

MOUNTJOY
BY DOROTHY MACARDLE

The Hunger Strike
 Honor Murphy – The Debate
 The 6th
 Agnes
 The Doctor
 The Split- Development
 The Stopping of Letters
 The Sentries
 Absolution

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I thought the tide was turning in Ireland, those few swift days. That mood of intense pity, one with intense hope and pride that was the mood of Ireland before last July seemed to have revived again. Our work at 73 knew neither meal nor sleeping time. We painted posters, gathered processions, even I spoke with Maeve to white-faced crowds in the dark streets of evening from the ruins in O' Connell street, the fountain in James Street, where I once heard de Valera speak; the crowds that were charged and threatened and fired over by soldiers, but would not go. I rushed No. 16 of Freedom out in haste; the little paper has become the sea into which tumbles every rivulet of my thoughts and what peace it is at last, that those

turbulent, erratic torrents have found a sea. This was my thought about the time.

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Miss MacSwiney's danger and suffering [behind the stone and iron of Mountjoy] became an intolerable thought. To be doing anything for ten minutes seemed shameful. On Thursday, Maeve and Iseult and I spent hours on the floor in my sitting room painting posters; "Miss MacSwiney's 6th day of Hunger Strike in Mountjoy", "5 women on Hunger Strike in Mountjoy". In the afternoon, a cable came from Mrs Sheehy Skeffington, "Muriel ill. Conscious about Mary and Baby. Wire news at once". It was poor Mrs MacSwiney, who was in the United States. Maeve could not go to discover where little Moira was. I said, I would go to 23 Suffolk Street and find out. There, Lili O' Brennan, eagerly kind as ever, told me the best plan would be to go to Mrs Cathal Brugha, in Rathgar; she would know. She gave me [L.1.] for the cablegram, and I left. I

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went with a message then to the newspaper offices. After that, I ought to have called in at the printing press to see how Rose was getting on with the printing of No.16 and then straight to Mrs Cathal Brugha. But I did not do what I ought to have done. I was in a fatalistic drifting mood. Saturday would be Donald's birthday. I was not satisfied with the shade of the brown tie I had bought for him. He wanted the colour of dead leaf - it was not the colour of any leaf I had ever met. It was in my bag, it would not mean ten

minutes delay. I went to the poplin shop and changed it and walked toward Nassau Street then to get the tram to Rathgar.

So, it happened that I passed Suffolk Street and found a crowd gathered and looked down and saw

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military motor cars and lorries drawn up outside 23.

The big raid at last! I was dismayed; those 'captured documents', would be published. More Republican secrets in the enemies' hands. The women who worked there might be taken to Goal. I saw B standing silent in the crowd. 'Could one do anything to help,' I asked [her/him], 'by going in?'. 'I'll go', a girl standing by said. I emptied my pockets into my handbag and gave it to her to hold. 'There are documents they don't want taken', answered B. The Soldiers let me pass in and upstairs into Lili O Brennan's room. She and Miss Bermingham were sitting by the wall. Mrs Cogley was in another room, and Mrs Gallagher and two girls.

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The raiders were turning out all drawers reading everything. There were still important despatches in a drawer on the table, not far from the fire. I sat by that table writing. Lili sat between me and the fire: but a sentry stood watching me all the time. I had finished a long birthday letter to Donald and still had no chance. It was impossible. We were all under arrest, 'No one is allowed out'. Mrs Cogley thought she might persuade them of her innocence and be allowed to go. The officer half-promised she should be released. I also

demanded to be allowed to go. He asked my name and address. I gave the Dundalk address. He

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knew the Macardles and said he hoped to let me go. I gave Kathleen Devaney my warm scarf. She had no coat. And the officer said we should all be taken to Portobello first, and he decided to take us there. We were put into comfortable motor cars at the doors and driven away through the familiar lamp-lit streets. I had known, of course, that *Freedom* would bring my arrest, yet now it was inevitable that we were captives, powerless to escape, being taken to imprisonment that must last, at best, until the Republic is winning... months or years, maybe. I thought I would open the door and try to slip out; impossible, the second car was behind. So, we came to Portobello and sat in a circle in the guard-room

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there. The light of a curious lamp, like a lighthouse, on our faces, while sullen, rough-looking soldiers came in and out. The authorities were looking up our records, we supposed. A voice began shouting insults from the window to us. We complained to an officer. The man went away. Our Spirits were high, rather wild even, and the ruling passion strong in captivity. I related to the others the true story of the English Gunners who had to manage the guns for the Free State army at the Four Courts. It would be news, I thought, to the young soldier behind the lamp.

Not a word of explanation was

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given to any of us, then or afterwards. We were packed into the motor cars again and driven down Stephens Green and Grafton St.

Some thought we were being taken back to Suffolk Street. Others knew it was Mountjoy. I longed intensely to see one face of a friend; to let them know what was being done to me. I had the letter I had written to Donald, addressed, in my hand, and would have thrown it to be posted to any friend I might see. I was sure, quite sure, I told the others, that Maeve and her brave throng of Republican women would be either in O'Connell St or outside Mountjoy. It was

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just about the hour when they always met. I would see her and call out to her. I felt sure there would be a hundred hands to take the letter even – not impossibly, a rescue; we might slip out into the crowd and be hidden and get away.

