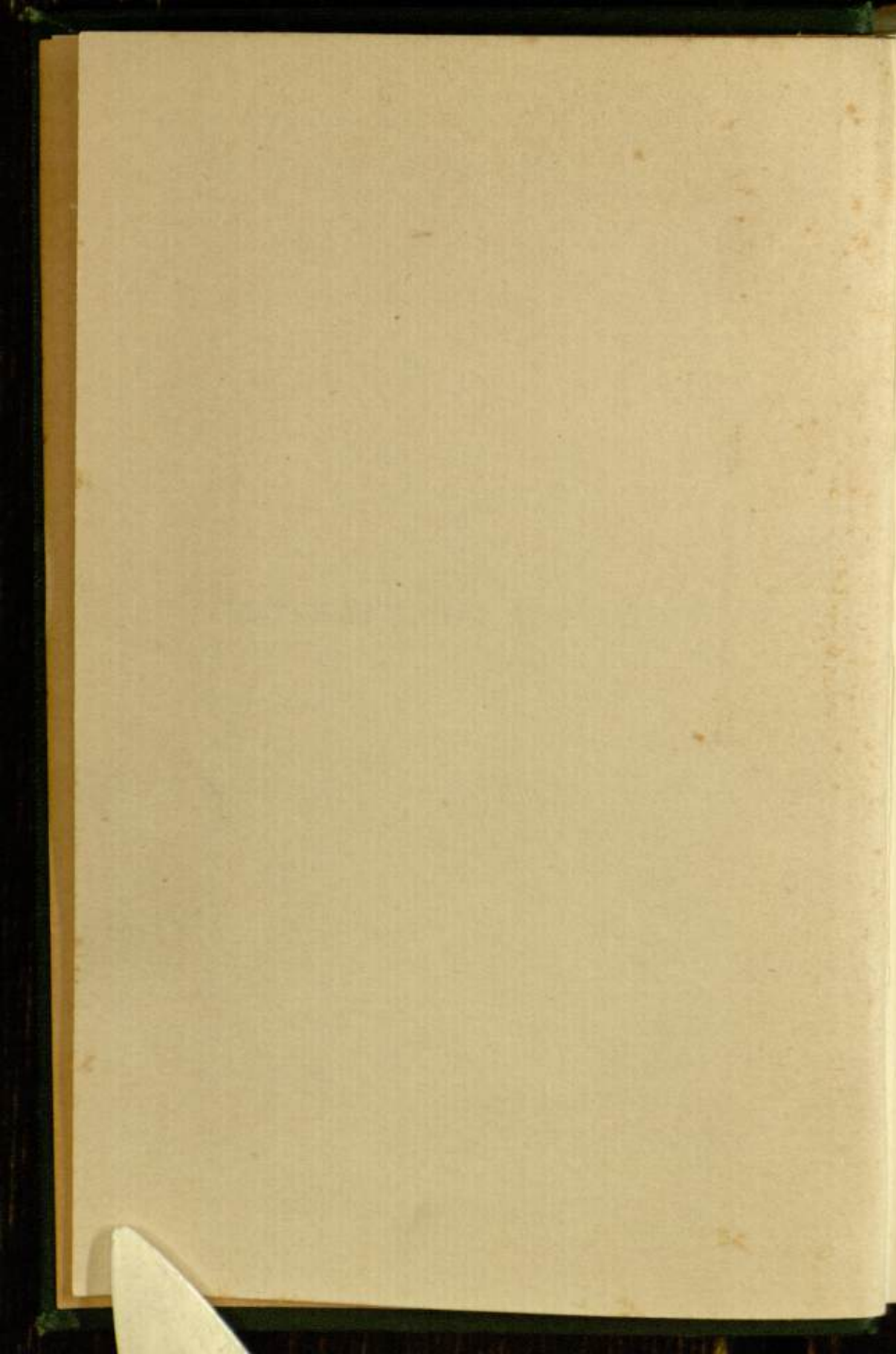


MY FIGHT FOR IRISH FREEDOM



To me of Ireland's truest friends across
the water. with Compliments, to
Joe Mc Garrity

Dan Breen

August 1924



DAN BREEN.

MY FIGHT FOR IRISH FREEDOM

By
DAN BREEN

With an Introduction by
JOSEPH McGARRITY
(Philadelphia)



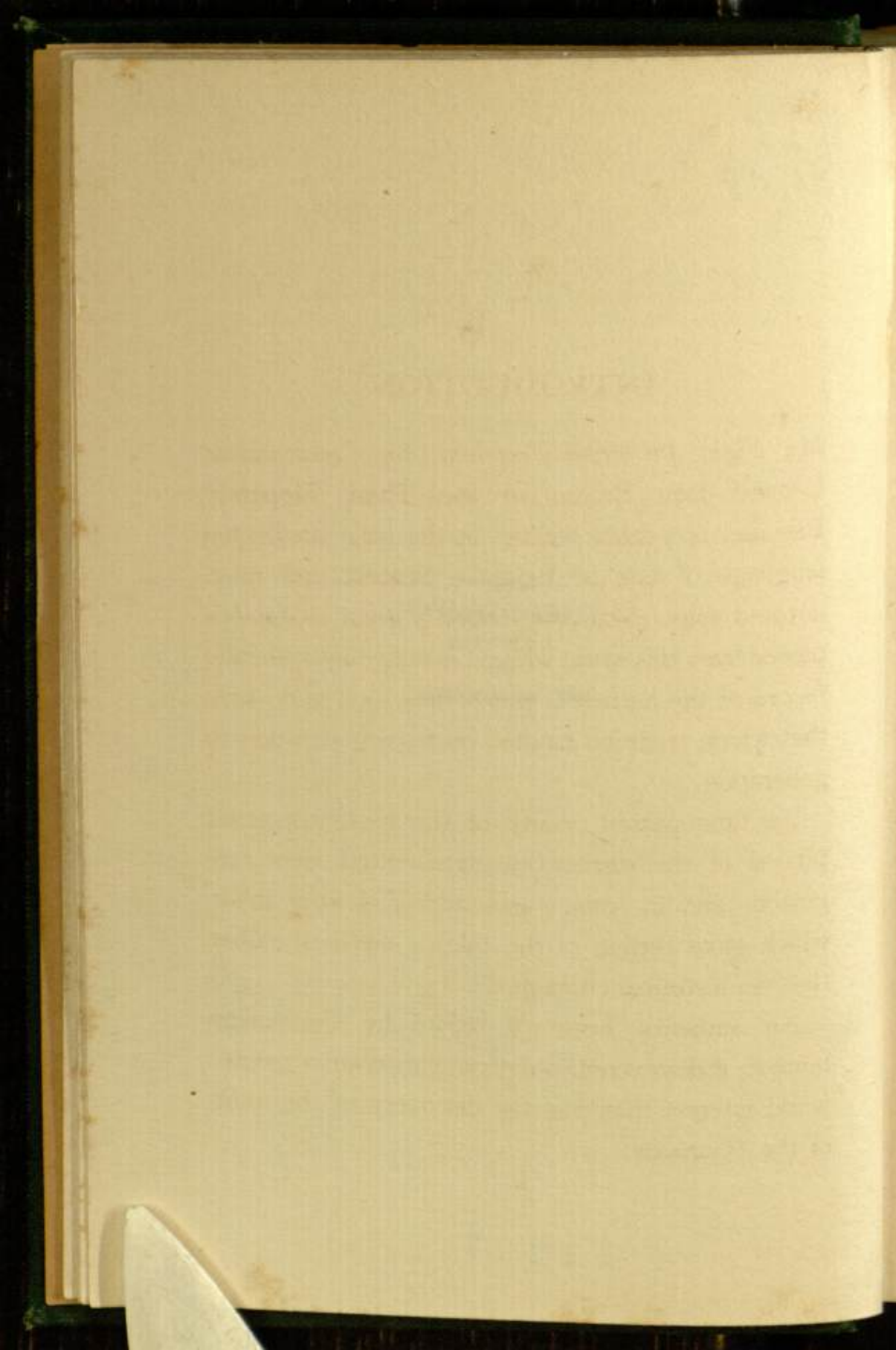
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SEAN TREACY
J. J. HOGAN
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INTRODUCTION

My Fight for Irish Freedom, by Commandant General Dan Breen, of the Third Tipperary Brigade, is a story written in the plain unaffected language of one of Ireland's bravest and most devoted sons. Many of Ireland's great champions passed from this world without leaving any authentic record of the battles in which they took part, save that which tradition handed on from generation to generation.

As time passed, many of the most important phases of the stories thus transmitted were forgotten, and in some cases additions were made which gave certain of the tales a mythical rather than an historical character.

An authentic historical record by Cuchulainn himself, if discovered to-day, would create a greater world interest than has the discovery of the tomb of the Pharaohs.

The author and principal actor in this dramatic story was born and reared in Tipperary. He had no military knowledge whatever until he joined the Irish Volunteers. Gallant young Irishmen of the type of Dan Breen had been, for generations, drifting away from their native land. Their natural military genius and daring found outlet in the armies of France and Spain, where

“ On far foreign fields, from Dunkirk to Belgrade
Lie the soldiers and chiefs of the Irish Brigade.”

Washington appreciated in full the valour of his Irish emigrant soldiers, as he afterwards proved by conceding to them equal status with the native-born Americans. He placed unbounded confidence in the patriotism and loyalty of his Irish generals and soldiers who comprised almost one-half of the entire Revolutionary Army.

With the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the manhood of the world was being rolled up into two opposing mighty war machines—preparing to annihilate each other. The catch-cry “to fight in defence of small nations” was broad-casted. Under this, and other specious pretexts, hundreds of Irishmen were induced to join up in England’s Imperial

armies, and they endured the horrors of France, Flanders and the Dardanelles.

While these newly-recruited Irish regiments were being drafted to the various war fronts in Europe, great minds were busy at home planning Ireland's regeneration. For two years the Irish Volunteer movement, directed by Pearse, Connolly, Case-ment, Clarke and the other leaders, had been spreading like a prairie fire through the country ! Alas ! because they dared to put forth the claim of their own small nation to be master in its own house the firing squad and the scaffold extinguished the brave lives of sixteen noble Irish leaders.

Dan Breen and his few comrades had definitely reached the conclusion that while a foreign flag floated over public buildings in Ireland, and while a foreign army was garrisoned in the land, there was one place—and one place only—for Irishmen to fight—and that place was Ireland.

He did not wait for an army to grow up, or for some great captain to come from foreign lands to lead his countrymen to victory. As a matter of fact at one time our soldier-author was, with a few comrades, practically the only force in the field engaged in active hostilities against the enemy.

Such a stirring drama has seldom if ever been acted on the stage of Irish life. It is doubtful if any other individual in Irish history received a like number of near-fatal wounds, fighting in defence of his country—and survived to tell the story of the engagements in which the wounds were inflicted.

Fired with a burning love of country and a fixed determination to achieve her independence, Dan Breen with a handful of men declared war on England on their own account, convinced that their countrymen would follow their example. In this he was not disappointed.

The engagements described follow each other in such quick succession, and are of such a thrilling character, that from the opening of the first chapter to the close of the last, the reader is in momentary expectation of the story ending with the dramatic death of the author.

The author's graphic descriptions of localities, his giving of accurate distances between one location and another, his recording of place-names and family names gives the story a distinct and particular historical value.

Great as was the physical suffering he endured,

having been literally riddled by bullets, it was as nothing compared to the mental torture he must have endured later on seeing his former comrades turn their arms against each other after the signing of the "Treaty" in 1921.

In giving to his countrymen this authentic written record of the engagements in which he took part, Dan Breen has rendered a service to Ireland second only to the services rendered to her in the engagements he describes.

Let us hope that some competent Celtic scholar will translate the story into the language of Ireland's ancient champions whom she had gathered to her bosom centuries before this gallant son of Tipperary was ready to render to his beloved country the splendid services he has so willingly given.

JOSEPH MCGARRITY.

PHILADELPHIA.

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MY FIGHT FOR IRISH FREEDOM

CHAPTER I.

A VOLUNTEER'S TRAINING

"A soldier's life is the life for me,
A soldier's death, so Ireland's free."
—Davis.

It was in 1914 that I first joined the Irish Volunteers in the village of Donohill, some four miles from Tipperary town. At that time I was about twenty years of age. I soon became known to the local police as the "Sinn Feiner," then a very rare sort of animal. At a later stage in my career the same people, I believe, conferred upon me the still higher title of "Prince of the Assassins"! But I must beg the reader's patience while I briefly outline the position in Ireland the year the Great War began.

The British Parliament had passed its Home Rule Bill for Ireland. The Orange minority in the

North of Ireland declared it would resist any attempt to enforce that Bill or to set up a Parliament in Dublin. Supported financially and morally by the wealthiest section of the English Tory Party, the Orangemen openly organised, drilled and armed a Volunteer Army to defy the British Parliament.

At this time Sinn Fein as a political policy was little known outside of Dublin City. The spokesmen of the great majority of the Irish people were the Parliamentarians led by John Redmond. But a few of the intellectual leaders, such as Pearse and MacNeill, whose political influence then counted for little, saw in the action of the Orange Volunteers an excellent example to the rest of Ireland. They called on the Nationalists to form a Volunteer Army. The tradition of the Fenians still lived. Many who cared little for the Home Rule Bill saw that we now had got the opportunity for which they wished. Ireland answered the call, and when the Great War broke out there were in Ireland three armies, though very different in equipment and in outlook. One was the British Army of Occupation ; the other was the Orange Volunteer Army in the North ; and the third was the Irish Volunteer Force. Consequently, when the Great War broke out Redmond and his followers threw in their lot with the British, and appealed for recruits for the British Army. The Orange Volunteers, too, were in whole-hearted sympathy with the British cause. The Irish

Volunteers for a time were split and disorganised; thousands joined the British Army; but a small number remained doggedly neutral and loyal to Ireland alone. That small number was not deceived by England's cant of "fighting for small nations," and "for the sanctity of treaties." They were those who believed in an Independent Ireland; and as their best speakers were supporters of the political programme of Sinn Fein, they all gradually became known as "Sinn Fein Volunteers."

Our little band at Donohill was part of this small minority. We did not give much heed to John Redmond's call to join the British Army. We continued to drill and train openly, in the hope that the time would come when we might get our chance to strike a blow at the only enemy we recognised—England.

As the war developed we were closely watched by the police. We were known as "pro-Germans." The majority of the people, carried away by the campaign of lies and calumny in the Press, were in favour of England as against Germany in the war. The aristocracy and the wealthiest merchants and farmers generally supported the movements that were started to provide comforts for the British soldiers in the trenches. But we of the Irish Volunteers—henceforth in using that term I must be understood to mean those who declined to take England's side in the war—stood aloof. It was

then that I came into disfavour with the police for my refusal to support their funds for providing comforts for soldiers. I was an employee of the Great Southern and Western Railway, and I have no doubt that they acquainted my superiors with what they regarded as my disloyal tendencies.

It is necessary to explain the nature of this police force. The Royal Irish Constabulary—a body that has now passed into history—was not a police force in the sense understood in other countries. It was a semi-military force, trained to the use of arms, and provided with carbines and rifles. As crime in the ordinary sense was practically unknown in Ireland, the main duty of these men was to spy upon Volunteers and others working for an Independent Ireland. They were known to report even sermons delivered by Irish priests. In all there were then about ten thousand of these police in the country, scattered in small garrisons of two to ten or twenty men, according to the size of the village or town in which they were located. Sprung as they were for the most part from Irish Nationalist families, they were the brain of England's garrison in Ireland; for they knew the people and they got the information without which England's 40,000 troops—ignorant alike of the country, its people and its history—would have been of little use.

I now resume my narrative. From the outbreak of the Great War I still continued my daily work,

and took no more active part than any ordinary private in the local company of the Irish Volunteers. We met and drilled a few times a week, and tried to pick up a rifle or a revolver now and again; for the Volunteers generally had very few arms at that time.

Thus we continued our routine through 1915, and up to April, 1916. With the Insurrection of 1916 I do not propose to deal here, except to say that owing to the confusion of orders and counter-orders the men of Tipperary got no chance of having their mettle tested. I must, however, remark upon a coincidence in connection with our plans. Part of the duty of the Volunteers of my district was to have been the destroying of an important line of railway communications. For that purpose we were to have seized a quantity of gelignite, then stored by the County Council for blasting purposes in a neighbouring quarry. That quarry was Soloheadbeg, where three years later my comrades and I received our baptism of fire.

The Rising of 1916 changed our whole outlook. The people who had scoffed and sneered at the Sinn Feiners before now swung round to our side. But our military organisation had collapsed. Thousands of our men all over the country were seized and deported to England. The British forces, both police and military, seized what arms they could lay hands upon. We could no longer drill and

parade in public ; our organisation had been solemnly proclaimed by the British to be an illegal body. For a time we were in confusion and despair. It was only for a very short time, however, for within a few months those who had escaped the meshes of the English military net after the Rising had actually held two secret Conventions in Dublin to re-organise the Volunteers.

After a few months we set to work again. My neighbour and comrade, Sean Treacy, and I decided to make a fresh start, and to put our Volunteer company at work once more. This time, of course, we could not do it openly ; we had to work on a secret basis. As it was now considered dangerous to have anything to do with the Irish Volunteers, our numbers were small ; but we had better and more determined men. For a while, indeed, there were only three of us.

We met in a little wood after our work twice every week. So we struggled on until May, 1917, when our company had grown to be thirteen strong. Not a man of us possessed any military knowledge, and those in the neighbourhood who could instruct us had either joined the British Army, or could not be trusted to take the risks. Still we got on very well at physical drill, scouting, signalling, revolver practice, close-order drill, and such work. We had to rely mainly on book-work ; and by a

strange irony the books we found most handy were the official texts supplied to the British troops, the men we were preparing to meet.

Of course, we made mistakes now and again, but our earnestness surmounted many difficulties. Besides, we were often innocent spectators of British drill manœuvres in the locality, and I can assure you we kept our eyes and ears open for tips. If the chance of picking up an odd revolver came our way, we managed to find the money somehow, and added to our little supply of munitions.

The best tribute to our success in the art of military education was paid by the officials of the British Government, who, at a later stage, described our little band as the "crack shots of the I.R.A." In passing it is well to observe that we ourselves learned that anything in the nature of official statements issued from the British military headquarters at Parkgate Street, Dublin, or from the civil authorities at Dublin Castle, should always be digested with a considerable quantity of salt.

It was in August, 1917, that our little handful of men made its first public parade. By that time the men who had been deported after the Easter Week Insurrection had been released, and all over the country were beginning to do what we had been doing on our own account for nearly a year. In the political arena two bye-elections which had occurred in Roscommon and Longford, resulted in a triumph

for candidates standing for the Republican cause. A few months later still Eamon de Valera, on his release from Lewes Jail, had been invited to contest a Parliamentary vacancy in East Clare. Standing for a Republic, and for declining to attend England's Parliament, he was elected by a huge majority. Shortly after his election he addressed an enormous meeting in Tipperary town, and we, in the dark green uniforms of the Irish Volunteers, acted as a bodyguard of the man who was shortly afterwards elected President of the Irish Republic. Tipperary was then occupied by a garrison of over one thousand British soldiers, and as our meeting was held almost under the shadow of their barracks we did not carry rifles. Instead we carried hurleys. Now, we were thus, to the amazement of all peaceful people, committing a treble act of defiance against England. In the first place, it was a crime to march in military formation; secondly, it was an even more serious offence to wear uniform; and thirdly, it was violating a special proclamation just issued against the carrying of hurleys.

That proclamation came about in this way. A meeting was being held in Beresford Place, Dublin, one Sunday afternoon to protest against the treatment of Irish prisoners detained by England. The meeting was being addressed by Count Plunkett and Cathal Brugha, when Inspector Mills, of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, with some of his men

attempted to prevent the holding of this peaceful meeting of citizens. The meeting included many young men going to or returning from a game of hurling—Ireland's national pastime. In the melee, which followed the attempt to break up the meeting and to arrest the speakers, the Inspector was struck with a hurley, and received injuries from which he died. Thereupon, Sir Bryan Mahon, then Commander-in-Chief of the British troops in Ireland, issued a proclamation making it illegal to carry hurleys in public. To realise the absurdity of this proclamation one has only to imagine a civilised Government declaring it illegal to carry a walking-stick. The result was what anybody knowing Ireland might expect—hurleys for a time were carried in places where their use was scarcely known, and the British Government became a laughing-stock.

This first military display of ours in Tipperary was not a bigger shock to the enemy than it was to the local Sinn Feiners ; for you must understand that by this time public opinion had swung round almost completely in favour of Sinn Fein, and we were burdened with thousands of recruits, who were not in their hearts in favour of any stronger weapons than resolutions. On this occasion many of the local Sinn Feiners were shocked by our audacity in taking the step we did without a solemn discussion, a formal proposition to the meeting, and a long-

winded resolution. Such poor souls often hampered us later on, but we didn't mind. The purely political wing of Sinn Fein criticised us severely, I believe, but we kept silent, just listened to all, and judged our men.

CHAPTER II.

PREPARING FOR THE FRAY.

THE local police duly informed their headquarters of this open defiance of British law in Tipperary. They were ordered to arrest the culprits. But, as we had no desire to enjoy the hospitality of His Britannic Majesty's jails, Sean Treacy and I went "on the run," that is to say, in order to evade our pursuers we had to leave our homes, and keep moving from the house of one trusty friend to another. But on the Friday following our public parade, Sean was arrested by the "Peelers." Members of the R.I.C. were better known in Ireland for generations as "Peelers," a term of contempt coined from the name of Sir Robert Peel, who, in the early part of the nineteenth century first organised the force.

Sean was taken to Cork Jail where he first met the brothers Brennan, of Meelick, County Clare, who were also unwilling guests of the British jailers. The three brothers Brennan—Austin, Paddy and Michael—afterwards became famous officers in the

Southern Command of the Irish Republican Army, and at present hold high ranks in the Free State Army. In passing I should say that in throwing men into prison at that time England was really giving them an excellent opportunity of exchanging views, discussing plans for the future and generally turning the prison into a "University for Rebels." Many indeed learned more about drill, and the methods of making explosives, while they were in prison than they had ever before known.

Sean was eventually tried by court-martial, and sentenced to two years imprisonment, but sixteen months of the term were remitted. These trials were, of course, a mere formality, for our men never put up any legal defence, but declined to recognise the right of any British tribunal to try them. Very often in the early stages our men turned the proceedings into a farce by reading a newspaper or singing while the evidence was being taken.

With a number of his comrades Sean went on hunger-strike as a protest against their treatment. It was the first time that Irish political prisoners used this weapon, which later became so common. They were removed to Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, where they continued their hunger-strike until one of their number, Commandant Tom Ashe, who had taken a leading part in one of the most successful exploits in the 1916 Insurrection—died as a result of the attempts made by the prison doctor and

officials to feed him forcibly. The tragedy raised the whole Irish nation to fury, and the British Government realised for the first time that our men were in earnest, and ready to die for their principles. An agreement was entered into whereby they were to be treated as prisoners of war, or as political prisoners, and forcible feeding was never again tried.

Meantime I had been busy during my comrade's imprisonment. I organised sections of Volunteers in all the surrounding parishes, and as similar efforts were being made all over the country our military organisation soon became even more perfect than it had been in 1916. The British Government, true to its traditions, broke the agreement made with the prisoners, and Sean and his fellow Volunteers, who had now been removed to Dundalk Jail, went on hunger-strike again, and secured their release.

All this time the organisation and drilling of the Volunteers had been done secretly. Now and again the British surprised bodies of men here and there, and captured them. But when Sean came home he brought back the word that we were to come out in the open to drill, even if the British Government attempted to arrest every man of us. It was felt that if England carried out the policy of wholesale arrests she would soon have tens of thousands of Irishmen in jail, and would again make herself a laughing-stock to the nations.

This was in the early part of 1918. By this time we had been getting a fair supply of arms and ammunition by channels which may not yet be disclosed. It must be remembered that for several years before this no firearms were allowed into the country, no shops could sell any they had on hands, and even sporting cartridges could only be bought by special permission of the British military authorities. The enemy scented another Insurrection.

They became more alert, and once more Sean Treacy was arrested. From the moment of his capture he again went on hunger-strike, and was joined by Michael Brennan, of Meelick, and by Seumas O'Neill, a teacher in Rockwell College, both of whom had been arrested three days after Sean.

During Sean's first term of imprisonment I had been elected company captain; and now during his second term I was further promoted to be Commandant of the Battalion, and later still I became Brigade Commandant. At that period each company elected its own captain, each man having a vote, and each man being eligible. The various company officers in a battalion area then met, and in their turn elected the officers for the battalion, and so with the brigade. Truly, it was a democratic army.

This was the time when things were going badly with England in the war. In March, 1918, began

the great German offensive, when the British lines were broken through. In their despair the English cried, "Conscript the Irish." Within a few weeks the necessary Act was passed in the British Parliament, and all preparations made to force Irishmen to fight England's battle. Sir John French, later Lord French, himself an Irishman by birth, was British Viceroy in Dublin.

The Irish people were roused to action. Never before was there such a fierce determination to resist the British plans. Bishops, priests and political leaders of all shades of opinion met together to face the threat. In the moment of common danger all turned instinctively to the Irish Volunteers. If resistance was to come it would only come from their ranks; for England and Ireland well knew that the Irish Volunteers would be wiped out to the last man before they would allow a single Irishman to be forced into the British Army.

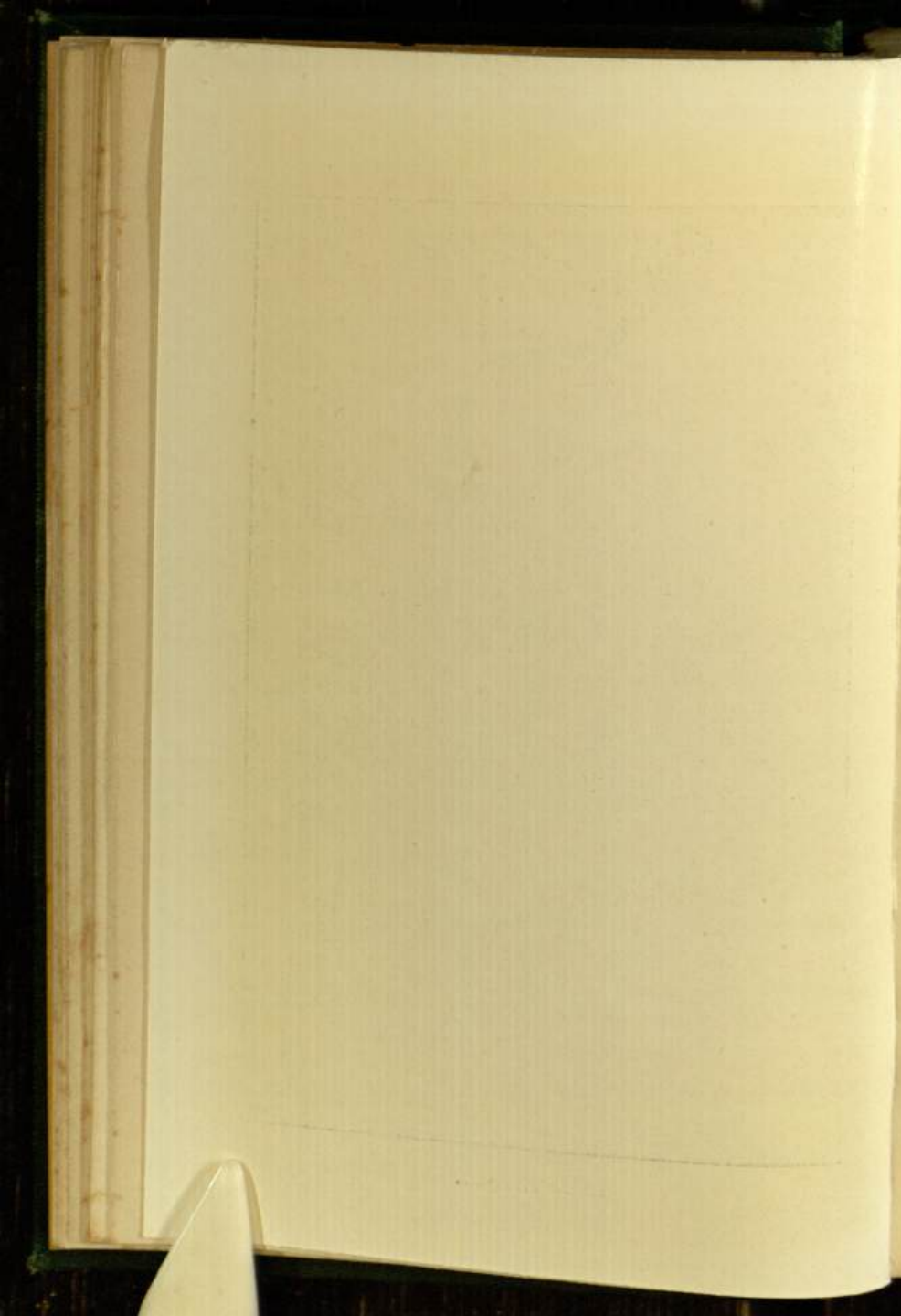
Our trouble was the shortage of arms; of men we now had too many. At that time I was Brigade Commandant, and we decided to make raids for arms. We knew there were plenty of shot-guns, revolvers, bayonets, swords, and an occasional rifle here and there in private houses, especially in the houses of the element loyal to England.

We had very little trouble in collecting the arms. Our men in every district had compiled exact information regarding every house in which there was

a weapon. We generally went at night and asked for the arms. Those who would have liked to refuse knew they dare not. Many others gave them willingly, and some even sent us word to call for them. In no case had we to fire a shot during the few weeks we were on this job. We had to do the thing as quickly as possible, for as soon as the British got wind of it they immediately issued an order that all arms should be handed to them for safe keeping. We generally got there first, and more than once our visit to a house was only a few minutes before that of the peelers.



SEAN TREACY.



CHAPTER III.

OUR FIRST MUNITION FACTORY.

DURING the summer of 1918 the threat of Conscription hung over the land, and young and old flocked to the ranks of the Volunteers. It is safe to estimate that at that time nine-tenths of all able-bodied Irishmen between the ages of sixteen and fifty were Volunteers of a kind; while the women had their association—Cumann na mBan—and the boys had theirs, the Fianna or Boy Scouts, all preparing to be our auxiliaries. As most of our officers were in jail on one charge or another, we who were out were kept working day and night. All the time I felt enthusiastic, for I saw in Conscription a glorious chance of uniting our own people. Though poorly armed we were determined to fight; and I believed that if the fight came the survivors would be united in their purpose, and to me a united Ireland of two million people would be preferable to an Ireland of four and a half million divided into three or four different factions.

Meantime, though the Conscription Act had become law, England, realising our determination, postponed its enforcement for a few months, in order to give us an opportunity of enlisting voluntarily. We went on with our preparations, and became all the more daring. Sometimes it was both bewildering and amusing to the public to witness our manoeuvres.

More than once, for example, in sham battles we attacked or defended Tipperary town, and actually proclaimed certain roads or streets as "military areas," where British soldiers or police, as well as civilians were forbidden to enter during the "operations." These operations were carried out by a few hundred Volunteers, while the town was occupied by a garrison of over a thousand British soldiers. On such occasions we had no display of arms, though a few of our number might for special reasons have their revolvers in their pockets.

It soon became evident that England was wiser than to try conscripting us. The threat gradually faded away, and so too did our great army! But the small number that remained was of more use. They meant to fight for Independence. The others had been only thinking of saving themselves from the trenches of France, and believed with the old political leaders that Ireland's freedom was not worth the shedding of a drop of blood. As my subsequent actions showed, I held a different view.

At this time, as I have already explained, Sean Treacy was enjoying the luxury of a hunger-strike in Dundalk Jail. He had been thirteen days without food, and we feared they intended to let him die. We who were outside felt that we should do something without delay. I got a brain wave. Why not capture a Peeler, bring him off to a safe hiding-place, and put him on forcible hunger-strike, and keep him as a hostage for Sean's safety? I discussed the plan with some of the others: they were favourably disposed; and as we knew that a few policemen regularly patrolled the railway line near the Limerick Junction every evening, we decided they should be our hostages. All preparations were made, and our hiding-place up in the mountainous district on the Limerick-Tipperary border was selected. Forty men were mobilised to carry out the job; but for once the policemen failed to patrol the line. Later I found out that the scheme had been turned down by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret organisation which included the most reliable of the Volunteers, and which practically controlled the Volunteer Army. After that I severed my connection with the I.R.B.

Sean Treacy was released in July, 1918. When he came home he was full of plans for organising. I had had an overdose of it in the months that he was away, and from my experience I was more in

favour of starting a fight at once than of trifling further with organising. Sean would have his way, and we agreed to differ. I at once started a "munition factory" in partnership with my friend Patrick Keogh. Many a lively dispute we had on various points, some important, some otherwise, but as soon as Sean appeared he always poured oil on the troubled waters.

I must give you a description of our factory, lest the reader be picturing an Irish replica of the Krupp works at Essen. The building itself was a small rural cottage owned by Tom O'Dwyer, of the Boghole. Three rooms were let to Denis O'Dwyer, of Dervice. Both he and the owner were well-known characters in Tipperary. Our equipment was of the crudest kind, for we had no machinery. But it was a simple matter to make ordinary black gunpowder. We also turned out crude hand grenades, which, by the way, had to be ignited by a match before being thrown, so you can imagine the risks if these had to be brought into action on a windy or a rainy night. At this time, too, we collected every available cartridge, including sporting cartridges for shot guns, and these were refilled with buckshot. Keogh and I always quarrelled as to whether it was better to put four or eight grains of lead to the cartridge. The reader can easily imagine the effect on a poor devil who might get the full charge of one of these refilled sporting cartridges.

Though most of our raids for arms had been carried out by this time, we still found occasion for an expedition of the kind from time to time. My first encounter with the enemy was one night while I was returning from a raid.

A small number of us, including Sean Treacy, were cycling home from Tipperary, when my bicycle went flat, and I had to dismount to pump it up. I ordered the others to go ahead, saying I would overtake them. On their way they passed the police barrack on the outskirts of the town. It would seem that the police heard them passing the barrack, and came out to have a look round; or else they were actually on the road when the men passed, and, with their usual courage, were afraid to confront the six Volunteers. Anyhow, I neither heard nor saw anybody when I had pumped up my bicycle, until I was suddenly pulled off by a burly Peeler. In my left hand I carried a small iron bar for forcing locks, so I tried its effect on his head. The bar got the better of the argument. I then drew my revolver, and covered the group of peelers. "Surrender, or I shoot," shouted their officer. "Put up your hands, or I'll shoot the lot of you," I replied. They complied with my order.

I then stepped backwards, rolling my bicycle, and still keeping my gun levelled at the peelers, until I reached a laneway. I dashed up the lane,

mounted my bicycle, and escaped from the town not a moment too soon. The alarm was quickly raised, and the whole town was surrounded, and every street and lane searched. But I was safe in my factory with my comrades.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FACTORY BLOWN UP.

MY most exciting experience was to see our munition factory blown into the sky. I had a narrow escape, for I was within fifty yards of the door ; but my partner, Paddy Keogh, had an even more wonderful escape, for he was actually on the premises when the explosion occurred.

We never knew what brought about the havoc. I had gone out to a well to fetch a can of water, for necessity compelled us to do all our own cooking and cleaning. As I was returning to the cottage, I saw the roof leaving it, and simultaneously came the roar of the bursting grenades. In a moment the house was in flames. It was a desperate situation. My one thought was to save my comrade, if indeed he was not already beyond human aid.

I dropped the can of water and rushed to the house. I dashed up the stairs and found Paddy lying in the room either dead or unconscious. I raised him in my arms and carried him with a heavy heart through the rain of shrapnel down the stairs

and out of the house, and away to the banks of the Multeen, a little stream not far away from the house. My heart was wrung with anguish as I laid him by the stream and rushed for my can to throw some of the fresh clean water over his pale countenance. Before I had time to try the effects of a second supply, Paddy was on his feet and rushing for me—very much alive!

"You damn fool, do you want to drown me?" he shouted. And then he added a lot more that I prefer not to repeat.

The destruction of our house was a heavy blow, and for a while we mourned the loss of our little factory and its contents.

My little capital was gone now, and the O'Dwyers had to be compensated for the loss of their home. I thought out my plans, and gathered together all the tradesmen in our little army, and put them to work. In a few days the cottage was repaired, and looked none the worse.

By the way, the Black and Tans, at a later stage wreaked vengeance on it more effectively than the explosion of the grenades.

O'Dwyer's house was now out of bounds for my work, but in a very short time I got another house from a good typical Tipperary man, Jer. O'Connell. Here I was more successful, because I took greater

precautions with my work. I guarded against another explosion ; but other circumstances compelled us to evacuate it within a few months.

During our stay in this house our condition was far from happy. Of bodily comforts we had none. We had neither bed nor bed coverings, and worse still, we had no money wherewith to buy them. We got a loan of a couple of blankets from neighbours, and we commandeered some straw from the nearest farmer. First we spread out the straw on the ground and covered it over with one blanket. We then spread over us a lot of old newspapers (which we carefully collected every day), and over these we placed our second blanket. The paper was excellent for keeping us warm, and by not turning out of one position we usually got about three hours' sleep. As soon as we moved, the paper tore and the cold quickly worked its way through. Still greater discomfort than our bed was caused by the presence of mice ! The little beggars were very numerous and very daring. Many a night we were wakened by their nibbling at our hair. Whenever I protested, in action as well as in words, Sean Treacy would plead—" Ah, the poor little creatures ! They might as well be happy when we can't. Don't be vexed with them, Dan, even if they take a little of your black hair." I argued that it was enough to have the peelers after us, and that if the mice had any decency they ought to leave us alone.

For some time things went on smoothly, and our work progressed pleasantly. Then my partner, Keogh, left me, and I was joined by Sean Hogan—whose life for the next five years was to be very closely linked up with mine.

