

Mountjoy Prison Dec 14th

At a quarter to 9 last night most of the women prisoners were at classes in the larger cells and the hospital was exceptionally quiet. Just as the little bell which for 4 weeks has been sounded nightly as a summons to the rosary was sounded. 3 shots were heard. Miss S. Dowling, who is ill, rushed out of her cell. She and other prisoners had been sitting on the beds drinking tea when bullets crashed through the window and lime plaster fell on the beds. One pane of glass previously broken was entirely blown in, there is a small bullet hole in the pane beneath and there are two large bullet holes in the opposite wall. Returning to her own cell, which had been empty, Miss Ethne Coyle found bullet holes through the wall opposite the lime plaster on the floor.

The Prisoners council sent a message requesting the governor deputy Governor to come and inspect the cells and explain the firing. They refused to come. This morning the deputy interviewing our council said that Miss Coyle had been signalling at her window. He spoke in bullying tones about Sean Hales, said he took full responsibility for the executions of Friday last and that the order has been given that if we signal, the sentries are to fire to hit. It is of course quite untrue that there was any attempt at signalling. If Miss Coyle had been at her window she would certainly have been shot. A possible explanation is that the gas lights in our cells are very bad and continually flickering. We sent in a complaint about this some days ago. The sentry may have assumed that we were signalling and therefore fired. Shots are being fired by the sentries continually especially at night. They shoot birds and cats in the compound about three weeks ago one of them shot a convict prisoner through the eye. The attitude of the deputy governor implies that in his opinion the sentry was only doing his duty in firing into our cells. As we are unable to stop the flickering of the gas the shooting is likely to recur.

A Dream

I am dreaming of steep airy places Night after night. It was on a rough hill path, last night, that I was travelling, and mother, I think was with me and dear friends, - I knew my love for them, but I do not know who they were. The path climbed up through a wood and golden broken sunlight played on it falling through autumn boughs. We were very eager, very happy, knowing that some miracle awaited us at the end. The summit was the grey-green, _____ shoulder of the hill, and we passed straight into a hospitable house which stood with all doors open, welcoming us. I went through the house alone and came out again through a doorway and stood on the stone threshold and there, leaving my feet, filling the whole valley, Lay a radiant, dark blue sea. The mountain peaks rose out of it, purple and sun-smitten, and the open ocean lay beyond and over my head was a clear Blue _____ of air
(after Donald's letter wishing me happy dreams)

Dirge for the Dying Year

Farewell sad year, down in the clouded west
Sink with the day amid gloomy pageantry
Of royal purple, as is sweet for thee
For thou hast vanquished our Kingliest
And buried them away with the dead leaves

A plunder was it that the air bereaves
of sweetness, bitter war of brotherhood,
Life of its pride, death of its quietude,
In thy slow passing mournful live grieves
gentlest sons by sons unfaithful slain

Thy clouds were miseries; they winds were pain
That stript our blossomed boughs and strewed the flowers
on every valley, all things that were ours
Thou didst lay waste; they will not laugh again
though men remember; Haste thee and begone,
Linger no more! Thy tyranny is done;
Young stars muster their spears behind the pall
of dusk. They march to guard thy funeral
And herald to our skies tomorrows' sun.

Mountjoy Prison

Dec 31st 1922

A Dream

I think Mona was with me, and other friends, and in some way the place we were was wonderful to us with forgotten memories, like a place, that has been loved in childhood or far off in another life. We knew that in a certain Direction if we could travel far enough lay some beauty of the land of hearts desire. The way by which we were going was through a pathless meadow of long, wet, tangled grass and before us we saw dark trees. Our feet were drenched and impeded by the grass and suddenly I seemed to remember that there was an easier way- a path along a river under trees.

We found the river but the path was on the other side and there was no bridge, because the river was widening towards the place of our desire. We hurried back then and took the difficult way again. Following it we were soon in an narrow tunnelled passage, leading steeply upward into utter darkness. So steep it was that I cried out that to climb was impossible, one would fall backwards with every step, but then, groping in the darkness we discovered that the path had been cut roughly into shallow steps by some who had gone before, and it was possible, though hard to mount.

We went on them, into deeper and deeper gloom, yet no doubt assailed me that the glory we half remembered would open to us all at the end. At last. We came out into a faint green daylight among ancient trees and pressed through the thicket and stood out on the brow of a high hill. There it lay open before us, Beauty and peace and grandeur satisfying to the heart- a Green World [...] mirroring a cloudless heaven and the river flowing into the sea.

Letter from Maud Gonne to Dorothy Telling her about the raid at St. Stephens Green. (Not transcribed)

P7

Lament

Olive, as a wood wind torn, storm riven
Has all thy ____-sad beauty been,
_____ love have thy pale lovers given
With death and woundings have they praised
their queen

The storm is fallen and the sword are weary
That flared against thee, clamorous with hate ,
Quietude is about me- live, live –
I find thee not, and I am desolate!