But she was not in O'Connell Street. There was no sign of a friend, no sign of one Republican woman outside Mountjoy. Cecilia Gallagher recklessly slipped out of the car but was caught on the pavement again.

Those familiar gates, outside which I had stood so often in suspense and anguish for those within, opened before us and closed behind. We were Republican Prisoners of War.

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Mountjoy had been the center of all our thoughts as, two years ago, was Brixton Goal. Now the one desire was to see Miss MacSwiney; to know for ourselves how she was. After an interview with the Governor in the office, where we told our names and addresses and no more; some sat down, though not invited to do so- while the governor [wrote us down]. Lili, an old fellow worker and friend of his was not asked even that. We were led down long, dark corridors and across a yard, delivered into the hands of a matron and wardresses, perfunctorily searched and shown into a long bare cell. This was the hospital; we seven were to be kept here. Then began, among the wardresses, a quest for bedding and supper, and for us, gathered

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out on the landing, the questioning of what lay heavily on my heart. The women here were on hunger strike.

Must we, in loyalty, hunger strike too?

We discussed nothing but hunger striking all the morning. Iseult's horror of it as blasphemy against the body increased the horror of it which the ghastly history of Brixton had given me. I had been able, for weeks, to contemplate imprisonment serenely and had not felt it worthwhile to give up a little work and sleep at Roebuck to avoid arrest, but for these few days, I felt afraid, afraid that to be arrested then would make it

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necessary to do this terrible thing. Probably if we did it, they would let us die. Iseult had heard a description of

the pain...I was afraid to tell her I was afraid.

Lili was the first. I knew, when I knew her better, that she was bound to be. A little light, faery-like being; she is worn to a ghost of a faery by her burning faith and intense work; a gentle eager- hearted, loving woman. She would not urge it on any others, but she would do it herself. It would not be long for her; she was ill...

One or two were sturdily against it ...the rest waited for a lead. There were a dozen reasons against it. It was too late - six days

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too late. It would be useless now. We were none very strong. And I knew, knew clearly and without question, that I had no reason but fear of death and agony for not doing this thing. I knew it would be a service to the Republic; it was a thing that I could do. I had written and spoken of the ultimate sacrifice. Was all that unreal - was it only for the sacrifice of others that I was ready? I grew unutterably ashamed. And still, I was afraid. All my imagination knew of the long tale of Brixton took vivid life. I think I prayed to Terence MacSwiney, not to God. Then the pure thought of the Republic grew

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strong, strong enough to make it possible. I said I would hunger strike too.

Tessie, a pretty, apple-cheeked, dark-haired Kerry girl said she would do it too. I hated that she was scarcely more than a child, but nothing would dissuade her. She was brave. Two who were very delicate should have

been exempt. I wanted [three] to do it and not the rest. Others said it should be none or all. The thought of coercing any girl to that risk or suffering was horrible. Cecilia said then that we should not decide until the morning. We should take supper

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tonight. Tea and bread and butter were brought in, and they all took a little supper. For me, the hunger strike had begun. I could not eat or drink and had to pretend to. My throat felt contracted and dry. Seven beds were brought in and placed side by side. The long cell just had room for them. Candles were lit, and we were locked in. We took off our dresses and let down our hair. There was much high-spirited, jesting talk. I had hardly courage for it. The thought of what was coming frightened me. I lay in bed, a bed that was a punishment, surely and after a while, I slept. I dreamed all night that I was out driving among trees, but prison was before me in the dream, and hunger strike, and maybe death.

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Of course, daylight brought a little more courage and a little hope. I awoke earlier than usual while the others were still sleeping and lay looking at the white-washed walls with three iron doors and three iron shuttered peepholes, and the white ceiling curved over us in three folds. Three cells had been thrown into one to make the ward. Cecilia and Lili were whispering, discussing the hunger strike. My cowardly heart was telling me it was useless and would do more harm than

good. They can easily release her if she makes her protest alone; a crowd of women doing it will only stiffen them and make them ashamed to yield. It was a cowardly plea, and I

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hardly expressed it, even to myself. I would be able for the hunger strike, I thought. I was almost certain that, having begun, I would not give way. It is the beginning always that is difficult for me. But the peephole opposite my bed opened, and a sunny face looked in. "Sighle!" with a cry of recognition, Lili and others sprang out of bed and crowded about the hole. "How is she?", "How is Miss MacSwiney?", "How are you all?" Miss MacSwiney was wonderful still...Honor Murphy was very bad, and Mrs O Rahilly; their hunger strike was off. Mrs Humphries was very bad. "Mother is breaking down", Sighle said wretchedly, "but she won't come off unless I do". Miss MacSwiney was distressing herself terrible over them all, imploring and commanding them to

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give it up. She said, worrying about them had taken three days of life out of her. It was worse to her than anything else. It would affect her brain and they had no right to do it, no sufficient cause. "No, no, no," Sighle urged; we must not do it, not suggest it, it had been a mistake.

The cell doors were opened. Breakfast was brought in, and we drank tea, thankful that we had announced no

decision. Lili saw Miss MacSwiney then, and that determined us finally not to hunger strike.