The two Seans and myself seemed to have but one mind—I have never had any difference with Hogan up to the present day, and never had an angry word with my dear old comrade—Sean Treacy—up to the day of his death.

It was during our sojourn in O'Connell's house that we were joined by Seumas Robinson, later elected Deputy for East Tipperary and Waterford. Robinson, who had lived a good part of his life in Glasgow, at once became a fast friend. The four of us—Treacy, Hogan, Robinson and I—seemed perfectly balanced in temperament, age, outlook and hopes. Many an ambitious plan we made, and many a dream we dreamed of the Free Ireland for which alone we now lived and worked.

After a few months Jer. O'Connell gave us notice to quit. We had no tenant's rights, no protecting Act of Parliament, and no alternative but to depart. Being "on the run" we dare not go looking for lodgings in the ordinary way, even if we had money to pay. The peelers knew every hole and corner in their district, and were ever on the prowl for Irishmen known to have little love for English rule. But good luck came to our rescue.

Some cousins of Sean Hogan's had a little dairy or outhouse, which they generally placed at our disposal. Here we enjoyed the luxury of bed, clothing and other little comforts, but our meals were few and far between. I myself lived for two weeks in the "Dairy" on rice boiled in water, without either sugar or milk. This abstemious life was not new to me. For months while I was organising I used to fast from breakfast to breakfast, and many a night I walked twenty miles for a bed, or even a shake-down.

The "Dairy" did not escape the attention of the enemy, who subsequently gave it the name of "The Tin House."

We were terribly handicapped for want of money; not indeed for personal comforts, which seldom troubled us, but to get round.

On one occasion Sean Treacy and I cycled to Dublin to get some arms. We had no money for train fares, and it was essential that we should reach Dublin by 6 o'clock on a particular Monday evening. There was a Brigade Council meeting fixed for Sunday night—at which we were bound to attend. That meant that we could not leave Tipperary till about 8 o'clock on Monday morning. We covered the 110 miles, and we reached Dublin in good time. Of course we were very hungry, but once we reached the house of our good friend Phil Shanahan—himself a Tipperary man, and later a Republican

Deputy for Dublin—all our troubles disappeared. Then and after we never wanted for anything while Phil was about.

We had to remain in Dublin until the following Saturday before we could conclude our business. Here another difficulty arose. We were due back in Tipperary at an officers' meeting the same Saturday at 6 p.m. We left Phil Shanahan's house at 8.30 in the morning. We carried six revolvers, five hundred rounds of .303 (rifle) ammunition, and half a dozen grenades, and we were the only two who were punctual at the meeting.

CHAPTER V.

THE POLITICAL LANDSLIDE.

IN December, 1918, came the event which gave the Irish Volunteers the moral sanction for their subsequent activities—the General Election.

It is important to bear in mind the position at that time. No General Election had been held in Ireland for seven years. In that interval the vast majority of the people had completely changed their views. They no longer had any faith in England, or in the efficacy of sending their hundred representatives to the British Parliament, where they were in a helpless minority, and where their voices were scarcely heard. England's treachery on the Home Rule question and her threat of Conscription had cost her dearly. But the greatest force of all in the awakening was the Rising of 1916. That episode had put new life and heart into the people. The bye-elections, to which I have already referred had given the people their only opportunity, so far, to indicate the growing desire for liberty, complete and untrammelled.

On November 11th, 1918, the Great War virtually ended with the Armistice. A week later it was announced that the long delayed General Election was fixed for the 14th December. Sinn Fein got its opportunity, for that election was to be the first ever held under the British Constitution on the basis of manhood suffrage, and we knew well that the young men of Ireland would vote overwhelmingly for our cause.

But we had to educate and organise. The name and policy of Sinn Fein were still grossly misunderstood. The public did not clearly realise the difference between the political body, Sinn Fein, and the military organisation—the Irish Volunteers. The Insurrection of 1916 was commonly called the “Sinn Fein Rising,” and our Volunteers were spoken of as the “Sinn Fein Volunteers.” Even the Republican Tricolour—the Green, White and Orange of the Young Ireland Party of 1848, and of the Fenians of the next generation—was called the “Sinn Fein Flag.” But misnomers did not trouble us very much, for the Sinn Fein body had been adjusting its programme to suit Republican ideals. And now when Sinn Fein clubs were springing up in every parish, it was quite usual to find that the President or the Secretary of the club was also captain of the local Volunteer corps. The majority of the younger men in the Sinn Fein

Political Organisation were also Volunteers ; and the Volunteers were also members of the Sinn Fein club.

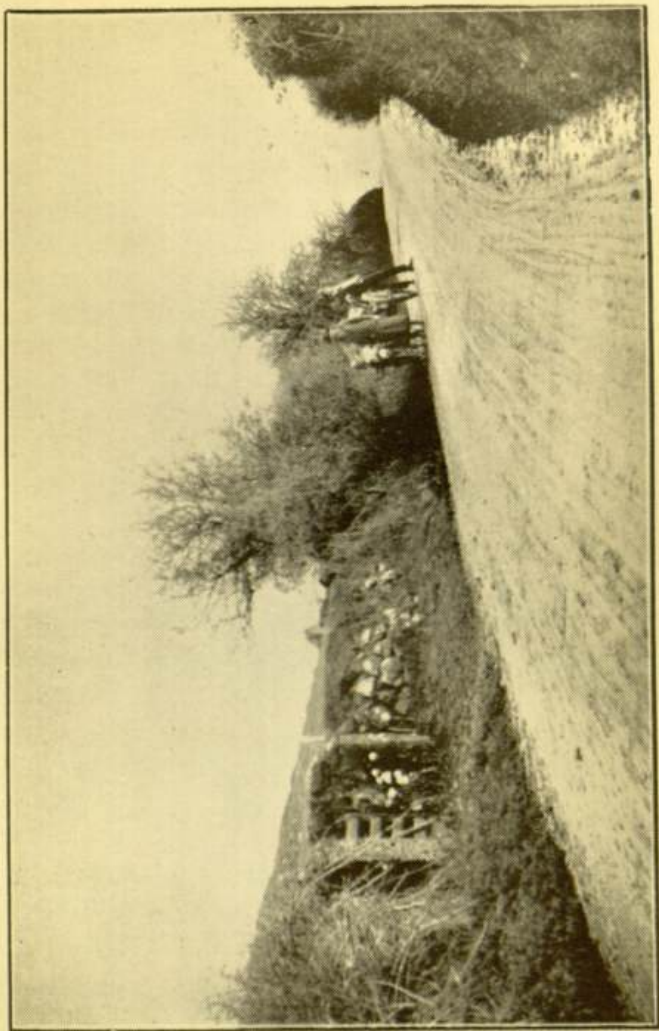
During the period of the Election the people went Sinn Fein mad. We had most of the clergy with us, and the earnestness and enthusiasm of our speakers and organisers swept the country. The political wing of the Republican cause spread like wild-fire ; but our army was gradually dwindling. While we lamented this decay on the military side, we saw the necessity of making an enormous success of the elections, hoping to restore our army to its proper strength when the election was over. So we threw ourselves heart and soul into the contest, and worked night and day for the Republican candidates. We didn't leave a dead wall or a cross-roads in the country that we did not decorate with appeals to " Rally to Sinn Fein," " Vote for the Republic," " Stand by the men of 1916." Such were the rallying calls addressed to the people during those few critical weeks. No secret was made of our policy. Every Republican was pledged never to take his seat in the British Parliament, but to work at home in Ireland for the establishment and recognition of the Republic.

We knocked plenty of fun out of the election. Alas ! many of those who worked hardest in those days have passed under the sod since. Our workers in Tipperary included Dinny Lacy, killed during the

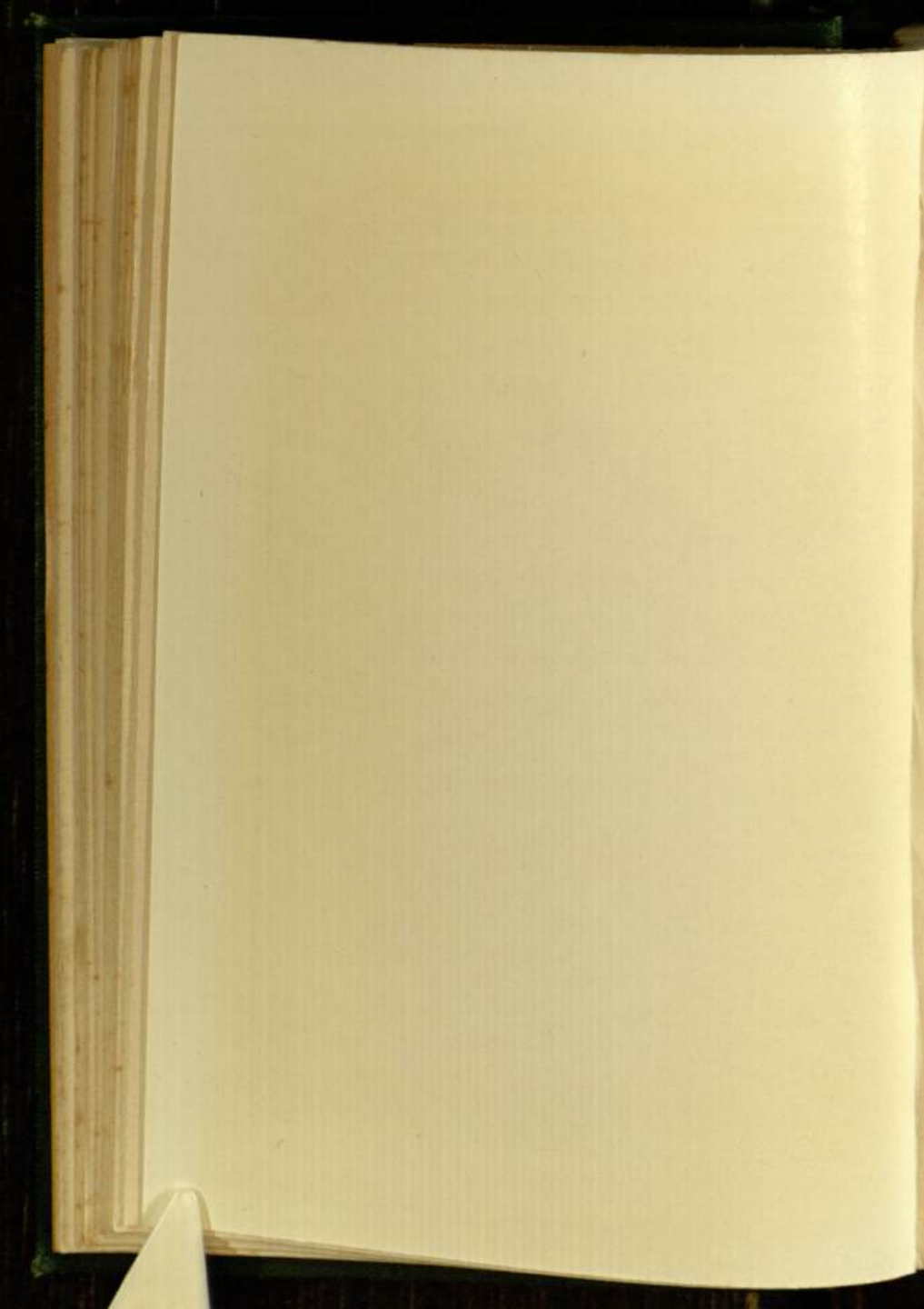
Civil War in his native county ; Sean Duffy and Paddy Maloney (whose father was our successful candidate), later killed in an encounter with the British not far from Soloheadbeg ; Sean Allen, who was executed by the British in Cork Jail ; "Sparkie" Breen, also killed in the Civil War. But these memories only serve to remind one of the fine fellows we have lost. Anyhow we won every seat in Munster, except Waterford City. Leinster and Connaught did equally well, and in Ulster we won several seats. The net result was that of the one hundred and five constituencies, seventy-three had repudiated British rule and plumped for an Irish Republic.

A month later, on January 21st, 1919, these elected representatives of the vast majority of the Irish people met in public session in Dublin, formally proclaimed the Republic, and established a Government. The same day, and almost at the same hour, our little handful of Volunteers were striking the first blow since the formal repudiation of British authority by the people. But let me explain how it came about.

After the election we had more time to review our position. The results had cleared the air ; the people had by an overwhelming verdict given us moral sanction to drive the British forces out of Ireland. But the election work had had a serious effect on our army. Many had ceased to be soldiers



SCENE OF SOLOHEADBEG AMBUSH.



and had become politicians. There was danger of disintegration, a danger which had been growing since the threat of Conscription disappeared a few months earlier. I was convinced that some sort of action was absolutely necessary. Over and over again I discussed the matter with Sean Treacy. I knew that if we once showed them the way, there were plenty of fine fellows on whom we could rely. Sooner than we expected the opportunity came.

Let me introduce my readers to the first authentic account of the affair known as "The Soloheadbeg Outbreak," or, as the hostile Press persistently titled it, "The Soloheadbeg Murders"; for those who read the newspaper versions of our struggle with England must bear in mind that every newspaper in Ireland was hostile to our policy, and so remained to the end, though a few of them lost their bitterness towards us as the campaign progressed. It must also be remembered that even when the "Great War" ended the British Press Censorship was continued in Ireland for over a year.

CHAPTER VI.

SOLOHEADBEG.

AT the beginning of January, 1919, we received information to the effect that a quantity of explosives was to be conveyed to Soloheadbeg Quarry for blasting purposes. The consignment, we knew, would be guarded by armed policemen, as was always the rule at that time.

I spoke to Sean about it. "Here is our chance," I said, "let us start the war soon, or the army will lose heart." I knew we had but a very small number of men with determination enough for such a job, but I knew too that the number would increase with time; and, in any case, it is quality, not quantity, that counts in guerilla warfare.

We discussed the proposal for a long time. Finally we decided to disarm the guard and seize the explosives, for, as Sean said, there was nothing we needed more at that time than guns and explosives. We made a careful survey of the locality. We selected the spot for our first ambush. We knew every inch of the ground, we had been

born and reared in the vicinity, and Sean's own farmhouse was not a stone's throw from the quarry.

Soloheadbeg is a small townland about two and a half miles from Tipperary town, and less than a mile from the Limerick Junction. The quarry stands on an eminence on a little by-road. Farmhouses and cottages are dotted here and there in the neighbourhood, though there is no village nearer than Donohill, a mile and a half distant. It was in this plain, overshadowed by the gigantic figure of Galteemore away to the south, that Brian Boru and his brother Mahon fought their first great battle with the Danes in 968, when Brian with his gallant army of Tipperary men and Clare men routed the invaders, and never ceased from the pursuit till he reached Limerick twenty miles away and burned the town over their heads. The right wing of his army swept across the hills where the quarry now stands, as the defeated Danes fled to their stronghold.

The quarry itself stands on the right, down the little by-road. There is a high ditch on each side of the road by which it is approached from Tipperary, and here and there is the further cover afforded by thick white-thorn bushes. I should explain that what we call a "ditch" in Tipperary is really a bank, or dike.

Unfortunately our information regarding the date of the arrival of the explosives was not quite correct. We expected it on January 16th, but it did not come till five days later. During these five days we waited in readiness for the attempt. Our men had left their homes without giving any indication of their plans. After three days I had to send all home except eight. We had neither provisions to feed them nor money to purchase the provisions.

And so the nine of us who remained were watching and waiting. The men who were with me were—Sean Treacy, Seumas Robinson, Sean Hogan, Tim Crowe, Patrick O'Dwyer, of Hollyford; Michael Ryan, of Grange (Donohill); Patrick McCormick, and Jack O'Meara, Tipperary.

Our chief concern during these days of waiting was to avoid attracting attention. We did not want to be seen by any of the people in the locality. Those were nearly all employed at the quarry, and as the times were then disturbed enough any report that strangers were hanging around the neighbourhood might have completely upset our plans. Every morning before daybreak we went as noiselessly as possible to our hiding place, there to remain under cover, but ever on the alert, while one of our number acted as scout from the by-road to the main road from Tipperary, along which the peelers were bound to approach. There we waited in

silence until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and then we abandoned our position, knowing they would not come later, as they liked to be back in town before darkness set in. We spent the night at my own home, where my mother prepared breakfast each morning about 4 o'clock. On the fifth morning she declared, "If you don't do something to-day you can get your own breakfast to-morrow."

At last came the fateful morning of January 21st, 1919, the day that was to see our country rejoice at the first meeting of the Parliament of Ireland, the first Dail Eireann setting up the Government of the Republic, and sending its message to the free nations of the earth.

We had taken our place behind the ditch, and had spent many weary hours waiting and watching. We were quietly discussing the great event that was to take place in Dublin that day. Our scout was away with his eyes fixed on the Tipperary road. Suddenly our conversation was interrupted by our scout. Dashing towards us from his look-out, his eyes sparkling with the light of battle, and a grim smile on his countenance, he whispered the word of warning—"They're coming, they're coming!"

Every man knew his post. For days we had thought of nothing but the position we were now in. If any of our number felt nervous or excited he showed little outward sign of it. Like a flash every soldier manned his post. Our hour of trial was at

hand ; we were to face the enemy, with life or death in the balance. And incidentally we were to open another phase in the long fight for the freedom of our country.

Our scout was again on the alert, and again he returned to report. This time he gave us the actual distance, and he told us their number.

Nearer and nearer they come. In the still clear air we hear the sound of the horses' hoofs, and the rumbling of a heavy cart over the rough hilly road.

That day I did not feel the same coolness that I afterwards strove to develop. My nerves were highly strung ; I realised what we were doing, and I foresaw the consequences whether our plans succeeded or failed.

We were facing men trained to the use of firearms, especially disciplined for such emergencies as this. In all probability they had but just completed the special course in bomb-throwing, which had lately been added to the accomplishments of the R.I.C. My little squad had little experience in the practical use of firearms. We had never been in a position to fire one round of ball-cartridge for the sake of practice. We had often chaffed one another about this want of experience, and jokingly referred to the probable consequences if our nerves got jumpy when the real time came. But we always brushed aside these idle fears, and maintained a

calm and cheerful exterior, consoling ourselves with the thought, "We're Irish anyhow, and all Irishmen are fighters by nature."

But now the hour had come. From my point of vantage I shot a hurried glance down the road as the party approached. The driver and the County Council employee who was to take over the explosives walked beside the horses. Two policemen in their black uniforms were also on foot carrying rifles in their hands. They were a little distance behind the cart.

Only a moment before the blood was rushing madly through my veins; now when I saw them actually at hand all my nervousness disappeared, and I felt cool and strong again. I believed I could fight a dozen of these enemy forces all by myself. For the men who were now approaching had deserted their country, and were the spies and hirelings of her enemy. Nearer still they come. They talk in low tones. They are almost under the shadow of our revolvers.

"Hands up!" The cry comes from our men as with one voice. "Hands up!" But no! They seize their rifles, and with the best military movement bring them to the ready. They were Irishmen, too, and would rather die than surrender.

Again and again we called upon them to put up their hands. We would have preferred that they

should surrender without bloodshed, but they were dogged and stubborn, and now 'twas our lives or theirs.

Their fingers were on the triggers. Another appeal on our side would be useless—perhaps too late for ourselves.

Quick and sure our volleys rang out. The aim was true. The two policemen were dead.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR ESCAPE.

NOW began our career of real excitement. If we had disarmed the police without firing a shot the thing would not have been so serious. But the shots had alarmed the countryside. In a moment men and women would appear at every doorway. On the roadside were the two terrified civilians, James Godfrey, the driver of the cart, and Patrick Flynn, the County Council employee. Within an hour hundreds of police and military would be scouring the countryside for us. Henceforth I realised we were to be outlawed rapparees with a price on our heads.

But it was a time for action. We seized the rifles and equipment of the police, mounted the cart, and drove away with our booty. The cart contained more than a hundred-weight of gelignite, but thirty electric detonators which Flynn had in his pocket escaped us, as we learned a week later.

Never was a poor horse called upon to give such gallant service in a dash for life and liberty. Sean Hogan held the reins; Sean Treacy and I sat behind. The others of the party had been ordered to escape in different directions, and all got clear away.

On we sped, urging our poor horse to greater speed, while school children and farmworkers watched us in amazement as we went by.

We were heading for Donaskeigh. For a great part of our journey not a word was spoken. Treacy was the first to break the silence. He spoke in the same cool tones that he might have used if he were sitting round a fire discussing a game of cards.

"Do you remember, Dan, when we were reading about explosives? The book says that they are dangerous if frozen, or if they get jolted?"

This reminder did not add to our peace of mind, for if ever explosives got a jolting ours did. The road was rough and uneven; heaps of loose stones were scattered along the way; the cart was one of the ordinary farmyard type, heavily and roughly built, and without springs.

But on we had to go until we reached the spot where we had decided to hide our booty. There we quickly deposited the gelignite, all except two sticks which I kept for a decoy. These I threw on the roadside at the spot where we eventually abandoned the horse. For months later, day after day, police

and soldiers actually walked over our dug-out, but never discovered it. They had been deceived by the two loose sticks, and kept themselves warm by digging trenches all over the country, but their search was in vain.

When we had hidden the booty our trouble began. The poor old horse could go no further. Besides we had no desire to keep him much longer, for he would only furnish the enemy with a clue to getting on our track later. We left him on the roadside and went our way. A few hours later that district was spotted with khaki figures, for the horse was found that evening at Aileen Bridge, about four miles from Tipperary town on the main road to Thurles.

Difficulties were now looming up before our eyes. Tipperary was no longer safe. The weather was against us. We were tired with the excitement of the day, and the suspense of the days before, but we could not think of rest for a long while yet. The weather was intensely cold, and, to make things worse, it started to snow. That not only added to our difficulties, but there was the danger that if the snow lodged we might easily be traced.

At Ryan's Cross, near Aileen Bridge, we abandoned the horse. Then we turned to the right. Previously we had been going north, but now we went south-east, and gradually south towards where the Galtee mountains towered above us. We walked forty miles over these mountains and valleys, for

like many before us we felt that they would give us hope and shelter. All through the ages since Geoffrey Keating penned his famous *History* when there was a price on his head, the Galtee mountains and the Glen of Aherlow have been the first refuge of the Tipperary felon.

We had travelled four miles after leaving the horse when we took our first rest at Mrs. Fitzgerald's, of Rathclogheen, near Thomastown. There we had our first square meal since my mother gave us breakfast early that morning, and right heartily we enjoyed the ham and eggs and tea our hostess set before us. It was in that house that our famous countryman, Father Mathew, was born.

But we could spare no time for lingering; we had yet to put many more miles between us and Soloheadbeg. We resumed our journey towards the mountains. At Keville's Cross we crossed the Cahir and Tipperary Road. The cold was bitter, and the wind was piercing. The only other living things we saw out in the open were two mountain goats, spangled together near the cross-roads. Several times we lost our way after that. We dare not call to a strange wayside farmhouse, for at that time the people had not learned to keep a shut mouth. At one point Sean Treacy fell into a drain about twenty feet deep, and we thought he was killed. When we got him out we found he was little the worse for his fall, and he assured us he would fire another shot

before handing in his gun. We continued our journey towards the summit. Once when we had traversed the Glen and climbed Galteemore's rugged slopes from the Tipperary side, we lost our bearings on the top. In the height of the summer you will find it chilly enough on Galteemore. You can imagine how we felt that evening in the heart of winter. It had taken us three hours to climb, but after all our exertions we wandered back to the two goats—back to our starting-point. In despair we abandoned all hope of crossing the mountain. As Sean Hogan said then, "'tis all very well for poets sitting in easy chairs at the fireside to write about the beauties of mountains, but if they had to climb them as we had, hungry and cold, they would be in no mood to appreciate the beauties of nature."

When we returned to Keville's Cross we decided on a new plan. We crossed on to the railway line, and determined to face for Cahir. It was lucky we did so. We had not gone many miles along the line when we saw the lights of the military lorries that were scouring the roads in search of us. Had we been down on the road we could never have avoided them.

A railway is a tiresome road to travel, even at ordinary times. For us in our condition that night it was cruel. Yet we had to keep on. Once in the thick darkness I saw a black figure a few paces ahead. I was walking in front and promptly levelled

my revolver, with the order "hands up!" The figure remained motionless, having apparently halted at my command. I advanced, with my gun still levelled, and walked into a railway signpost with the warning, "Trespassers will be prosecuted." Unhappy though our plight was, the boys laughed at my mistake, and I had to laugh myself with them.

A little farther on Sean Hogan asked us to stop for a moment, as his boot was feeling loose. Sean Treacy tied the lace, but he did not travel much farther till he again complained that it was loose. Sean stopped to examine it, and found that the whole boot was practically worn away by the rocks and boulders. Only a bit of a sole and the laced portion of the upper remained.

All the time Sean Treacy tried to keep our spirits from drooping. Several times we asked him how far more was it to Cahir, and always got the reply, "the next turn of the road." He was right, of course; but as the road and the railway which runs parallel to it are an almost perfect straight line for three miles, the next turn was a long way off. Now and again we were so exhausted that we used to stand and rest our heads against the ditch by the railway side to take a sleep—or what we persuaded ourselves was a sleep—for five minutes.

At last we reached Cahir. We were now as near to absolute collapse as men could be. We were

becoming desperate. For the first time we had to assume that outward coolness, and take that risk which later became almost part of our daily routine. We walked right through the town of Cahir, a garrison town on the main road from Limerick to Clonmel and Waterford, and only fifteen miles from Soloheadbeg. But we had to take the risk. Our blood was almost congealed with cold, we were ravenously hungry, and there was little life left in us. But we knew one good friend on whom we could rely for a night's shelter. That friend was Mrs. Tobin, of Tincurry House, near Cahir. I shall never forget her kindness to us that night and to others of the boys later. The British afterwards bombed and destroyed the house in daylight as an "official reprisal" for the shooting of District-Inspector Potter, an incident to which I shall refer in a later chapter.

We got to bed the first time for a week. The three of us were in the same plight. Excitement, cold and exhaustion all combined to make sleep impossible for us. But we lay limp for four hours, and in this way we got some rest for our weary limbs.

We got up full of anxiety to hear the news. Since we left Soloheadbeg we had spoken to nobody and had not seen a newspaper. Sure enough, there were the big splash headings, just as we anticipated, announcing this "Tipperary Outrage," "Fearful

Crime," "Murder of Two Policemen," and such like. We saw, too, an account of the inquest on the dead men, Constable McDonnell and O'Connell. Most of the news of the incident was absolutely wrong, as it often was later on. We learned, too, that two young men had been arrested on suspicion, but neither had anything to do with the affair, and they were released in a few days. Two schoolboys from the locality, Matthew Hogan, aged fifteen, a brother of Sean's; and Timothy Connors, aged eleven, were also arrested by the British, as they were supposed to have seen us. The father of the boy Connors had been a workman employed on the farm of Sean Treacy's mother. Both boys were detained for months in an effort to get them to give information, and, in the case of Connors, a great legal action ensued, which resulted in a verdict against the Commandant of the R.I.C. Headquarters for illegal detention.

Meantime our episode at Soloheadbeg had had its first effects. South Tipperary, that is half the county, had been proclaimed a "military area." That, for all practical purposes, meant martial law. Fairs, markets and meetings were prohibited; military reinforcements were rushed into the district and garrisons were established at villages which had never before sheltered a British soldier. Night and day they patrolled the roads and scoured the fields. Our little band had unmasked England. She had

POLICE NOTICE.

£1000 REWARD

WANTED FOR MURDER IN IRELAND.



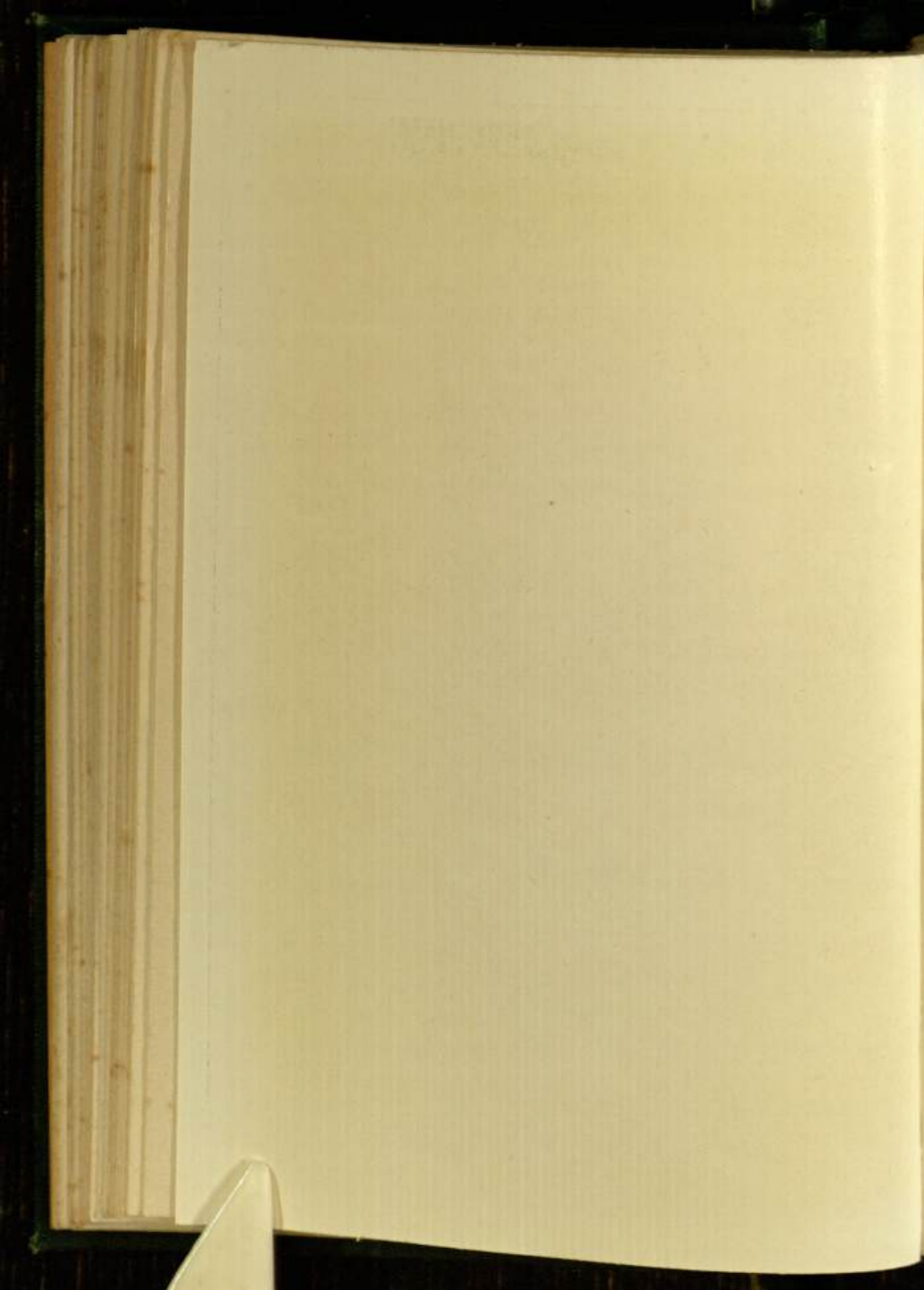
DANIEL BREEN

(calls himself Commandant of the Third
Tipperary Brigade).

Age 27, 5 feet 7 inches in height, bronzed complexion, dark hair (long in front), grey eyes, short cocked nose, stout build, weight about 12 stone, clean shaven; sulky bulldog appearance; looks rather like a blacksmith coming from work; wears cap pulled well down over face.

The above reward will be paid by the Irish Authorities, to any person not in the Public Service who may give information resulting in his arrest.

Information to be given at any Police Station.



now to come out in the open and let the world see that she held Ireland by naked force, and by force alone.

We also learned that a reward of £1,000 was offered for any information that would lead to our capture. A few months later this offer was increased to £10,000. Nobody earned it nor indeed tried to earn it, except a few members of the R.I.C. They failed, and most of them never tried a second time.

These are the plain, unvarnished facts concerning the first shots fired after the Insurrection of 1916. These shots were the first of a series that were to bring Ireland's name once more before the world, and to make the nations look on in admiration at Ireland's fight for freedom.

CHAPTER VIII.

HELPED BY THE BRITISH.

WE spent two nights in Mrs. Tobin's house. Then we went to Ned McGrath's, of Tincurry, and from there we were taken by Ned to Gorman's, of Burncourt Castle. We then arranged to go to Ryan's of Tubrid, and sent on word that they might expect us. But after sending word we changed our minds and did not go to Tubrid; and lucky it was for us—or for somebody else. Just at the time we had expected to be there the house was surrounded by eight peelers, and Ryan himself was arrested.

We decided to go on to Mitchelstown in County Cork, at the other end of the Galtees. We spent a night in O'Brien's, of Ballagh, and while we were there a strange thing occurred. We were sleeping upstairs when strange voices aroused us. We looked out and saw several peelers just entering the house. We at once got ready for a fight, expecting to see them mounting the stairs at any moment. But they never came. In a few minutes they took their

departure. Then we learned that the object of their visit was to ascertain if the owner of the house had paid the licence for his dogs.

Finally we reached Mitchelstown where we met Christie Ryan, who welcomed us and gave us the shelter of his house. While we were there we saw eight armed policemen pass the door. They were guarding a little packet of blasting powder. Evidently the Soloheadbeg affair had taught them to take no chances, and now they had quadrupled the escort.

Later we came across into East Limerick, where Ned O'Brien, of Galbally, put us up, and then we travelled farther to the Maloneys, of Lackelly, the scene of a great battle with the British two years later. At Lackelly we stayed about a week.

But you must understand our position all this time since the affair at Soloheadbeg. We were still within a radius of ten miles of the scene. Police and military were scouring the countryside for us, searching houses, ditches and woods. The clergy, the public and the press had all condemned our action. Our only consoling thought was that so were the men of '98, and the Fenians of '67, and then the men of 1916 condemned in their day, and we knew that as the cause of these men had been vindicated, so too would our cause when the scales fell from the people's eyes. At this time, however, scarce a word would be heard in our defence. Our

point of view was not even to be listened to. The people had voted for a Republic, but now they seemed to have abandoned us who tried to bring that Republic nearer, and who had taken them at their word.

Our former friends shunned us. They preferred the drawing-room as their battle ground, and the political resolution rather than the gun as their weapon. We had heard the gospel of freedom preached to us; we believed in it, we wanted to be free, and we were prepared to give our lives as proof of the faith that was in us. But those who preached the gospel were not prepared to practise it.

Even from the Irish Volunteers or the Irish Republican Army, as it has now come to be called, we got no support. Ned O'Brien and James Scanlan of Galbally, Paddy Ryan of Doon, and Davy Burke of Emily, certainly stood by us; but they were the exceptions.

When the news of the Soloheadbeg affair became public, a meeting was actually summoned in Tipperary town by a man who should have been our friend. His purpose was to dissociate Sinn Féin from the incident, and to denounce us for our action. The meeting was, however, called off by another prominent man. A local clergyman in a sermon, in which he denounced us as murderers, said that it used to be the custom to say, "Where Tipperary leads Ireland follows," but he hoped this

would not be so in the case of Soloheadbeg, the men responsible for which would, he said, go to their graves with the brand of Cain on their foreheads. Such were the things said about us, but we kept on our course.

In many places we were refused shelter on a night that one would not put out a dog. I remember on one occasion we were sitting in a farmhouse by the fireside when a loud knock was made at the door. It was dark, and the farmer did not care to open without knowing who was outside.

"Who's there?" he demanded.

"Police!" came the prompt reply.

Simultaneously we drew our revolvers. The door was opened, and a young neighbouring farmer entered, laughing heartily at his attempted joke. Before we could put away our guns the owner of the house observed them. At once his attitude towards us changed. He informed us point blank that he would not permit men with guns to stay under his roof. It was bitterly cold, but we had to go out into one of the outhouses for the night. So chilled were we there that we had to drive in some of the cows to keep us warm.

We had to keep tramping from parish to parish without a penny in our pockets. Our clothes and boots were almost worn out, and we had no changes. Many whom we thought we could trust would not let us sleep even in their cattle byres.

When we reached the village of Dono, in County Limerick—still only seven miles from Soloheadbeg—we again met with Seumas Robinson, and I need hardly say that our joy at the reunion was unbounded. Although it was only a few weeks since we parted after the fight at Soloheadbeg, we all felt like brothers meeting after years of separation. When we met we continued our night's march linked arm in arm.

While we were in this neighbourhood Paddy Ryan, a well-known local merchant and an old worker in the cause of freedom, proved a staunch friend to us. With Seumas again one of our band we discussed the outlook and the chances of winning over the people to engage in "one good stand-up fight" against the old enemy. We then drafted a proclamation ordering all the enemy forces out of South Tipperary. We sent it on to Dublin, but both An Dail and General Headquarters refused their consent to let us go ahead. We never found out their reason for doing so. Ours was the only logical position.

Withholding their support was a bad blow enough—but what was our horror when we found that someone had actually worked up a plan to ship us away to America! We were not consulted at all, but calmly told to be ready to sail in a couple of days. It was surely a sugar-coated pill! A deportation order in disguise, issued from the very

source that should, if consistent, get behind us in the war. We refused to leave Ireland. We told them that we were not afraid to die, but would prefer to live for Ireland. To leave Ireland would be like an admission that we were criminals, or that we were cowards. Now, more than ever we declared that our place was in Ireland, and Ireland's fight would have to be made by Irishmen on the hills and at the cross-roads in Ireland, not with printer's ink in America, or in any other country. This was apparently regarded as a breach of discipline. We were members of an organised body and should obey our superior officers. They persisted in their plan of sending us away, and we, just as obstinately, refused to leave. At length we won, but only on condition that we should remain away in some remote part of the country. We felt that we could very soon overcome that difficulty too.

While these little quibbles were going on between G.H.Q. and ourselves we were suffering intensely. The cold weather and the weary, aimless travelling around were very trying on us. We could not get a horse to carry us even a journey of a few miles. We had to trudge from field to field, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another. At last human nature began to assert itself. Why should we be treated so? Was not the sky as fair in one place as in another?