O wilderness- Dear saints, will some tomorrow
Bring that sweet holy anguish back again,
My soul is sorrowful for the old sorrow,
My heart is hungry for its ancient pain
Mountjoy Nov. 24

P8

Mountjoy

Through Prison bars
We see the stars
And the blessed Christmas moon

We pray them send
To every friend
Sweet freedom's kindest _____

1922

p9-p10

Letter written to Mr Cook regarding her dismissal from Alexandra College

Mountjoy Prison,

Dublin

Dec 29th 1922

Dear Mr Cook,

I have heard indirectly the decision of the council with regard to my post and am surprised that you have not written direct to me as you knew my address. I feel sure, however, that no discourtesy was intended. I also hear indirectly that members of the college staff have received the impression that I failed to keep my promise to inform the Council before undertaking public political work.

I cannot believe that either you or Miss White would be a party to a deliberate mean misrepresentation and feel confident that you will take steps as soon as College re-opens to make my position clear. I must ask you to circulate to the staff a copy of my letter to the council and the following note-

“Having promised to inform the Council of college before undertaking ‘premeditated public political work’ I wrote this letter without one days delay as soon as it became clear to me that activities in which I felt bound to take part could be so described, although I knew that confiding my intentions to a number of people hostile to the Republic, I would very likely be pre-empting my own arrest. I was further concerned to write in this way to the Council, (although this consideration was outside my promise) because I knew that secret political work on which I was engaged - the editing of ‘Freedom’ - might at any moment become known to the agents of the provisional government.

I am certain that Miss White will bear witness to the fact that I insisted on writing to the Council without delay and without any pressure from her or for Mr Guinness.

I have kept both the letter and the spirit of my promise to the Council scrupulously, and demand only that you should act with equally fairness to me”.

I shall be glad to have your assurance, when college has re-opened, that this note and my letter have been circulated to the staff. I would not trouble to justify myself against so mean a suspicion to any but people whose opinion I still respect.

I remain,

Yours very truly

Dorothy Macardle

p11-12

Dirge for the Dying Year

Farewell sad year, down in the clouded west
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Mountjoy Prison

Dec 31st 1922

P13-14

Earth Bound – list of stories

P15-16

A Fable for Extremists

An old inn in the south of Ireland was haunted by a ghost which used to pace up and down on the 1st floor. And when it was rebuilt the 1st floor was placed a couple of feet higher than in the original structure- one night two travellers sat until later over the fire in the coffee room and then one went upstairs to his bedroom on the 1st floor. Presently the other dozing by the fire, heard a shriek and his friend came running down in a state of terror. He said that there was a ghost in his bedroom, but a ghost of the most horrible kind the upper half of a man only, which went gliding legs dangling the lower half of a man was gliding and refusing to recognise the new structure, continues to walk on the floor which no longer exists.

Story related in the spirit of the _____ By Rev. E. Savel Hicks.

P17

An obituary article for Press – Very Urgent please.

P18

With Mary MacSwiney in Prison (not transcribed)

P19-22

Copy of letter from Miss MacSwiney to Ms Humphries

Wed Nov. 29th

(Transcribed by Dorothy Macardle)

My Dear Angels,

For that is indeed what you were to me for the past fortnight especially- angles of loving kindness and unceasing prayer and vigil. I can never thank you all enough. I could not write

yesterday - -was honestly too weak and am doing it now sub rosa, after getting the doctor off my hands. It won't be a long letter but I wish I could tell you all I feel. The one drop of regret was leaving you all behind, but b le dé (buíochas a bheith Dia), it won't be long.

You remember the story of the fall of Jericho. How the jews had to walk round 7 times praying and singing psalms.

Well on Sunday the women's procession walked round Mountjoy 7 times- they had done it once every night- saying the rosary- you did the singing and on Monday the Gates fell.

[...buíochas le dei go deo]

How is poor little Kathleen? It is a shame to have her there suffering like that.

Nell dear I am so sorry for bringing away the blankets. It was stupid. They would have been so much nicer for you, but we can send them back, I hope only for a short time.

Mme O.R has called twice but I have not been allowed to see her. I left special word this morning that she was to come up but the doctor had not arrived and the doctor had not arrived and the nurse in charge who got the message said she couldn't come after all that long journey over.

I was terribly done up on Monday night after the move between the joy and triumph and excitement and weakness you wouldn't give much for me. Then my internal organs went on a strike of their own evidently- I suppose on a principle of 'he who will not when he may - when he wills he will have [nay]'. Anyhow the result for about 20 hours was that I almost wished myself on hungerstrike again.