I confer, it was a lightening of the heart to me. I looked forward to imprisonment contentedly; a new

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experience, a little hardship, confinement, but nothing to fear. One would be able to write and read.

The great eagerness was to see the other prisoners and, above all, Miss MacSwiney. The rest were at exercise. Mrs Humphries and Sighle, Rita Farrelly, Mme O Rahilly and Brigid O'Mullane. Mrs O' Rahilly told me the story of the arrests as we walked around the dusty grass patch under the blind grey prison walls.

Mrs Cogley and I still half expected to be released, and the others made me learn a score of urgent messages by heart.

Sighle, brave and laughing, supple and straight of body as a boy, began playing vigorous games, but she had been six days on hunger strikes and had to give up.

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I delighted in her from the first; her frail blue eyes and coils of beautiful hair, and friendly, radiant smile and sincere manner. Brigid O' Mullane and Moire Mc Kee had been brought in after us. We had one gay glimpse of them in the passages last night, and were quite happy and at home.

I have not made up my mind about Brigid O' Mullane. I remember her during the Bombardment in those memorable of days when I was working with Mr Childers, and we wanted recruits. He told me with a

considering look that she had volunteered to help but ...he said, half smiling...only because she supposed the work had become dangerous now. This attitude startled us. She has, certainly, what Terence MacSwiney's

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comrades used to call a "die for Ireland face"; transparent, colorless, with thin keen features, dark eyes, a high smooth forehead, and brushed back from it; a short, dark mane of glossy hair. Her movements are light and decisive; soldierly indeed. She is a characteristic type, one of the finest in many aspects of the Young Ireland of our time. Moira; Dick Mc Kee's sister is of another type; small, dark, quiet, sympathetic, gentle and shy, with a breath-taking record of adventurous secret service to her credit, known only to a few.

We talked to Honor Murphy first through the peephole of her cell, then

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doors were opened, and we went in. She had been here a month before the others, quite alone since her arrest. When the printing press was destroyed; "All is lost, even Honor", Frank Gallagher said that day. She had made great friends with her gaolers it seemed having no resentment against those who betrayed the Republic, and been petted and given a kitten and lived in great serenity. The Hunger strike had made her alarmingly ill, and still, she was too weak to move out of bed. Laughingly, she told us how all the days of the

hunger strike she and Sheila had talked about nothing except food. It was hard always to think of Honor in prison. I had met her too, working with Erskine Childers and heard his wondering praise of her, 'such a splendid little girl'. I hated it at the time that she was continually riding under fire. Such

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a fair pretty, dreamy girl; destined, you would think, less for wars and politics than for some delicate romance. It was comforting to find her contented here. Yet, it seems a surrender of spirit, somehow, to become contented in a goal.

Miss MacSwiney sent down for Cecilia Gallagher, and all was quiet in our cell while we waited for her return. She came down after a little while and told us. It was the seventh day of Miss MacSwiney's hunger strike. She was weak but not suffering too much, vividly interested in everything, quite serene. It was wonderful news. What this woman was doing seemed almost terrible in its splendor to me.

Aside note: Crowded in the passage of the recreation ground, I saw a group of the others, evidently full of distress. Saw them lead away Rita Farrelly, sobbing wildly. Saw Cosgrove, the Governor, looking after her in sullen distress. He had told her that her father was dead. She did not know that he was ill. She had gone home on seven days parole.

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Mrs Humphries, wise and motherly and simple to us from the first, summoned us upstairs to say the rosary

outside Miss MacSwiney's cell. After it, we went in one by one. She was lying on her side, among white blankets and pillows, and looked up smiling and spoke in a voice less faint than I had feared.

I felt almost sure, then, that it would not be for long.

Prison dinner; a plate of rice, which for want of spoons and from sheer merriment, some lapped up with their tongues; and tea, very weak with thick bread and butter, made a hungry day. At bedtime, we demanded and were given milk. I wrote to Donald.

Davy and Tessie, our lightest

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hearted and youngest of us made laughter with foolery and stories and Irish dances. But outside continually there were raucous shouts from sentries and sharp challenges and, just outside the window, startling shots. To these sounds, we went to bed, half undressed, and sleep closed our first prison day.

Saturday 11th Nov

'The priest will be here at 9.30 to hear confession', the wardress who wakened us said. Then began a discussion, grave and frivolous. What was to be done? Absolution would be refused, we knew; except on the unthinkable condition of promising to support the Bishops' pastoral and do nothing to oppose the provisional government.

I had an impious desire to engage the priest in a political discussion and ask him

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four or five questions, which I felt quite sure would be unanswerable; but even a heretic could not use the confessional for a prank. However, the others were longing to go to Communion and went to the Chapel. They came back crest-fallen and bitter. Cecilia had gone in first. The priest had heard her confession and then, 'Now my child, I have to ask you certain questions', on account of her being here. Outside, she would not have been asked. She protested and finally answered, not to his satisfaction, and he would not absolve her. She reported, and the rest did not go in. 'The four walls of Mountjoy keep us from absolution', as Lucy said. To a heretic, this keeping of the keys seems strange.