From Doon we went to Upperchurch, in the north of Tipperary. There we spent a few days with Patrick Kinnane, one of a family of famous Irish athletes; our next resting-place we decided would be Meagher's of Annfield. We sent on word that they might expect us to arrive at half-past seven in the evening, when it would be quite dark. The four of us, accompanied by Patrick Kinnane, walked along the road, chatting and enjoying the cool spring air. We must have taken our time along the way, for Treacy looked at his watch and reminded us that we were overdue, as it was now nearly eight o'clock. Suddenly in the distance we saw something white fluttering in the darkness. We halted. It was a signal by a girl who was trying to attract our attention.

The four of us dropped into a place of concealment behind a thick hedge. The girl saw us and approached along the road. As she passed the spot in which she had seen us hide she whispered the words: —

"The peelers are inside, raiding!"

She was one of the Misses Meagher who had slipped out unnoticed by the police to give warning, knowing the road by which we would come.

From our point of vantage we waited until we saw the forces of the British law depart to their

barracks. Then we proceeded on our way, and entered the house they had been raiding, where we enjoyed a pleasant tea.

From Meagher's we came south again to Leahy's of Boherlahan, the famous family of Tipperary hurlers. After that we went to Donnelly's, of Nodstown, in the same district, where we held a meeting of our Brigade Council on a Sunday evening. With our colleagues we discussed plans for more active operations, and produced the proclamation we had drawn up ordering all British armed forces to leave South Tipperary under penalty of death. Although Headquarters had refused their sanction we decided to publish it. About the end of February it was posted up in several parts of the county. The newspapers published it with mocking headlines. It seemed a tall order no doubt at the time, but subsequent events showed that we saw further ahead than either the newspapers or our own Headquarters gave us credit for.

After that meeting we decided to return northwards towards Creany, sending word ahead as we always did. We sent a message to Patrick Kinnane to meet us with a car, and started our long tramp in the dismal night.

At Upperchurch we were met by Kinnane, Doherty and Patrick Dwyer, and we headed for Murphy's house at Creany. It was three o'clock in

the morning when we reached our destination. Seldom did we suffer more than that night from cold and exposure. The weather was harsh, even for February, and the district was wild and mountainous.

When we arrived at Murphy's house we were ravenously hungry. Murphy was a great character. He was locally known as "the Stationmaster"—why, I don't know, for the nearest railway station was fifteen miles from his house. He was preparing a great meal of smoked ham and eggs for us. So hungry was Hogan that instinctively, and half unconsciously, he began to eat the raw ham as it was being put on the frying pan. In a few minutes he was seriously ill, and we thought he was going to die. He soon revived, but for weeks afterwards he was far from well. His illness at this time was very unfortunate for us, because we had made up our minds, in spite of Headquarters' orders, that we would try to get to Dublin, as we could no longer endure the misery of our existence.

With that purpose we went from Creany to the Falls of Donass, that most glorious and picturesque spot on the Shannon just across the Limerick border from North Tipperary. Then we parted with Robinson and Treacy, who started on their perilous journey to Dublin, while I remained behind with Hogan until he would be himself again. They arrived in Dublin safely, and were welcomed by a few

sympathetic friends. A full and accurate description of each one of us, with the reward offered for information that might lead to our capture, appeared every week in the *Hue and Cry*, the official police gazette, and so it was no easy thing for them either to travel to the city, or to get about when they had arrived there.

Meantime Hogan and I could not stay long in the district round the Keeper Mountains. But Tommy McInerney came out from Limerick with a motor car, accompanied by Tim Ryan. McInerney was the man who drove the ill-fated motor car which went to meet Roger Casement on Good Friday of 1916, when the car ran over a cliff in Kerry, and two of the occupants were drowned, McInerney himself escaping.

Tim Ryan knew of a friendly priest in West Limerick who would give us shelter, and we started on our journey to meet one of the truest friends we ever made—a certain sagairt whose praises I should like to sound here, but who does not wish his name to be made known. Sean Hogan sat in front with McInerney, who was driving, Ryan and I being in the back.

For a time our journey was uneventful until we approached Limerick City. We were suddenly confronted by lorry loads of soldiers dashing along in the direction of Tipperary. We knew they were on some big round up. We did not know then, though

we found out later, that they had received information that we were lying in a certain hiding place, and scores of troops with armoured cars were being rushed to the scene.

Never since we left Soloheadbeg did we feel in such a tight corner. One flash of suspicion on the part of a single officer of the party would have ruined us. At that time we knew that more than one British soldier, even privates, had fond hopes of earning the reward for our capture, and many of them had been at great pains to study our descriptions. Besides, it was comparatively easy for them then, in the spring of 1919, for we were then the only "much wanted men," as the newspapers described us.

An apparently endless line of lorries approached us—every soldier armed to the teeth, every lorry equipped with a machine gun. The smallest show of concern on our part meant our death warrant: the slightest sign of fear or anxiety would betray us. And there was no turning back. To attempt such a thing would be an open challenge by three men to several hundred soldiers. Coolness and bluff were our only hope.

We passed the first twenty lorries without turning a hair. We just looked at the troops with that gaze of curiosity mingled with admiration that one might expect from any loyal citizen watching his gallant protectors go by. We had passed the greater part

of the convoy, and were beginning to feel more at our ease, when suddenly rounding a corner we were confronted by a sentry with rifle upraised and called on to "alt." Our driver at once put on the brakes and pulled up.

We now realised why the other braves had allowed us to pass unchallenged. We had been led into an ambush—permitted to get right into the middle of the convoy, so that we had not a dog's chance of escaping. It was a cunning trap, but we would show them how Irishmen can die rather than surrender. It was all up with us, but we would sell our lives as dearly as we could.

I pulled my gun. For a fraction of a second I fingered it fondly under the rug rapidly deciding where I should send my bullets with best effect. I had my finger on the trigger ready to raise my arm to fire when an officer dashed up.

"Sorry for delaying you, gentlemen," he shouted.

This did not look like an ambush. I gently lowered my gun from view, and waited for his next words.

He was the captain in charge of the party. "Two of the 'beastly' cars, you know, have broken down," he explained, "and 'twas awfully unfortunate, don't you know, but the traffic was almost completely blocked." He apologised profusely for the delay, but he feared there was not

enough room for our car to pass. "'twas jolly rotten," but he thought we should have to get out and walk.

By this time I had quite recovered my composure. I told him politely but firmly that we had an important business appointment to keep, and that any further delay might mean serious loss to us. Besides, I said, we had travelled far, and a long motor journey was not good for rheumatics, and we were far too tired to walk.

I think he was really impressed by my protest. At that stage British officers regarded an Irishman who could travel in a motor car as a person of importance who might get a "question raised in the House," if treated rudely. A year or two later I know what he would have said to any Irishman met on the road.

He suddenly turned to his men, ordered three or four of them to drop their rifles and push us in our car for about two hundred yards till we had passed the broken-down lorries, and could take the middle of the road again.

Never did I feel more inclined to laugh. Here was a section of the British Army actually going out of its way to save us the trouble of walking, while the same army was day and night searching the countryside for us. What a pretty heading it would have been for the *Morning Post*—"Wanted Gunmen aided and abetted by the British Army!"

We were more profuse in our thanks to the soldiers, assured them they need not push our car any further, and were very sorry to have them put to so much trouble. A moment later we waved them good-bye, and were dashing along the road to Foynes. I can assure you that the speed of our car was tested for the next quarter of an hour in case by any chance the obliging soldiers might get suspicious, and come after us to make enquiries. But Sean and I laughed heartily when we had left them behind. It was the first time since we had become outlaws that the British helped us to escape; it was not the last, for more than once I had reason to feel grateful to their stupidity in helping me out of difficulties when they little knew who I was.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR RETURN TO SOLOHEADBEG.

THAT evening we reached our destination—the house of the priest to whom I have already referred. Here we got a right hearty welcome. No trouble was spared to make us feel happy and cheerful. The housekeeper—Molly—was like a mother to us. She was a bit of a dictator, too, where dictation was for our good. When she had given us a good hearty meal she ordered both of us to bed, where we remained for two whole days. Can you wonder that we felt loth to leave the blankets, with memories of newspapers, dirty straw and damp hay still fresh in our minds?

After two days' rest I felt fit and active again, but Hogan was still far from well. We can never forget Molly's kindness during this time. No trouble was too great for her to make us comfortable. I believe it was her kindness and good cookery that really brought us to. And she was always good-humoured and cheerful. It was a tonic to hear her merry laugh, her banter and her bright

homely talk. It was all so different to what we had been accustomed to for months. Up to this the people who spoke to us at all never raised their voices above a whisper. Sometimes we had to laugh when we saw the caution they exercised before giving any sign that they recognised us. Whenever we met an acquaintance on the road he looked behind, to the right and to the left, before saluting us. Many of them, I suppose, were afraid that if we were caught soon after meeting them they might lie under suspicion, and there is nothing an Irishman fears more than to be thought an informer.

It was amusing to observe the frightened look that came into people's eyes when they recognised us. Of course, there was often a good reason for their fright, for we were often several weeks without making the acquaintance of a razor. But one is not particular about personal beauty when there is an army at one's heels, and ten thousand pounds on one's head.

No wonder then that Molly's good nature and good humour were such a tonic to us. And she was brave as well as kind. She would inspire us with hope when everything looked black. She was unshaken in her conviction that no harm would come to us; that God, as she said, would save us from our enemies. She always kept a lamp burning before

the image of the Sacred Heart, in intercession for our welfare, and I am sure that many a decade of her beads she said for us too.

But if Molly was a brick the priest was a thousand bricks. Like Molly, he never counted the cost of "harbouring outlaws." We were welcome to his roof and to his table as long as we cared to stay, and everything that his house held, or that he could command, was at our service. We certainly enjoyed our stay at —, and would have liked to prolong it, but it was not safe to stay over-long in the same district, and we felt it was not fair to our host. Moreover, we wanted to be on the move to try what we could be doing to put more life into the cause. After a stay of a few weeks in this place we went on to Rathkeale.

Here for the first time I met Sean Finn—as fine a type of brave and chivalrous Irishman as ever lived. He was then but a mere youth, but he had been elected Commandant of his Battalion. Imbued with a passionate desire to strike a blow for the old land he was brave almost to rashness. But, alas! for Ireland, he fell in his first battle with the enemy about a year and a half later. My highest tribute to the memory of this gallant soldier of Ireland!

We did not stay long in Rathkeale. We were restless, and longing for action. We were anxious, too, to know how Sean Treacy and Seumas Robinson were faring in Dublin. At this time we

saw the newspapers every day, and we knew that they had so far escaped. At last, we got into communication with them and arranged to meet them again. We felt that the fates would have the four of us joined hands again, and stand or fall together. So Sean Hogan and I worked our way from West Limerick back towards the eastern end of the county, to the borders of South Tipperary. Once more we found ourselves in a place where we had already received shelter and hospitality—at Lackelly, near Emly. We were thus within six or seven miles of Soloheadbeg again, and within a few miles of the spot where a few weeks later we were to have our next most exciting and dramatic adventure—Knocklong.

At Lackelly we met Treacy and Robinson once more. We felt like a group of schoolboys on a holiday. Somehow when the four of us were together all the dark clouds seemed to scatter. We forgot we were hunted outlaws with a heavy price on our heads, and when we met we talked and joked long into the night, and exchanged our experiences and our adventures since we had parted. Treacy and Robinson had gone about Dublin freely and openly, and had quite a pleasant time. We, on our part, tried to make them jealous by telling them of our great time at the priest's house, and were able to boast of being helped by the British soldiers on our way to that place.

Seumas was able to retort with an equally amusing experience. It seems that on their way from Tipperary to Dublin the car broke down just at Maryboro' Jail, and immediately several soldiers rushed to their assistance to get it started again. In Dublin, too, they had many adventures, but these I cannot go into.

Meantime, the police and military were still busy searching the whole county of Tipperary for us, and digging up gardens and bogs in search of the missing explosives. They watched our haunts, and raided every place we were ever known to frequent. In spite of the difficulties this state of things created, the four of us determined that it was useless to remain inactive. The encounter at Soloheadbeg stirred the country, and showed the Volunteers what could be done, but our absence might nullify these effects. The three months that had passed since then seemed to us to have been wasted. The I.R.A. was still only a name. In theory there was a fairly good organisation. Every county had its Brigade and its Battalions, and arms were not altogether lacking, but of what use, we asked ourselves, are men who are soldiers only in name, and of guns that are oiled and cleaned but never fired? The men were not wanting in courage, but they needed more initiative. At that time all they could do was go to jail. All over the country men were allowing them-

selves to be arrested and imprisoned for drilling or carrying arms, but they never seemed to think of using the arms rather than go to jail.

We made up our minds when we met at Lackelly that this business of going to jail and becoming cheap heroes must stop. We wanted a real army, not a hollow mockery. Even if such an army numbered a few score only, it would be far better than the present organisation. We thought Soloheadbeg would have been followed by active operations all over the country, but now it was becoming a mere memory.

In this frame of mind, and with these resolutions we procured four bicycles and headed straight for Donohill—back to the very scene of our first battle, back into the middle of the military net that martial law had drawn round the whole county. Donohill is about two miles north of the Soloheadbeg quarry, and our route took us by the very road where we waited so long for the enemy, and where we at last met them. It was our first journey past the scene since January 21st, and you can picture our feelings as we saw the familiar hill once more and the turn of the road where the peelers appeared. We dismounted and lingered for a while in the neighbourhood. I am sure many of the people around never expected to lay eyes on us again, for in the old days

the usual thing for men in our position to do was to clear away to America. But our work was in Ireland, and we were going to see it through to the end.

At Donohill we appeared to the Horan family like men who had come back from the grave. When they realised we were not ghosts, they gave us a typical Irish welcome, and we joked and laughed long into the night. They didn't forget to keep somebody on the look-out by the road to make sure we would not be surprised. With the Horans we stayed till the following night.

My own house was only half a mile away, and, needless to remark, I took the opportunity to see my mother. It was a great surprise for her, but a very welcome one. During my period on the run I dare not even send her a card, for it would bring her endless annoyance from the enemy, and probably give them useful information, for they never scrupled to open letters going through the post. Poor woman! She was very brave and in the best of spirits, in spite of the fact that her little home was often raided and ransacked three times in twenty-four hours, in the early dawn, and in the dead of night. It gave me great courage to see her and to talk to her again. But I should not delay long, and I bade her good-bye again, taking with me her warm blessing as I left.

The dear old soul has suffered much for the crime of having taught her sons their duty to their country.

Even the house over her head was looted and burned, and her hens and chickens had to pay the price of English hate, for they were bayoneted by the Black and Tans. Through all her trials she never lost heart, and would always have her jibe at the enemy. Once when the British came and asked if her son was in, she sarcastically asked them if they would venture under the same roof with him. On another occasion in reply to the same question she told them I was upstairs, and invited them to enter. Their response to the invitation was a precipitate retreat to seek cover.

CHAPTER X.

SEAN HOGAN CAPTURED.

FROM Donohill we went to Rossmore, and then on to Rosegreen, and finally into Clonmel—the Headquarters of the R.I.C. for South Tipperary, and a large garrison town. We spent several days in that district, and were not idle. We met the local officers of the I.R.A.—they belonged to our brigade—and found out what plans they had. We did our best to induce them to get things moving more rapidly, and to get on with the real serious work.

One morning while in Clonmel district I had an unusual adventure, not very exciting in its own way, but one that I feared was going to prove more than exciting for me. As I was cycling up Mockler's Hill at 2 o'clock in the morning, when it was still pitch dark, a cyclist coming in the opposite direction rode right into me. I got the full force of his handle-bars over the heart. I was thrown helplessly to the ground, and vomited a quantity of blood. I thought I was going to die. The prospect of such an in-

glorious end did not improve me, nor hasten my recovery. To be killed in action by an enemy bullet was a fate I did not at all dread; but I strongly objected to being killed by the handle-bars of an ordinary, inoffensive push-bicycle, and, to make things worse, I pictured myself being identified by the R.I.C. and kicked into an even worse condition than that in which the cyclist left me. However, my recovery was more rapid than I hoped for. I have always had a bad habit of pulling myself together very quickly. In a short time I was able to mount my bicycle again, and ride to my destination.

On the 10th of May, 1919, we retraced our steps to the village of Rossmore. It was now almost four months since the affair at Soloheadbeg. During that time we had been sleeping where and when we got the chance; sometimes in a barn, sometimes in a cattle-shed, and very seldom in bed. Our health was not any the worse of our hardships. I suppose with time one grows hardened. Even this night when we got to Rossmore we were feeling fit and game, although we had been four nights without any rest. Still, we could do with a few hours' sleep. Somebody we met mentioned casually to us that there was a dance that night in Eamon O'Duibhir's house in Ballagh, only a short distance away. We forgot about our weariness; we forgot about our danger. We were young, and had grown

accustomed by now to taking risks, and it was long since we had had the pleasure of a dance or a ceilidhe.

Without a second thought we faced for Ballagh. Soon we were in the thick of the night's fun. It felt glorious to be back again, even for one night, in the atmosphere of light-hearted gaiety. For nearly two years I had not mingled with a crowd, and here I was now in the midst of a typical Tipperary party. The music was great, and the supper and refreshments were even better. For once we forgot the dark clouds over us; we laughed and talked and danced in the reels and in the sets with the lads and the lassies—in the middle of the Martial Law area, and at a time when probably a dozen British raiding parties were breaking in doors in cottages and farmhouses looking for us.

Of course, the boys and girls all knew us. They, like so many others before and after, had only to slip out, any one of them, go to the nearest police barracks, not two miles away, and earn a thousand pounds by saying where we were. But they never dreamed of such a thing. Neither did we ever dream of suspecting any one in the party, or in any other party of Irish-Irelanders. Every one of them would cut off his hand before he would touch that Saxon gold. Irishmen have many faults, but very, very few informers are bred amongst them.

We danced all through the night, and in the early hours of the morning I returned with a few of the boys to Rossmore. The other three did not come with me ; they stayed on for a few more dances, but we had arranged to meet at O'Keeffe's, of Glenough, where we would have a right good sleep. Shortly after I arrived there Sean Treacy and Seamus Robinson put in an appearance. Sean Hogan did not come with them, but none of us felt a bit uneasy. He had two days to go before he reached his eighteenth birthday, but we knew he was well able to look after himself.

The three of us were about as tired as we could be. What with our five nights without sleep, and the fatigue of a night's dancing, we could have slept, as Sean said, on a bed of briars. The sight of the cosy bed that had been made ready for us almost made us sleep before we turned into it.

I think Sean Treacy had not finished his rosary before I fell asleep. The next sound I heard was the voice of Patrick Kinnane. It seemed very far off. He was speaking to me I knew, but my eyes refused to open. Then I was brought to my senses. His words lifted me clean out of the bed ; I realised the full meaning of his early intrusion : Hogan had been captured by the Peelers !

It would have been very easy for us to believe that " J. J.," as we called him—his name was John Joseph—had been shot. But to think he was

arrested! I would not believe it. Was Kinnane joking? I turned to Sean Treacy, for he too was on his feet by now, and I read the truth in his face.

I would have given a fortune for a few hours more of sleep. I never felt so tired and weary in my life. Robinson and Treacy were just as bad. But the thought of "J. J." in the enemy's clutches brought us quickly to our senses. Without a moment's hesitation we made our decision. Our faces rather than our words conveyed to one another what was in our minds. We must rescue Hogan, or die in the attempt, and we knew that had any one of us been in Hogan's position his decision would have been the same.

Quickly we got what information there was of his capture. He left the dance soon after us. Before he had gone far he was surrounded by ten stalwart policemen. He carried his gun, of course, as we all did, but he never got a chance to use it. It was not until a year later that the British invented the happy trick of shooting prisoners "while attempting to escape." If that fashion had then existed "J. J." would not be with us to-day, nor would there have been much use in planning to rescue him that night.

Our first trouble was to locate him. At that time murders of innocent people had not yet come into fashion, but Martial Law made people more careful, and few ventured out late at night or early in the

morning because of the certainty of being held up and questioned and probably arrested by the British, who patrolled the roads at all hours of the night and day. Hence we found on our first enquiry that no one had seen whither Hogan's escort had departed. They might have faced for any one of half a dozen garrisons—Thurles, Tipperary, or Cashel, for instance. To be thus left in ignorance of where to lay our plans was almost maddening, and we knew that every hour that passed made the danger greater, and that he would soon be removed to a place beyond our reach. Gladly, I believe, would any one of the three of us have taken the place of our youngest comrade. Now that he was gone from us we suddenly discovered all his excellent points of character, though we were never in the habit of paying him compliments while he was with us.

We searched and enquired everywhere. We sent messengers on bicycles in all likely directions to endeavour to pick up a trail. But his captors had got too big a start. We were almost in despair when at last we got on the scent: we traced him to Thurles police barracks.

To attempt to rescue him from that place would have been worse than madness. It would have been as easy to storm the gates of hell. Thurles is a fairly large town, and had a big garrison of both police and military. The barrack was

strongly fortified, and the peelers were always on the alert. Their positions made alertness essential. They were in the middle of an area that was soon to become the centre of active warfare, and they were on the main road from Dublin to Cork. There was never the slightest hope of rushing the barracks or of effecting an entrance by a ruse, and besides, we knew that the presence of Sean Hogan in their stronghold would make them all the more careful, for they knew he was one of the four men wanted for the attack at Soloheadbeg. The bits of information they had picked up, and our disappearance from the locality made it certain to them from the first day that we were in that adventure.

But there was one gleam of hope. We knew he would not be kept long in Thurles. Prisoners were only kept in these local stations for a day or two while the preliminary enquiries and remands were being gone through. Then they were transferred to one of the largest prisons—Mountjoy, Cork, Maryboro', Dundalk or Belfast. In the case of Tipperary men, and indeed men from all over Munster, Cork was generally the destination. The odds were ten to one that in a day or two Sean Hogan would be taken by train from Thurles to Cork.

Our plans were quickly completed. We would go to Emly, intercept the escort, hold up the train and rescue our comrade. We chose Emly for many

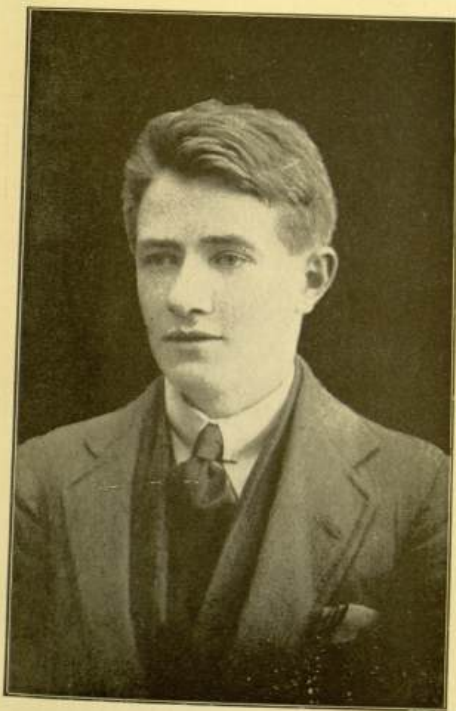
reasons. It was a small station, and there were no soldiers convenient; the police we did not particularly mind. It was in the heart of a district with which we were familiar, and in which we had many friends. It almost touched the borders of three counties, and consequently increased our chances of evading pursuit, since the enemy would not easily discover whether we retreated to the mountains, to North Cork, to South Tipperary, or to East Limerick. Above all, we had faith in many of the boys from the neighbouring village of Galbally.

But holding up a train and making arrangements for the removal of our rescued companion, and for our own escape, are not operations that can be carried out by three men. We needed help; we must get reinforcements. We at once secured the services of a special Volunteer despatch-rider; for, naturally, neither telegrams nor telephones were to be thought of. To trust these means of communication would be the same as to send the British word of our plans. Our first care was to send full details of our plans to the Acting Commandant of the Tipperary town Battalion, with orders to send us the reinforcements. Emly would be only seven miles, less than an hour's cycle run, from Tipperary town.

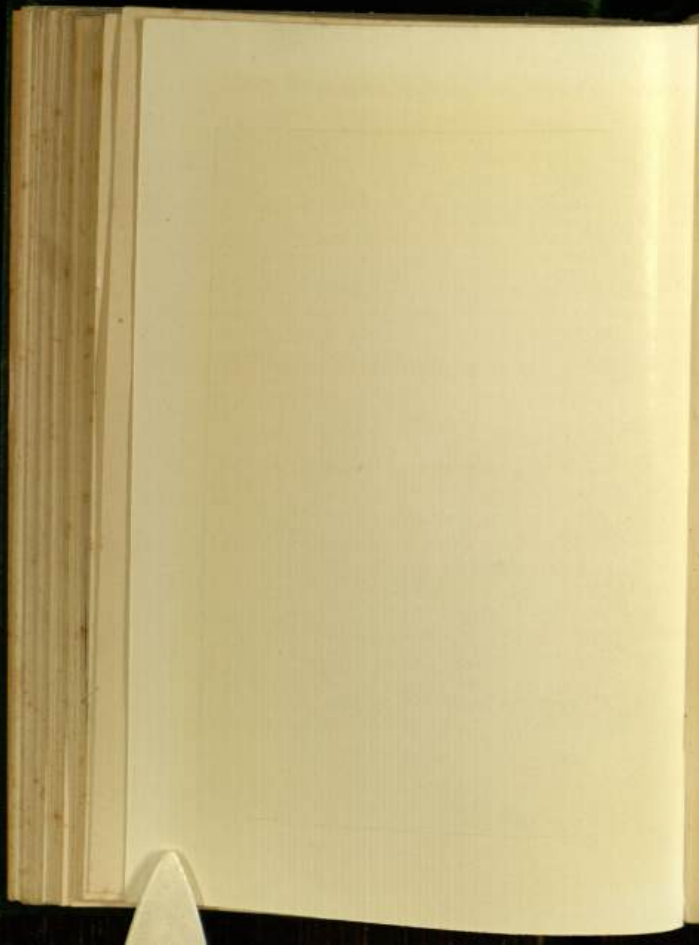
Hurriedly we decided on our course of action, and made our preparations. Ned Reilly and the O'Keeffe brothers gave us every help in laying our plans before we left Thurles.

Having completed these arrangements we left the town of Thurles at 11 o'clock on the morning of May 12th, 1919. Our hearts were sad, but we still had hopes, and our blood was boiling with anger, anxiety and excitement.

Mounted on our bicycles the three of us faced for Emly. Except for the hour's sleep after the dance we had now been five nights without a rest. In the ordinary course Emly would have been only some thirty miles from us, but for obvious reasons we had to avoid the main roads, and could not pass near Tipperary town. We covered nearly fifty miles on that journey, over rough and uneven roads. It was one of the toughest rides we ever did. The journeys that Sean Treacy and I had done to and from Dublin were less wearisome. As we approached Donohill, Seumas Robinson's bicycle was put out of action. We had neither the time nor the means to try to repair it on the roadside, but we had faithful friends. Patrick O'Dwyer, of Donohill, whose wife was a first cousin of Sean Hogan's, put a new bicycle at our disposal, and we resumed our journey. Our fatigue was telling on us. We could have fallen off the bicycles and slept by the roadside, but the excitement and our sense of loyalty to our comrade



J. J. HOGAN.



kept up our strength. At Oola we actually fell asleep on our bicycles, but again we bestirred ourselves, and on we went doggedly, up hill and down dale with our teeth set and our minds fixed on rescue or death. We made a detour to the right, through the Martial Law area, and over the border into County Limerick, through the historic village of Cullen, and on to Ballyneety, past the ruins of the old castle, on the very same road that Patrick Sarsfield took on that moonlight night three hundred and thirty years before, when his sabre brought terror to Dutch William's troops. It was a strange coincidence that we who now rode on a similar errand of death or glory were Tipperary outlaws, just as was Galloping Hogan, the man who made Sarsfield's exploit possible that night. And we were going to rescue another Tipperary outlaw of the same name and clan.

While Sean Treacy was reminding us of these pages of history—for he loved his Irish history—we were interrupted by a dull thud, and looking round we saw that poor Robinson had fallen off his bicycle and was fast asleep by the roadside. We had to keep moving, time was precious, and the three of us mounted again and reached Emly at half-past three on the morning of May 13th. On the way we had stopped once or twice to complete our plans, and to perfect our intelligence arrangements. Once

we got a rude shock when a bomb dropped from Robinson's pocket, and for a moment we thought we were being attacked.

At Lackelly we called upon our old friends, the Maloneys, and right heartily we were welcomed. When we were discussing our plans, while enjoying a warm and much needed breakfast, May Maloney offered her services in any way she could help, and gladly we accepted her offer. She became our despatch rider for the occasion, and I do not know how we could have got along without her help. It was she who went to Thurles that morning, and sent us word that Hogan was still there. The Maloneys' house, by the way, was later destroyed by the Black and Tans, and both May Maloney and her brother Dan were imprisoned during the recent war.

By 10 o'clock on the morning of May 13th, we had completed all arrangements for the rescue of Sean Hogan.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE AT KNOCKLONG.

As I have said, we arrived at Emly at 3.30 a.m. The first train on which the prisoner might come was not due till noon. When all was in readiness a few hours before noon we waited eagerly for the arrival of the men from Tipperary town in response to our request. As the hour approached we grew anxious and restive. The minutes grew into hours. Eagerly our eyes scanned the road from Tipperary, but no cyclist appeared. What had happened? We could not let ourselves believe that the help we needed so badly was not at hand. Eleven o'clock—still no reinforcements. The minutes travelled all too fast now. Half-past eleven came, and still no sign. And the train was due at 12!

But we were not going to let Sean Hogan be taken away without a fight. We knew that the escort, armed with rifles, bayonets and revolvers, would consist of four to eight policemen, but it was possible that other policemen or soldiers would be

on the same train. We could only fail. At 12 o'clock the three of us rushed up to the station just as the engine steamed into the platform.

In my hurry I dashed right into an old woman at the entrance. To save her I had to throw my arms around her. The two of us were swung round and round by the force of the collision, and I finished what must have looked like a dance by falling heavily to the ground. Unfortunately, there was no time for explanations or apologies, and I don't know whether the poor woman ever heard yet the explanation of the collision. Before she could even see my face, I was up again and racing along the platform with my finger all the time on the trigger of the revolver.

But there was no prisoner ! We were sadly disappointed. In a sense, too, we felt a little relieved for there would be still time to seek help before the next train was due. But waiting is always the hardest part of any fight ; suspense is more severe than action.

As we returned crestfallen to our resting-place, after scanning every carriage, our pill was made more bitter by the thought that the Tipperary men had failed us. Our minds searched for other help. We thought of the old Galtee Battalion, the boys from the mountain districts, from Galbally and Ballylanders. Their Battalion we knew had lately been suspended by Headquarters. But we knew,

too, that their hearts were right, and their hands strong and daring. They would not turn a deaf ear to a call like ours.

The next train was not due from Thurles till 7 o'clock in the evening. We sent word to the boys of the Galtee Battalion, told them our errand and the danger of the work that was to be tackled. Within an hour the reply came. Five of their men would join us at 5 o'clock. Never before had we got such a heartening message.

The men were as good as their word, and they came before their time. At 4.45 p.m. they arrived, Eamon (Ned) O'Brien, James Scanlon, J. J. O'Brien, Sean Lynch, and poor Martin Foley, who was hanged in Mountjoy Jail exactly two years later for his part in the rescue. With him was hanged poor Maher, who knew nothing in the world about the incident for which he was hanged. But they gave their lives gladly for Ireland, and the brave words of their last message from the foot of the gallows will keep their memory for ever fresh in the hearts of Irish patriots. May they rest in peace!

We were now eight strong, five of us armed with revolvers and three unarmed. After a consultation we decided on a slight change of plan. Sean Treacy, Seumas Robinson, Ned O'Brien and myself cycled on to Knocklong, the next station, about three miles south of Emly. We selected Knocklong because, except Emly, all the other stations were

held by strong British forces, but this being only a wayside one, and a couple of miles distant from a police barrack, was comparatively safe for us. If this attempt failed we had plans to motor to Blarney, where we could again intercept the escort party. The other four men we sent to Emly station with instructions to board the train without arousing suspicion, to find out what carriage our comrade was in. In that way they could give us the hint as soon as Knocklong was reached, and no time need be lost in getting to the rescue.

We reached Knocklong just as the train's departure from Emly was signalled. We walked up the platform looking as cool and unconcerned as we could, but with our guns gripped tightly in our hands. Little did the people who awaited the train that evening think that they were soon to be witnesses of a drama for which a film-producer would have given a fortune. In the distance we saw the smoke of the engine rise into the sky. Another minute and the train was pulling into the platform. At the same moment another train on the opposite platform came in from Cork direction. It was only the next day we learned that the second train contained a company of armed British troops for Dublin. There they remained within a few feet of the struggle for life or death that ensued. I never

learned why they took no part in the struggle. Perhaps it was too late when they realised what was afoot.

Our train had not yet come to a standstill when the signal for which we waited was given us by two different parties. In accordance with the arrangements made in Thurles the previous day a member of the I.R.A. Secret Service boarded the train after the prisoner, and was at the window to give us the signal. Our men were at their window, too, not knowing about the other man.

There was not a moment to be lost. The train would delay only a minute, and we had not thought it necessary to hold up the driver. A slight motion of the hand from our colleagues indicated the carriage where we would find our man.

It was a long corridor carriage divided into about a dozen small compartments, each shut off from the others, and a passage running alongside the whole way. Our Galtee men were in the passage. In one of the compartments we saw Sean Hogan. He sat in the middle of the seat handcuffed, and facing the engine. Beside him sat a sergeant of the police, on the other side a constable. On the opposite seat were two other constables—all four fully armed.

Sean Treacy was, by arrangement, to take charge of the attack. He gave the word. Within five seconds of the arrival of the train we were

rushing along the corridor and bursting into the prisoner's compartment with our guns drawn, and with the order, "Hands up!" "Hands up!" Only a moment before, as we heard later, Sergeant Wallace had viciously struck his prisoner with the sarcastic query, "Where are Breen and Treacy now?" His query was answered; Breen and Treacy were at his service.

As we burst in the door of the compartment, the police quickly realised our purpose. Constable Enright had his revolver drawn and pointed at the prisoner's ear. Orders had been given the escort to shoot the prisoner dead if any attempt were made to rescue him. A fraction of a second saved Sean Hogan. It was his life or the Constable's. The policeman was in the act of pulling his trigger when he was himself shot through the heart—death being instantaneous.

And now ensued an episode in comparison with which a Wild West show would grow pale. The passengers realised our object. In a moment panic reigned. My most vivid recollection of that scene is the figure of a soldier-passenger, dressed in England's khaki uniform; but under that uniform there beat an Irish heart. I shall never forget the triumphant smile on his face as he waved his hat and shouted, "Up the Republic!"

I had little time for studying the passengers. That first shot prevented the escort from murdering

their prisoner, and it was the first shot in a grim battle that was to end in the death of two and the wounding of four. With the first shot one of the policemen literally dashed himself through the window of the train, roaring like a wild bull. We never saw him again, but I heard that he ran through the country like a maniac and reported the fight in a very incoherent manner at Emly police barrack next morning.

Constable Enright was dead, so that there remained Sergeant Wallace and Constable Reilly. A fierce and rapid exchange of shots followed. Constable Reilly lay stiff on the floor. We thought he was dead, but we soon found he was only shamming.

Sergeant Wallace fought to the end. A braver man I have never seen in the ranks of the enemy. Several times we called on him to surrender, but he never answered, even when deserted by his men. The confusion and panic were indescribable. Cramped as we were for space, we were in danger not only from the bullets of the police, but also from those of our own men. And all the time we were struggling to push out our handcuffed comrade.

We handed out our comrade in safety. Meanwhile Sergeant Wallace had also struggled on to the platform. I looked around me. I knew I was

wounded, but, in the excitement, I could not know where or how seriously, though I knew it was in the region of the lung.

Suddenly I realised that Treacy, Ned O'Brien and Scanlon were also wounded, and we were the only four with arms. Blood was streaming from all of us. The other three had lost their guns in the fight. I alone was in a position to fight, and I had more than the plucky sergeant to face, for Constable Reilly, who had shammed death a moment ago, was now out on the platform firing continuously from his rifle. A second bullet now found its mark in me. I was shot in the right arm. If Constable Reilly had been as cool as the old sergeant one of us would never have escaped alive. He saw my revolver drop from my wounded hand—and he saw me pick it up again. If he had been quick he would have dashed my brains out before I got the chance to do so. I had always prepared for such an emergency as this. I had practised so that I was as good a marksman with my left hand as with my right. I fired again, and at Reilly, and when he saw me level my gun he turned and fled down the platform. Meantime the Sergeant had collapsed on the platform, and victory was ours. Reilly escaped because I was blinded with blood and unable to take steady aim; but I made sure that he would not turn again, while the rest of my comrades carried Hogan off in safety.

We left the dead Constable and the dying Sergeant at Knocklong Station. The people had fled in terror from the platform, and many of the passengers had jumped wildly from the train. Even the engine driver, who did not apparently hear the first shots, was about to start the train after the usual delay while the battle was still in progress, when a girl told him there was a battle going on. The same girl also states that she later saw Reilly praying near the station.

Late that evening the dead body of Enright was taken in the train to Kilmallock, as was also Sergeant Wallace who lived until the following afternoon.

At the inquest afterwards there was of course nobody but Reilly to give his version of the fight. One of the jurors boldly remarked to the police: "You are simply trying to paint your own story in your own way." The police witnesses were not allowed by their superiors to answer any important questions calculated to show that we would not have shot their men if they had surrendered.

The inquest was also noteworthy for the fact that the jury not only refused to bring in a verdict of murder, but spoke out. I quote the newspaper of 22nd May:—"Condemning the arrest of respectable persons, and exasperating the people, and called for Self-Determination for Ireland, and blamed the Government for exposing the police to

danger." Our efforts were having their effect. The plain people were realising that ours was a fight for Irish Freedom. They realised too that we had no enmity against the police as such, if they confined themselves to the work of ordinary police; but when they became spies and soldiers in the pay of England we had to treat them accordingly.