I am much better today b.le.dia and expect to join Annie soon. She came into see me for 12 mins on Monday night and promptly did a proper faint when she went out. But she is getting better fast b.le d. It is now that the excitement is over and that more effort is required of her that she will feel it. How are you all since? Write to me and tell me every bit about yourselves. Sighle, now that you no longer act as secretary in one sense, you can do it in another.

I wish I could thank you all as I should for being so good to me. But you know don't you? That vigil was wonderful. That anyhow is one, was one, act of Cosgraves which will stand to his credit. It meant so much to us all, that I am going to pray harder than ever for his conversion. I still believe too that Paddy has a streak of good in him somewhere though we did not see so much of it. Never mind! I would rather convert them than disgrace them, but judging from

the state of some letters which went out from Mountjoy they seem to be as much afraid of prayers as the devil is of Holy Water.

I was disappointed not to see that altar coming out- only the picture. It had to make way for my stretcher. I know it is up again now and that you are doing daily vigil instead of night but it will be more distracting, if less hard on you. I shall be with you in spirit. I have not yet heard who the eighteen new arrivals are. I suppose they were glad to get my cell free to pack a couple in there.

I am timing my rosaries with yours and hope to be able to continue it till I am well and ready to work again, by which time I hope you will be out. If you make any change, tell me. Last evening on Monday, I was with you from 6-9 listening to Ms Cogley and that glorious Ave Maria and the choir as well. I thank you all again a 1000 times.

Le ghrá mór

Máire

Remember me to all the nurses and Wardresses. They were very kind

Máire

P23-28

Citizens of the Republic

This is a difficult and bitter time. Evil, lies, and cruelty seem to have triumphed for a while.

We have had to give up our armed resistance, leaving usurping traitors in power, leaving brutalized men, armed and free to do their will, leaving thousands of prisoners, the best of our men and women, helpless in their power. We know this is not and cannot be the end - that 'other means must be found to guard the nations light'. But meanwhile we have to be passive, to do nothing, knowing how our prisoners suffer, know that the unarmed soldiers of the Republic are still being hunted in the hills; seeing the enemy making themselves stronger and more [secure] every day. That is very hard, very discouraging if we look only at the surface of things.

But if you look into it, it is not discouraging at all, whatever it all means?

What does it mean that these thousands of men and women are still in goal?

It means that thousands of men and women, those who have suffered the most wearying, nerve – wrecking, dispirited thing of all- confinement in vile conditions, semi-starvation, with

the nightly, hourly probability of torture- that those thousands are not weary, not nerve wrecked, not dispirited - that those thousands are undefeated and invincible in their allegiance still. I think of the prisons with The stolen flag flaunting over them not as [...] as the free state and the empire, but as strongholds of the Republic. It is right that the tricolor should fly over the goal in those prisons, the Republic lives. ~~[It is not a sign of _____ enemies strength but our weakness]~~

What does it mean again, that the Free State Ministers are outraging civilization, violating all democratic and constitutional means, behaving like a military despotism of the dark ages, passing bills ~~to imprison without trial~~ -to enable them to flog prisoners, and imprison their opponents to arrest on suspicion- to do all the things the Czars and tyrants of the dark ages had to do?

It means that they know their power is not founded on the peoples will. It means they have learnt that lesson, seen that truth at last. They know that Ireland is not with them- knows that there is an opposition against them unconquerable, thousands strong, know it will possible for them to administer the British empire in Ireland except by the old imperial methods- coercion, violence, brutality - it means that they know that in spite of all their effort to crush it- The Republic Lives.

What does it mean that so many of the prisoners are young boys and girls that the young sons of the Free State fathers are in revolt? It means that the youth is with us... that the future is for us.

And what does it mean that the President of the Republic has thought well, and the soldiers of the Republic. Men ready to sacrifice everything - have thought well to lay down their arms. Men who have the spirit of our army when they are desperate - when they know they are beaten do [...] what does this [...truce?] mean? It means that they are not beaten, that they do not despair. Civil war is a hideous thing: de Valera did all he could to save Ireland of that horror. Rory O Connor did all he could ... but England's Minister] wanted it and England's slaves and [no prisoner _____ not obeyed] and war was made on the Republic by Irish men. The enemies of the Republic wanted war, because they knew they could crush the Republic in no other way. They have tried it and they have not crushed the republic that way. It means that [...] soldiers Is hope.

The people, the poor confused, deceived, bewildered people, who believe Michael Collins great lie

They have seen at last that it was a lie. They have seen that the treaty is not freedom not independence nor a stepping stone to Independence, that is English Tyranny in a green coat. I believe the people of Ireland see that now and that soon, not yet perhaps, but in a little while, they will take courage again - the courage to declare openly what is hidden in their secret hearts - that they stand for freedom - for the Republic - nothing else. When that day comes, we shall have won. The blood of our martyrs is the men fallen in ___ and Rory & Liam and Erskine Childers almost [200 murdered men, has been needed to wash out Michael Collins lie - but the [blood lie has been given to that lie is dead].