As the rest walked about our high-walled recreation ground, the [whitehaired] Governor of the prison came towards us, that uniform, Pearse's

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desecrated uniform is more repellant here than ever Khaki could have been. We turned away. But I heard my name called and crossed to him. The others, startled, looked after, certain it meant release. 'No', he said, 'It is Mme O Rahilly I want'. She was in the chapel. He waited for her. We did not see her again. She was released, but for fear I suppose of her taking out messages, was not allowed to come near us. I thought I had done so little, so miserably little for the Republic, that my turn would come very soon; a half-ignominious release.

I wanted to be writing; the journalist habit was on me, and it was almost a physical deprivation now to have

no channel for the outflow of one's thoughts. I hoped *Freedom* was being carried on, we had all prepared
Fortunately [we caught the editor's arrest].

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We were aching for a sign from the outer world. How had our friends heard of our arrest? Who would write? When would we be sent nightgowns, brushes and combs? I knew it was possible that no one had heard of me until Friday, when I should have lectured in College. Had my pupils guessed? The dear 'Pfeiffists' would be shocked, agitated. Would they be a little indignant, I wondered? Would it, even a very little, make them think about the Republic? If it did, it might be almost worthwhile. They are worth winning for Ireland; those sweet-spirited intellectual girls. I was forbidden, by my promise to the college, to win them through my teaching or discussion. It would be good to win them even a little way through this.

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Sat 11th Nov

Letters came! One for me from Lilian Dalton, so heartfelt & loving and sorry; a good letter to get. My Pfeiffists are desolate, she says. Poor Helga; she will really care. She has been afraid to think about the Republic because of her protestant mother. Will she gain courage to think about it now?

It was childhood again, the hour in the recreation ground, running and crying out and playing blind-mans-buff. We who had fancied the life of the Republic hung on our wit and labour, utterly irresponsible now helpless, though it should perish. Like childhood too,

the scene in the cell when we found great untidy
parcels lying on our beds; linen, sponges, pencils;
hurriedly gathered together

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and rushed up to the gate by our friends. There was no
pretence at restraining our excitement and delight.

The rosary again, and a brief glimpse of Miss
MacSwiney, and then it was five o'clock.

At five o'clock, the comical little Deputy Governor
required we should be locked into our cells. This, it
appeared, was not political treatment. Brigid O'
Mullane, a Commandant of Cuman na mBan to the last
hair in her head, determined that we must protest; the
cell doors must be open until nine o' C.

Protest could take only one form; we would refuse to
leave the landing, and Paudeen would send for soldiers
and have us dragged forcibly to our cells. This had
already been done to Sighle once. To some of the
young and war-like spirits

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Sat 11th Nov

the thought seemed exhilarating. To my
unadventurous spirit, it was repellant in the extreme.
Paudeen arrived before the question had been settled.
Lili O Brennan had already by consent, which so swiftly
in little communities recognises character, been
appointed our spokeswoman. She and Brigid went
forward to interview the blustering little man.
He had to await an answer from Portobello - it should
come in a few days. Some wanted to refuse to retire.
Others thought it would be more reasonable to wait. I

suggested an ultimatum; an answer by Monday, or we would be free, and this was put to the vote. Patience had the majority, and we retired; 'Suffolk Street' covered, I felt sure, with the contempt of the warrior sect.

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We were all propagandists in cell '∞' Our natural medium, thought and word. The four above, Mrs Humphries, Sighle, Brigid and Rita Farrelly were women of deeds. One already the heroine of a famous fight, champions of Cuman na mBan. There would inevitably be a difference of attitude...a little scorn. But the challenging, reckless spirit and boyish beauty of those girls is very lovable; however they frown on us. Aside: Sighle, 'You never think of consequences.' Someone had actually got a newspaper; we opened it, and a displayed heading shocked us into speechless dismay. Erskine Childers has been arrested. To our hopes of saving the Republic, it is the worst blow except one that could be given. To Lili Brennan, it is the

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worst personal blow. Erskine Childers is the most brilliant, and one of the most noble and faithful champions Ireland has; and the love that those who know him have for him is greater even than the hatred the enemies of Ireland have for him. To me, the little time I worked with him is the brightest, grandest memory I have. His unashamed dependence, his mole-

like drudgery, his quick, ardent, wondering praise like a poets of all the light-hearted helpers who went and came and under it all, the brilliant power and utter fearlessness and fine nobility of the man...to be proud of the Republic is to be glad of him. He has been arrested, taken alive because a dairymaid clung to him, and the attackers were able to take his gun. God save him for Ireland! His peril is very great.

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My companions, Lili especially, are old campaigners and know how to live through such times as these. There was very little said about the news, though Lili was his secretary, and he is her leader and hero and most precious friend. She and Nóinín and Davy sat round one of the little tables with a candle, playing cards. Lili's face in the candlelight had a strange, tense sweetness; it played radiantly on Nóinín's golden hair. They are rare, fine, charming people, these prisoners of war.