This is the true story of Knocklong, condemned as it was at the time by archbishop, priests and press—the same people who, two years later, would have treated us as heroes and loudly boasted of "the freedom we had won." Time works wonders!

The heroes of the fight were Sean Treacy and the two O'Briens. In the next chapter I must tell of our equally exciting escape from the scene, and the story our rescued comrade had to tell when we clasped his hand again.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR ESCAPE FROM KNOCKLONG.

BEFORE describing our escape from Knocklong and the adventures which ensued, I must pause to outline the experiences of our comrade, Sean Hogan, since his arrest a few days before. They throw an interesting sidelight on the methods of the Peelers, though at that period these methods were not so cold-blooded and barbarous as they became within a year.

When the dance concluded that morning at Ballagh, and when the rest of us had gone on to O'Keeffe's for a sleep, Sean Hogan went up the road with Brigid O'Keeffe to Meagher's, of Annfield. This was the same Meagher family at whose house we had had such a narrow escape a few months before, when the girl's waving handkerchief warned us of danger. Miss O'Keeffe was a cousin of the Meaghers, and she had decided to go up to their house for breakfast.

So sleepy was Sean that he actually fell asleep at the table. When breakfast was finished he took off his belt and revolver and lay down for a rest on

a sofa. Mr. Meagher and his two daughters were at this time busy about the farmyard preparing to send the milk to the creamery.

Sean was suddenly roused from his sleep by the warning shout: "The police are coming up the road!" He jumped to his feet, put on his belt, and went to the door, revolver in hand.

The police had been seen a good distance off by the Meaghers, but Sean could not see them from the house. Assuming that they were coming from the north side he ran from the house in the opposite direction, along a field which is much lower than the level of the road. When he had got to the end of the field he thought he was now out of danger, put away his revolver, and jumped on to the road—into the arms of six policemen. They had, as a matter of fact, been coming from the south, and had got a full view of him as he ran along the field from the house.

Sean was at once handcuffed and his revolver seized. His captors marched him back the road to Meagher's, just as another section of the police raiders came out the door, having hurriedly searched the house. They did not recognise Sean, and he refused to give his name. Just as he was being removed Miss O'Keeffe came and shook hands with him, saying, "Goodbye, Sean." That was the only part of his name they knew. They apparently took her to be one of the Meagher family, for had they

recognised her as one of the O'Keeffes they would probably have come down the road to search her own house, where we were at the time.

Sergeant Wallace was in charge of the police party, and with him were Reilly and Ring amongst the others. They marched their prisoner to Roskeen Barracks, and at once sent word to Thurles that they had captured an armed man whose Christian name was Sean. A police van from Thurles soon arrived to escort their prisoner to that town, and one of the party recognised him as one of the much-wanted Soloheadbeg men.

After his arrest one of the Meaghers ran down the road to Patrick Kinnane's house, between Meagher's and O'Keeffe's, and asked him to convey word to the rest of us of Sean's arrest.

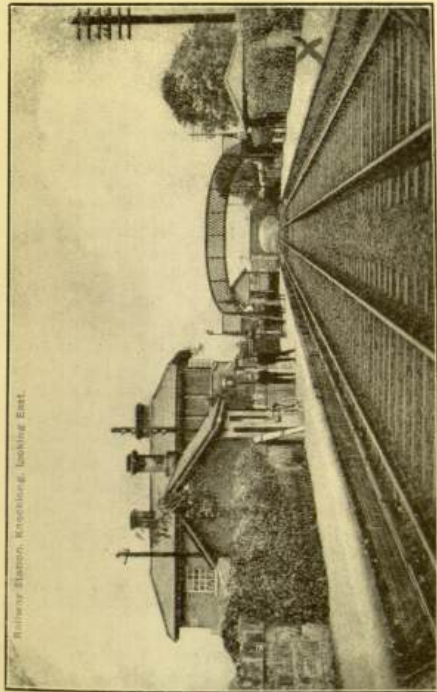
When Sean Hogan fell into their hands the Peelers adopted every subterfuge to get him to divulge information. First they tried to coax the information from him, for they saw he was but a mere boy. They failed in their efforts, and then their tactics changed. They struck him, and beat him unmercifully, but again they failed in their purpose; for if Sean Hogan was but a boy in years, he was a man in strength of character and loyalty to his comrades. Not a word would he tell even though they were to torture him to death.

Then they tried still another plan. One of the policemen, pretending to be his friend and adviser,

told him quietly that he had been betrayed by Breen and Treacy, who, they said, were then on their way to London, having been granted a free pardon and a huge sum of money for the information they had given. This was followed by a straight hint that if Hogan would supplement the information by whatever knowledge he had of the organisation and its plans, he, too, would be well rewarded, and would find himself helped to leave the country instead of finding himself on the way to the gallows. But J. J. knew his old comrades too well to think for a moment that they had betrayed or deserted him. All the threats and cajolery of the Peelers were in vain. He refused to answer their question, and in the end, did not pretend to hear them.

At last he was put on board the train for Cork Jail on the evening of the 13th May. Thurles is only about 30 miles from Knocklong, and by the time that station was reached history was once more to repeat itself. The night before when I rode by Ballyneety my mind had gone back to the days of Sarsfield; to the historic episode of the destruction of King William's troop train. There was no story I loved more as a boy. It was a tale of daring and of dramatic triumph, and I pictured the dismay of the English troops whose password was "Sarsfield," when in response to their challenge came the grim reply, "Sarsfield—and Sarsfield is the man!" Often when I was a boy I dreamed of how

Railway Station, Knocklong, looking East.



RAILWAY STATION, KNOCKLONG.

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proud I would have been, were I with Sarsfield's little band that night riding out from Limerick to strike terror into the hearts of the invaders.

On the train from Thurles to Knocklong Sergeant Wallace never ceased taunting Hogan with his plight. Repeatedly on the way he asked with savage mockery, "Where is Breen now?" and to add to the unhappiness of his helpless prisoner he accompanied each question with a prick of his bayonet. These are some of the things the world did not know, when it looked upon us for a long time as cold-blooded murderers. Many of our men can tell such tales, and produce their own bodies as the evidence, just as poor Hogan's condition testified to us when we rescued him.

Even as the train steamed into Knocklong, Wallace once more repeated his derisive question—"Where are Breen and Treacy now? They sold you to get you hanged." Ere he had finished his question Breen and Treacy supplied him with the answer—an answer which he did not expect, and one which debarred him from further promotion in this world.

And now to resume my narrative. When the last shot had been fired, and when Constable Reilly had fled from the scene, we moved from the platform. The people were terror-stricken. Many had fled in terror from the station. Others had taken shelter by the walls and the gatepiers. A few who were too

dumfounded to take flight looked at us in amazement. None dared to approach us, and I am not surprised, for never before had old Galteemore looked down on such a strange party at a hitherto quiet and peaceful country station. There were nine of us all told, one a handcuffed prisoner and four of us wounded and bespattered with the blood of ourselves and our enemies.

I was no longer able to walk, and I realised now that my last shot had been fired from my revolver, and that it might at any moment be found highly desirable to have it reloaded, but my right arm was dead and I could not reload. I looked around me. Outside the station I saw a motor car evidently waiting for somebody who was to come from the train. With my empty revolver raised in my left hand I held up the car. I think my appearance was enough to inspire any Christian with terror, not to speak of levelling my gun. A fit of dizziness, probably the effects of my wounds and loss of blood, had come over me on the platform, as I made for the gate, and I had fallen heavily against the wall, and blood was gushing from my head. I could scarcely walk. I groped my way along. The people around me ran at the very sight of me, many of them shrieking. At last somebody came to my assistance. He was dressed in khaki—an Irishman in England's army! The very irony of it makes me smile to-day. I think he was the same man who had

shouted "Up the Republic" on the train, though I am not sure, for some people told me afterwards that there was an American soldier also in khaki at the station that evening—I believe, too, that the soldier who cheered for the Republic was afterwards courtmartialled by his officers—but whoever he was that helped me, if his eyes catch these words, let him accept my thanks; I forgot to show him my gratitude at the time.

Leaning on his arm I struggled from the station premises on to the road. He half linked and half carried me for I was now growing weaker every moment. Probably I was loosing my senses too, for I forgot all about using the motor car I had held up, and I left it behind.

The rest of the party were outside on the road. With a butcher's knife, procured from a man named Walsh, they broke the handcuffs that bound Sean Hogan, and he was once more a free man. The unwounded men took charge of him and brought him to a place of safety.

The other four of us—Ned O'Brien, Treacy, Scanlon and I—faced for Shanahan's. I scarcely remember that journey; it was growing dark, and we did not know the road well. I was losing blood all the time. It must have taken us hours to get to the house. We were all weak. In a field on the way

we met some lads from the neighbourhood. They came to our assistance and helped us to reach our destination.

I was at once put to bed, and the priest and doctor were sent for. Both soon arrived. Dr. Hennessy, of Galbally, was very kind to me, but both priest and doctor regarded my case as hopeless. I was told that I had only about twenty-four hours to live, as the bullet had gone right through my body piercing the lung, and I had lost an enormous quantity of blood. That news was cheerless enough, but I was not even to get the twenty-four hours to die in peace.

When I arrived at Shanahan's my comrades had at once mobilised an armed guard under a chap named Clancy, of Cush, Knocklong. I was not to be permitted to fall into the hands of the British alive. Scouts were sent out to watch all the approaches to the house. We knew that the country would be swept with columns of troops and police. All through the night—as I learned later—reinforcements were rushed to the neighbourhood, and the police garrisons were strengthened at Doon, Oola, Galbally, and all the local villages and towns. For days afterwards a house to house search was made in that part of East Limerick and South Tipperary, and even the graveyards were inspected for fresh

graves, as the newspapers reported that "two of the attackers were believed to have been mortally wounded."

Nor can I help recalling at this stage an incident that happened on that memorable evening. I was told afterwards on the best authority. Four policemen from Elton, a few miles from Knocklong, heard the firing at the station, and took to their heels back to their barracks. There they remained, and with the door locked, until County Inspector Egan arrived in a motor car and broke it in, shouting, "You cowards! Here you are hiding, while four of our men are shot, and the murderers at large!"

But a few hours after my arrival at Shanahan's, when the priest and doctor had attended me, our scouts rushed in with word that the enemy raiding parties were hot on our heels. A hurried council of war was held. My comrades procured a motor car and carried me off once more, without even taking time to say a prayer for the man who was to die next day. They drove me right through the town of Kilmallock, and I did not know till the next afternoon that we had actually passed the R.I.C. barracks where the dead Constable Enright and the dying sergeant had been removed from Knocklong. But there was no other means of escape—we had to get out of the net that was closing round Knocklong. We took our chance, and luck favoured us. My comrades fully realised the seriousness of the

situation and the risks they were taking in motoring through the town of Kilmallock, but I was blissfully unconscious of everything save the fact that I was soon to "cross the Jordan." Our boys always believed that he who puts his hand to the plough must not turn back. They never knew what "going back" meant. Their guiding spirit was "On, always on." That was the spirit that carried them through the most glorious fight in Irish history. It is the spirit that will carry them to the end.

When I woke up next day I was once more in West Limerick, under the care of Sean Finn.

Let me pause again to tell you the sequel to the Knocklong rescue. All of us who took part were either already on the run, or had to get on the run henceforth, except Sean Lynch and J. J. O'Brien, who returned to their business. Both of them afterwards joined Dinny Lacy's famous South Tipperary column and fought all through the Black and Tan war. Ned O'Brien and Scanlon had shortly afterwards to escape to America, as their health was affected. They are now back in Ireland.

A year later a brother of Scanlon's was shot dead by the British in Limerick City while a prisoner in their hands. After the rescue several arrests were made by the British on suspicion. All, except three, were eventually released; but poor Martin Foley and Maher, after being held in prison for nearly two years, were hanged in Dublin, on June 6th,

1921—a month before the truce. The third prisoner, an ex-soldier (British), was tried but acquitted.

In West Limerick my comrades and I received refuge and hospitality. Sean Finn was kindness personified, and indeed all around him were equally good to us. Especially kind and good-natured were the Sheehans, Keanes, Longs, Duffys and Kennedys; but our good times were not to last long. The enemy was once more on our track. We learned of all his movements from our Secret Service, for you must understand that no matter where we went it was necessary for us to keep in touch with our Intelligence Department.

We moved farther west, on towards the Kerry border. Even here we found the trail was too hot, and we had to cross the border into Kerry itself. By this time I was well on the road to recovery. Then, as at a later stage, I acquired the habit of breaking all medical precedents, and insisting on living when, according to all the rules of the game, I should have died. By the time I got to Kerry I was even able to walk a little, though I needed some support. But I could not walk far. This was a greater drawback to us, because the English troops were so busy scouring the countryside for us, day and night, that we dare not think of using motor cars or vehicles of any kind, the roads being out of bounds to us.

One bright feature always lightened our load. It was Sean Treacy's sense of humour. No matter how dark the outlook Sean would have his little joke, and we had to laugh with him. At Knocklong he had been shot through the teeth and mouth, and for a long time afterwards his mouth was very painful. At the time I was still suffering severely from my wound through the lung and body. Hence the difficulties for both of us for satisfying our appetites. "Dan," said Sean to me, "I wish I had your big head for half an hour. I am frightfully hungry, but I can't eat. You can eat all right, but you won't." Another night on a different occasion we were cycling through Cullen to Tipperary. This was a very dangerous district for us, because it was in the Martial Law area, and was only a few miles either from Soloheadbeg or Knocklong. Besides, being near our native district, we always ran the risk of being seen and known by too many people. Suddenly while we were riding with all speed Sean asked us to pull up. We were somewhat surprised, because we knew how much any delay might mean for all of us, but we dismounted. It was raining like the very deluge at the same time. Sean turned to each one of us in turn and asked us solemnly for a pin. Each of us said we had no such commodity, the truth being that nobody wished to open his coat on such a night.

"What do you want a pin for?" I asked him.

"Well," he replied, "I'm afraid my tie isn't hanging straight!"

I never felt so much inclined to give my old comrade a punch. I am sure it was the same with the others; but we had to laugh as we mounted and rode ahead making remarks which were none too complimentary about some people's conceit. Such little incidents helped us on our road, and often helped to scatter the gloom that surrounded us.

But to resume our story. In Kerry we remained for some days, occasionally amusing ourselves by reading the many grotesque accounts that were printed of the Knocklong rescue. Day after day too we read of the denunciation of our terrible crime (of saving our young comrade), by priests, bishops and politicians. We read the King's message of sympathy to the relatives of his poor hirelings, and also Lord French's. Most of the Kerry people with whom we came in contact were very kind to us; above all, we can never forget the O'Connors, the Hickeys and the Ahearns.

After our stay in Kerry we returned to County Limerick, keeping along the banks of the Shannon all the time. Our wounds were by this time healing rapidly, and we were feeling strong again. We used to go in for a dip nearly every day, and we fished quite a good deal. We had to be doing something. None of us could ever stand a day of inactivity.

CHAPTER XIII.

MANY CLOSE SHAVES.

ONE day while we were still in West Limerick we had what was probably our narrowest escape after the Knocklong affair. In was in June, 1919. Sheer luck drove us half a mile outside a great encircling movement made to capture us.

This was the sixth great attempt by the enemy to net us, and each time they engaged thousands of troops—to catch four of us. They knew well by now that each of the four of us would offer armed resistance, and that if luck was at all favourable many of them would fall never to rise, before they got us dead or alive. Liberal rewards were now offered publicly and privately for any information concerning our movements. Our descriptions were published broadcast, and even dropped from military aeroplanes, with the promise of British gold for anyone that would inform on us. It was a special duty for every policeman in Ireland, and every intelligence officer in the British army of occupation to learn our description. About this time, too, the British Government was perfecting its Secret

Service machinery in Ireland. There had always been a costly Secret Service organisation maintained for generations ; but it was not dangerous work, relating mainly to the activities of harmless politicians. Now, however, the work was getting more dangerous. Besides, our Secret Service was now becoming a thing to be reckoned with ; Dublin Castle had to bestir itself. As we well knew, the officials there were time and again severely reprimanded for their failure to catch us. They always replied that the people would give no information, that informers were very few and very cautious, and that Scotland Yard might be asked to give some help. They hinted at the same time that a few Irishmen living in England might be approached to undertake Secret Service work, as very few could now be got in Ireland.

It was in the summer of this year that the British Government therefore reorganised its Secret Service in Ireland, relying mainly on ex-soldiers of Irish birth. The newspapers of the time can tell how many score of them paid the price of their treachery during the ensuing two years. We found them all out in one way or another. If one reason more than another accounts for the success of the I.R.A., it is that we met and broke their Secret Service at every move, until in the end there was no such thing in practice as a British Intelligence Corps.

One word more on this subject. I know that

many people at the time were surprised at the number of men who were found with the label on their dead bodies—"Spies beware—executed by the I.R.A." Some people wondered if any mistakes were made, if any of these men were executed without sufficient evidence. I can say that of the cases that came under my knowledge there was always evidence enough to convince the most scrupulous. We made no mistakes, unless indeed we allowed many to escape against whom there was ample evidence, though we gave them the benefit of the slightest doubt.

But the "Knocklong Gang," as I believe we were sometimes called, always outwitted the spies and the battalions sent to round them up. Often, I know, they got fairly good information about us. At this time to which I have referred—June, 1919—for instance, it is probably true that they knew we were sometimes in West Limerick or North Kerry, near the mouth of the Shannon. After that big raid, which we so narrowly missed, we deemed it wise to change our quarters once more—and we crossed into East Clare, still hugging the banks of the Shannon. We kept ourselves fit by plenty of exercise, mostly swimming, for we had an idea that a good stroke in the water might at some time or other help us in getting out of a tight corner. Nobody could say that we did not live the healthy life of primitive men at this time. Many a day we en-

joyed ten or twelve hours of a glorious summer sun-bath. One day while in Clare we were basking beside the Shannon when a boat manned by police passed right beside us. We took no particular notice of it at the time, thinking the whole thing but a mere coincidence. When we got back to the house in which we were staying that evening we learned to our surprise that the boat was part of a search party that had got on our trail once more. They never suspected who we were, so that once more our recklessness had saved us—or them?

Probably the police had their eyes searching round the corners of rocks, or peering under bushes where they expected we should be hiding. It would amaze them to know we were often within earshot of their own barracks. It is a positive fact that often a single brick alone separated us from a police garrison, and more than once we were interested spectators watching from a window lorries laden with troops going out in search of us.

There is another possible explanation of such incidents as that on the Shannon. I am sure that more than one policeman whom we met on a country road suspected who we were; but these Peelers often considered discretion the better part of valour. We were never asked to produce visiting cards. Many a policeman in such circumstances would feel convinced that he would not be serving

his wife and family by attempting to arrest us. I'm not saying he was wrong either.

In a short time Clare became too hot for us. The Brennan Brothers were not on the best of terms with the British garrisons in that county, and finally relations became so strained that the British proclaimed Martial Law there too. Martial Law and ourselves were never very good friends; perhaps it was that we knew each other too well. Anyhow, we crossed the Shannon once more, and this time found ourselves in North Tipperary.

It was at the house of a family called Whelehan that I first came in contact with Ernie O'Malley. Whelehans were very kind to us. While I was there "Widger" Meagher and Frank McGrath—both famous athletes, and the latter Brigade Commandant of the I.R.A. in North Tipperary—visited us.

We spent a while in Mid. and South Tipperary too. At this time money was one of our great needs. Many, we knew, would gladly give it to us, but it was not easy to get in touch with the right people. The people we met most were, like ourselves, on the run and on the rocks.

Eamon O Duibhir, of Ballagh, in whose house, you will remember, the dance was the night Sean Hogan was captured, was a good friend to us, and supplied us with money. Once we had to sleep in an old castle—Castle Blake, near Rockwell College.

This old ruined castle was later a good friend to many of the boys on the run, as it had a kind of a secret apartment. At an early stage in the Civil War it was the scene of a sad tragedy when two Republicans—Theo English, of Tipperary, and Mick Summers—were surprised by Free State troops, and killed in the encounter which followed.

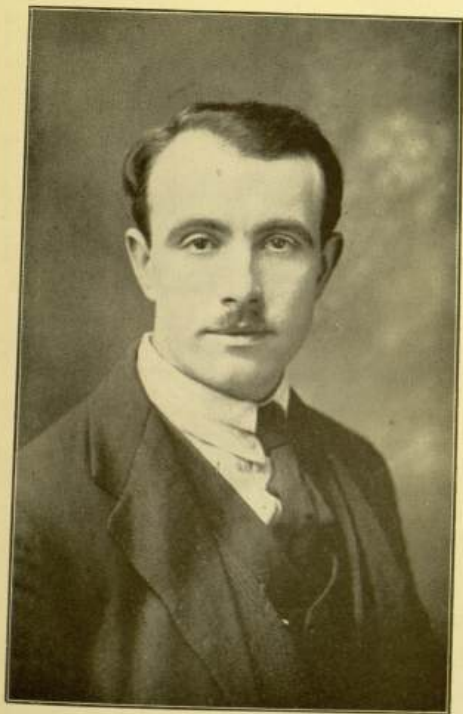
At last we got restive again. The country showed signs of following our example, but at this time the signs were few—an odd attack on a police barrack and the capture of a rifle or two from a soldier here and there. We felt the time had come for more energetic and general action. We knew we could not remain any way safe within Tipperary or over the border of Offaly. We discussed our position time and again, and always agreed we could not continue the life we were now living. To escape being shipped or exiled to America by those who should have stood by us, we had to avoid Dublin, and to remain in some remote part of the country. We were no longer content to accept this condition. We wanted to know how exactly the country stood, how we stood, and how the whole Volunteer Army stood. At last Sean Treacy and I, leaving Robinson and Hogan in North Tipperary, cycled straight into Dublin. We had no adventure on the way. At Maynooth we called on Donal Buckley, a member of Dail Eireann, and a man who had walked to Dublin to take part in the Rising of 1916.

He proved as good as his record. His house was put at our disposal, and we stayed three or four days there, though he tried to keep us longer.

In Dublin we headed for Phil Shanahan's again. Every Tipperary man who was on the run, or who wanted a good dinner, flocked to Phil's. Later we met Mick Collins, then Adjutant-General of the Irish Volunteers. We had a long discussion and we spoke plainly. Finally Mick undertook to arrange that we should stay in Dublin. With this assurance we mounted our bicycles again, and rode back to the country for Seumas Robinson and Sean Hogan.

At this time I was dressed as a priest. That was not an uncommon disguise at the time. The Peelers and soldiers probably suspected that a good many of the priests they saw travelling knew more about guns than Theology, but seldom held any of them up. They were not then at open war with men and women, priests and children. There would be too much of a National uproar if a priest was arrested, and as the old Peelers were still overwhelmingly Catholic they gave suspicious-looking priests the benefit of the doubt. Next year they not only arrested priests, but imprisoned several, and murdered three of them.

On this occasion when I reached Maynooth I discovered my back tyre was badly punctured. I did not think it becoming my clerical dignity to mend the puncture myself, and besides I had no



SEUMAS ROBINSON.



patience with that kind of work ; so I wheeled my machine to a local cycle mechanic's shop and asked him to repair it at once. Apparently he was a man who believed in making every customer take his turn, for he told me he could not do the job for a few hours. I pointed out to him that I was going on urgent business, but it was all no use. Finally he advised me to go to the College—Maynooth College, the world's greatest college for the training of Catholic priests—where they would easily get someone to repair it. In my rage at this refusal I forgot for a moment that I was in the garb of a minister of peace and goodwill. I told that cycle mechanic what I thought of him in language more forcible than priestly, and I am sure the poor man was amazed and shocked at the liberties which present-day clerics take with the English language. He was still staring at me in amazement when I wheeled my wounded bicycle from the door.

I had no desire to visit the College. Amongst the students I would find many friends willing to help me, but I was afraid the President and the Professors might not be too well pleased to find a gunman masquerading as a clergyman, and I doubted if I would be able to play the part and pretend I was a priest. I need hardly say I was no master of Latin, and I always associated priests with that language.

Still, I had to get the puncture mended. In a

fit of bravado I turned towards the police barracks. At the door I met a policeman who raised his hat to me, and with a show of dignity that would have done credit to an archbishop I acknowledged his sign of respect.

I told him my difficulties. Could he help me with the puncture? "To be sure, Father," he replied, "I can get you all that you want in no time; and if your Reverence won't mind I'll give you a hand at the job."

In two minutes the whole garrison were out tripping over one another in their eagerness to get solution and patches and the other necessities. Inside the door I could see dozens of printed notices and official documents pasted on the walls. Amongst them, I have no doubt, was an elaborate description of Dan Breen, and a promise of a huge reward for his capture.

When the job was finished I thanked the Peelers most profusely for their kindness and rode away. I suppose it was discourteous of me not to have left my card with the sergeant.

That night I reached the borders of Tipperary and Offaly and met the others. A few days later all four of us were safely settled in Dublin, which was to be our new headquarters for months to come. Within a few weeks we were planning to arouse the world by shooting the very head of the British Government in Ireland.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE TRAIL OF LORD FRENCH.

WHEN we got to Dublin in the Autumn of 1919, there were many signs that the war with the British was soon to develop. Any good judge of the situation at the time could have foreseen the intensive guerilla struggle that was to ensue for a year and a half. Raids for arms were becoming more numerous, and attacks on police patrols were by no means rare. But open warfare had not yet developed. British soldiers and police could go about with comparative safety. Our great danger while in Dublin was from the "G" men, Dublin's Scotland Yard. These were the detective branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, paid by the rate-payers of Dublin to track down criminals, but now mainly employed on political or military work. So far from devoting their attentions to the criminal classes we knew that many of them actually made use of criminals as "touts" or "spotters" to shadow men, or to get information. In the Autumn of 1919 the "G" men, of whom there were a few

score all told, were principally engaged in assisting and guiding the British military in midnight raids on the homes of Sinn Feiners, or in raids to seize Sinn Fein literature. They even made their way into Sinn Fein gatherings to take a note of the speeches, and though many of them were known by appearance to almost every person in Dublin they were not afraid, for at that time they seldom got more than a hiding if identified. Day after day one read in the papers of raids on the houses of inoffensive people who never handled firearms in their lives. It was this form of petty tyranny that goaded many into action. Boys and girls, not to speak of men and women, were imprisoned for such offences as having a copy of an Irish song. It was more than flesh and blood could stand.

Towards the end of the year several notoriously obnoxious "G" men were shot dead or wounded in the streets, and in every case their assailants got safely away. Every other means of bringing these men to their senses, or making them realise that they were playing the part of spies and traitors had been tried but failed. As a result of the wholesale attacks made upon them it was in the end found impossible for them to live in their homes, or even to venture on the streets, and they took up their abode in Dublin Castle, whence they issued forth now and again to accompany raiding parties of armed troops. Many of them too resigned when

things became too hot for them. I must say, however that a small number who did not resign were never molested, because they confined themselves solely to their ordinary work of arresting criminals. These men had an understanding with our side that they could go about their work provided they never indulged in political activities, or assisted the military. A few others, who remained in the force, afterwards joined our Secret Service, and gave invaluable assistance in the way of official documents and information that they were in a position to obtain. For obvious reasons I cannot go into details on these matters.

When the four of us from Tipperary had become almost settled down in Dublin, and knew the city well, we were soon kept busy, as we wanted to be. Now and again a "G" man got on our track, but we soon dealt with him. We walked about Dublin quite freely and without any disguise. It was a common trick on the part of the R.I.C. to send a man who knew us up from County Tipperary for a few days in the hope of seeing us. These men soon learned sense. They returned home as quickly as they could, for it would not serve their health to get too close on our heels. Probably too a few of them who may have chanced to see us from time to time had wisdom enough not to know us.

We had many good friends in Dublin. Phil Shanahan's was a great haunt of ours, and one of

the most amusing recollections I have of that time is a conversation I had there one evening with a D.M.P. man who, of course, had no notion who I was. He discussed the political situation with me very confidentially, even the Soloheadbeg and Knocklong affairs. He was in complete agreement with the Sinn Feiners—he guessed I was one—but he couldn't agree to the taking of life. I think I gave the poor man the impression that my views were the same as his own.

Ryan's, of the Monument Creamery, in Parnell street, and Seumas Kirwan's were also open houses to us, besides many others that I will mention in the course of my narrative. Of course we frequently met kindred spirits like Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy and Tom Keogh, for at that time the number of active gunmen ready for any risk in the country's cause was small. Many of those who later proved their mettle did not get the chance at that time, principally because those who were in favour of active measures were few and far between. The attitude of the Headquarters' Staff of the I.R.A. I shall have occasion to refer to very soon.

In the autumn my comrades and I had long and serious discussions about the policy of shooting policemen and soldiers. We felt it was not enough in itself. They, we argued, were but the tools of higher men. Their loss did not trouble England very much, for she could always get more dupes.

Why, we asked ourselves, should we not strike at the very heads of the British Government in Ireland? It would arouse the world more to take an interest in Ireland's case; it would strike terror into the hearts of English statesmen, and it would prove more effective in helping to make British Rule in Ireland impossible. England could carry on all right with a few policemen less; it would be more difficult to carry on without a Lord Lieutenant. Besides, there were thousands of policemen; but there were only a few who might become Lord Lieutenant, and they would think twice of taking the job if they had to risk being shot.

As a result of these discussions we finally decided to make preparations for an attack on Lord French, the Lord Lieutenant himself. Brave and trusted men to whom we communicated our plans readily agreed.

For three long months we watched, planned and waited for him. We suffered many bitter disappointments waiting. He was very rarely seen about now and was always accompanied by a heavy escort. Great secrecy was observed about his movements, though our Secret Service kept us well posted. Even the public functions usually patronised by Viceroys were rarely attended by Lord French. There were many reasons for that, which do not concern my story.

He little knew what narrow escapes he had during these three months. Twice or three times we missed him by a street—the altering of his route by one corner. That, by the way, was a frequent plan of his—to change his journey from the original programme. It was a trick to upset any plans made against him on the strength of information supplied from inside. It showed what little trust he had in those around him. On one occasion we missed him by barely one minute.

During those three months, the last months of 1919, we had no less than twelve different ambushes planned to intercept him. But on each one of the twelve occasions he either failed to come or arrived too late or too early for our purpose. These plans were connected with affairs of the city—public functions, or visits to private houses. We were naturally hampered, because we could not afford to hang around a particular spot too long—our movements would lead to suspicion, and probably to a sudden swoop by the military.

The first occasion that we were lying in wait Mick Collins was with us. So was Tom MacCurtain, Commandant of the 1st Cork (City) Brigade, who, in March of the following year, when he was Lord Mayor of Cork, was murdered in his own home by the police. Poor Dick McKee was also there. He was then Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, and never believed in asking his men to take risks

he was not prepared to take himself. Dick was murdered together with Peadar Clancy, while a prisoner in the hands of the British a year later.

On another occasion I remember vainly waiting with Peadar Clancy for two hours outside the door of a Merrion Square doctor whom French occasionally visited. On November 11th, the Anniversary of the Armistice, the Lord Lieutenant was to attend a banquet in Trinity College. We had every hope of intercepting him that night. Our plan was to bomb his car as he passed Grattan Bridge, for we knew the very hour he was due to travel along the quays from the Viceregal Lodge to the College.

So certain were we that everything would work out according to plan that some of our men in the vicinity of the Bridge, within a hundred yards of Dublin Castle, had actually drawn and thrown away the pins from their bombs. It was a bitterly cold night, and there they stood with their fingers pressed on the springs of the cold metal ready to release the bombs. But he never came. For almost two hours our men had to endure the agony of holding the springs of the bombs, and in the end they had to make their escape as best they could, still gripping the cold bombs.

A fortnight later French was expected at the Castle, and of course his journey would take him across the same bridge. We knew of the arrange-

ments, and again took up our positions. The weather was bitterly cold. It was in the early forenoon, and suddenly snow began to fall. But we did not mind the snow. The job we were bent upon was too serious to be interfered with by such trifles. Some of us paced the bridge in the blinding snow, and wondered were we to be disappointed again, for the hour fixed for his arrival had passed. While we were on the bridge a friend who recognised us passed, and, evidently realising that we were on some job remarked with pointed sarcasm, "That's a most convenient spot you are taking shelter from the snow!" His words brought us to a sense of our position. Anybody in the shops round the bridge would have suspected us at once. As there seemed no use in waiting any longer we went off. Five minutes later lorry loads of military swooped down on the bridge, and held up and searched everyone in the neighbourhood. Detectives who had been posted near the entrance to Dublin Castle had seen us on the bridge, and at once telephoned to the Viceregal Lodge, with the result that French cancelled his appointment, and the troops came instead. We had just got away in time. Another instance of our luck!

On all these occasions our information about Lord French's arrangements was absolutely re-

liable. No doubt he often changed his plans at the last moment, fearing that our sources of knowledge were as sound as indeed they always proved.

Personal reasons, which do not concern me, also often caused his plans to be altered, while of course the advice of touts and spies had its effect. It certainly was an eloquent commentary on British rule in Ireland that the head of the Government carried his life in his hands whenever he ventured through the streets of the capital. As everybody knew, he was wise enough to venture out only as seldom as he could, even when accompanied by a huge escort ; though I have no reason to think that personally he was not a brave man.

At last when our patience was almost exhausted, we got information that gave us hope of achieving our purpose. It was in December, 1919. The newspapers of these days seldom gave any information at all regarding the Viceroy's movements. Even when he crossed to England occasionally the newspapers were not informed until he was safely back in Phoenix Park. They were not encouraged to trace his movements. Sometimes, however, the newspapers were supplied with information intended deliberately to mislead the public in general, and the I.R.A. in particular. At the time of which I speak the Irish newspapers had informed their

readers that Lord French was away out of the country. I think they actually stated that he was cruising somewhere in the North Sea.

We knew better. He was, as a matter of fact, enjoying himself with a select house party of male and female intimates, at his country residence, French Park, Co. Roscommon. We knew a good deal more about Lord French's life than the public ever suspected; but my purpose is not to give a history of the Viceroy's private affairs, except in so far as they concern my narrative. Sufficient to say that on this occasion we knew every member of the select few at French Park, Boyle.

Frenchpark is a remote country district. While the Lord Lieutenant was in occupation the house was garrisoned by a strong force. But that garrison we felt we could easily overpower did we so desire. The situation of the house too would favour our escape when we had accomplished our object. We would have no difficulty in covering the journey from Dublin to Roscommon, and we believed we would get back almost as easily. We could readily go by roads which would avoid the towns, for it is a much easier matter for wanted men to go from Dublin to the West than it would be, say, to go South or North.

Why, then, it may be asked, with all the circumstances in our favour did we not attempt to shoot Lord French when he was in Roscommon?

The answer is simple. We knew he would be returning to Dublin on a particular date, and we decided to attack him almost at his own door, and beside the city. Why? Because what we had in mind was the effect such an incident would create. Against the old soldier himself we had no personal spite, but he was the head of the alien Government that held our country in bondage, and we knew that his death would arouse the world to interest itself in our fight for freedom. His name was known throughout the world. The Phoenix Park was as well known to the world as Hyde Park. Think then of the sensation that would be created when this man, a Field Marshal of the British Army, and head of the Government in Ireland, was shot dead at the gate of the Phoenix Park, in the capital of the country he was supposed to rule, and within a stone's throw of half a dozen of England's military garrisons—at a spot where within five minutes could be mustered twenty thousand British troops, with every implement of modern warfare. The risk to ourselves was greater, but the moral effect would be worth the price. The world would sit up and say: "The men who have done this are no cowards; their country must have a grievance; what is it?" That is the result on which we reckoned, and our reasons for finally deciding to plan our coup for Ashtown. I shall describe (in the next chapter) our attack, and its many sequels.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BATTLE OF ASHTOWN.

LORD FRENCH was due to arrive back in the Viceregal Lodge on Friday, 19th December, 1919. That arrangement was kept a dead secret, and even the higher officials in the Lodge and in Dublin Castle were unaware of his plans. But we were well aware of the arrangement. The time has not yet come when the source of our information may be disclosed.

We not only knew the day but the hour. Further, we knew that when Lord French returned by the Midland Railway he would not travel into the terminus of that line (Broadstone Station) in the city, but would alight at the little wayside station of Ashtown. So we laid our plans.

Ashtown is about four English miles from the centre of the city, but only about two miles from the northern residential quarter. You travel to it along the main road that leads from Dublin to the Northwest of Ireland, one of the best trunk roads in the country, passing in a straight line into the heart of

Meath, through Navan, Kells, Cavan, and on to Enniskillen. About two and a half miles after you leave the tramway line you come to Ashtown. The station itself is not on the main road—it is about two hundred yards down on a little by-road to the right. There is no village of Ashtown; the district has fewer houses than probably any other place so near the city. There seems to have been no reason for making a station there except, perhaps, for loading and unloading horses for racing and hunting.

To most people Ashtown simply means one house—Kelly's publichouse, commonly known as the "Half-way House." It stands just at the cross-roads where you turn to your right off the main road to go to the station. That little by-road, which, as I have said, leads on the right hand side to the railway, cuts across the main road almost at right angles and leads on the left to the Phoenix Park and to Castleknock. Thus when one travels out from the city and stands at the cross-roads beside the Half-way House one is within two hundred yards of the station on the right, and within one hundred yards of the Phoenix Park gate on the left. At this gate there then stood a Police Barrack, where three or four D.M.P. men used to be stationed, but the barrack was closed a few days before our adventure. A quarter of a mile inside the gate was the Viceregal Lodge.

Of houses there were very few in the vicinity. The only one near the Half-way House was the residence of Mr. Peard, the owner of the Park Racecourse which adjoins the main road. On the city side of Ashtown there were several institutions—such as orphanages and convents—the nearest being the famous Deaf and Dumb Institute kept by the Christian Brothers. Away to the right of the railway is the famous Dunsink Observatory.