If we look back on Ireland's history what lesson does it teach us for today? This lesson, this law as it seems to be, of Ireland's war. That not by military achievement, but by sacrifice, we have won whatever we have won.

Look back at 1916. Was that a military victory for the Republic? NO! Was it a victory for the Republic? Yes! Yes, because the sacrifices of those noble leaders woke Ireland and woke the world to a great truth- that Ireland had the right to be free.

Look back at the years of the terror. Was that a military victory for the I.R.A? Did they make the English suffer as they suffered themselves - horrible imprisonment, torture, executions...No. How then did they force England to a truce? But their sacrifices, their sufferings, but what they and all those faithful people of Ireland endured. England was so shamed, so execrated for her persecution of Ireland that she had to give it up and try a more cunning plan.

That cunning plan has succeeded, in a little way, for a little while. The agents of the Empire are able to imprison and flog and execute Republicans, to raid Republican houses, loot and destroy and to carry on the persecution England was forced for a little while to cease.

Could our men stand now unarmed, doing no violence, inflicting nothing, suffering everything....

The lesson of Irish history teaches us that it is thus Ireland will win.

I think those words of Terence MacSwiney were inspired... I think they were prophetic of our own time:

'Not to those who can inflict most but to those who can suffer most, victory will come. What is there left for us to do? To resist, to stand fearlessly by Sinn Fein. Ireland's salvation is in that-

The enemy will try to break us through our prisoners. We know our prisoners- we know that if we can endure half as well as they can all is well. The enemy will try to divide us- to sow disloyalty and dissension in our ranks. We know, I think now to laugh at that.

The Republican army now is Sinn Fein - every one of us – man, woman, child, belongs to it. Everyone must be as fearless and as loyal and enduring as the prisoners. As the men of the IRA. In a few days orders will come. The programme of Sinn Fein will be published. Everyone of us then will know what to do.

Time is with us. Truth is with us. when in time, the whole truth is known, the whole people of Ireland will be with us again. ~~I think we have [...] We have the wisest and best of leaders. The enemy knows that almost as well as we know it ourselves. The enemy is trying to get him, but they won't get him. The IRA will see to that. I think we have no need to lose heart... And if even if we do lose heart there is one thing we may be sure of. The prisoners never will.~~

P29-30

Miss MacSwiney's condition

Report from Mountjoy

Nov 22nd (19 day of hunger strike)

A discreditable attempt is being made with the assistance of the press, to deceive the public as to Miss MacSwiney's condition. This false impression has been fostered within this prison by well- tutored nurses from Marlborough St., all who perseveringly see 'no change' in their patient's condition, although to inexperienced eyes significant and perturbing changes are only too apparent. "She is feeling dreadfully cold", one of us said. "She is always cold", was the answer. She had a collapse about 4 o'C", another watcher reported. "Her usual morning weakness", was the reply. Since Saturday as a protest against the exclusion of her sister, Miss MacSwiney has refused the administration of doctors and nurses. We, her fellow- prisoners, are now her only attendants. Nevertheless, the night- nurse, who sits by the surgery fire, refusing even to fill the water bottles for Miss MacSwiney which we bring down, writes the medical reports. We have little doubt that they are false reports such as will be useful to the

Free State propagandists if they fall as low as did the English by spreading rumors that the patient is taking food, or as documentary evidence at an inquest.

We, Miss Mac Swiney's only attendants have carefully noted and compared our observations and wish to record them with all possible accuracy, avoiding exaggeration.

Her vitality during the first 14 or 15 days seemed to us remarkable, she conversed, read, and wrote letters and although her voice and movements grow faint each day and the periods in which she could exert herself shorter and the exhaustion which followed a more distressing, her mind was alert, cheerful and at peace. Since Saturday her agitation about her sister has [...] an acute change, especially observable at night, when the suffering so bravely concealed during the day is betrayed by pitiful [...] in sleep and by restlessness in the long hours while she lies awake. We can see she is struggling against extreme weakness. That anxiety about her sister is a consuming obsession. Her temperature is constantly sub normal. Her pulse is very weak. In the last couple of days, it has fallen as low as 63.

None of us have experience of nursing cases of hunger - strike or can say how long this starved suffering, exhausted body can retain life. In the case of a woman, we suppose that the end will come suddenly in one of their early morning collapses. When that crisis comes, we can do nothing, for we are pledged not even to [admin a stimulant to her]. We wait for her, daily, hourly, the opening of the gates, either of this prison, or of death.

(Signed)

Lili o' Brennan

Dorothy Macardle

Cecelia Gallagher

Brigid O' Mullane