Before bedtime, Nóinín began singing an old, romantic Spanish song. I like her singing better here even than on the public stage; the folk song quality, the touch of impersonation, the clear

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Sat 11th Nov

value of the words gives its subtleties, which are not lost in a prison cell. We are thanking our stars, unkindly, that she was captured and not released. Davy, who has the pale, grave face and sleek head of a Madonna is disclosing a droll delicious wit; packs of laughter rang out in answer to her maledictions, "That

you may have a son a Bishop”, and her retort, “I don’t care a Paudeen!”

I sat in the farthest corner with another candle stump, making new words to the, “Shan Bhan Bhocht”, which when written were hailed with delight but criticised as being too severe. “Then what will the traitors do”, was objected to. It was too harsh...too harsh for our gaolers, maybe!

Sun 12th Nov

The others got up in the dark and went to the chapel for early mass. When they came in, they were going to say the rosary outside Miss MacSwiney’s cell, and half asleep, I tumbled out of bed and knelt with them. She is worse, Mrs Humphries told us, she had a restless night. The thought of slow, slow suffering and the ghastly withering of life to which she was deliberately going; of the hideous miracle which had turned Ireland’s passionate gratitude and pity for her name into the wicked hatred that could let her die. It was all a thought, an atmosphere black and heavy and stifling. It made one’s heart feel strained to do impossible things. It was cold, and I had hardly any food for three days, so it was not strange that halfway through the rosary, the world receded from me giddily in a grey mist, and I fell into somebody’s arms. I was quite contented to be on the floor, in half oblivion, but I could not make my voice

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Sun 12th Nov

heard, and they lifted me and brought me downstairs, and a nurse laid me on my bed and brought me a hot

water bottle and a little cup of tea, tea in a ~~china~~ cup. I was not ill and lay there all the morning in a restful, contented frame of mind. The pang of imagination about Miss MacSwiney had exhausted itself; I suppose I was not troubling about her. A loveable little kitten visited me. They say he is a little convict. We have christened him Rory Beg.

My own things, my friends and possessions, my book wanting to be published and my new play waiting to be produced, and the delightfulness of my fireside and my big windows looking over Stephens Green, all these were vivid to my mind and had a new preciousness to my heart. Leaving prison, going home to all that would be very wonderful. I had always known I had more than my share of the

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pleasantest things of life and the only danger was forgetting the value of them. Prison would wake one to the pleasure of life again- make it all fresh – “Herrlich, wie am ersten Tag!”

Lily, too was unwell and Davy, and the Doctor came. Poor man, he is afraid to be human, afraid to be concerned and kind as a doctor talking to his patient would naturally be. He forces himself to keep an air of indifference as who should say, ‘remember, although we do our duty to you, you and your ailments are nothing to us’. He is afraid of his government, afraid for his position, afraid to be his manliest and best self. It is the same with the wardresses here. What a vile, craven slavery of the soul!

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Sun 12th Nov

Our food is carried into us by convict women ['locals']. They are [humourously] to be called. The poor old soul is broken, a shambling body and a distorted, repellant visage, continually twisting with repressed tears. Nónín, who wins everyone's confidence by her sweet, serious interest and gentle manner, heard her story. She had been sentenced for receiving stolen property. She had not known it was stolen, she said. She had seven more months to serve, 'Pray for me that I'll be with my children for Xmas', she said, weeping again and again. The thought of Xmas in prison seemed to terrify her. Agnes is very different, a younger woman; square set, dark-eyed, well able for all the chances and mischances of life, not afraid to fire us sly, friendly glances and run into us with stolen sugar or eggs. Her tales; they

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are all, if you'd credit their [raucous, amusing, innocence], is that she is sentenced for owing £5 for board and lodging. Righteous indignation arose in me. 'Outrageous!', I said, 'It's more scandalous to imprison people for poverty than imprison them for being Republicans.' This sentiment appealed to her; it seems - she sidled into me at tea time with another stolen egg. I would have no scruples about [acting] as [receivers] of stolen property here; the property of the people who have stolen days and nights of my life - but unhappily, the eggs are stale. A wardress told us afterwards that this Agnes is mal-adventurous. Her plan of life is to take first-class lodgings, get credit as a

university student and instead of paying her rent, do a term in goal! There is something that

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one begins to sympathise with in such dealings; such dealings with a world that puts honest folk in prison for telling the truth. She is more pleasing to her maker, I feel sure, in her fearlessness than the prison Doctor or Pauden O' Keefe.

Our three windows; high and barred, the lower panes muffed; can be reached by standing on the head rail of the beds. There is an element of risk in this; men prisoners have been shot for doing no less. Intense excitement was caused this morning when somebody, peering out over the muffed glass, whispered ecstatically that she could see the men out in the compound [...] the men of the Four Courts who have been shut away for

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months. She recognised Maurice. It must be 'B Wing'! Frank Gallagher was there, one of the most valiant and masterly young writers and fighters of the Republic, 'a man of gold', Erskine Childers called him. They are splendid friends. Cecilia and he had been married just a month or two before the bombardment, and before the first wonder of their romance was over, his arrest had come. She climbed on her bed rail and clung to the window sash looking through the clear glass, reckless of the sentries and their guns. She cried out and waved her hand, and came down. Frank was there. He had

seen her. It must have been the first he knew of her imprisonment, and turned white, and waved his hand and gone quickly in.