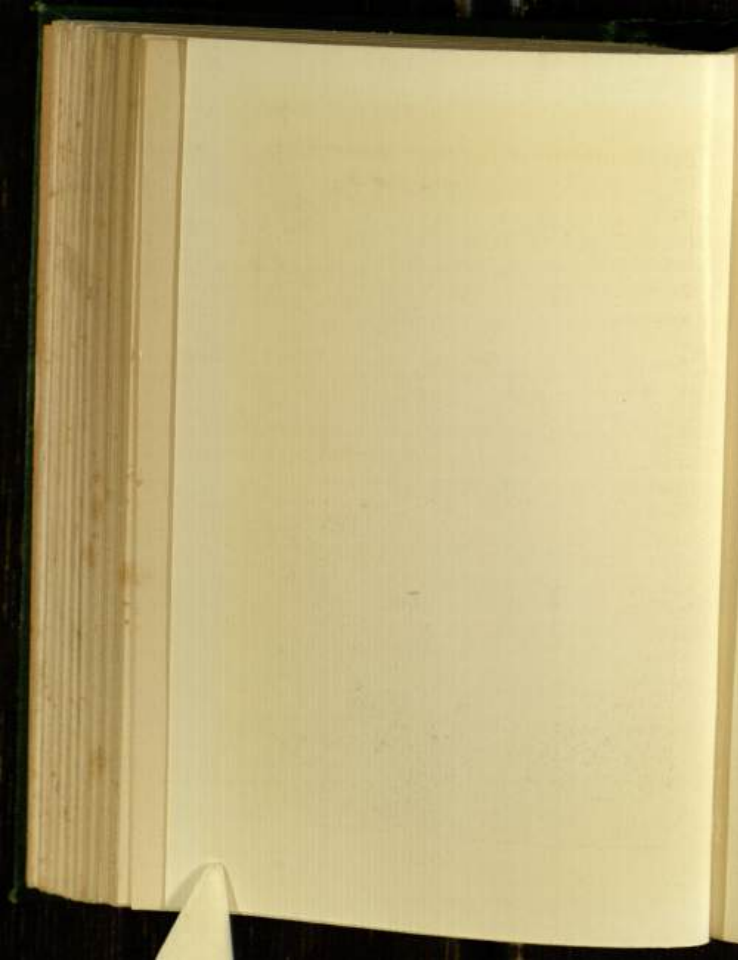
I have thought it necessary to describe the spot in this detail, because even to Dublin people the Ashtown district is comparatively unfamiliar.

The special train in which the Viceroy was to return was due to arrive at Ashtown at 11.40 a.m. Half an hour before that our party had arrived on the scene. We had started from Fleming's, in Drumcondra, that morning, and at Mrs. Martin Conlan's, of Phibsboro', I had stopped for a cup of tea. There were eleven of us all told in the exploit—namely, Mick McDonnell, Tom Keogh (later a Free State Officer killed in the Civil War); Martin Savage (killed that day); Sean Treacy (killed in action in Talbot Street, Dublin, ten months later); Seumas Robinson, Sean Hogan, Paddy Daly (later a Major-General in the Free State Army); Vincent Byrne, Tom Kilkoyne, Joe Leonard and myself.

We cycled out the main road—the Cabra Road—going in pairs at different intervals so as not to



MARTIN SAVAGE.



arouse suspicion. We left our bicycles outside Kelly's, for at any hour of the day it was not unusual to see a dozen bicycles outside that tavern while the owners are refreshing themselves within. We knew every inch of the locality, every bush and turn, every nook and corner. As a further advantage we knew the exact order in which Lord French and his escort always travelled.

We knew we would arouse suspicion were we to wait on the roadside, so according as our men arrived they entered the tavern. Inside were a few of the local labourers and farmhands. Our appearance in pairs did not seem to create any suspicion, especially as the local people were not at all aware that Lord French was to pass the spot in a short time. In the publichouse while drinking our bottles of minerals we indicated to any who might be listening that our meeting was purely accidental. We talked about cattle and paddocks and grazing and many things except politics. But even in this fictitious conversation we had to be careful, for the men who were in the shop knew farming from A to Z, while some of our men knew very little about that industry.

While we were talking about all these things for the benefit of our audience we were beginning to get anxious now that the time was drawing near. More than one of us glanced at his watch from time

to time, and our eyes were busy all the time watching the cross-road, for from the shop we had a clear view of everyone who passed either on the main road or on the road to the Park. The first sign of activity we saw was a large D.M.P. man coming from the direction of the Park Gate. He evidently knew who was to arrive, for he took up a position near the cross-road to control any traffic that might come that way. His spear-pointed helmet, his shining buttons and his spotless boots, not to speak of the care with which he pulled down his tunic under his belt, all indicated that he felt called upon to make an impressive display. We did not trouble very much about the poor man, though he had a revolver holster by his side and no doubt it was not empty.

A few minutes before the arrival of the train four military lorries, with troops armed with rifles, drove down from the Park Gate, passed the Half-way House and pulled up to take their positions near the station. In addition we knew that several armed D.M.P. men would be lining the route from the Park Gate to the Viceregal Lodge.

Now we had of course made all our arrangements days in advance. Nothing was left to the last moment. Our plan was to concentrate our principal attack on the second car in the convoy. That was

the car in which Lord French always travelled. Outside Kelly's there was a heavy farm cart lying. Tom Keogh, Martin Savage and I were to push this at the last moment right across the road, thus blocking the passage of French's car, for the road is too narrow to allow two cars to travel abreast, and the heavy farm cart would compel them to slow down. At the same moment the other members of our party were to open their deadly attack on the Lord Lieutenant's car with bombs and grenades, and then rely on their revolvers to deal with the military guard.

Sharp to time we heard the whistle of the railway engine as the train steamed into Ashtown. But we never moved. We had two or three minutes more, and a false step half a second too soon might upset our whole plan. Then we heard the motor engines throbbing. The party was about to move off from the station. We stepped out to the cross-road. Our men quietly took up their positions. Tom Keogh, Martin Savage and I were beside the farm cart that we were to use as an obstruction. It was time to get it in motion.

I caught hold of the cart and began to push it round the corner. It was a heavy cart, far heavier than we thought, for, needless to say, we had not had a rehearsal of the act, nor had we judged the weight of the cart otherwise than with our eyes.

I pushed it round the corner on to the narrow road leading from the station. Suddenly I heard a voice addressing me. It was the voice of the D.M.P. man whose presence we had ignored.

"You cannot go down there for a while," he remarked. "His Excellency is to pass along here in a few seconds."

Now, I knew that His Excellency was due, much better than the Constable did. However, I could not explain to him that I had an appointment with His Excellency. Time was pressing. I tried to ignore the policeman. He evidently thought I was too stupid for this world. He went on protesting to me and explaining how necessary it was to have the road clear for His Excellency's cars.

The amazing thing, when I afterwards came to think of it, was that he was apparently too dense to notice that I had two guns in my hands. If he did I'm sure he would have taken out his notebook and asked me for my name and address, for it was illegal to carry arms.

I did not want to use my gun so soon. In the first place I had no wish to hurt the poor man, and secondly, I knew that to fire a shot now would be fatal to our plans, as it would at once attract the attention and suspicion of the escort, who were now in their cars a hundred paces from us.

I did the only thing I could in the circumstances. I shouted at him—I threatened him and finally told

him if he didn't clear out of our way I would smash him up. But it was no use. Even then the policeman did not realise the position. He still kept on talking.

And while we stood there, wasting moments that were precious, our comrades were wondering what was wrong. One of our men who had been allotted a position on the ditch that ran along the road apparently realised the situation. Without considering how he was threatening our whole scheme, not to speak of endangering the lives of three of us who were standing by the cart, he drew the pin from his grenade and hurled the missile straight at the policeman's head. Now any one of the three of us could easily have settled with the obstructionist with perfect safety to ourselves, but we had no desire to kill the poor man, and in any case we feared that a single shot would prevent Lord French from coming up to us from the station. He could, for instance, if he suspected an ambush have sent his escort ahead to clear the road, or he could have gone right into Broadstone Station, in the city, and so upset everything.

The policeman was struck on the head with the bomb and the weapon burst at my side without doing serious injury to any of us beyond the fact that the force of the explosion threw us violently to the ground. McLoughlin, the policeman, was not seriously injured. The rest of us quickly re-

covered from our shock, and we had no time now to bother about the policeman, for at that moment the motor cycle despatch rider (or scout, as he really was) who always rode forty or fifty yards ahead of the Viceroy's party dashed by us from the station. A second later comes the first motor and we dash right in front of it opening fire on the occupants. Our fire is at once returned, and so close are we to the enemy that a new hat I had just bought is shot right off my head. It was a close shave, but my usual luck was with me that day. So fast was the car travelling that we had no time even to glance at the occupants, nor indeed were we greatly concerned with them, for our real object was to frighten that car into such speed that it would quickly seek safety in flight while we would hurl all our force against the second car, the one in which we knew Lord French always travelled.

Our cart had not completely blocked the road when the first motor sped by—we did not intend it to. Another dash to pull the cart right across the road and the second car is upon us. From every position held by our little party our concentrated attack opens and the air is rent with rapid revolver fire and bursting bombs and hand grenades. But it is by no means a one-sided battle. The enemy has his machine-gun and rifles in action, and there we stand a target for him on the roadside while we still pour volley after volley into car No. 2. The

three of us near the cart are now in a double peril. The enemy's bullets whistle round us and his grenades burst at our feet, but so close are we to our objective that we must also run the gauntlet from the bombs which our own men are hurling from the ditch.

With our smoking guns still spitting fire at the occupants of the car we back behind the cart, seeking what little cover it affords from the enemy's hail of bullets. Another second and the cart is being riddled and the splinters from its shafts are flying round us. But our work must be accomplished and the fight must be kept up. Suddenly to our dismay another enemy car is rushing towards us from the opposite direction. We are now in greater danger than ever for we are trapped between two fires. I felt a bullet pierce my left leg, but I had no time to examine the wound though I reckoned the bullet had passed through. The British had by this time about a dozen rifles and a machine gun in action; but the marksmen's nerves must have failed them, otherwise we could never have stood up so long against them. One man, however, gets his mark and poor Martin Savage falls into my arms, shot through the body. Poor chap! How light-heartedly he had been singing and reciting poems about Ireland and the glory of dying for one's country, as we rode out to Ashtown

only an hour ago. And he is breathing his last in my arms, dying as he would have wished to die—by an English bullet.

All the time the bullets were whizzing by and the enemy's fire seemed to be growing more intense. I laid my dying comrade down on the roadside. His lips were moving as if he had a last message to give me. I stooped and put my ear to his face and catch the words spoken slowly and painfully but distinctly: "I'm done, Dan, but carry on!" Never can I forget that picture of my bleeding pallid comrade as he lay on the road at Ashtown that December day while bullets hopped around like hailstones striking everything but me at whom they were aimed.

But it was no time for weeping over the dead. Martin Savage had given his life in the cause for which he had lived—the cause for which he had shouldered his gun three years before when as a lad of eighteen he had done his bit in Easter Week, 1916. But for the rest of us the duty was to live for Ireland—to carry on.

Tom Keogh had now got back to cover. I looked around to see where were my chances of escape. There seemed none. The blood is streaming from my wounded leg and the enemy's fire is fierce and rapid whilst ours has eased off, because our grenades are gone, many of our revolvers are empty and one of our men is dead.

Amidst a hail of bullets I dashed for shelter of Kelly's house round the corner and got there in safety.

My gun speaks again. The enemy is silent. The khaki warriors have suddenly fled for the safety of the Park, followed by the whole Viceregal party.

We were now left in possession of the field of battle and with us were the wreck of the second car, its driver McEvoy whom we had wounded and captured in the fray, the wounded D.M.P. man, Constable O'Loughlin, and the dead body of our gallant comrade Martin Savage. We released our prisoner McEvoy. By a strange irony of fate his path crossed mine three years later, in April, 1923. I was then a prisoner in the hands of the Free State troops in Limerick Jail. McEvoy was there, an officer in the prison.

That December day in 1919, as we hurriedly surveyed the ground at Ashtown we were convinced we had achieved our purpose and had shot Lord French. Now our next and most urgent concern was to return to the city, for we knew that within half an hour Ashtown and the country for miles around it would be swarming with British troops.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR ESCAPE FROM ASHTOWN.

THE ten of us now held a hurried Council of War at the cross-road of Ashtown. Nine of our party had escaped without a scratch: Martin Savage was dead and I was wounded and bleeding profusely. We had routed the whole body of British soldiers with their rifles, their machine gun, and their armour-plated car, and we had killed the Lord Lieutenant.

We carried poor Martin's body into Kelly's shop. It was all we could do. We knew the enemy would soon return with reinforcements and take possession of all that was left of that gallant soldier, but it would be suicidal to attempt to remove it to the city. The terror-stricken occupants of the Half-way House looked on in amazement and in silence.

With a prayer for the soul of our departed comrade we mounted our bicycles and faced for the city. We had scarcely started when Seumas Robinson found that his bicycle was broken and

useless for the journey. Jumping on the back of Sean Treacy's machine he balanced himself with one foot on the step and held on to Sean's broad shoulders. But with two men on a bicycle speed is slow, and never were we in greater need of a speedy return to safety. In our dilemma we espied a cyclist approaching us from the city. He was walking and wheeling his bicycle, evidently having alighted when he heard the battle in progress. In war most things are fair and the temporary seizure of his machine was not against our rules. Robinson had his gun still in his hand. Jumping from the step he presented his revolver at the stranger and ordered him to hand over his bicycle. The order was complied with. We always liked to cause as little trouble as possible to civilians and even in our haste that afternoon Seumas did not forget his duty to the owner of the bicycle. He assured him that if he called to the Gresham Hotel that evening his machine would be forthcoming. I do not know whether the man ever got his bicycle; I hope he did. Anyhow it was left near the door of the hotel that same evening as Seumas had promised.

We returned to the city safely. I was now feeling weak from the loss of blood, and went at once to Mrs. Toomey's house on Phibsboro' Road, on the north side of the city, and one of the first streets one meets in the city when returning straight from Ashtown. I believe the police and military later

that day traced my blood-stains from Ashtown along the Cabra Road, but fortunately they lost the trail near the city. Mrs. Toomey was very kind to me. I was at once put to bed and a doctor was sent for. I was attended by Dr. J. M. Ryan, then famous as the Captain of an All-Ireland hurling team. A doctor from the Mater Hospital, which was only a few hundred yards from my resting-place also attended me.

That evening Dublin rang with the newsboys' cry of "Attack on the Lord Lieutenant—Sensational fight at Ashtown—One of the Attackers shot dead!" And then I got a shock that almost drove me mad. Lord French had escaped unhurt!

It was true. We had failed. For the first time the Viceroy had travelled not in the second car but in the first. The car which we had scarcely bothered about and which we had only wanted to frighten off actually bore safely away the man we wanted. The news made my wound worse. I never liked half done jobs, and here we had not even half done our work. Sean Treacy took the disappointment philosophically. His motto was always to make the best of things. His consolation to me was, "You can't always have Knocklongs, Dan."

We never got another chance of shooting Lord French. He retired completely from public life. He scarcely ever appeared in public afterwards. Even

when he went to England armoured cars patrolled the roads to the mail boat, and armed detectives surrounded him, even to London. His movements were kept a close secret and disclosed to the Press many days later.

Had we been in a position to use rifles that day we could easily have made sure of shooting him from Kelly's house, but at that time our only means of travelling to the spot was by bicycle, for practically no motor cars were in use. This was due to the fact that a few months previously the British had made an order that every motor-driver should have a special permit from the military, bearing not only his name but his description and a photograph, like a passport. The order was to prevent the I.R.A. from using motor cars for getting about, especially for night attacks. Naturally, the only men likely to get permits from the British would be those who could prove their "loyalty" and were therefore not likely to assist us or to run the risk of giving us a car. The Motor Drivers' Union resenting this degrading condition met the order by refusing to apply for permits and by declaring a general strike all over the country. Hence as we could not get motors to travel to Ashtown we had no means of concealing rifles as we naturally could not strap them on bicycles. However, I must say I am glad now that Lord

French escaped. He was only doing his duty by his adopted country, the Nation or the Empire which had given him wealth, title and honours.

Let me pause to recount some sequels to the Ashtown attack. Church and Press denounced us in unmeasured terms, but the public were more guarded in their condemnation; slowly the country was beginning to realise that we meant war with England until, to quote the words of O'Donovan Rossa, "she was stricken to her knees or we were stricken to our graves." For the most part then, while the press and the clergy uttered bitter denunciations the public remained silent. It was the turning point. They were judging the situation. In private discussions many defended our standpoint. In public there was, of course, no means of doing so. The great majority of our countrymen were taking their bearings; they were perhaps shocked at the daring force tactics, but they were beginning to realise that we meant business, and that it was their duty to stand by us.

The morning following the attack the *Irish Independent* published a leading article in which we were all referred to as "assassins." The article was plentifully sprinkled with such terms as "criminal folly," "outrage," "murder," and so on, and this was the very paper which depended for its whole income on the support of the people who had voted for the establishment of an Irish

Republic. It had not even the sense of fair play, not to speak of decency, to wait until the inquest had been held and until Martin Savage had been laid to rest, to express its views. The other Dublin papers we did not mind. The *Irish Times* was openly and avowedly a British organ, and the *Freeman's Journal* was beneath the contempt of any decent Irishman. But we could not allow a paper that pretended to be Irish and independent to stab our dead comrade in the back.

At the time I was, of course, confined to bed as the result of my wounds and had no direct part in what followed. I believe some of the boys favoured the shooting of the Editor. Finally, another course was adopted. It was decided to suppress the paper. At 9 o'clock on Sunday night twenty or thirty of our men in charge of Peadar Clancy entered the building and held up the staff with revolvers. They then informed the Editor that his machiney was to be dismantled, and proceeding to the works department they smashed the linotypes with sledges, leaving the place in such a condition that it was hoped no paper would appear for some time. With the assistance of the other Dublin printing offices, however, the *Independent* was able to get a paper out as usual next day. However, we had taught the paper a lesson, and in a way we were glad that nobody was thrown out of work as many of the staff were I.R.A. men. Never afterwards did the

Independent, or any other Dublin newspaper, refer to any I.R.A. men as murderers or assassins, and I must say that soon afterwards the *Independent* was of much service in exposing British atrocities, even though it never supported our fighting policy. The proprietors got £16,000 compensation for the raid.

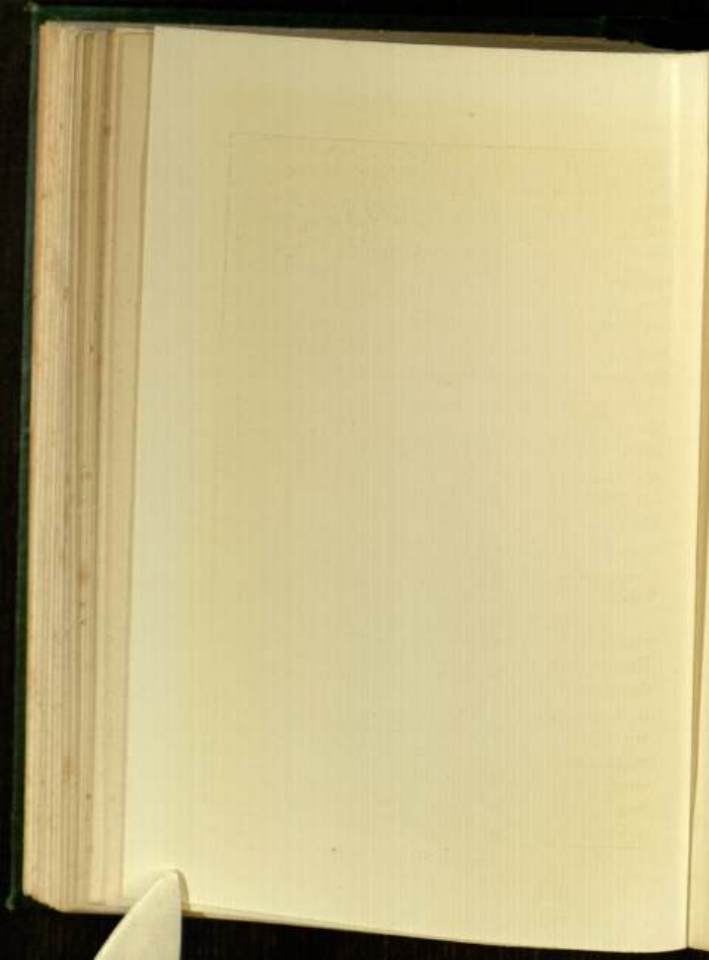
After the inquest on Martin Savage his body was handed over to his relatives. The clergy refused to have his body allowed into any church in Dublin, and the night before its removal to his native Ballisodare, County Sligo, it lay all night at the Broadstone Station attended only by a faithful few. But the funeral the next day was the greatest tribute ever paid to an Irishman in the West. The cortege was several miles long, and the Parish Priest attended and recited the last prayers, while the R.I.C., with the chivalry characteristic of them, surrounded the graveyard with their guns and bayonets. However, I suppose that was the best tribute they could pay to a gallant soldier, even though they did not intend it.

One other matter I must refer to here and then I proceed with my narrative :

It may be asked why Martin Savage's body was allowed to leave Dublin without receiving from the capital the last mark of respect which his sacrifice deserved. The answer is simple. The Government of the Republic, Dail Eireann, did not wish to



GENERAL LIAM LYNCH.



associate itself directly with our actions. Without going into details which might involve the names of many prominent men, some living, some dead, I wish to emphasise here and now that neither then nor at any later stage did Dail Eireann accept responsibility for the war against the British. Why, I do not know, nor do I wish to enter into any controversy on the attitude of the Dail. I can only say what was later publicly admitted both in the second Republican Dail and in the Free State Dail (General Mulcahy, December, 1923), that the I.R.A. was left to carry on the war on its own initiative, on its own resources, without either approval or disapproval from the Government of the Republic. It is well that this fact should be known to future generations.

It was amusing to read the newspaper versions of the Ashtown attack for days afterwards. At the inquest on Martin Savage it was stated that the "assailants fled and were pursued." I almost roared laughing when I read this and pictured the British soldiers' precipitate flight for the cover of the Phoenix Park wall. It was very strange indeed that we managed to reach Dublin on our bicycles if we were pursued by men provided not only with rifles and machine guns but with motor cars. Another imaginative writer described a tree by the roadside which had been specially clipped to form a look-out point for one of our men. Just imagine

the military genius of anyone who would send a man up on a tree to see a train that he could see from the road, or to become a sure target for enemy rifles!

At the inquest too the Crown Counsel refused to disclose the name of the lady who was in the car with Lord French.

Lord French, by the way, travelled in mufti that day—so it was stated at the inquest. Perhaps that is why we did not recognise him in the first car. I also learned from the inquest story that Detective Sergeant Hally, who was wounded by our fire, was a countryman of my own, hailing from Carrick-on-Suir.

After a few days in the house of Mrs. Toomey at Phibsboro', I was taken across to the south side of the city to No. 13 Grantham Street—the house of Mrs. Malone. Three months previously I had paid my first visit to this house. It happened in this way:

On 8th September, 1919, Seumas Robinson and I were in difficulties to find a place to sleep; we went to Phil Shanahan's, where we had met Sam Fahy, brother of Frank Fahy, T.D. We had known Sam well in Tipperary, where he spent some years, though at this time he was on the run like ourselves. We told him our trouble, and he at once gave us the latch-key of a friend's house in Grantham Street and told us the number, assuring

us that men on the run need never want for shelter while that house was there. Mrs. Malone, he said, was the woman's name, and she could be trusted with any secret. She had lost a son, Michael, in the Insurrection of Easter Week.

Seumas and myself then went from Phibsboro on our way to Grantham Street. To make matters worse we had forgotten the number of the house. Fortunately it is not a large street, and at the first house we knocked we were directed to Mrs. Malone's. We were made feel quite at home immediately. They were all very kind to us—Mr. and Mrs. Malone and the Misses Malone. We stayed for the night, and next morning we learned that the family had only four days previously suffered the loss of one of their daughters.

From that day we became close friends with the Malone family. We brought Treacy and Hogan there soon afterwards and introduced them to the family. Both of the girls—Brighid and Aine—were active members of the Cumann na mBan, and were always anxious to help us. They carried all our despatches and messages and even helped in removing munitions to Kingsbridge Station. You must understand that we were always in search of revolvers or rifles or ammunition to buy or to capture. Any that fell into our hands we always sent to our Brigade in South Tipperary. The stuff was needed very badly there, and there were

far less chances of getting it than there were in Dublin. Very often we sent on munitions by train, in boxes labelled "Tea" or "Wines," or some other commodity that the person to whom they were addressed was accustomed to receive. Of course, we always had our arrangements made at the other end so that the goods would be received by a merchant who was himself an I.R.A. man or by one of his assistants.

Only a few days before the Ashtown fight I had been joking with Aine Malone and telling her they would have to nurse me if I was wounded. I little thought that my joke of December, 1919, would come true, and that I would be installed in Grantham Street in the care of the Malones. The wound in my leg proved more serious than I expected, and my head too was painful. For three whole months I was laid up, scarcely able to move about at all. I am not so sure that I felt any way anxious to get away from my surroundings. Everyone was kind to me. Peadar Clancy came to see me and gave me the news nearly every day. I have fond, if sad, memories of pleasant hours spent with Peadar as he chatted or read for me. Dick McKee and Sean Treacy and Hogan were all kind too, and came to see me regularly. Peadar and Dick and Sean Treacy alas were not to see another Christmas. But I know they died smiling and happy.

Apart from my good and thoughtful comrades

there was an even stronger reason which made me think little of the pain and the indoor confinement. That was my kindest and ever attentive nurse—then Brighid Malone—now my wife. Few people have the good fortune to be nursed through sickness by their future wives whose presence counts for more than all that medical skill can give. But the story of our marriage a year and a half later, in circumstances that a fiction writer would discredit as too far-fetched for any Wild West novel, I must reserve for its proper place in a later chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM TARA TO TIPPERARY.

AT the opening of 1920 I had plenty of leisure, while my wound was healing, to review the year that had passed.

Soloheadbeg had borne fruit. The best tribute was that contained in the official statistics that were now issued from time to time by the British Government regarding "Crime in Ireland." Crime as such was, of course, almost unknown in Ireland until the arrival of the Black and Tans. When the British Government used the word "crime" in reference to Ireland it generally meant active operations against the Army of Occupation. So it was solemnly announced to the world at the beginning of 1920 that during 1919 scores of attacks had been made on British troops or police, hundreds of raids for arms had been carried out and a dozen policemen (that is, armed spies) had been shot dead. If the British Government thought the publication of these statistics would make us repent of our actions and shed our patriotism it had mis-

calculated. The only effect was to make us more determined that there would be a much bigger record of such "crimes" to be compiled at the end of 1920. And we kept our resolution!

In these statistics England took good care not to record her own acts of warfare against the civilian population in the same period. She did not tell that Dail Eireann, the elected representative Government of Ireland, had been proclaimed an illegal assembly, and its schemes for developing the country's industries declared criminal activities. She did not tell the world that the Gaelic League, Cumann na mBan, the Irish Volunteers and Fianna Eireann (the Irish Boy Scouts) had been similarly declared illegal bodies. Nor did she tell of the midnight raids and robberies officially carried out against peaceable citizens by her troops. In a word, to quote an expression used by Arthur Griffith at the time, she had "proclaimed the whole Irish nation as an illegal assembly."

But lest I should give an unfair picture of the time to the reader unacquainted with Irish events, I must in fairness mention a few things that the English forces in Ireland had not *yet* done. They had not imposed curfew; they had not murdered men in their beds; they had not burned and bombed towns and villages; they had not shot prisoners "for attempting to escape"; they had not

executed prisoners of war, murdered priests and outraged women.

I emphasise the fact that they had not done these things in 1919, because they were guilty of every one of these crimes during the year that was now beginning. In order to follow my narrative it is well to bear this fact in mind, for I may not have occasion to mention these developments of British policy unless they directly bear upon my story.

Indeed while I was yet in Dublin in the home of the Malones, the first Curfew Order was issued. In an encounter with a few I.R.A. men after midnight in February, 1920, a policeman was shot dead in Grafton Street. The British at once issued an order making it a criminal offence for any civilian to be out-of-doors between midnight and 5 a.m. Within a few months that Order was extended to most towns and cities in the south of Ireland; not only extended but made more severe. For instance at one time no one was allowed to leave his house in Limerick after 7 p.m. In Cork the hour was 4 p.m. for a while. It then became customary for the British to clear the streets with volley after volley of rifle fire, scores of men, women and children being murdered in this way during 1920 and 1921. Incidentally these curfew regulations gave the Government's murder gang a free field, for no civilian would be about to see them shooting or looting during the Curfew hours.

In the early spring of 1920 I dragged myself away from my pleasant surroundings in Grantham Street, and traversing the fair plains of Fingal. I went to spend a month in royal Meath, at the foot of the Hill of Tara. It was my first stay in royal Meath, the garden of Ireland's kings in the days of her greatness. The first day I climbed the hill—I stayed for an hour on its summit, living in the past, in spiritual association with the warriors of old, and wondering if ever again our land would see the day when her sons and daughters would have shaken the shackles of slavery from their limbs and have flung their flag proudly to the breeze, defiant and free. There is little now on the Hill to tell of those days of our greatness. No men crowd its summit; tradition says that the curse of a saint from my own county brought about the ruin and decay of Tara. But the great Banquet Hall could still be traced where the High Kings received homage from their vassals and bestowed hospitality upon their subjects. But a little cross on the summit marks the "Croppies' Grave," where "many a Saxon foeman fell, and many an Irish soldier true"—the last resting place of the dauntless few who struck a blow for Ireland in '98, and fell with their face to the enemy. And I knelt on the green sward of the deserted palace and prayed that the Croppies' sacrifice might not be in vain; that their dream might come true even in our

generation, and that I might be given strength and courage to speed the day.

There on the sod hallowed by the footsteps of Ireland's warrior saints and kings of peace I realised for the first time the full meaning of that little poem of Moore's, with its pathetic appeal that always grips the Irish heart and dims the patriot's eye.

"Let Erin remember the days of old
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her!"

And then my eyes wandered over the plains at my feet—richer than my own Golden Vale. Here and there I saw a stately mansion or a castle; but I knew that these were not the homes of the clansmen of our kings, but the fortresses of those who had deprived them of their heritage. Of farm houses there were none; a labourer's cottage here and there marked the home of the Gaels who had survived—to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water. I searched the countryside for the men that this fair land should have raised; but the roads were deserted; the bullock had replaced the king and the peasant. And I asked myself did Providence ordain that Meath should be the home of the bullock to feed the conquering Saxon. No! It could not be. It was the old curse, the old blight of the foreigner.

Many a day afterwards I wandered along the plains of Meath, thinking and planning and

dreaming of the happy land it might be if only we were allowed to work out our own destiny as God would have us. I often walked for three or four hours without meeting a human being. Here and there a lovely mansion; around it the gate-lodge of the serf, the winding avenue, the silent trees and the green fields with the bullock as their ruler. Landlordism, worked as the willing instrument of English rule, had wrought this desolation. And I renewed my resolve to do my share in bringing about the change that must come.

I spent pleasant, if uneventful days, with Joseph Dardis and with Dr. Lynch and Tom Carton, of Stamullen, and also with Vincent Purfield, of Balbriggan. From them all I received the same genial hospitality that so many had already shown me. Thank God, England has not yet deprived us of our spirit of kindness and hospitality.

The summer was now approaching. I was feeling strong and fit again. I was anxious to be doing something. The war was developing and I could not be idle. I felt I had no right to remain any longer out of the fray. Some of the things I had read in the papers had made my blood boil again. Tom MacCurtain, Lord Mayor of Cork, who had been with us but five or six months previously lying in wait for Lord French, had been murdered in his home in the presence of his wife. In Thurles two or three similar murders had been committed by

the British. They were but the first of a hundred such murders to be committed within a year by British forces, all connived at or directly inspired by the highest officials in the land.

I resolved to be up and doing. I returned to Dublin. There I met some of the boys and urged an intensive guerilla campaign. Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy enthusiastically supported my views and favoured my "on with the war" policy.

As I have already explained, our own policy was all the time "unofficial." Neither Dail Eireann nor General Headquarters of the I.R.A. had sanctioned it or accepted responsibility. Mick Collins, I must say, seemed to favour it. He always promised to continue to push our war policy in the "proper quarters," and it must be remembered that he was then not only on the G.H.Q. staff but was Finance Minister in Dail Eireann. I have already recounted how he was with us on one occasion towards the end of 1919, when we had prepared to ambush Lord French, but the Lord Lieutenant disappointed us.

The truth is that our war policy was not popular. The military authorities did not seem to want it. The political wing certainly did not want it, and more than one T.D. strongly denounced it in private; though it was part of our good fortune to be able always to conceal our differences from the enemy—until after the Truce. The Press, of

course, denounced our campaign, though since a lesson had been taught the *Independent* the newspapers had learned that "discretion was the better part of valour," especially in the use of certain words like "murder," and "outrage." The words "shootings" and "tragedies" became very popular with the newspapers after the attack on the *Independent*.

The public did not want the war. They forgot that it was their vote at the 1918 General Election that had led to the formal establishment of the Republic. They only knew that attacks on police meant more severe martial law, worse curfew, more arrests and compensation for policemen's widows. Evidently many thought at that time that liberty was a thing to be got for nothing. I must say, however, that as the war developed in intensity towards the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921 the vast majority of the people stood with us, and cheerfully took their share of the risks and hardships.

I did not intend to stay long in Dublin. I wanted to get back to Tipperary. I felt that things were too quiet there. The boys were all right, they were game for anything; all they wanted was to be told what to do. So Sean Treacy and I once more cycled that hundred miles journey, and I found myself back in Tipperary after an absence of nearly twelve months.

This time we had a new plan. We decided to embark upon a campaign of a kind then scarcely known in the struggle, but one that was soon to show the world that there was no longer any doubt that Ireland was in a state of open war.

(In the next chapter I shall describe that new campaign.)

Before dealing with the events which followed my return to Tipperary I must tell of an incident that almost ended my career as a gunman.

Seumas Robinson and I had been spending a few days with Vincent Purfield at Balbriggan, where I had often had such a happy time. That was during Holy Week, 1920, and we decided to go to Dublin for Easter. We started from Balbriggan in a motor driven by Vincent himself on Good Friday, April 2nd, 1920.

Now the British authorities in Ireland were always under the impression that the Sinn Feiners would always do something every Easter to celebrate the anniversary of the 1916 Insurrection. As a matter of fact we usually did, but we were always disobliging enough to do just the thing they never expected, and at that time they were taken most by surprise. Anyhow, in preparation for the "annual rising," as people sarcastically spoke of the thing which the Government expected, the military always let us

know that they were not to be taken by surprise. For years they used to erect barricades at all the roads leading into Dublin, and place military outposts who searched every car and pedestrian passing in or out of the city during the few days before and after Easter. Having thus done their duty by the Empire they usually removed their barricades after a few days.

When we left Balbriggan that morning we forgot all about this annual manœuvre of the British, otherwise I need hardly say we should have spent Easter with Vincent in Balbriggan. We had a pleasant journey until we arrived within a few miles of the city, about half a mile beyond the tram terminus at Whitehall. On rounding a corner we suddenly came face to face with a military lorry travelling towards us. The lorry slowed down apparently to pull up and search our car, but we looked so innocent and harmless that the officer ordered his car to proceed. We proceeded on our way and laughed heartily, while congratulating ourselves on our good luck. But our good fortune was short-lived. The noise of the military lorry had scarcely died away when half a mile further on towards the city we heard a sharp order to "Halt!"

Straight ahead of us, just at the tramway terminus was a military barricade, a score of soldiers, with their rifles gripped in a business-like way, while an officer was stepping towards us,

dangling his revolver. Now, I thought, my hour had come. There is no escape this time.

Vincent kept as cool as a cucumber; not one of us betrayed the slightest concern and the car drove right to the barricade before it slowed down.

I stepped out of the car and walked straight to the officer with an angry scowl and demanded the meaning of this.

"I must search your car," was the curt reply.

Then I thought it was better to try civility. I told him we had no objection to being searched, but assured him that any delay would be serious to us, as we were in a hurry to reach the city on important business. He hesitated for a moment. Then he waved to the soldiers to clear the way.

"Very well!" he said, "you may go ahead."

"Thank you," I nodded to him, entered the car and we drove on.

I could not have afforded to allow either the car or ourselves to be searched. Had he attempted to do so, it would have been his last piece of military activity. Probably we would never have escaped ourselves had he forced me to pull my gun, but there was no other way out of it.

Our motor car was the only vehicle that entered or left Dublin without being searched during those five days.

The same bluff as had carried Sean Hogan and myself out of a similar difficulty near Limerick a

year before now proved successful at Whitehall, within a few hundred yards of the house where, seven months later, I was to have my biggest fight for life—at Drumcondra.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BARRACK ATTACKS

OUR new plan for more active operations against the British was, in short, to attack them in their strongholds—the police barracks throughout the country. The peelers were now far too cautious to patrol the roads. They seldom if ever ventured any distance from their barracks. We could not meet them in the open. But if the mountain would not come to Mohammed, there was only the other thing to be done. We had got to go to the police and attack them on their own grounds.

At this time, in the spring of 1920, they were rapidly evacuating all outlying barracks in small places where there was a danger that the garrison could be cut off or surprised. They were concentrating on the larger barracks where the garrisons were strengthened and the buildings strongly fortified with steel shutters and barbed wire entanglements. It was at this time that the I.R.A. carried out its most intensive simultaneous series of operations. In one night no less than about a

thousand vacated police barracks were burned to the ground—the operations extending to every county in Ireland. In this way we prevented any possibility that those barracks would ever again be occupied by the enemy. A thousand links of the British military chain had been severed.

At this time the peelers had abandoned all pretence of being a police force. They were openly and avowedly a military force not attempting to suppress crime but holding the country by brute force for England. When the R.I.C. uniforms disappeared from a village our I.R.A. police promptly took over the duties that they should have discharged, and right well they did it. The robber and the housebreaker soon learned to have for the I.R.A. a wholesome respect he never had for the R.I.C.