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We heard the men singing before bedtime; evidently a Sunday night concert. When they stopped, we stood up and sang, answering them. Nóinín, leading with her rich, glorious voice. We sang, "The Soldier's Song".

ASIDE: Rory O'Connor is there; the quiet, dark, daring man who achieved such wonderful rescues and engineering feats. Liam mellows; the fair young, and thoughtful man whose brain is full of beautiful, workable schemes; next to De Valera and Childers, perhaps the noblest man Ireland has. And Sean, the dear young boy. Sean MacBride and Robert Barton, T.D is here. We have to be thankful that these men, the hope of the Republic, are safe in Gaol.

Mon 13th Nov

We are beginning now to [regulate] the community of seven and appoint [...] This is my day for cleaning the cell. An urgent discussion was held with the others about the action to be taken with regard to being locked in at five o' c today. Two spokeswomen, Brigid and Lili. If he offered to negotiate, they were to use their discretion. If he refused, our protest was to be made. We watched him

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gesticulating in his funny, bullying way, bringing his arm down with a lurch of his whole [...] body and wag of his head and our spokeswomen came back to report. He had given his word of honour that if we went back to our cells, we would not regret it. He had a message from Portobello. We consented to retire, and they went back with our answer, and then Lili came to us with the result. Cell doors would, in future, be open from breakfast time until 9 pm, and continual access to the recreation ground would be arranged. I was thankful it had ended without a tussle with the Free State soldiers. Some of the others; the three girls upstairs felt, I think, that it was a little shameful to have averted a fight.

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Aside: Miss MacSwiney kept me when I went in, troubled about my faint yesterday. She had not recognised me on Friday, she said, but she remembered now sitting by my fire in 73. She is full of concern about us; our rights, our food it makes her pain harder to see.

We in Suffolk Street were not in a militant mood. We had a heart for nothing, care for nothing else but Miss MacSwiney, whose weakness was becoming worse and worse, and the newspapers were still saying, 'no change is reported in her condition', and no sign came from the world that anyone cared. Lili said we must send out a report to our own D.P., and she and I set to work, amid respectful silence, to draw up appeals. All the anxiety and shame, and pity that has been consuming me went into mine so that when I had

finished it, I was tired. They all wanted it until they heard Lili's, which was stronger and simple, Hers, they said, made one long to something;

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mine made them want to cry. I agreed, but the people upstairs took both. They could not decide.

To my dismay afterwards they came and told me they had shown the letters to Miss MacSwiney. It appalled me to think she had read all that I had written, and did not dare to go near her all day.

Dad has written suggesting that my flat should be given up. It has upset me too much. One should not be so desperately attached to places. It is weak; but not to have any rooms to go home to - it is an utterly desolating thought. I wrote to dad but did not send the letter. It was too violent.

Tues 14th Nov

Miss MacSwiney's [...] as that she wanted my letter sent with certain passages from Lili's inserted. With labour and irritation; I accomplished this distracting task, and the letter was sent out, under-ground. We had little hope that our Director of Publicity would manage to get it into the public press.

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Tues 14th Nov

Inaction is becoming unbearable; that this suffering should go on, hours after and nothing be done, day and night. We ask one another, is there nothing that we can do? Fantastical schemes are proposed and turned over, and their utter impotence shown. I know

what the old phrase means now, to be eating one's heart.

A paper came - Monday's! Erskine Childers is being tried ...a trick...by his...most venomous enemies in a secret court. We are terribly afraid.

There was a hateful statement in the paper by Cosgrove about Miss MacSwiney. It hurt her, they said.

It maddened me. I wrote an answer to it, which we sent out to the D.P. I sent him, too, a little poem, 'The Pilgrim', for *Freedom*. Lili brought a copy to Miss MacSwiney, and she wanted to keep it.

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The Pilgrim

*Unhesitant towards the dark unknown,
Her soul travels alone,
Made swift by pity, omnipotent by faith;
And [sure / some], the holy dead,
Who gave their world for Ireland, lean above
That agony and shed
Their splendour upon her spirit,
Because her love
It is like to theirs
But time, in whose name
She dies, by whose sons she is
Flung to [wrath/death]
Bows down her head,
Broken with bitter shame.*

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Wed 15th Nov

A new recreation ground has been prepared for us. A circular grass plot with three narrow circular stone

paths; so narrow that if two walk side by side, one keeps slipping down. Here we walk round, slipping down, round and round and round in a caged monotony; it is a hateful place. Just over the wall is the canal. Our continued question is; are there sentries outside? There is a little hollow turret in the wall, but a sentry is always there.

I walked round and round with Ms Humphries, trying to analyse the curious scruples which we all know we share about the ethics of prison life. Why is it that we do not send out for every comfort we can devise and make life as

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Wed 15th Nov

livable as may be here? We do send out for food and clothing, but not for overly luxurious things. Ms Humphries scruple is religious; this is an opportunity for mortifying the flesh, which we should thankfully accept. I have no belief at all in self-denial as a virtue for its own sake. I think my scruple must be political. It would make things easier for our gaolers to make them easier for ourselves – it seems illogical, but the instinct is strong. Still, a certain amount of civilization I will make.

Read that Ms MacSwiney has been arrested in Washington for demonstrating for Mary MacSwiney's release.ⁱ

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Wed 15th Nov

Our precious Nóinín was orderly for the day. When we came into dinner; we found a table set that made us forget every trouble in pure laughter - apples on a

polished tin lid, serviettes of pleated newspaper, illustrated menu cards ⁱⁱ describing the prison dinner in decorative French. It was as jolly a festival as I have ever enjoyed.

‘A clergyman wishes to see Miss McArdle’, a wardress announced and followed by excited and mirthful benedictions. I went to the surgery, where a tall person introduced himself to me as Mr Greer. I thought he had come in hope of winning my soul, so hastened to assure him that I was charmed to

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meet him, although not a member of his church. He had been sent by my pupil, Peggie, who is his niece. The innocent child had entrusted him with confidential notes for me, and he had left them all with the censor! I hope she will talk to him as he deserves.

We discussed the political situation with much politeness. He enquired whether there was no way of getting me out. I could promise to remain neutral, he supposed? I explained that it would not be possible to be free and refrain from working for the Republic. He looked at me in sad bewilderment and said goodbye. He will think of me as a ‘fanatic’ or ‘idealist’, I suppose - unhappy man!

ASIDE: I have always heard that prisoners confined and [...] to hate one another- and although we seven are good friends now, I see how that would come. Never from early in the morning until too late at night is there silence. One hates people for talking, hates their voices, also. [...] complete waste of time...in the hope of

anything ... doom of hated and of getting [...] reading and writing done, I have asked for rules of silence, and we have made these for a few hours each day. Cecilia is hard to quiet!

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Wed 15th Nov

Honor has become a problem. Discussed among us with grave faces and in hushed tones. She has told us that she will not work for the Republic any more. Cecilia says that she has been dubious all the time, and Frank used to solve her doubts. Cecilia tries very hard, discussing patiently with her the whole story of this war. My thought was that Honor had turned pacifist; she hated killing, she said. Nothing would be easier to understand. But it was not that our war before the truce she still thoroughly approves. The Bishop pastoral has shaken her; their assumption that killing by Republicans is murder while murder by Free Staters is 'authorized', legitimate war.

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She refused to sign our statement about Ms MacSwiney because she thinks her justly imprisoned; wrong to hunger strike. Yet this astonishing girl endured three days hunger strike in support of her. We are all deeply troubled. We like Honor and have admired her courageous devotion. It is miserable to see her losing her faith. Miss MacSwiney is sad about it too.

The evening paper came, and our statement was in it at full length. ⁱⁱⁱ It could not but help, we were sure, and the joy of this made it seem a kind act of

providence that had sent us here. I for one was altogether glad.

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Wed 15th Nov

To have succeeded even in this little thing gave us an elation of hope. Nóinín suggested we should sing for Miss MacSwiney and chose hymns and traditional Irish songs and marshalled us on the stairs. The bell of the angelus was chosen, and a sweet, childish song about Bernadette. The last verse was forgotten, and I have to invent words. When we were ready, Nóinín herself sang angelically; the music seemed to fill the prison and melt away the walls. There was nothing in the universe but that wild, old sorrowful Irish music and the sacrifice going on in that little cell; the latest of a million martyrdoms.

We heard shots outside this morning and coarse laughter. Davy climbed up to the window and came down with a white face. The soldiers had shot a cat, and it was in agonies on the grass.

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Thurs 16th Nov

Night was hideous, with the soldiers shouting and shooting in the yard. Agnes came in at breakfast time and whispered to me that one of the men convicts had been shot. His eye was gone. He had looked out of the window of his cell.

From the cells below, a horrible banging and beating on an iron door has gone on this morning. We do not hear it anymore. The prisoner has gone out of her mind. She has been taken to the asylum today. She is 19 years old. At exercise time, Rita Farrelly came back,

all in black, and instantly a group was round her greedy for news; *Freedom*, is going still, she

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Thurs 16th Nov

told me. Somebody had done well! There has been a raid on 73. She does not know how much damage was done. ~~Dad is going to keep on my flat for me...~~

I suppose my files of *Poblacht* and *Freedom* are gone again. She pulled the last issue of *Poblacht* out of her pocket. It was like water to thirsting men. Our first chance of Republican news. But the news was horrible. Jo Clarke, who stocked *Freedom* for us and *Poblacht*, has been taken and tortured in Wellington Barracks to make him give up the editors and printers names. The account of his torture is hideous, sickening to read. Erskine Childers is in Portobello. His enemies are venomous. It is a frightening thought, that gentle, chivalrous man.

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Maeve and all her throng of women are working ceaselessly outside. I knew she would be. It is good to know that we have her. Every night at eight o' Clock; they march, singing and praying all-round the goal. It is a splendidly reassuring thought. If I had the Catholic faith in prayer, I should have hope, but I have very little now.

Ms MacSwiney is wearing her strength away now with anxiety for Erskine Childers. It has made her sleepless and restless, and she grows very weak.