If any reader unacquainted with events in Ireland at that time thinks it incredible that a police force like the R.I.C. should have been so shameless as to allow criminals a free hand I hope I shall convince him by two simple facts. The first is that in cases where our men were found to have arrested men for robbery or other forms of crime, the practice of the British was to have the criminal released and protected and to have the I.R.A. men sent to jail. The newspaper files with accounts of courts-martial on our men on such charges bear out my statement. The second fact, though never revealed in the

newspapers, did not come under my personal notice, but I have it from I.R.A. men concerned. In County Meath a most cold-blooded murder was committed by an ex-British soldier. The R.I.C. had clear evidence that he was guilty. They arrested him, but did they try him? No! They released him and advised him to leave the country before he fell into the hands of the I.R.A. But he was arrested by the I.R.A. men within five minutes of his release, and later paid the penalty of his crime.

At this time too the Black and Tans appeared on the scene. A great many are still in doubt as to how they got this name, so it is as well to explain.

The force was recruited by Sir Hamar Greenwood's instructions early in 1920 to swell the ranks of the R.I.C. and to replace the Irishmen who had resigned from that force in disgust. Greenwood wanted thousands of recruits for carrying out the policy of terrorism which had been decided upon. He could not get them in Ireland. Even in England he found it hard to get any decent men to come on such work. Hence his force was recruited mainly from the lower classes of English ex-soldiers, many of them being known criminals or ex-convicts. They arrived in Ireland in such numbers that the R.I.C. could not possibly equip half of them in the recognised dark blue uniform. There were some black tunics to be had and some black trousers, also some black caps. The military came to their assist-

ance with a supply of khaki. Every man was given some portion of the black uniform to show he was nominally a policeman, but the main portion of the outfit was khaki. When these irregular forces first took up duty in the South you can imagine their grotesque appearance—one man being all in khaki except for a black cap, another all in khaki except for black trousers, and so on, none of them being either completely in black or completely in khaki.

Our Irish people have a sense of humour, and they have always been noted for their happy knack of giving appropriate nick-names. In the district which surrounds Knocklong—South Tipperary and East Limerick—the name *Black and Tan* was born. For generations there had been in that district a famous pack of hounds known as the "Black and Tans." Is it surprising that the people soon saw how like the new force was to their hounds, not only in colour but in other respects? Such is the origin of a name that will survive in all languages for terrorism, loot and murder.

These changes to which I have referred had taken place in our native county during our absence. We decided at once to open a series of attacks on police barracks.

Attacks on police barracks had been going on in various parts of the South on a small scale for months. The first case in which the garrison was captured was at Araglen, on the borders of Cork

and Limerick, near the southern end of the Galtees. The attack was carried out by Liam Lynch, who was killed during the Civil War early in 1923, while he was Chief of Staff of the I.R.A.

Liam Lynch, as the struggle developed in intensity proved himself the finest officer in Ireland to control and handle a brigade or division. He and Sean Moylan made an admirable combination and their successes against the British were amazing. Tom Barry was, I think, the best leader of a flying column.

I first met Liam Lynch at the Autumn of 1919. We were introduced by Tom Hunter, then Republican Deputy for Cork and Peadar Clancy's partner in business in Dublin. Lynch was at that time very much on the run, like myself. On September 7th, he had carried out a daring coup in Fermoy, disarming twelve soldiers who were going to church. In the struggle one of the British soldiers was killed and Liam himself was wounded. That incident is of historic importance by reason of the fact that it led to the first case of "reprisals"; for the night of the attack the British soldiers, led by some of their officers, wrecked and looted the principal shops in Fermoy.

Liam Lynch was a soldier to his finger tips. He stood six feet in height and in his eye you read that he was born to be a leader of men. As gentle as a child he was a dauntless soldier, and commanded

one of the best brigades in Ireland against the British.

Shortly after the capture of Araglen Barracks by Liam Lynch, the next victory of the kind was gained by Michael Brennan, who seized all the arms and ammunition in a barrack in Clare. In this case the barrack was surrendered by Constable Buckley, who afterwards fought with the I.R.A. through the war, and was killed in Kerry while a prisoner during the Civil War. The next barracks that was captured by the I.R.A. was Ballylanders on the 28th April, 1920, when three policemen were wounded and the barrack burned to the ground after the garrison had surrendered their arms to Sean Malone (*alias* "Forde"), who commanded in the attack.

On our return to Tipperary we very soon carried out three attacks on police barracks, one of which surrendered to us after a five hours' fight.

The first barrack in Tipperary to surrender to the I.R.A. was Drangan. That was on June 4th, 1920. Drangan is situated in the eastern end of the county, near the Kilkenny side. It is seven miles from Killenaule.

Our usual procedure in these attacks—which always took place at night—was to mobilise 30 or 40 I.R.A. men, and have trees felled across all the roads leading to the position. In that way we prevented, or at least delayed, assistance from arriving to help the besieged garrison. This blocking

of the roads was carried out often for a five or ten mile radius. Often, too, we felled trees across the roads when we had no intention of attacking a position—merely to annoy and confuse the enemy.

Having taken these precautions to ensure that no assistance could arrive to the garrison we also cut the telegraph and telephone wires. Then we quietly occupied a few houses in the front or rear of the barracks and opened our attack, while some of our men perhaps attempted to fire the building by means of petrol. Very often too the first hint we gave of our presence was the exploding of a mine at the door or the gable of the barrack in order to blow up the building or to make a breach. Sometimes these plans succeeded, sometimes they failed.

The fight at Drangan was a prolonged affair. The officers who took part in the attack were Sean Treacy, Seumas Robinson, Ernie O'Malley, Sean Hogan and myself. Having first taken the usual steps of blocking the roads and cutting all wires, we quietly occupied a vacant house right in front of the barrack—why the police were so stupid as to leave it unguarded I cannot imagine. More of our men went to the back and took up positions for opening fire, while on the street in front we erected a small barricade. About midnight we opened the attack. After the first volley we ceased fire, and called on the defenders to surrender. We always did that, not only to spare their lives if possible, but

also to spare our own supplies of ammunition which were never plentiful. But they refused to come out. We renewed the attack, with rifles, bombs, revolvers and shot-guns—our munitions were always necessarily of an assorted kind. The enemy replied hotly to our fire, but with no effect. Suddenly the sky was lighted up with Verey lights—rockets discharged by the garrison as a signal to neighbouring posts that they needed help. But we knew it would be long before assistance could pass our barriers. We continued the onslaught with renewed vigour from front and rear, and some of our men actually tore off the slates on the roof of the barrack. Daylight was breaking amidst cracking of rifles and the bursting of bombs when there was a sudden lull in the replying fire from the enemy. A moment later appeared from one of the windows a sharp blast of a whistle, and our men ceased fire. The order was shouted to the garrison to advance into the open. A minute later they were disarmed prisoners. We prepared for our return to safety before military reinforcements cut their way through. We marched our prisoners—two sergeants and six constables—to the outskirts of the village, released them and departed with our booty, not one of our men being wounded.

The same night Cappawhite police barrack, also in Tipperary, was attacked by another party of I.R.A. men, but the garrison held their own.

It was sometimes amusing to read the accounts of these attacks in the newspapers next day. Naturally none of our men ever told the true story, and the newspaper men had to rely mainly on the police version. The police, of course, had to make the best show possible in the eyes of their own superiors, and the newspaper men had to take their version, because they would need the information that friendly policemen could give them later on, and also because they might get a surprise midnight visit from the Black and Tan torturers if anything derogatory to the police was said. Hence it was that often when we had only 30 or 40 men on a job, with perhaps half a dozen rifles in all, the police would tell the public that the "number of attackers was estimated at 300, with several machine guns." And often when not one of our men got a scratch it was reported that "several of the attackers were seen to fall, and it is believed three were shot dead." There were times when we did suffer losses, but they never suspected it.

Our next operation of the kind was away on the north-western side of the county in the mountainous districts of Hollyford. This also was a complete success, the same body of us being in charge of the operation. It must be remembered that at this time the number of men on the run was comparatively small, and we often had to rely upon men who were never suspected of taking part in these

attacks, and who returned to their work before morning.

Our next attack was not far from the same district—Rear Cross. Here we had a desperate battle, and were forced to retire without capturing the position. In this fight we had the assistance of some men from East Limerick Brigade, and the North Tipperary Brigade, but the South Tipperary boys carried out the main offensive under Sean Treacy and myself. The garrison, I must say, put up a brave defence, and used their hand-grenades with effect, Ernie O'Malley, Jim Gorman, Treacy and myself all being wounded by shrapnel. We succeeded in setting the building on fire, and I believe that several of the enemy were burned to death, while two others were shot.

It was about this time—to be exact, on the night of May 27th—that the famous Kilmallock attack took place. I was not engaged on the occasion. This attack, carried out by Sean Malone (*alias* "Forde") created a big sensation at the time. It was a prolonged battle lasting from midnight until 7 o'clock in the morning. The barrack, which was regarded as being impregnable, was situated in the very heart of the town, and was occupied by one of the largest R.I.C. garrisons in the south. The I.R.A. occupied a hotel and several houses on the principal street, and actually pumped petrol from a hose on to the building. The barrack was burned

to the ground, but our men had to cease the attack before the garrison was forced to surrender. One I.R.A. officer—Scully, of Kerry—was killed, two of the enemy were killed, and six of them wounded. The two policemen were burned to death in a room where they had been locked because they advised a surrender. The sergeant who commanded the garrison was promoted to the rank of District Inspector for his defence. He was shot dead in Listowel a few months later.

The next big engagement in which we took part was the famous fight at Oola, the day Brigadier-General Lucas escaped. This sensational incident I must relate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPTURE AND ESCAPE OF GENERAL LUCAS.

THE capture of Brigadier-General Lucas was effected on June 26th, 1920, by Liam Lynch, George Power, and a few more of Lynch's staff. General Lucas, who was stationed at Fermoy and commanded in that district, was accompanied by Colonel Danford, R.E., and Colonel Tyrell. Lynch and his comrades drove up in a motor car and surprised the three British officers at a place called Conna, near Castlelyons, seven or eight miles from Fermoy, where General Lucas had taken a fishing lodge. They were taken completely by surprise and removed to a waiting motor car. The original idea was to hold the General as a hostage to be exchanged for Bob Barton, T.D., who was then being treated as a criminal in an English prison, where he was undergoing a 10 years' sentence for "sedition."

When Lynch had driven his prisoners for some distance they were conversing amongst themselves in Arabic. The purport of their conversation was

made clear when, half an hour later, they suddenly attacked their captors. In a sharp melee which ensued Colonel Danford was wounded. Lynch thereupon sent a motor back to Fermoy military barracks by Tyrell, whom he also released, while Lucas was removed to a place of safety in the keeping of the I.R.A. The manner in which the English soldiers at Fermoy showed their appreciation of a generous foe who had released a wounded officer was to wreck the town next night—the second time within twelve months that Fermoy had been wrecked because of a successful exploit by Liam Lynch.

Lucas himself was every inch a gentleman and a soldier. For five weeks he was a prisoner of the I.R.A., and during that time he was treated with the courtesy and kindness befitting his rank and character. Every facility was given him for communicating with his relatives, and he had every comfort that his captors—themselves “on the run” with their prisoner—could provide. To his credit be it said he acknowledged this later, though I believe he got into trouble with the British War Office.

His last place of detention was a house in East Limerick. From there he made his escape on the night of July 29th, in circumstances which it is not in my province to narrate.

Now, on the morning of July 30th, Sean Treacy

and the rest of us had planned an ambush on the road between Limerick and Tipperary. At that time our men were creating much trouble for the enemy by holding up trains and mail cars to censor letters for information. In this way we got much valuable information from time to time, including evidence against local spies here and there. So serious a problem did we create for the British that they had to take special precautions to prevent military mails and despatches falling into our hands. For instance, the Limerick garrison adopted the plan of sending a special military escort by road to the Limerick Junction every morning to take the mails off the train there, and thus avoid possible raids on the 20 miles of the branch line from Limerick Junction to Limerick.

We determined to ambush this party. The spot we selected was half a mile on the Tipperary side of the village of Oola. That would be about six miles from Tipperary town, fifteen from Limerick city and four from Soloheadbeg. Although we were on the main road from Limerick to Waterford we had a great stretch of country by which we could escape southwards, getting back towards East Limerick. The country is comparatively flat with good thick hedges of whitethorn as cover along the roadside.

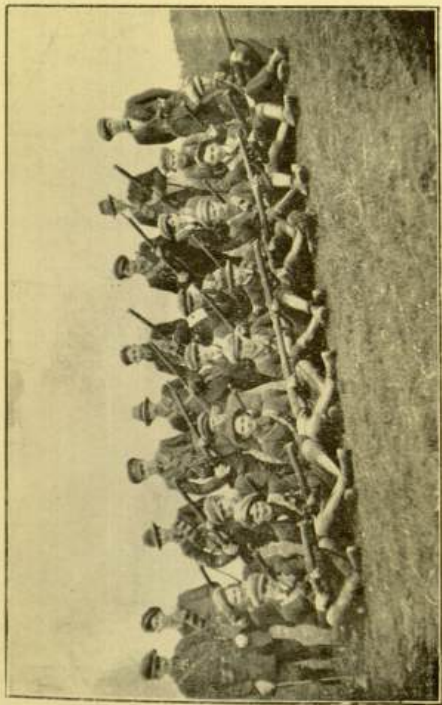
We expected the military car to arrive from Limerick about 10.30 a.m. A few minutes before

that time we felled a tree across the road to block their path. Then we took up our positions, still well out of view, for it must be remembered that in the village of Oola itself, almost in view of our selected spot, there was a strong garrison of peelers, and on the other side of us, two miles away at the Limerick Junction, was another R.I.C. garrison.

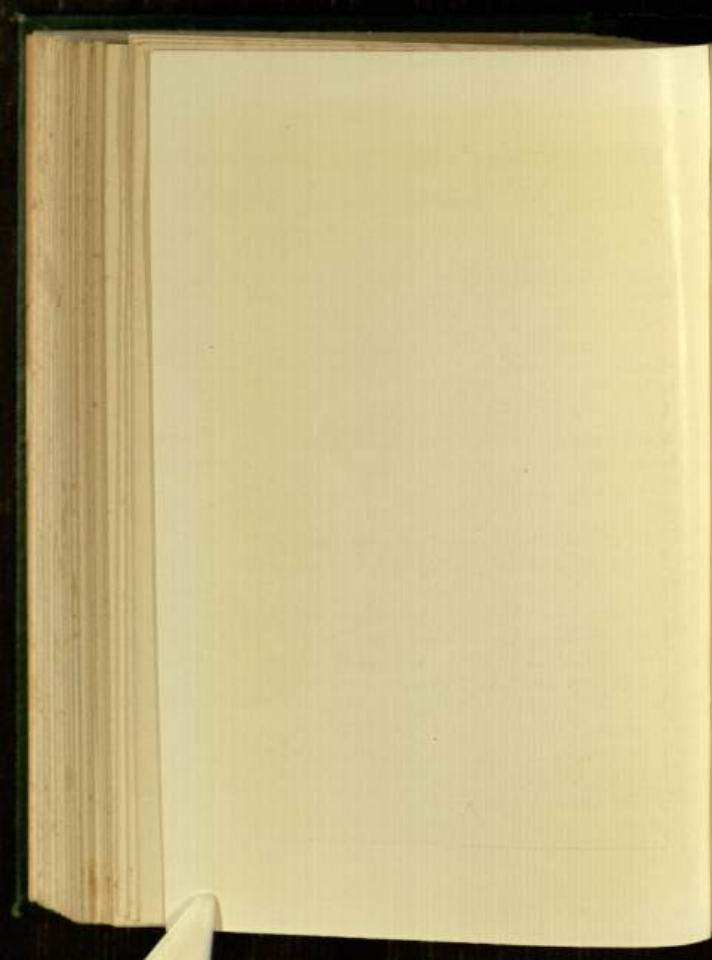
Sharp to time the military car came tearing along from Limerick. Just when they turned a corner and drove almost into the barracks we opened fire. Like a shot every man jumped from the car and took cover to reply to our men.

A fierce encounter followed for half an hour. In the first minute two of the British dropped their rifles and rolled over dead, but the others continued to pour volley after volley in the direction from which our fire came. But we were in a difficulty. There were only seven of us there, and we had only ten rounds of ammunition per man.

To add to our troubles we suddenly saw another military car arrive on the scene from the Limerick direction also. We had not calculated on that. These reinforcements must have arrived by accident, but with our limited supplies we could not continue to engage the whole party. We decided to retire. As we were retiring, still checking the enemy with an odd volley from the fields we saw a half a dozen R.I.C. men with rifles coming up from the village to give further help to the military. If we had had



THE FLYING COLUMN, IN TIPPERARY.



enough men or enough ammunition in the first instance we could, of course, have detailed a few men to feign an attack on the barracks so as to keep these fellows indoors ; but we could not afford that, and so our plans miscarried.

We retired without losing a man or receiving a wound. The enemy had three dead and three wounded.

Next morning we learned more than we knew while engaged in the attack. Brigadier-General Lucas was actually with the enemy forces. He had, as I said, escaped the previous night. He wandered all through the night through the fields not knowing exactly where he was and endeavouring in the first place to avoid any of our men who might have been sent in pursuit of him, and in the second place trying to get in touch with some of his own forces, police or military. On the morning of the ambush he arrived at the village of Pallas, three miles on the Limerick side of Oola, and evidently was picked up by the passing car.

We, of course, did not recognise him. As a matter of fact we were not even aware of his escape. The whole thing was a mere coincidence, though the English newspapers next day splashed the story as an "attempt to recapture the General." Perhaps it is as well we did not recognise him. Anyhow, we wish him luck, now that all is past.

A few days after this engagement at Oola I

returned to Dublin. For some time I was kept busy with minor activities. It was only then, too, that I found an opportunity of having removed from my body some of the bits of hand grenades with which I had been wounded at the attack on Rear Cross police barracks.

This was in the autumn of 1920. We had now been a year and a half on the run with a price on our heads. But I was becoming more reckless. The war was going on with greater intensity every day. I saw that the struggle of the Irish people was taking the shape I had always hoped. The British soldiers and police, particularly the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries—the latter were all ex-officers of the British Army, and were the garrison's gentlemen murderers—were day and night looting shops, burning private houses, and murdering prisoners and torturing youths. But the more savage became their methods of repression the more determined the Irish people became to fight to the bitter end. Practically the whole country was now on our side, helping us with food and information when they could not give us more active assistance. Men who had not the same views as we had on active warfare were being driven into our ranks because if they stayed at home in their beds they would be murdered by the British in the dead of night. In fact, their only hope of safety was to get "on the run."

If anybody not intimately acquainted with the events of that period thinks I am accusing the British too much I can only refer him to the Irish newspapers of the time. These newspapers were bitterly opposed to our policy and our methods, so they were not likely to exaggerate on our behalf. Moreover if they dared to suggest any charge that could not be sustained against the British they knew they would be at once suppressed. Yet, day after day for a year and a half these papers reported the murder of scores of prisoners, the shooting of men in their beds, the looting of towns and the burning of whole streets.

The historian will yet calculate the millions of pounds worth of damage they committed and the hundreds of murders they perpetrated. It is a well-known fact that dozens of these Black and Tans have since committed suicide or gone mad because of the horrors for which they were responsible.

And all this time the I.R.A. was every day becoming a vaster and more perfect military machine. My prophecy to Sean Treacy of 1918 was being fulfilled. Once the fight for freedom started in earnest, as I had said, it was being kept up with renewed vigour.

During this visit to Dublin I put a novel proposal before Headquarters, the adoption of which changed

the whole nature of the struggle. I shall outline my proposal in the next chapter.

Meantime I must here refer to my ever trusty friends, at whose houses my companions and I were ever welcome while in Dublin, even though torture and imprisonment would have been the fate of any under whose roof we might be known to shelter. I cannot recall them all now, but some I can never forget—Seumas Ryan, of The Monument Creamery; the Bolands, of Clontarf (Harry's people); Seumas Kirwan, of Parnell Street (a Tipperary man); the Delaneys, of Heytesbury Street (now Seumas Robinson's people-in-law); the Flemings, of Drumcondra; Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, of Irishtown; Seumas and Mrs. O'Doherty, of Connaught Street, later my good friends in America); Martin Conlon and, of course, Phil Shanahan.

CHAPTER XX.

ADVENTURES WITH THE MURDER GANG.

THE plan I put before Headquarters was the establishment of Flying Columns in every county, starting of course with Tipperary. My experience of ambushes and barrack attacks had convinced me that such a scheme would prove an immense success.

Hitherto we had been relying very much on help from men who would take part in a barrack attack at night and be at their work in the shops next morning. That was awkward for many reasons. It meant first of all, that they could only help at night. Secondly it often meant that business might often prevent them from coming and so we could not rely upon them very much. The disappointment we suffered from the Tipperary town men at Knocklong showed what serious risks there were in counting on men you had not actually at hand. Besides, these part-time volunteers could not possibly have the training that was wanted; they could not go far from home and they lived in an atmosphere of peace rather than of war.

We wanted full-time soldiers, to fight night or day, to be always at hand ready for any adventure and to devote proper time to training. They would be a mobile force striking at the enemy to-day in one district and next morning surprising him twenty or thirty miles away. Could we get this? We could. In addition to those few men who were permanently on the run—and that number was growing every day—there were scores ready to volunteer for whole-time active service in every county. Further, the tactics of the British in murdering men whom they suspected of being volunteers was making it impossible for any I.R.A. men to remain at home or at their ordinary work. We were being encumbered with hundreds of fellows who would only be in the way unless organised in proper military units acting under officers with discipline and daring.

By such arguments we convinced the Headquarters Staff. The Flying Columns were organised and on them fell the brunt of the war for the remaining twelve months. Perhaps the most successful aspect of this system was that it enabled active counties like Tipperary and Cork to send columns from time to time into places like Kilkenny and Waterford, where, owing to the apathy of the locals, the British were having too quiet a time.

During these autumn days of 1920 poor Dinny Lacy was constantly with me in Dublin, and many an exciting adventure we had together, dodging

or defying "G" men, or spies who got on our trail.

Dinny, whose name figured prominently in the events of 1920 to 1922, was born in Goldengarden, in the heart of Tipperary. He was educated in Donaskeigh School in the parish of the patriotic Father Matt Ryan, the "General of the Land War." Dinny was a great sprinter and footballer; in fact he was an all-round man. His home was only about a mile from mine, and we knew each other from boyhood. He went to Tipperary town as a boy, and soon became his employer's most trusted man as manager of a big coal and provision premises. He never smoked or drank and he was always extremely religious, and could be seen at Mass every morning in Tipperary. He was always a keen student of the Irish language and he became an enthusiastic Volunteer from the very start of that force. In Easter Week of 1916 he was one of the small band who answered the call to mobilise for action at Galbally, six miles from Tipperary, but the countermand sent him home, and like the rest of the men of Tipperary, he was given no chance of striking a blow that week.

In the summer of 1916 he was one of the most enthusiastic in favouring the reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers as a fighting force. Modest and unassuming he was always on the look-out for a rifle or a revolver, and he spent all his own money

in making such purchases. He gave everything, even his life, in the cause of freedom.

During 1917 and 1918 I came into frequent contact with him again. He took part in the big fight at Kilmallock in May, 1920, and shortly afterwards he had to go on the run. Henceforth he became one of the most daring and successful fighters against the British. So much was he hated by the Black and Tans that they actually burned down the house in which he had lodged in Tipperary. Poor Dinny! He escaped the bullets of the English only to be killed by the Free Staters in an encounter in the Glen of Aherlow early in 1923.

However, I must resume my story. I knew my days were numbered if I remained in Dublin. The British had spies and "touts" and "spotters" everywhere. They had promised liberal rewards for information, and were at this time making desperate efforts to restore their Secret Service and to match it against ours. Everywhere one saw the khaki and the guns and the lorries. It was quite a common thing for an ordinary pedestrian to be held up and searched by troops on the streets six or seven times in the one day. They jumped off lorries and searched and questioned passers-by. They boarded tramcars and searched every passenger. They surrounded whole blocks of buildings and remained for days with a cordon drawn around while every

house was being searched from cellar to attic. All these things were not rare, but daily occurrences.

At the same time people were brought to the Castle and tortured for information. Letters were opened in the post; hotel servants were bribed, and an elaborate and speedy system of telephonic code was arranged for the touts and spotters. Is it surprising that in such circumstances I was often hard-pressed to escape? I was being shadowed at every step and I knew it, but I always carried my gun strapped to my wrist, and concealed by the sleeve of my coat, ready to meet whoever challenged me.

At last came an adventure which I thought would prove my last. I was standing one Friday night alone at the Henry Street corner of Nelson's Pillar. I had arranged to spend the night at Carolan's, between Drumcondra and Whitehall. The Whitehall car came along and I jumped on board, going on top. At once five men sprang on to the same car and came up the stairs at my heels. Two of them I immediately recognised as members of the Castle murder gang which had recently been organised by General Tudor, Commander of the notorious Auxiliaries. This murder gang consisted of a number of Irishmen and Englishmen who were instructed to shoot any prominent I.R.A. officer whenever they got the chance, whether he was a prisoner in their hands or in whatever way they got

the chance. This, of course, was known to Sir Hamar Greenwood and had his approval, the members of the gang being not only specially paid, but assured that no matter what evidence was brought against them they would never even be tried. They did, as a matter of fact, succeed in murdering a good number of our men here and there through the country. One of the leaders of the gang was a Head Constable, who had served as an ordinary constable a few years previously in my own part of the country round Tipperary.

The organisation of this murder gang was kept a close secret, even from military and police officials. We, of course, knew all about it from our own Secret Service. We knew most of the members' names and the murders in which they had taken part. In addition, Headquarters had supplied photographs of some of them to our Brigades.

So when I recognised two of the gang on the tramcar that night I did not need to be a Sherlock Holmes to make up my mind that their three companions were also of the same ilk. But it was not the history of the murder gang I was recounting when I realised my predicament. I was in a tight corner. To attempt to retreat from the car would be a plain invitation to them to open fire. Besides there was the bare possibility that their presence on the car was a mere coincidence. Perhaps they did

not recognise me at all. Perhaps they were really on some other job.

All these thoughts flashed through my mind in a mere fraction of the time they take to relate. I had to keep cool, to avoid betraying by the slightest sign that I was excited or panicky. There was nothing for it but the old game of coolness and bluff that had served me so well on the road to Foynes and at Whitehall a few months before.

I sat down on the three-seater bench at the rear of the car, just at the top of the steps. Then I pulled out a packet of cigarettes and lit one. Immediately two of the gang sat on the same bench, one on each side of me. A third remained standing right opposite me gripping the railings. The other two went along the centre passage right to the front of the car. I never felt less comfortable in my life. I realised my danger, but saw no way out of it.

Neither they nor I made any move. The car started on its journey, crowded with passengers who little realised the drama that was being played beside them. It was after 11 o'clock and everybody was hurrying home, for curfew was at 12, and no one dared to be out after that hour, to become a target for a dozen bullets.

As the car passed up Parnell Square I began to feel a little reassured. Often before I had had a pleasant journey with detectives and policemen who

never recognised me. Perhaps my luck was not out yet.

Suddenly both the man on my right and his companion on my left made a simultaneous move. Their right hands went back to their hip-pockets. They were pulling something out.

Another second and I had pulled my gun. I had drawn first. They realised my purpose. In another second my three would-be murderers were rushing headlong down the stairs. I was at their heels with my revolver levelled. They sprang from the car on to the street and I jumped at their heels. Now came another moment of hesitation. Would they open fire?

It was not a favourable spot to select for a duel. The streets were crowded with hurrying pedestrians. Soldiers or Auxiliaries might appear at any moment. If the three murder-men fired I had no alternative but to return. If they didn't, I would not fire. But I could not afford to lose much time. There was only one more tram to pass to Whitehall and I had to get that or run the risk of being picked up by a curfew patrol.

We were in the middle of Dorset Street, almost facing Gardiner Street Church. I tried a little ruse. I stepped on to the footpath and suddenly ran towards St. Joseph's Terrace. But I ran only three or four paces. Then I stamped my feet on the pavement, making a noise as if I was on the double.

At my first move the three men who were a few yards ahead of me ran too. They turned quickly into the little avenue which runs parallel to St. Joseph's Terrace. They had been deceived by my ruse and evidently ran to intercept me at the other end.

While their running footsteps were still resounding on the pavement the last tram from the city appeared. I jumped on the platform as it passed, and left the murder gang behind, probably searching the side streets for me. What I can never understand is why their two companions who had come on the tram with them did not come in pursuit of me when I chased the other three from the car. Possibly loyalty to comrades was not part of their creed, if it involved danger.

It was one of these five men, I found out, who later tracked us to "Fernside," the night of the terrible fight there. I slept that night at Fleming's, of Drumcondra. Next morning I told Sean Treacy of my adventure and he laughed heartily, consoling me with the remark that I could hardly escape much longer. However, he regarded the incident in a more serious light later on when we discussed it. Finally we made up our minds that never again would either of us go out alone; that we would both go out together or both remain indoors. It seemed the natural compact to make now that the trail was

getting hot, and since we had passed through so many dangers together.

That Saturday morning we went out to Mrs. Fitzgerald's in Hollybank Road, almost beside Fleming's. Mrs. Fitzgerald was herself a Tipperary woman, and we had often before enjoyed the hospitality of her home. We were tired and sleepy that day so we spent most of the time in bed.

The following day we went to Croke Park, the headquarters of the Gaelic Athletic Association, and only seven minutes' walk from Hollybank Road. It had been our custom for many Sundays before that to visit Croke Park when we had nothing else to do. We generally had a game of cards—our favourite was "Forty-five"—with officials of the G.A.A. who might happen to be present, particularly Luke O'Toole (the Secretary of the Association), Andy Harty, and D. P. Walsh (both countymen of our own) and Alderman Nowlan, the President. They were all good friends of ours, and gave us many pleasant evenings in Luke's house when the matches of the day had finished.

I remember this Sunday well, because it indirectly led up to the fight at Drumcondra, strange though that may seem.

The stakes were never high, but to men in the position of Sean and myself at the time a few shillings seemed like riches. The evening I speak of the game proved unusually exciting; the "kitty"

or pool gradually grew to a nice sum, and I don't mind admitting that I eyed it' jealously as it grew. Luck favoured me—even in gambling! I won the pool, and seldom was money more welcome to my pocket.

Now at this time our plans were not very definite. They were not altogether in our own making. Dinny Lacey had returned to Tipperary about a fortnight before, and we had promised to join him within a week. Contrary to our usual habit we had failed to keep our appointment, but the fault was not ours. It was due to the action of Headquarters.

I have already referred plainly to the attitude Headquarters had adopted towards us and our campaign from the beginning, but at this time—the early Autumn of 1920—a change was noticeable. The war was going on even better than we expected. Our men were meeting and beating the British all through the south. The world was looking on in admiration at our struggle, and in spite of torture, burnings and lootings the people were standing by us. It was death for the man who dared to "harbour a rebel," but hundreds of men and women were every night sheltering our Flying Columns. In spite of an Anglicised Press the people had realised that we were right, that their cause was ours, that Ireland could never have peace or prosperity until we had driven the British out of Ireland. In our delight at the change, Sean and I

were becoming almost reckless. The hotter the fighting the better and more perfect the I.R.A. became as an organisation. Headquarters apparently realised that the rank and file were getting too far ahead of them, and they gradually began to take a kind of semi-official responsibility for our actions.

In pursuance of this new policy, Headquarters had now actually planned a certain operation for us in Dublin, and it was for that reason we were unable to return to Tipperary as soon as we had arranged.

But the plans never matured and we were still kept dallying round Dublin. Still we had something to cheer us up. I got a tip for a race—a "dead cert" that was to come off at a meeting in the Phoenix Park. Luckier still, I had now got the money I won at Croke Park, to make use of the information.

All our worldly wealth went on the horse. And he won!

Now for a little of the pleasures of life that we could still enjoy. The money we now had, meant wealth to us. Of course I did not regard it as my personal property—it belonged to our little "Soviet." Whatever we had we shared, and never were there more real communists than we. Before we could return to Tipperary we had now to spend this money. Any day might be our last in this world. A couple of bullets might make us depart at any



DINNY LACEY.



moment without having made our wills, and the thought that annoyed us was the possibility that our few pounds might provide the Black and Tans with the wherewithal to drink our health when we were dead.

But we knew we had to be careful and more cautious than usual. The net was drawing round us. An incident that occurred at this time on the night of the 10th October, 1920, shows the dangers which surrounded us. Sean Treacy and I had decided to stay that night at the house of Seumas Kirwan, 49 Parnell Street. We had often stayed there before and had held several meetings there. Seumas was a Tipperary man himself and gave us the full run of his house. All his assistants and employees were I.R.A. men, and whenever we stayed there for the night they were fully armed.

On this particular night we had just entered when a man rushed in at our heels and told Seumas that "the two men who had just come into the shop were shadowed by a spy."

Sean and I at once rushed into the street and the tout, who was standing near the door, ran for his life when he saw us. He was a good judge.

We changed our plans and went elsewhere that night. Henceforth we knew that Kirwan's would be a marked house, and I never stayed there again until the Truce period.

The manner in which we were warned that night illustrates how loyal the people were to us. It was quite common to get friendly warnings from newsboys and orange-sellers who saw touts hanging about.

Only a few days previously I had met a group of the Dublin Castle murder gang face to face in Talbot Street. We recognised each other simultaneously and drew our guns. They did not fire. I don't know why. As I had no desire to engage a whole group unless forced into it I didn't fire, but walked quietly away unmolested.

But to return to the spending of our winnings on the horse. Our first little dissipation was to go to the pictures at La Scala Theatre, which had just been opened in O'Connell Street. That was on the afternoon of the 11th October, 1920. In the theatre we met the two Misses Fleming, of Drumcondra, with them was Mrs. O'Brien, wife of Eamon O'Brien, of Galbally, one of the men who had taken part in the rescue at Knocklong with us, and who was now in America. Mrs. O'Brien was not only delighted but astonished to meet us. I suppose it was somewhat of a surprise to her to meet in a picture house two men whom all the troops and police in Ireland had instructions to shoot at sight. We had grown used to taking these risks now, even though it was quite probable that not one in that audience that evening would get home without being

held up and searched at the door, or in the street or in the tram.

We left the theatre together. Just as we stepped into the street the first man I saw was one of the murder gang who had boarded the tram with me only a few nights before. I could make no mistake about him, for he was one of the two who sat on either side of me on the tram. I saw him first. Standing on the path and scrutinising the picture-goers as they emerged he was evidently pretending to be looking for a friend, but I guessed he was looking for me. It is quite possible, though I do not think it probable, that either he or some tout had seen Sean and myself.

For a moment I felt tempted to draw my gun and shoot him on the spot. But I was between two of the girls and I did not want to alarm them. Besides if he had a confederate about, the return of fire might place the girls in danger. The five of us were facing for the Nelson Pillar to get a tram to Fleming's house in Drumcondra, and as the Pillar is less than a hundred yards from the theatre I felt it safe enough to walk on. I said nothing to the others, nor did I look a second time at the Castle man. I knew he must have seen me, too, and I felt pretty certain that he was following us up in the crowd.

Just as we approached the tram I stepped back to let the others get a few yards in advance of me.

As I did so Kitty Fleming whispered, "there is a friend following." Evidently she had seen him too. The girls were well trained to use their eyes in those days.

Sean and the three girls stepped into the tram. I was at their heels. As I mounted the footboard I wheeled round sharply and faced my enemy. He read the message in my eye. Had he attempted to board the tram I would have riddled him on the spot. But he was quick to see my move, and he quietly slunk back from the tram and lost himself in the crowd as our car started for Drumcondra.

At Fleming's we discussed the incident over a cup of coffee. At times I was half sorry I had allowed him to escape with his life. Had I known as much when I stood on the footboard as I do now the Crown Forces would be one man the less that evening; for, as the sequel will show, that man or one of his touts must have boarded the next tram to Drumcondra, and got on our trail again that night.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DRUMCONDRA FIGHT.

THAT night we left Fleming's about 11 o'clock. In case we had been seen entering and were still being shadowed we left by the back. It was a bright moonlight night. From the back of the house we got out to Botanic Avenue. There Sean and I debated for a few minutes whether we should go round to our friend Mrs. Fitzgerald, in Hollybank Road, or go on to Professor Carolan's, and we turned to the right and came up to the bridge over the Tolka. Curfew was at 12 o'clock, and the streets were already deserted. As we stood for a moment on the bridge to look round and listen we heard the rumbling in the distance of military lorries preparing to go on curfew patrol.

From the bridge to Carolan's is about seven minutes' walk. It is the main road to Belfast, and a well-to-do residential quarter. On the left is the great Training College for National Teachers, and on the right, some distance back from the road, is another well-known institution—All Hallows Ecclesiastical College.

We had a latchkey of Professor Carolan's house, "Fernside." It was one of the many latchkeys we had at the time, all given us by friends to whose houses we were welcome whenever we might wish to call at any hour.

I had already stayed a few nights at "Fernside," having been introduced to the family by Peter Fleming. I well remember how heartily I was received on that first occasion by the family, and how thoughtfully Mr. Carolan himself showed me over the whole house, and especially the back garden. He pointed out a low wall to me as the best means of escape in case of a raid. "I don't expect you'll need it," he said, "but it is no harm to know your way about." He was a kindly, lovable man whose clear earnest eyes would inspire one with confidence.

The house is one of a type common enough in middle-class suburban districts in Dublin. It is a two-storeyed brick building of eight or nine apartments. There is a small plot in front facing the road, and on the left, as one enters, is a tradesman's side door, leading to the back. Over this door it would be easily possible for an active man to climb into the yard.

At the back there is a long garden, separated from the adjoining garden by a wall about seven feet high. Close up to the house, and almost under the window was a conservatory.

Every time that we had availed ourselves of Mr. Carolan's hospitality we had reached the house before 11 o'clock at night. On this occasion we did not arrive until about 11.30 p.m., and as there was no light to be seen we concluded the family had retired, and we let ourselves in as noiselessly as possible, making our way to the bedroom which had been reserved for us on the second floor at the back, overlooking the conservatory. It is certain, of course, that no member of the family was aware of our presence in the house that night.

We went to bed almost at once, both of us sleeping together. Still we did not feel very sleepy and for a while we chatted about our plans for the future and our return to Tipperary. Then our conversation lagged. My mind became possessed of a strange presentiment. Perhaps it was the after-effects of my few recent adventures with the murder gang. I tried to sleep, but for once sleep would not come. Sean, too, was still awake, though not inclined to talk.

I felt half inclined to tell him of the queer feeling that had come over me, but he was himself the first to speak :

"Dan," he said, "do you find any queer feeling coming over you? I can't sleep. Can you?"

He had, in fact, put the very questions I was trying to frame. I told him so and we both laughed.

"We may have a raid to-night, Sean," I said,

half joking. "I wonder is there any danger we were shadowed to-night coming here? If we were surrounded in this place we'd have a very poor chance of escaping."

Sean did not reply for a minute. "Somehow I wouldn't mind if we were killed now, Dan," he said. "The war is going to go on whatever happens, and if we're killed I hope we will die together."

Another moment's silence and we both dozed off.

Suddenly we sat up in the bed. Outside in the street was the heavy tramp of marching men. Voices were whispering in the back. Through our window came the flare of a dazzling searchlight. It was about 1 a.m. We had been over an hour in the house.

There was a crash of glass in the front. A door opened. From the stairs came the sound of rushing footsteps.

We sprang out of bed together. Simultaneously our hands gripped our revolvers. I took a gun in each hand. A hand was groping on our door outside. I never spoke. Sean pressed my arm and whispered "Goodbye, Dan, we'll meet above."

Crack! crack! Two bullets came whizzing through the door. Crack! crack! My German Mauser pistol was replying.

There was no light save the flash of the shots.

Outside on the landing an English voice was shouting, "Where is Ryan? Where is Ryan?"

Bullets were now flying on all sides, our door was partly open. I blazed away on to the landing. Blood was flowing freely from my right thumb where a flying bullet struck me, but I felt no pain. Outside I heard a thud as if a man had fallen on the carpet. Suddenly I realised that Sean's gun had missed fire. With my Mauser still raking the landing and the stairs I shouted to Sean to get back to the window. He stepped back, just as another bullet from outside buried itself in the wardrobe. The firing from the stairs had momentarily ceased. There was a hurried rush of retreating footsteps down towards the hall. In the back I could hear rifle shots ringing out.

I dashed out of the room on to the landing and saw half a dozen soldiers making another attempt to come up the stairs, their electric torches making me an almost certain target for their bullets. Into that khaki group my pistol poured bullet after bullet. I knew now that the house was surrounded and that there was little hope of escape for me. But the rage of battle had taken possession of me. I was going to be killed; but I would sell my life dearly.

As I blazed into the soldiers there was a hurried rush for safety. They had now evacuated the top landing and I was pursuing them down the stairs.

When I got to the first floor they had all disappeared—some had taken shelter in the rooms underneath, others had retreated headlong into the street. There was no other target for my bullets, but now and again I heard the sharp report of a rifle from the back, mingled with occasional groans and cries.

I rushed back to my room. At the door I tripped over two dead officers and a wounded Tommy. I had to pull each of them out of the way before I could close my door. I don't know how I had missed tripping over them when I had first rushed out of the room. In the heat of the battle one does not see everything.

Once back in my room I banged the door and turned the lock. I knew I had not a moment to spare; for with the hundreds of troops they had apparently brought on the raid they were bound to make another attack. I sprang to the window. A searchlight played for a moment on the back of the house and a shower of bullets came whizzing through the glass. A few of them struck me, but a couple of wounds more or less did not matter very much, for I had already been hit more than once in the exchange.

The lower half of the window was already open. Sean had got out that way. I stepped on to the window-sill, and dropped into the roof of the conservatory. In the clear moonlight I could discern

countless steel helmets all round the house. The Tommies were blazing at me. Before I could drop from the conservatory I saw I would have to get away through them.

With the revolver which I held in my left hand I smashed a hole in the roof of the conservatory. Then I gripped a beam and swung down, my German pistol still seeking a mark on the enemy. Right well did it accomplish its task, for within a minute there was not a soldier to be seen—they had disappeared.

I was still dangling from the roof of the glass-house. When I had silenced the enemy I swung back on the roof and then jumped to the ground.

I looked around for my comrade. There was no sign of him. I called out his name, but got no reply. I lay flat on the ground to avoid offering a target to any venturesome Tommy who might put his head over the garden wall. I continued to call out for Sean.

"Sean! Sean! Where are you?" But there was no reply. I thought he might have been struck getting through the window and might have been lying wounded in the conservatory. Now I began to fear he had fallen into their hands. Then I consoled myself with the thought that after all he had got away, though the chance was a poor one. I knew I had been fighting on the landing and stairs for nearly half an hour, and when I did not return

to the room Sean may have concluded I was killed while he was trying to settle his revolver.

As I lay on the ground I realised I was getting weak. I had neither hat, boots nor overcoat. I had only barely time to slip on trousers and coat. I saw that I was wounded in five or six places and was bleeding from head to foot, but I had to move quickly. Strangely enough, I was beginning to feel that I would escape after all.

While I was still rapidly thinking what course to take the enemy returned to the attack. Several grenades burst around me near the conservatory. I made another effort and rose to move. A short distance from me I saw that low dividing wall that my host had been so careful to point out on my first visit. Now I appreciated his foresight as I made for the wall. A little distance beyond the conservatory in the garden I found the dead bodies of two soldiers. Then I knew Sean had passed that way.

He might have escaped, I thought; but there was still the danger that he had been shot further down the garden.

Just as I reached the wall a soldier's head appeared outside. He saw me and levelled his rifle, at the same time shouting "Halt! halt!" He fired and missed me. I fired too. When I dropped over the wall, clear of Carolan's garden, I

stumbled over his body. I don't know whether he was dead or wounded.

Another group of soldiers close at hand opened fire on me, and I blazed at them in return as I rushed for the nearest wall. I got over but did not recognise my surroundings. All I knew was that I was on the road. Suddenly I ran right into an armoured car. There was nothing for it but to get in the first shot. I hit one of their men before the occupants of the car had time to take aim, and I rushed by as their bullets knocked splinters out of the roadway and the walls around me, but never once struck me. By this time I had recognised my surroundings. I was out on the main road between Carolan's house and Drumcondra Bridge. It would be madness to keep on along the road, for if the armoured car did not pursue me I was almost certain to run into some of their outposts near the bridge.

On my right as I ran towards the city was the limestone wall surrounding St. Patrick's Training College. Could I once scale that and get into the college grounds my chances of escape were good. But it was about 18 feet high. I had neither boots nor socks; one toe on my right foot was broken and giving me terrible pain; I had at least five bullet holes in my side, from my hip to my foot, besides several less serious wounds. But when a man is fighting for his life he gets strength that he has not at ordinary times. I scrambled to the top of that

wall. How I did it I often wondered afterwards as I passed it by. When I got to the top I felt almost happy. My hopes grew stronger, though my body grew weaker from the terrible excitement and the loss of blood. I slid down carefully on the inside and faced for the west, leading towards Glasnevin or Finglas direction. But I was still within a few hundred yards of "Fernside," and at any moment I might again run into a group of soldiers. I crawled along as noiselessly as I could. At this stage I think it was instinct that was guiding me. I was dazed and as near to unconsciousness as a man can be while he still has the power to walk. I lost all sense of time and distance.

At last I found myself on the banks of a river. I knew it must be the Tolka. I had no place to seek shelter. My one aim was to put some distance between me and my pursuers. I could not go out on the road to seek a bridge. I had to cross the river, and there was only one way of doing it. Fortunately it was not deep and as I waded through the cold piercing water I could feel it trickling through my leg where some of the bullets had made a clear passage through my flesh. I cannot say that I felt the cold too keenly. I suppose there are times when nature is dead to minor feelings.

When I got to the other side of the river I saw that I was close to some houses. I knew they must be the houses in Botanic Avenue and that I was at

the back. I could struggle no further. Blood was pouring from me all the time. My only hope, if I was not to drop down and die of exhaustion and exposure, was to seek the shelter of some one of these roofs.

I do not know what instinct impelled me, but I selected one particular back door. It was as if an angel whispered that that door and that only held out hope to me.

I knocked. I realised well enough what a spectacle I must present now, at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, half-clad, dishevelled and covered with blood.

A second time I knocked. A man opened the door. My appearance was sufficient explanation, but I mumbled a few words to say that I needed shelter.

He did not ask me who I was, or how I had received my wounds. He simply said, "Come in. Whatever we can do for you we'll do it."

He and his wife took me in. The latter quickly summoned Nurse Long, who lived nearby. They dressed my wounds and gave me some stimulant, which the nurse procured from my friends, the Flemings, at imminent danger to her own life, having to pass twice through the excited cordon of soldiers in the small hours of that morning.

Then I learned who my good Samaritan was. He was Mr. Fred Holmes, whose sympathies, I believe, were on the other side.

But he and his wife tended me that morning with care and attention that they might have bestowed upon a son or brother. There was no need to tell them how I had come to be in that plight. Yet they took me in and saved my life.

Gratitude is but a poor word to express my feelings towards that family. In the morning I told them who I was. They assured me that everything in their power would be done to enable me to recover and to get to a place of safety, for I knew I could not stay long in a house which was not half a mile from the scene of the battle.

CHAPTER XXII.

MISSED BY INCHES.

EARLY in the morning—still October 12th, 1920—Mrs. Holmes at my request took a note to Phil Shanahan's, with a message for Dick McKee. I wanted to be removed as soon as possible. I also wanted to report to Headquarters that Sean Treacy had been killed in the same engagement.

While I was waiting the reply I learned from the people of the house that in each of the houses on either side a Black and Tan was lodging, both houses being the property of members of the Dublin Police. You can imagine how lucky I was to select the particular back gate I did.

In a short time a motor car arrived at the door. In it were Joe Lawless, Maurice Brennan and Tom Kelly. They had been sent by Dick McKee to take me away to the Mater Hospital where he had already made arrangements that I was to be received and treated.

I was provided with an outfit and placed in the car. My keenest regret was not the suit I had

been compelled to leave behind in Carolan's, but the six pound notes and the watch that were in the pockets. Probably some enterprising officer had a good night out of the discovery, for I need hardly say that my losses did not form the subject of compensation awards when the Truce came.

I was driven up Botanic Road on through Phibsboro' towards the Mater Hospital. At Phibsboro' corner a D.M.P. man motioned us to stop as we approached. For a moment we feared there was something wrong. But relief came in a few moments. We were simply being asked to slow down while a convoy of Auxiliaries passed, probably to raid some houses in the locality for me.

We continued our journey, and as we approached the entrance to the hospital in Eccles Street I saw Dick McKee—himself a very much wanted man at the time, walking slowly along the path. With a slight wave of his hand he motioned to us to pass the hospital. A little further down he crossed to us to tell us we could not go into the hospital for some time as there were two D.M.P. Inspectors, with some military and police actually raiding the hospital at that moment searching for wounded men.

"Dan," he said, as he gripped my hand for a moment, "ye got the very men we would have had to give the next two years looking for."

Our car crossed Dorset Street into Mountjoy

Square, and finally drove into an old stable in Great Charles Street. It was one of the best known dumping grounds used for concealing the arms of the Dublin Brigade, though it was shortly afterwards discovered by the enemy.

It is easy to imagine how sick and tired of life I was as I drove into this old stable, but picture my delight at seeing Sean Treacy waiting to welcome me.

He had escaped without as much as a scratch. Briefly—for he had not long to spare—he told me of his adventures. He got safely away through the back, convinced that I was killed. For hours he had wandered almost naked through the country, scarcely knowing where he was until as dawn broke he knocked at a door in a last effort to gain shelter. He did not even know in what district he was until the door was opened by his own cousin Phil Ryan, of Finglas! Truly, the fates were on our side that morning.

In our joy at meeting once more we almost forgot our perils; for the streets of Dublin were being searched that day by hundreds of troops as never before. But our scouts reported that the way to the Mater was now clear as the enemy had left the hospital. The boys were anxious that no time should be lost until I was in skilled hands, and we moved on at once towards the Mater. They took me on a stretcher into the hospital, and as I lay

on that stretcher I shook hands with Sean Treacy—for the last time.

Little did I think that evening that never again on this earth would I lay eyes on my faithful comrade—one who was dearer to me than a brother. Had I known then that it was to be our last meeting in this world I would have little heart to battle with my wounds. Poor Sean! the comrade of my adventures, the sharer of my hopes. His face is always before me, and until my last hour his memory will make me struggle against blinding tears.

When I arrived in the hospital Surgeon Barnaville took me into his skilled hands, and I believe I owe my life and my rapid recovery to his unceasing care and devotion.

Next day a friend who visited me gave me a full story of the Drumcondra fight, or at least that portion of it which I did not know myself. Some he had learned from the newspapers, more from our Intelligence Department.

It seems that in spite of our precautions we were shadowed to Fleming's that night, and later to Carolan's by the very man we had seen outside the theatre. Their Secret Service was able to report that "Breen and 'Lacey' had gone to 'Fernside.' " I have never since discovered whether Sean Treacy was actually mistaken for Dinny Lacey, or whether the similarity of the surnames had confused the spy.

At once every "G" man in the Castle was mobilised for the raid, but they refused point blank to go on the job. At this display of cowardice and mutiny the enemy chiefs were incensed; but they could not afford to betray their weakness by letting the news leak out that their whole detective force had refused to go on a raid. So the detectives were not punished for their indiscipline, and to cover up the mutiny the "G" men were ordered out the same morning on a raid on the shop owned by Mr. J. J. Walsh (now the Free State Postmaster-General).

Meanwhile the military chiefs had been communicated with and informed of the position. They asked "what kind of a job" it would be, and were told they might expect "plenty of gunplay."

The military had the men willing to take the risk. Foremost amongst those who volunteered for the raid was Major G. O. S. Smyth, a native of Banbridge, and formerly a District Inspector in the R.I.C. This man had been serving in Egypt until he got word that his brother—also a Major—a Divisional Commissioner of the R.I.C. had been shot dead in Cork. This Commissioner was a notorious official who addressed the police in Kerry, and told them to shoot any person suspected of being a Sinn Féiner, adding "the more the merrier." This cold-blooded incident to murder even ordinary civilians led first to a mutiny of the

R.I.C. in Listowel, and secondly to the death of Smyth himself within a month. He was shot dead in the County Club, in the heart of Cork city.

His brother, who had been serving in the British Army in Egypt, at once volunteered for service in Ireland, with the avowed intention of avenging his brother's death. With him he brought a chosen band of men inspired with similar motives.

He was the first to be killed that night. With him fell another officer, Captain A. D. White. A corporal was also wounded. These casualties the British officially admitted, but we knew their losses were heavier. It was quite usual at that time for the British to conceal their real casualties.

But what saddened me most of all was the news that our faithful friend, Professor Carolan, had been fatally wounded too. The official report issued at the time stated that the Professor was shot by the first bullet that came through our door. This was the report of a secret military inquiry condemning the shooting of the officers, for it must be remembered that long before this the British had forbidden the holding of coroner's inquests. Ordinary jurors were honest men and would insist upon having the truth, and would thus expose the whole Murder Campaign of the English.

Poor Mr. Carolan survived for several weeks. He was actually in the Mater Hospital at the same time as myself, though in a different part of the

institution. At one time there were high hopes of his recovery. During that period he made a statement in the presence of witnesses which will be found published in the Dublin newspapers of October 21st and 22nd of 1920. That was the death-bed statement of an honourable man and a pious Catholic. If further proof of its accuracy be needed it is the fact that the newspapers which published it were not suppressed, as they would have been within half an hour were the report inaccurate.

In that statement Mr. Carolan made it quite clear and emphatic that the time he was shot we had escaped. We had been a quarter of an hour out of the house, he declared, before he was put standing with his face to the wall, and deliberately shot by a British officer. When he first opened the door for the raiders they asked him who was in the house, and the faithful man said he thought Ryan was the name—giving a name common in that part of the country from which our accents would tell we came. That accounted for the shouts we heard, "Where is Ryan? Where is Ryan?"

A revolver was kept pressed to the poor man's temple all the time, and when the British saw their leaders killed they murdered him as a reprisal. Generous, noble and patriotic he dared to shelter us when few of our pretended friends would have done so. I shall always think of him and his family's

kindness to us, and regret from the bottom of my heart that he met such a sad death. May he rest in peace.

On the evening of the 13th October, while I was being taken into the Mater, the village of Finglas, where Sean had found shelter, and only a mile from the house where I had been befriended, was invested by hundreds of British troops in full war kit. Evidently they had either traced Sean to the district or had suspected that I got farther than I actually did.

Every house in the village and district was searched, but without avail.

One other sequel to the Drumcondra fight I must relate before I proceed with my own story. Every male member of the Fleming family was arrested next day. That is the best proof we got that our footsteps were dogged all that night. Michael Fleming was sentenced to six months imprisonment for refusing to give information about me.

Thursday, 14th October, 1920, is a date I shall never forget. That was my third day in the hospital.

Early in the afternoon one of the Sisters came running into my room. Before she spoke I could read that she had serious news. A few hours before I had heard some firing in the neighbourhood, but that, I had been told, had been an encounter at Phibsboro' corner where an attempt to capture an

armoured car proved unsuccessful—one I.R.A. man giving his life in the effort. That occurred only three hundred yards from where I was lying.

But the Sister had more serious news than that for me. The hospital was surrounded by troops and armoured cars, and the hospital was being searched for me.

My bed was beside the window. I raised myself on my elbow and looked out. Below I saw the burly figures and the Glengarry caps of a dozen Auxiliaries on guard outside."

"It is all up this time, Dan," I remarked to myself, "and you can't even pull a gun!"

Somehow I felt resigned to it. For the music of the shots I had heard that morning told me that the fight was going to go on.

Still, I cannot say that I was not excited. Now and again I heard the engines of the military cars throbbing. Perhaps they would go without finding me. But they were only driving up and down to keep back the crowds. When I looked out the Auxiliaries were still there. The minutes grew into hours. Would the raid ever end? When would the door open to admit the searchers to my room?

Luck favoured me once more. After a two hours' stay the raiders departed without even coming near my part of the house.

When they had gone I learned the reason of their swoop. Early that morning a young I.R.A. man

named Furlong had been wounded in an explosion which occurred near Dunboyne, ten miles outside the city, where he had been testing some bombs. His comrades at once rushed him in a dying condition to the Mater. The British got to hear of this. He was not unlike me in appearance. The poor fellow died while the raid was in progress, and I believe some of the Black and Tans thought they had seen the last of Dan Breen.

This raid had for me personally the saddest sequel that could come to pass. In the next chapter I shall relate what I afterwards learned.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EXECUTIONS AND REPRISALS.

WHILE I was lying in the Mater my faithful comrade, Sean Treacy, was never idle. His main concern during this time was to be ever on the watch for my safety. And that Thursday evening, 14th October, 1920, he learned that the hospital was surrounded.

Without a moment's delay he went to Headquarters to seek a rescue party of which he himself would be one. His request was granted, and within an hour he and other trusty comrades were busy mobilising their men. In his zeal to undertake a desperate task for my safety he forgot about himself. He went openly through the principal streets—and was shadowed. I cannot say for certain, but I have a firm conviction that the man who traced him was the same man who, three days before, had traced us to Drumcondra.

Sean had almost completed the arrangements for the rescue when he went to the "Republican Outfitters," in Talbot Street, where he was to have

a few final details settled. That place was a drapery establishment owned by Tom Hunter, T.D., and Peadar Clancy. It was perhaps the best known centre in which I.R.A. men met from time to time, or delivered messages, though it was so closely watched that it was never advisable to delay there long.

When Sean arrived in the shop he found George and Jack Plunkett, sons of Count Plunkett, T.D., and both members of the Headquarters Staff. With them were Joe Vyse and Leo Henderson, officers of the Dublin Brigade, who had been holding a hurried meeting.

Peadar Clancy, who left the shop, accompanied by a lady friend, had only reached the Nelson Pillar, two hundred yards away, when he saw a military raiding party dash from O'Connell Street into Talbot Street, and at once suspected that the shop was going to be raided. But he had no chance of giving word to the boys. It would take the military less than two minutes to reach the shop. Sean, who was standing near the door, was the first to see the enemy approach. Two or three others had to face the front and take their chances of evading the British.

The lorries pulled up at the door. One of those in the shop immediately ran from the door to the street. A soldier sprang from the lorry to intercept him. Just at the same time an Auxiliary Intelligence

officer, whose name was given as "Christian," and who was in civilian clothes, jumped from the first lorry and shouted "That is not he. Here is the man we want"—rushing towards Sean Treacy, who was in the act of throwing his leg across the bicycle which he had left outside the door.

Sean saw he was cornered and pulled his gun. It was a hopeless fight from the first, but like the man that he was Sean Treacy fought till he was riddled.

The whole contingent of British troops and Auxiliaries, regardless even of their own comrade who was in grips with Sean, turned their rifles and machine gun on the man they feared. They killed Sean and three civilians who came in the line of fire, but Sean had left "Christian" dangerously wounded before he fell himself.

Thus died the greatest Irishman of our generation. He gave his life to save his comrades. It was not the first time he had offered to do it.

I have no hesitation in declaring that Sean Treacy was not only the noblest patriot of our time, but the greatest military genius of our race. It is a big claim to make for a man who died before he was 28 years of age, and who had had none of the training that we associate with military leaders of fame and reputation. The world has since acknowledged that the tactics adopted by the I.R.A. in its guerilla warfare with the British were inspired

by genius of the highest order. I assert now for my dead comrade that the most brilliant of these tactics for which others were given credit, were the product of Sean Treacy's active brain. He gave the hints; others elaborated them. He died with a smile on his countenance—the noblest patriot, the bravest man, and the cleanest and most honourable soldier I have ever known.

I knew nothing of the fight in Talbot Street for days afterwards. I am not given either to superstition or to flights of imagination, but so sure as I pen these lines so sure am I that I knew that Thursday afternoon that Sean Treacy was dead. He stood at the foot of my bed, with a calm smile on his countenance.

That evening Mick Collins came to see me. My first question was: "Where is Sean?" I was yet too ill to be told the bitter truth. Mick turned his eyes from mine and replied: "He is out in the country."

Not for ten days did I hear the full story. From Ship Street Barracks, whither his body had been taken by the British, the remains of Sean Treacy were taken to his native Tipperary, where they were received with honour and reverence that no king could claim. From Soloheadbeg Church, where he had knelt in prayer as a child, the body of Tipperary's pride was taken through the town of Killeacle. Never before had such honours been

given to a dead Tipperaryman. The British seemed to fear him in death, for their armed ghouls sought to interfere with the funeral. The day was observed as a day of general mourning in South Tipperary, and the funeral procession was several miles long. Scarce an eye was dry that day.

The country will not soon forget Sean Treacy. His grave at Kilfeacle has become a place of pilgrimage, and his name will rank with those who stand highest in the roll of our people's soldiers and patriots.

The following Friday night I was removed from the Mater Hospital by Gearoid O'Sullivan and Rory O'Connor. Gearoid O'Sullivan was later Adjutant-General of the Free State Army. Rory O'Connor, with his comrades Liam Mellows, Dick Barrett and Joe McKelvey, was executed in Mountjoy Jail on the 8th December, 1922, by order of the Free State Government, as a reprisal for the shooting of Sean Hales.

These two accompanied me in a motor to the house of a lady doctor on the south side of the city. It was felt that the Mater was no longer a safe place for me, though I shall always think with gratitude of the devoted care I received from every member of the staff, particularly Surgeon Barnaville and the nuns. It must not be forgotten that at this time the British had issued orders that any doctor or nurse who attended a patient for gunshot

wounds was at once to report the case to the Castle. The object was to trace men who were in a position similar to mine. To their credit be it said that the members of the medical profession, irrespective of their personal political views, absolutely declined to carry out these orders.

At my new resting-place I was again carefully tended, and my wounds began to heal rapidly. After a few days I was able to get out of bed for a short time every day.

A week after my arrival at this house another exciting incident took place. The whole block in which my hostess lived was surrounded. Once more, I thought, they were on my trail. From my window I saw the troops taking up their positions. I rushed to the skylight—for skylights had often before proved useful to me. Just as I got to the skylight I saw an Auxiliary outside on the roof with a rifle in his hand.

This time, I concluded, there was no chance for me. I was to be caught like a rat in a trap. I went to the front window again. Outside was a line of khaki and steel. Beyond that was a throng of curious sightseers. Some, I suppose, were full of anxiety and fear lest any soldier of Ireland should be caught in the trap. Others no doubt were proud of the Empire's Army, and hoping it would gain another little laurel.

As my eyes travelled along the line of spectators

I saw the figure of Mick Collins. Later I learned why he was there. He had seen the troops moving in the direction of the district in which I was being nursed, and had actually collected a few of the boys to be ready to attempt a rescue.

Their services were not needed. The soldiers raided almost every house in the locality, including the house next door, but never came into the place where I was. All the same I felt grateful to Mick. As I have already explained, he was the only member of G.H.Q. who stood by us consistently.

It was considered advisable to remove me again. I was taken to Dun Laoghaire to the house of Mrs. Barry early in November, 1920. Miss O'Connor and Miss Mason were both constant nurses of mine while I was there and my recovery became rapid. I had been there only three or four days when almost every house in the avenue was raided, except that of Mrs. Barry. Evidently the British spies were hitting the trail but losing the scent.

I was in Dun Laoghaire on "Bloody Sunday," November 21st. On that morning fourteen British Intelligence officers were shot dead in their lodgings in Dublin by our men. These officers, living the lives of ordinary civilians in private houses, were really spies, and the brains of the British Intelligence Department at that time. In every land spies pay the death penalty during war, and even the British Ministers of the time justified all their actions by

saying they were "at war with Ireland." But there could not be one set of war rules for their men and another for ours.

The operation was one of the most successful carried out in Dublin. The I.R.A., however, suffered some losses. Frank Teeling was captured and sentenced to death, but escaped from Kilmainham Jail before the sentence was carried out. Paddy Moran was later captured and tried for taking part in one of these executions although he was four miles from the scene. He was hanged in Mountjoy early in 1921. I knew poor Paddy well. I first met him at the home of my friend Mrs. O'Doherty in Connaught Street, Dublin. He was a lovable character, and a faithful soldier of Ireland.

There were two terrible reprisals that day for the execution of the fourteen spies.

In broad daylight the same afternoon hundreds of soldiers and Black and Tans drove to Croke Park where 10,000 people, who had not even heard of the shootings that morning, were witnessing a football match between Tipperary and Dublin.

Surrounding the grounds the British without warning poured volley after volley into the crowd, killing seventeen people and wounding about fifty. That crime was, perhaps, the most diabolical of which England had been guilty.

Another incident of "Bloody Sunday" had, however, a sadder personal touch for me. That

was the murder of Peadar Clancy and Dick McKee. They had been captured by the enemy shortly before, and were murdered in Dublin Castle as a reprisal for the shooting of the officers. Of course, Sir Hamar Greenwood, or his chief manufacturer of lies at the Castle, invented one of their usual explanations that they attacked the guard and attempted to escape. Fancy two highly intelligent officers attempting to attack an armed guard in the heart of a fortress from which a mouse could not escape! An independent medical examination showed that the two I.R.A. men were subjected to the most incredible tortures before they were done to death.

Mick Collins and Tom Cullen (later A.D.C. to the new Free State Governor-General) arranged for this medical examination, and also for the lying-in-state of the two bodies at the Pro-Cathedral. I mention this to their credit, for few members of G.H.Q. staff would have ventured so much in public at that time of danger and uncertainty.

Poor Dick and Peadar! They were two of our bravest officers and two of our staunchest supporters of the intensive war policy. They lived only five weeks after Sean, and did not even get a chance of dying fighting like him. A County Clare Volunteer named Conor Clune was murdered on the same occasion in the Castle.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MY RETURN TO TIPPERARY.

FROM Dun Laoghaire I was taken in a motor car by Eamonn Fleming across the mountains into Wicklow. At one place Eamonn introduced me under an assumed name, but the man of the house laughed heartily and assured him that he knew me well as Dan Breen, for he was a patient in the same part of the Mater Hospital when I was there some weeks before.

At this time I had to keep moving from place to place more rapidly, as England was now pouring troops into the country by thousands. The jails and penal settlements of Britain were being scoured for recruits for the Black and Tans, who were given every assurance by their chiefs that they need have no fears they would ever suffer for letting themselves loose on a campaign of murder, loot and arson. And they took the hint.

I spent a few days at the lovely home of Bob Barton, T.D., in the Glen of Wicklow. Later I went farther south again, and finally, a few days

before Christmas of 1920, I found myself back again in my own brigade area in South Tipperary.

Here I met all the old comrades again—Seumas Robinson, Dinny Lacey, Sean Hogan, Sean O'Meara and many others. I was feeling strong again, but by doctor's orders I was not allowed to walk any considerable distance.

The war was now at its height. Our columns were moving about in broad daylight with their rifles on their shoulders, welcomed everywhere by the people, whose offence in harbouring us was punishment by death. The enemy now only ventured from their strongholds in the towns when they were in hundreds, accompanied by dozens of armoured cars. The British machinery of Government was completely wrecked. British courts were deserted while litigants flocked to the Republican Courts to get justice, even though a long term of imprisonment was the penalty for anyone found in one of our courts. The orders of the English Government Departments were ignored by all our public bodies. In a word, England's only claim to rule Ireland at this time was that she had about one hundred thousand armed criminals in the country dressed as soldiers and police.

I spent a while in the neighbourhood of Solohead, and later went on towards Cahir and Rosegreen. Most of the remaining period of the war I passed in that part of the county, round Fethard, Cahir

and Rosegreen direction. Our columns were now busy fighting every day, and about this time we put into practice the idea of having elaborate dug-outs for sleeping accommodation and for concealing arms. These underground resting places had very narrow entrances, barely large enough to admit a man's body.

In April, 1921, we were in Cahir district when our Brigade Intelligence officer reported that it had become usual for a convoy of British troops to pass between Clogheen and Cahir every Wednesday morning. We decided to ambush this convoy on 22nd April. Word was sent to the columns to mobilise at the spot chosen for the attack. Con Moloney (who became Deputy Chief of the I.R.A. Staff during the Civil War) and I arrived in the neighbourhood the previous night and fell in with our columns. At this time we travelled about in a motor car, so the reader will appreciate the change that had taken place. In 1919 when the war had not started I dare not stay in my own county, and now in 1921, when the war was at its height, I could use a motor car with comparative safety.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of the 22nd all our men rose to prepare for the ambush. It was about midway between Clogheen and Cahir. When all was ready Moloney, Lacey, Hogan and myself visited the positions.

The enemy party was expected to pass about 10

o'clock in the morning, and before that hour our men were on the alert with their guns in their hands. It was approaching 11 o'clock when we began to fear that the soldiers would not follow their usual custom; still we remained in readiness until 1 o'clock, when Con Moloney and I decided to return to Brigade Headquarters—"somewhere in South Tipperary."

We had left the position only half an hour when the convoy came along. Our men at once called upon the enemy to surrender, but they replied by opening fire. A sharp encounter followed, in the course of which one soldier was killed and two wounded. The remainder of the party then surrendered to the I.R.A., who disarmed them, destroyed their convoy, and then released their prisoners.

Our men lost no time in retiring from the position, for the firing had probably been heard in Clogheen and Cahir, both occupied by strong British garrisons who would at once rush reinforcements into the districts. The I.R.A. were marching off with their booty, in column formation, when a single motor car, rounding a corner at a place called Curraghclooney, almost ran into the rear guard. The car was halted. Our men asked the occupant his name and got the reply, "District Inspector Potter, of the R.I.C., Cahir."

He was at once taken prisoner, and his car

seized. Our columns had not proceeded much farther on their way when they suddenly found themselves being ambushed by a strong party of enemy troops. A brisk engagement developed, but although out-numbered three to one, our boys not only fought their way through without losses on their side, but carried their prisoner with them. their success was due to the able leadership of Dinny Lacey and Sean Hogan.

Now at this time an I.R.A. man named Traynor was under sentence of death in Dublin. Already the British had hanged several of our soldiers who had fallen into their hands, but our side firmly set its face against reprisals. On many a day that I.R.A. men were hanged as criminals British soldiers and police fell into our hands, but they were always released on handing up their arms. If England would not play the game we would.

Traynor's was a particularly sad case. He was the father of a helpless young family. His execution was fixed for April 25th.

With Potter a prisoner in our hands we at once decided upon a course of action which might save Traynor's life. We sent a special courier at once to Dublin, with a message to be delivered at the enemy headquarters to the effect that we were prepared to exchange our prisoner for Traynor, and failing this, that Potter would be executed by us.

The message was delivered in Dublin Castle two

days before the time fixed for the execution. We got no reply. I believe the Castle officials never let the offer go beyond their own secret circle. After all, Potter was in their eyes but one of the mere Irish whom they had used as a tool.

On the 26th we received word that Traynor had been executed the previous day. We felt it would show weakness on our part if we did not carry out our threat. We thought, too, it would have a good effect if we had to make similar offers in the future. And besides Potter was, in our eyes, not an English soldier but an Irish traitor.

We informed him he was to be executed. We gave him every facility for communicating with his wife and children, and for writing any messages he wished.

I never felt more sorry in my life at having to carry out such an unpleasant task. We discussed the matter from every aspect and agreed we had no alternative. Potter was a kind and cultured gentleman, and a brave officer. Before he was executed he gave us a diary, a signet ring and a gold watch with the request that we should return them to his wife. We fulfilled his request.

As an official reprisal for his death the British military authorities blew up ten farmhouses in South Tipperary. Amongst them was Mrs. Tobin's, of Tincurry, where Sean Treacy, Hogan and I had sheltered the night after the Soloheadbeg affair.

CHAPTER XXV.

MARRIED IN THE BATTLE LINE.

ON the 12th June, 1921, just one month before the Truce with the English forces, I was married in circumstances as strange as they were romantic.

In an earlier chapter I have already told how I first met my future wife, Brighid Malone, in September, 1919, and how she and her sister served us and our cause when sympathisers were few. From the day of our first visit to the home of the Malone's, our friendship began and soon developed into a deeper feeling. I knew it was to Brighid's constant care and nursing that I owed my speedy recovery from the wounds I received at Ashtown. During the months that I spent in her mother's house after that encounter our attachment became stronger, and in 1920 we became formally engaged.

After the fight at Drumcondra in October, 1920, Brighid came to see me whenever it was safe. We decided to get married as soon as I would be completely recovered. I knew well the risks I was asking her to take for my sake; but she never

hesitated in taking them. To be known as a friend of mine involved all the petty tyranny and torture of which the British were capable. What then would it mean for the girl against whom the terrible crime could be laid that she was my fiancée or my wife?

I knew that spies would forever after dog her steps, that her home would be raided night and day, and she herself insulted, and perhaps tortured for information. But she never flinched. She was willing to take her chance, and I, for my part, felt I could be still as good a soldier of Ireland.

Early in 1921 we agreed that the marriage would take place in June. Brighid would have her holidays at that time, and therefore her journey to the country, if noticed, might not arouse so much suspicion.

At the end of May we had completed all arrangements. To have the ceremony in a church was out of the question. Churches were constantly being raided and searched, and even sacrilege was of little concern to the Auxiliaries. Besides, a marriage ceremony in a local church arouses the curiosity of the neighbourhood.

We decided to have the marriage at Michael Purcell's, of Glenagat House. Glenagat is six miles from Clonmel, and four miles from each of the towns of Cahir, Cashel and Fethard. All of these towns were held by strong enemy forces who every

day and night sent out heavy columns to scour the district in search of our units. Our chosen spot was, therefore, in the midst of the enemy.

The Purcells were a great family, and did everything in their power to help in completing the arrangements. They had a long record of service in the country's cause, and both Mr. Purcell and his wife had seen the inside of a prison cell during the "Land War" of the last generation. They had been ruthlessly evicted from their homestead, but at this time they had won back their farm.

The fight was now more intense than ever. Each side was suffering heavy casualties every day, and the crimes of the Black and Tans were daily becoming more fiendish and revolting.

Brigid arrived in the district on the Sunday before the wedding. It was seven months since we had seen each other, so that our re-union was not only romantic but delightful. It is not easy to appreciate the risk she had taken.

Meantime I had sent word from Brigade Headquarters to all our columns, telling them of the event that was coming off. During the early morning of 12th June all our columns converged on Glenagat, felled trees across the roads, and posted armed guards at all the approaches. Glenagat that day was as impregnable as the South Tipperary Brigade could make it, and if the British forces attempted to visit the area they would get a recep-

tion such as they had never before experienced. Never were our men so eager, so determined, or so excited. The night before Sean Hogan, Dinny Lacey, Mick Sheehan, Con Moloney, Sean Fitzpatrick and several other officers slept with me in a tent near by. I think I should have said spent the night, for we slept very little, much to my regret. The boys would insist on talking all through the night and giving me all the advice that bachelors usually give to one who is going to become a benedict. If ever I was the target for rapid and sustained fire it was that night—though fortunately it was not of a dangerous kind.

Early in the morning we arrived at Glenagat House. Father Murphy, of New Inn, Cashel, who was to perform the ceremony, had already arrived, and Brigid was there too. Father Murphy said Mass in the house, and both Brigid and myself received Holy Communion. Sean Hogan was my "best man," and Miss Annie Malone was bridesmaid.

When the ceremony was over we sat down to breakfast, and a right merry party we were. Father Ferdinand O'Leary, Sean Cooney and Miss Cooney arrived on the scene just as the breakfast began.

At Jack Luby's, of Milltown House, we had a real country wedding. All through the evening and night the boys and girls of the neighbourhood danced and sang and enjoyed themselves as if

there was no war on. All the time our outposts were on the alert, though each party was relieved from time to time to have their share in the merriment. And even while the boys danced and laughed their guns were ever at hand in case of need. We had grown used to the war. No terrorism could ever kill the spirit of the people.

From Glenagat district we went across to Donohill, back to my native parish, beside Soloheadbeg. Larry Power, who was Captain of my old company, saw that we had nothing to fear, and I knew my old comrades could be trusted to the death.

Here we spent our honeymoon, moving from the house of one friend to another, for they were all anxious to entertain us. John Quirke, Paddy O'Dwyer, James Ryan and Jack O'Brien, of Ballinvassa, were each in turn our host, and spared no pains to make us happy and safe.

Truly, it was a strange wedding and a strange honeymoon. No wedding marches, crossed swords, confetti or rice or trips to the continent, but the love and welcome of trusted friends with generous warm hearts. And I do not believe that either my wife or I would have it otherwise, if we had our choice again.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRUCE.

EARLY in June, 1921, I learned that a movement was on foot to effect a compromise with England. It did not surprise me then to hear that a Truce had been arranged as from July 11th, 1921.

In many respects we welcomed the respite, though we never thought it would end as it did. For some time our area had been running short of munitions, and just before the Truce we had sent some of our men to the continent in the hope of negotiating for a cargo which would attempt to run the blockade. At the time of the Truce I was Quartermaster of the Second Southern Division of the I.R.A., but I resigned for reasons I do not wish to state here. It was just about the time of the Truce that our Brigades all over Ireland were being grouped into Divisions.

It was like a new life to us to return from the columns to the towns and cities again. Everywhere we were welcomed and acclaimed as heroes, even by the people who, two years before, had been describing us as murderers and assassins. But all

this time we were still short of money. During the months of the Truce I went about almost every day to race meetings and made scores of friends amongst the racing fraternity whose information—especially that of the owners—enabled Hogan and myself to make some very profitable investments. It was the only way we could obtain money, for the I.R.A. were still an unpaid Volunteer Army.

In Tipperary and Dublin I visited all my old friends, and was welcomed everywhere. In August I decided to give up racing. At that time the I.R.A. was devoting special attention to the Northern areas, endeavouring to equip and train the units there so that when the fight would be renewed they would play a more active part and relieve some of the pressure from the Southern counties. I was anxious to give a hand in this work and went to the north, where I met Charlie Daly, who was since executed by the Free State during the Civil War. Daly, who was a Kerry man, was one of the finest and ablest soldiers I ever met. I spent five weeks with Charlie training the Northern boys in the use of the gun and the bomb. It was hard work for all of us, but I enjoyed it as I saw much of Ulster in our long walks and pleasure drives. To make it more exciting we went into Belfast itself on a few occasions.

I returned to Dublin about the end of September. While I was in the capital the Dublin Guards pre-

sented me with a gold watch and chain, and Paddy Daly and others, who were later officers of high command in the Free State Army, said some very nice things about me. Here I must observe that the watch I received on that occasion was looted from my house in Carrick-on-Suir ten or eleven months later by the Free State troops who entered that town.

I remained in Dublin until a few days before the signing of the Treaty. Then I discovered that a compromise was being made, and I went to the south once more. I was convinced that if we could show that the Army was standing solid for what it had fought to achieve the Dail would not betray the Army. The soldiers, I felt, would keep the politicians on the straight track. I could not bring myself to believe that the Dail would take upon itself the responsibility of making a compromise, when it had never taken responsibility for the Anglo-Irish War. In this I was sadly mistaken. The very men who were most bitterly opposed to the few who began the war were now the strongest supporters of the Treaty.

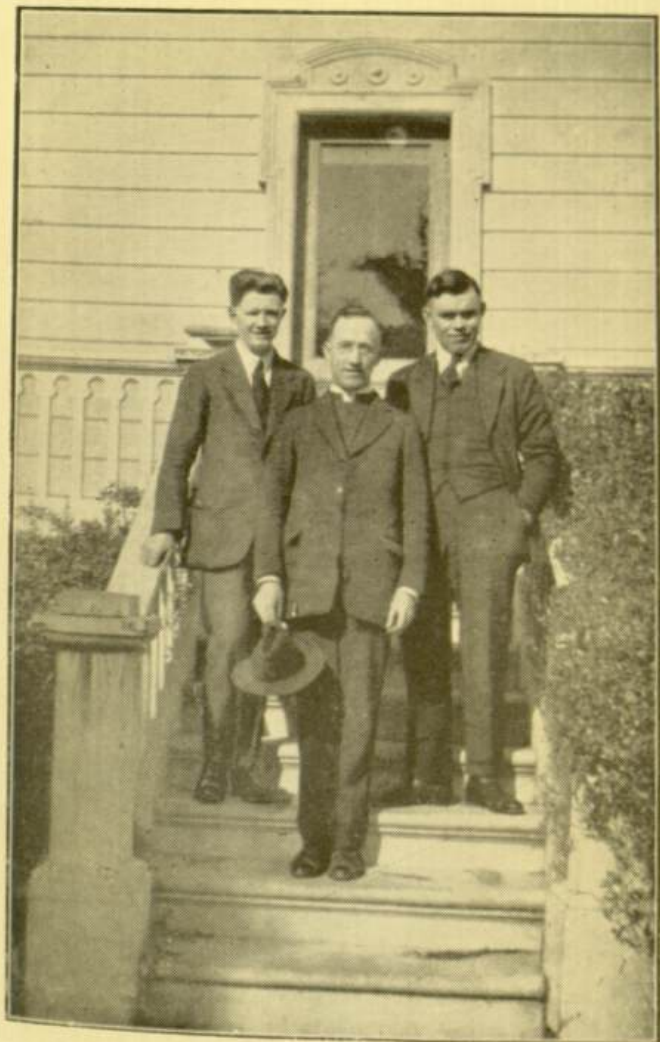
I came to Dublin on December 7th, the day the terms of the Treaty were made public, and I met Liam Lynch, Sean Hogan, and several I.R.A. officers. I urged Liam Lynch, who was then in command of the 1st Southern Division, to end the Truce right away and resume the war. In that way

we might have kept the Army united once the common enemy was again in action against any section of us. Nobody favoured my plan. Some held out the vain hope that even if the Treaty were accepted by the Dail it would be rejected by the people at the polls. I laughed at the hope, knowing that in any country which has wearied of war the masses of the people will always accept a compromise.

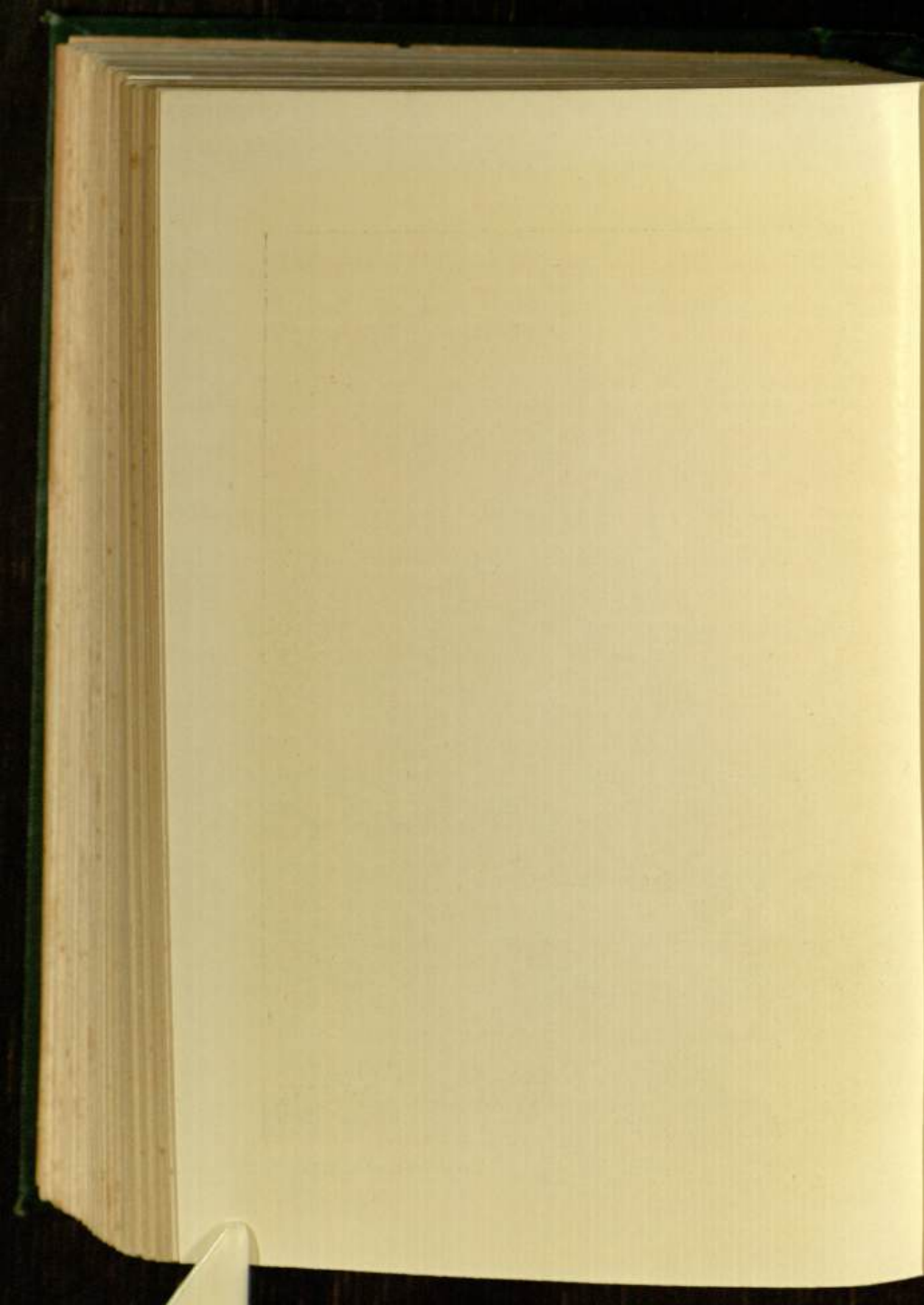
Disheartened at the failure of my efforts to get the boys united once more against the enemy, I made up my mind to leave Ireland. I intended to go to India and strike a blow against the old enemy there and help those who were fighting the same battle as we had been fighting in Ireland. But when Sean Hogan and I got in touch with Indian leaders in London they asked how could Irishmen be trusted to fight for India when they had deserted their own country?

In despair I decided to go to America. In the middle of December I acted as "best man" for Seumas Robinson when he was married in Dublin. That evening I left for London.

As I left Dun Laoghaire I felt completely broken in spirit. I had seen all our efforts in vain, and the men we trusted had told the world that the freedom we fought for was the freedom to have our country cut in twain, and the freedom to take an oath of allegiance to a foreign king.



J. J. HOGAN. FATHER DAN KELLY. DAN BREEN.



Before I left Dublin I had asked several I.R.A. officers to stand with me in resuming the war, but they would not accept my views. Had they agreed I would never have left Ireland, and I warned them that within twelve months they would be fighting a Civil War.

On the 19th of December, before leaving Ireland, I addressed an open letter to Commandant Sean McKeon, T.D. In this letter I made my attitude towards the Treaty perfectly clear. These were my exact words :—

“ I wish to point out to you that you are reported to have stated in *An Dail* to-day, that this Treaty brings the freedom that is necessary and for which we are all ready to die. You also are reported to have previously stated that this Treaty gives you what you and your comrades fought for.

“ As one of your comrades I say that I would never have handled a gun or fired a shot, nor would I have asked any of my comrades, living or dead, to raise a hand to obtain this Treaty.

“ Let me remind you that to-day is the second anniversary of Martin Savage's death. Do you suppose that he sacrificed his life in attempting to kill one British Governor-General in order to make room for another British Governor-General?

“ I take no party's side, but I still stand by our old principle of Complete Separation and entire Independence.”

In London I met Sean Hogan who had crossed before me. It was the first time I had ever been out of my own country, and for a time the novelty of life in London and my strange surroundings helped to keep my mind from the great tragedy of Ireland. We stayed in London for about a fortnight. During my stay I met Mr. P. L. Smyth, the well-known Dublin Commission Agent, and he proved a kind friend to us.

Our next trouble was how to get to America. We decided to attempt to cross from Canada, but we had two great obstacles to overcome.

In the first place we had very little money, and in the second place we had no passports. How we overcame the passport difficulty I cannot explain here.

Anyhow, after a three weeks' journey we landed safely in Canada. From Canada we successfully crossed into the States, and made our way to Chicago. Here we were met by my two brothers, John and Pat, and my sister, Mary, all of whom had been in the United States for some years. I soon found that in this far away city we were almost at home. We met fellow-countrymen and fellow-countrywomen everywhere. One of the first we met was Ned O'Brien, of Galbally, whose health had broken down because of the wounds he received in the rescue at Knocklong. Other friends we made included Mrs. McWhorter, a great worker in the

Irish cause, Michael Mulryan, Jim Delaney and Colonel O'Reilly. They all helped to make it a real holiday for us by showing us everything of note in that great city. Above all, I marvelled at the great meat-curing factories, most of which are owned and worked by Irishmen.

We went from Chicago to Philadelphia where a host of friends again greeted us. Joe McGarrity, that veteran worker for Ireland, was one of the first to welcome us, and we spent a while in his house where so many before us—Sean McDermott, Padraig Pearse, Roger Casement, and Eamon de Valera—had been honoured and entertained. Luke Dillon, too, welcomed us, and our old friends Seumas O'Doherty and Mrs. O'Doherty, whom we had known in the old days in Dublin. The kindness of the O'Doherty family to us I shall always remember with gratitude.

From Philadelphia we travelled to California. There I again met many Irish friends, including Father Peter Scanlon, Father Dan Kelly, Senior; and Father Dan Kelly, Junior, all from my own part of the country. I was delighted to meet Mick McDonnell too, our old comrade of the Ashtown fight, who had been out there for quite a good while.

California is a delightful place. Although it was mid-winter when I got there the weather was like the weather we get in Ireland in the summer-time.

Meantime I was far from being out of touch with affairs in Ireland. The American papers gave much prominence to the development of events at home following the acceptance of the Treaty. It was plain that our old comrades were irrevocably divided and heading for Civil War. Every day brought fresh stories of new differences and minor conflicts that showed the situation could end only in one way. In America our countrymen were divided in the same way as our people at home.

Early in March came the news that Limerick was on the verge of an outbreak. Different posts in the city were held by the rival sections of the Volunteers—some supporters of the Treaty and some against it. Ultimatums had actually passed between the rival commanders there, and it looked as if at any moment a single shot might begin a conflict that would soon spread throughout the land.

I was staying with Father Dan Kelly, Senior, at Menlo Park, when a cable reached me from Ireland asking me to return at once. This message was the outcome of an agreement made between the rival sections in Limerick, an agreement which averted a conflict.

Within two days of the receipt of this cablegram I had left California for Chicago. There I again stayed for a few days with my relatives and friends. From Chicago I went to Philadelphia where I got

the same warm greeting from Joe McGarrity, Luke Dillon and the O'Dohertys.

We had decided that New York would be the best place from which to attempt a passage to Ireland, for of course Hogan and I were still confronted with the same difficulties regarding money and passports as we had experienced on our outward journey. We could easily have got passports from the British Consulate if we had asked them as British subjects, but we would rather have rotted in America. While in New York we visited the Carmelite Fathers' place in 39th Street, and also the Irish Offices in 5th Avenue, where I met Liam Pedlar.

At last, through the help of some Irish friends, both of us got taken on a vessel that was sailing for Cobh. We were working our way as stokers. Sean and I set to our work with a will, and had done four hours' at a task which was novel to us. The vessel was to sail within an hour, when somebody got suspicious of Hogan. He was questioned as to his nationality, his experience on other vessels, and the result was that he was ordered to leave the ship on the spot.

Now this was a nice dilemma for me. I saw our four hours' hard work and all our efforts to secure the jobs gone for nothing; but I could not think of leaving Hogan alone in New York without a cent. in his pocket. I made up my mind that I would not sail without him.

But it was no easy matter to escape from the ship. The crew were marshalled for the voyage, and to attempt to return to land was a serious offence, for which I might find myself in irons.

The risk had to be taken. I made a bold bid. I walked straight to the gangway, but was held up by an officer. I explained to him that I had important business to do on shore but would not be detained longer than a few minutes. He must have taken me to be a simple harmless poor worker, for he accepted my word and allowed me to land. I never saw him or his ship afterwards.

The loss was not all on his side. All the money we had the night before we intended to sail had been invested in guns, and these were on the ship. It would be madness to try to bring them with me, so I had to suffer the loss. My comrade was more to me than Krupp's factory.

We had a few more bitter disappointments before we could again get on a liner. Finally we found ourselves on the high seas once more, sailing for Cobh.

We landed in Ireland early in April. A friend to whom my wife had wired to meet me at Cobh brought me the happy news that not only my wife but a son was waiting my arrival in Dublin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

EFFORTS TO AVERT CIVIL WAR.

WHEN I arrived in Dublin I found that the situation was even more critical than I had expected. The old Republican Army had definitely split into two sections—one the new Free State Army, and the other the I.R.A. The British troops had evacuated Beggar's Bush Barracks and Wellington Barracks, and handed them over to the Free State troops. The Republicans had seized and fortified the Four Courts as their Headquarters. Similar divisions existed all over the country, though the south was overwhelmingly Republican so far as the Army was concerned. It was clear that at any moment a civil war might ensue. War was in the air. At night there was constant firing, and armoured cars rushed through the streets.

I felt almost broken-hearted. Had we stood so loyally together in the past only to turn our arms against each other now? I decided that I at least would not be to blame if fighting broke out.

I visited the strongholds of each party in turn

to explore the possibilities. I called meetings of the old fighting crowd on each side, but there seemed no chance of any agreement.

I then met Sean O'Hegarty (Commandant of the 1st Cork Brigade), Florrie O'Donoghue (Adjutant of the 1st Southern Division), Humphrey Murphy, of Kerry; Tom Hales, of Cork; and Sean Moylan, T.D., all of whom were opposed to the Treaty. After some discussion we decided to meet some officers on the other side in a last effort to find a way out. We met Mick Collins, Dick Mulcahy, Owen O'Duffy, Gearoid O'Sullivan, and Sean Boylan.

After a long exchange of views we agreed upon a certain basis of settlement. This we put in writing, and each of us signed it except Sean Moylan. This document was published in the Press on 1st May. I give it here in full:—

"We, the undersigned officers of the I.R.A., realising the gravity of the position in Ireland, and appreciating the fact that if the present drift is maintained a conflict of comrades is inevitable, declare that this would be the greatest calamity in Irish history and would leave Ireland broken for generations.

"To avert this catastrophe we believe that a closing of the ranks all round is necessary.

"We suggest to all leaders, Army and Political, and all citizens and soldiers of Ireland, the advis-

ability of a union of forces on the basis of the acceptance and utilisation of our present national position in the best interests of Ireland, and we require that nothing shall be done that would prejudice our position or dissipate our forces.

"We feel that on this basis alone can the situation best be faced, viz. :—

"(1) The acceptance of the Pact—admitted by all sides—that the majority of the people of Ireland are willing to accept the Treaty.

"(2) An agreed election with a view to

"(3) Forming a Government which will have the confidence of the whole country.

"(4) Army unification on above basis."

That was signed by Tom Hales, Humphrey Murphy, Sean O'Hegarty, Florrie O'Donoghue, Sean Boylan, Dick Mulcahy, Owen O'Duffy, Gearoid O'Sullivan, Mick Collins and myself. That is, five of us who opposed the Treaty and five who favoured it. In the Civil War which followed both Florrie O'Donoghue and Sean O'Hegarty remained neutral.

These proposals came in for severe criticism. The Republican Headquarters in the Four Courts at once issued a statement repudiating the terms, and suggesting the whole thing was an attempt to split their ranks. I myself received my full share of

adverse criticism. One Republican Journal, *The Plain People*, described me as a "Judas—with perhaps the difference that I had not got the thirty pieces of silver." I do not to this day know who the editor of this paper was. Perhaps he believed what he wrote. I paid no heed to these observations. My duty I believed was to strain every nerve to avoid civil war.

On May 3rd, those who had signed this suggested basis of peace were received by the Dail, and Sean O'Hegarty addressed the House. The result was the appointment of a Committee representing both sides in the Dail to discuss the proposals.

The next step was to see what could be done to bring about a reunion in the Army. A conference was arranged between the chiefs on both sides, and several meetings were held. But neither the Army chiefs nor the political chiefs could come to any lasting agreement. The one result of all the negotiations was the Pact between Eamon de Valera and Michael Collins agreeing to contest the coming elections as a United Sinn Fein Party, both Free Staters and Republicans standing on the same ticket and not opposing each other. In that way all the outgoing members of the Dail were again nominated, and the agreement was that after the election there was to be a Coalition Ministry.

When the election came there was some difficulty about a vacancy which had been created in East

Tipperary by the resignation of Alderman Frank Drohan, of Clonmel. He had resigned before the division on the Treaty, and a dispute arose as to whether the Republicans or the Free Staters were to nominate his successor. Finally, I was selected as being more or less neutral. I was not consulted on the matter and I knew nothing about the arrangement until I saw the announcement in the Press. I protested against the proposal, but for the sake of harmony I agreed to allow my name to go forward. I had no ambition to enter politics. I was a soldier above all things, and I made it quite plain that I would take no part in the election campaign. However, both sides nominated me and I was defeated at the polls.

I had hoped that as a result of the Pact between Collins and de Valera we would have an uncontested election, which would result in preserving a united front against England. However, both the Labour Party and the Farmers prepared to send forward candidates of their own to oppose Republicans and Free Staters. Before the polling, Mick Collins delivered a speech in Cork urging Labour and other parties to carry on their campaign. This was, of course, a flagrant violation of the agreement which he had entered.

In North, Mid. and South Tipperary I succeeded in inducing the Farmers' candidates to withdraw from the contest. If all parties were as patriotic as

the farmers of Tipperary civil war might have been avoided. They had suffered more than any other section of the community from the Black and Tan terror. They had had martial law preventing the holding of the fairs and markets for three years. Their farmhouses and creameries had been wrecked in scores, and they had stood loyally by us all through the war. Their self-sacrifice in retiring from the 1922 election deserves to be remembered.

The Labour candidate in Tipperary would listen to no argument. He cared nothing about presenting a united front to the enemy. He was ambitious for power and he insisted upon going forward. He afterwards, I believe, boasted that he was not afraid of Dan Breen even when a gun was put up to his breast. Even in election campaigns such slanders are hardly playing the game. However, I hope my countrymen know me well enough not to believe that I would ever put a gun up to an unarmed opponent.

All this time I still felt anxious for the future. Mick Collins' violation of the Pact made me suspicious. I felt too that England would never permit a Coalition Ministry of Free Staters and Republicans, but my hope all the time was that if a crisis came the Free Staters would throw the Treaty back in her teeth rather than cause brother to fight against brother.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW I WAS CAPTURED.

I HAVE no intention of giving here a story of the Civil War. I can only say that I claim to have done my part to avoid it. But when I learned to my amazement that the Free Staters had in the dead of night placed British guns in position to shell the Republicans in the Four Courts I felt there was only one course open to me—to throw in my lot with my old comrades and carry on the fight for the Republic.

In the course of that fight I lost nearly all my old brothers-in-arms. Even in the war against the Black and Tans Tipperary suffered less heavily. Dinny Lacey gave his life for Ireland; so too did Jerry Kiely, "Sparkie" Breen, Paddy Dalton, Paddy McDonough, Mick Sadlier, D. Ryan, Liam Lynch, and several others with whom I had campaigned in the old days. They were noble and courageous soldiers, true and unselfish comrades. Ireland will miss such men as these. They might be with us still if the agreement made in Limerick be-

tween Liam Lynch and Mick Brennan had been kept by the Free Staters. That agreement might have saved the soldiers of the south from turning their guns on one another. No one can say that the Republicans have a particle of responsibility for the breaking of the 1922 Treaty of Limerick.

I shall conclude my story with an account of the circumstances that led to my capture.

When Liam Lynch was killed in County Waterford in the early spring of 1923, Austin Stack, Frank Barrett, David Kent, Sean Gaynor, Maurice Walsh, George Power, and several others of us who were together in the neighbourhood decided to make our way to the Nire Valley to attend an important meeting that had been called to discuss certain peace proposals. We reached Melleray at 1 o'clock next morning, and had a much needed rest and some food. At 5 o'clock we resumed our journey towards Cappoquin, and after an hour's march we crossed the road, for we were anxious to keep to the fields as much as possible. Just after we had crossed the road, and were advancing up a hill heavy fire was opened on us from three sides. We at once took cover, but as the firing became more intense we decided to get away as best we could. In the confusion we became scattered. I never met Austin Stack from that day until I met him four months later in Mountjoy, where we were both prisoners.

I fell in with Maurice Walsh and Andy Kennedy, and we decided to face for Newcastle, near Clonmel. When we arrived there we found to our amazement that the place was held by a strong party of Free Staters.

We had to remain for two days on the hills, as the Free State troops had brought up huge reinforcements to sweep the district. There was heavy snow on the ground, but we could not venture into any place of shelter.

After two days we slipped through the lines, and I headed for my old haunt, the Glen of Aherlow. I reached a dug-out on the Glen and almost collapsed from exhaustion and hunger. I slept almost as soon as I lay down.

From that sleep I was wakened by the heavy tramp of marching men above. I jumped out and looked into the barrels of several Free State rifles. I had no option but to surrender.

I am not a soft-hearted man. I have gone through too much to feel it an easy job to weep; but my pride alone kept me from crying like a child that day.

For five years I had defied England's garrison in Ireland. Everything I had suffered willingly for my country and my countrymen. And now in my native county I was a prisoner in the hands of my own countrymen.

I was first taken to Galbally where I met my old

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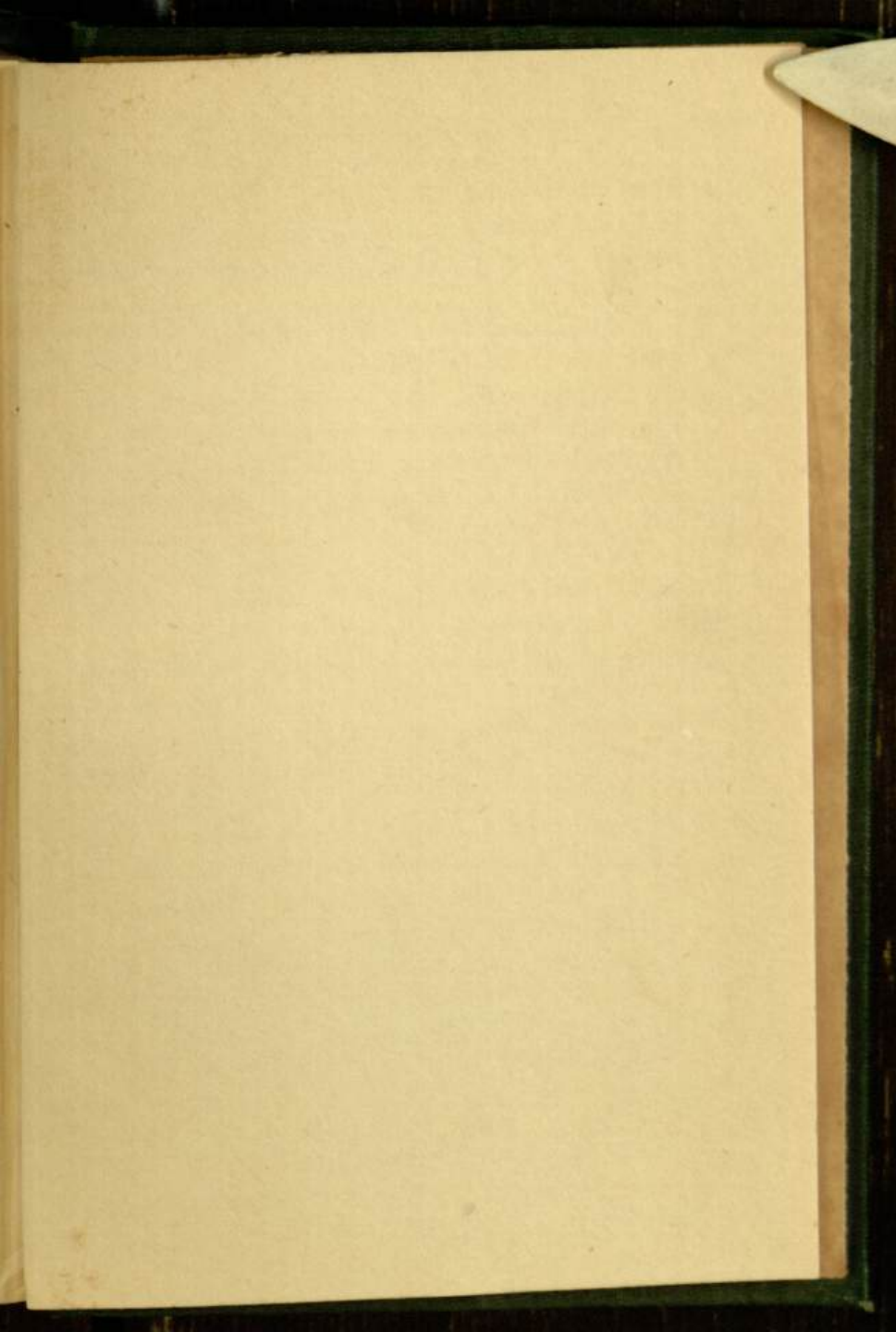
friend of Knocklong, Ned O'Brien, his brother John Joe, and James Scanlan. I think they felt the situation as keenly as I did, but they tried to cheer me up.

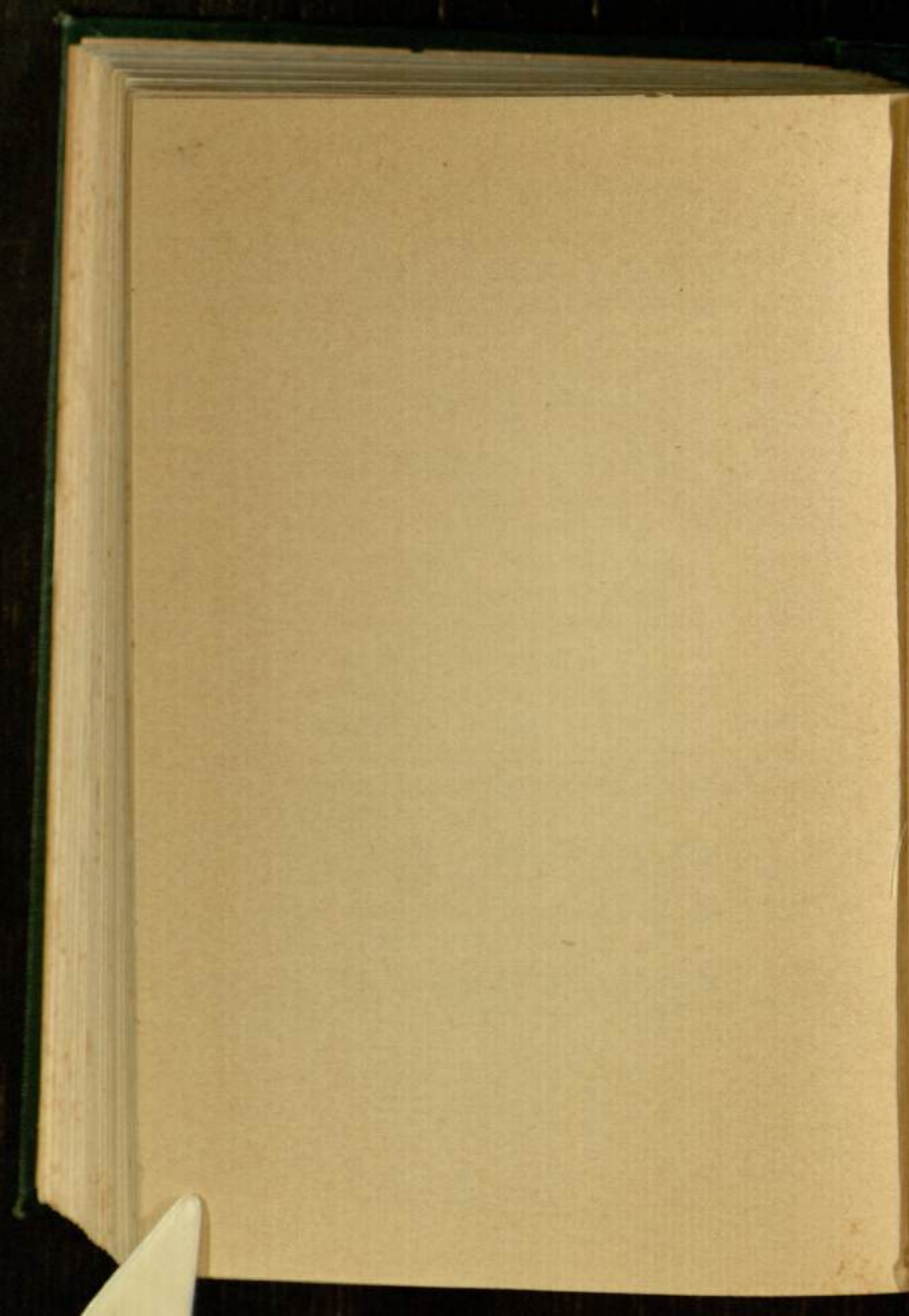
From Galbally I was taken under escort to my native town, Tipperary, where I was put through some form of trial. Next day I was taken from the Free State Headquarters, the Abbey School, and marched to the railway station. The humiliation and agony I endured during that short march I shall never forget. May the reader never know what it is to be marched a prisoner through his native town for doing what he believed to be his duty and serving his country.

I was taken by rail to Limerick where I was detained for two months. I have already related how I met, as one of the military officers in charge of me, Lord French's driver whom we had wounded at Ashtown.

From Limerick I was taken to Mountjoy, and because of my treatment there I went on hunger-strike. After twelve days of hunger-strike and six of thirst strike, I was released.

During my imprisonment the people of Tipperary had elected me as their senior Republican Deputy.





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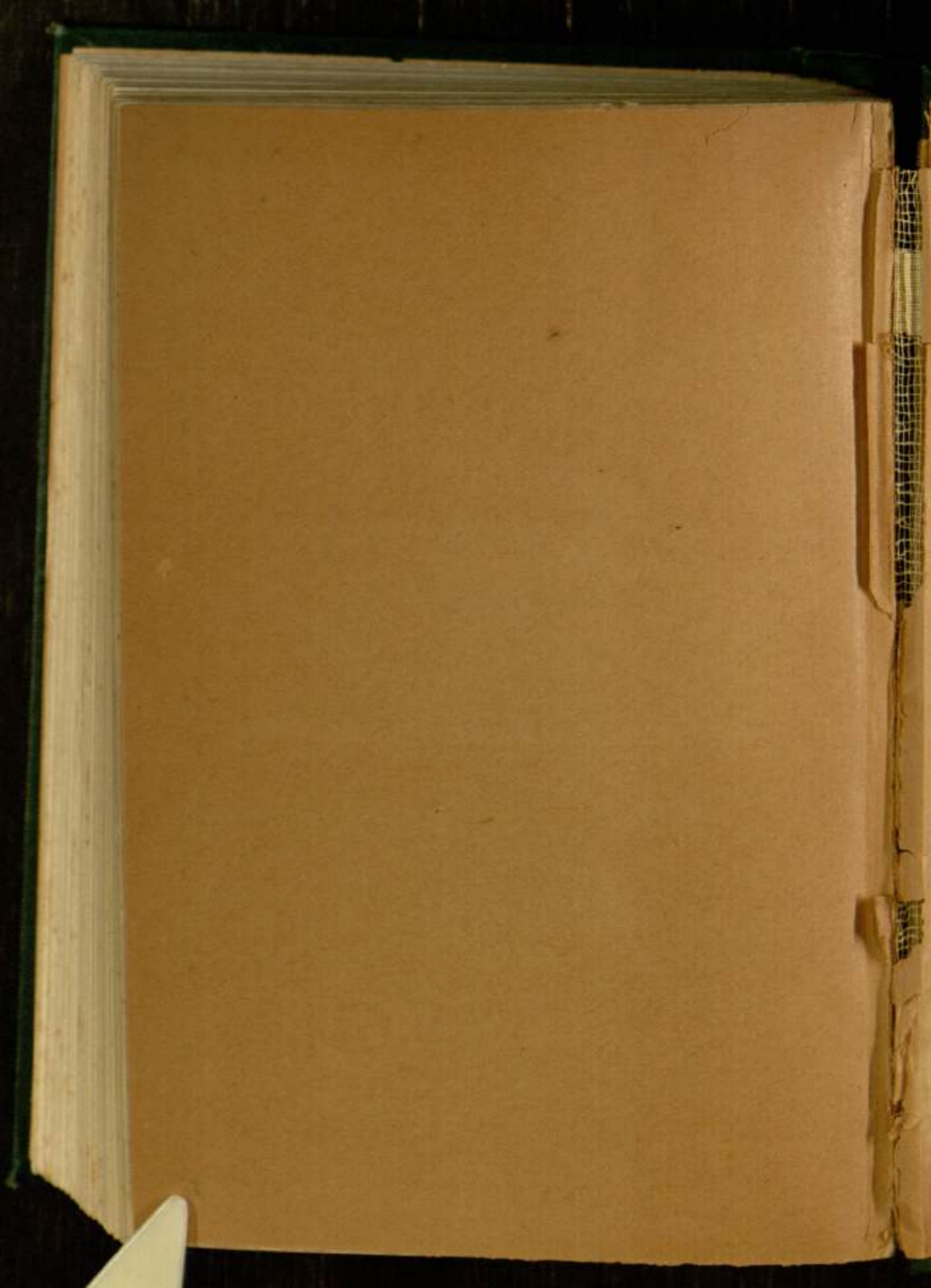
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