Plays...and my book; everything burnt. I had published nothing. All my work. It was a shattering thing to hear. It was well I had no one of my own there; I would have cried out...and cried. It is true, I know that courage creates courage. I clung to a vivid memory of Mrs [Schheld] when she stood serenely

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watching the wrecking of Cullenswood House. It made this not so overwhelming. And I remembered that allegiance to the Republic had cost me nothing, nothing at all. This was my baptism, perhaps. I had to learn to be an Irish Republican. What sort of a loss is this, compared to the loss of a brother. I felt ashamed, and then it became a little enough thing. I was quite recovered by the time I went into Miss MacSwiney and gave her Maeve's message, and told her quite light-heartedly about the raid. But she is too wise and too understanding to be deceived; 'Shame, shame!', she said vehemently. 'Shame to burn your manuscripts! Shame! Furniture, other things, I would not mind [....] Her distress greater my own.

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Thurs 16th Nov

'It is nothing to be very sad about', I said, and convinced myself, it has hardly troubled me since, except in little moments. My Rhythm book; I can't write the Rhythm book again. It was studying and lecturing on English poetry that made it possible. For eight years, I have been testing my theory and choosing quotations for it, and when I finished the

draft of it in June, I destroyed every scrap of my rough work. I must put it out of my head.

All the time that I have been here; no one has sent me pen or paper or ink. The hunger to be writing is on me, these long, slow days, and I have to write this in pencil on

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little miserable borrowed scraps. I have written to Iseult begging for my writing case and supplies of manuscript paper. I shall be better able for prison when that comes. It is strange that she has not sent it yet. It will surely come tomorrow. Then I need not be idle anymore. A despatch box came today full of luxurious toilet things chosen by Iseult. Cream and expensive powder, eau de cologne and perfumed soap. It made one feel a woman and not a mere prisoner and was a great delight.

But what I am starving, for now, is paper and ink. I could write the little play again from memory, I hope if it came in time.

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Thurs 16th Nov

After many futile efforts to put our mind to it; we succeeded in holding a debate tonight.

It was planned partly for the benefit of poor Honor Murphy in the hope of clearing for her, her confused and wavering thoughts. The subject was, "That the P.Q, being the legitimate [gaol] of the country - armed opposition to it is justly punishable by imprisonment". Cecilia, against her convictions, made out a case rather cleverly for the P.Q. Honor, in spite of her support of

them, made so poor a case that we could less than ever understand her change. Lili and I spoke against the motion. Lili, briefly and very well. I, at such length, giving the history of events since Dec. last, that the chairman cut me short. Of course, the [negative] won.

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Fri 17th Nov

The young Irelanders upstairs decided to make leaflets and give them to the guards. This has been tried once and discovered, and Paudeen's arrangement is that if it is done again, all parcels and letters and paper will be stopped. Letters stopped! What a wilderness of anxieties this would be. Parcels stopped would mean hunger that could be endured but no writing paper; no occupation, no chance of keeping this journal or writing the play; to go out with nothing made, nothing learned. The others are gallantly indifferent about this. I am ashamed to oppose their plan, though I know it is useless. But it does not seem to me worthwhile. Will I ever be fit to be an Irish Republican at all?

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Prisoners' Families

I think there are all types of friends and relatives attached to us seven. The first crop of letters were mostly from shocked Free State relations and were [...], obviously for the benefit of the censor with ~~remarks~~ expressions of confidence in the Government which has put us in goal - a little trying to read- and careful disassociation from our crimes. Poor Davy was reduced to tears and dreadful misery by a letter threatening that if she did not sign the form and come out, her mother's death would be on her; a vilely mean and

cruel form of coercion. I would not encourage poor Davy even to apply for parole.

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Fri 17th Nov

Knowing that even among people with no little comprehension of honour, she would be tormented with persuasions to break it. And Davy would make no excuses for herself about [...] she has the clear, simple truthfulness which was the fundamental cause of the anti-treaty position.

Lili has good republican friends who have known prison themselves and are clever about the little things, which have so much more value than the big. They send her parcels containing what she has been wanting, and write her letters which neither belittle nor magnify her misfortune, and show entire sympathy with her own aspirations and indignations and fears.

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I too, have good friends, but not of the type most helpful to a prisoner of war. My Republican friends are few, and they are so responsible and anxious and busy about vital things that is only odd, hasty thoughts they can spare for me. Dad is solicitous and generous, but has no imagination for my needs, has a perverse pleasure in writing to tell me that Republicans are deserting the cause. He wrote me one lie about Erskine Childers for which I hated him with a volcanic hatred for twenty-four hours.

Mother is much more understanding, but maddens me with suggestions that all I want for Ireland is peace.

She who knows nothing and cares

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Fri 17th Nov

nothing for the Republic; knows nothing of what peace would mean, desires only the surrender of all that I would be imprisoned for life to save. How childish it is to let the sayings of people so utterly ignorant shake one's peace of mind! But for all that, she writes kind and sympathetic letters, and this is rather wonderful and she sends me delightful presents of the right things.

Jack has not written at all. It is impossible not to feel there is an end of all friendship with people who do not write; for it can only mean that they are bigoted by Anti-Republican, or indifferent to me, or afraid. With Jack, I suppose it is a little of all. He is fine

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and I long for him to be happy, but how can we be friends?

Mona is full of thought and kindness, but writes with a queer constraint as if she were making experiments in style. Donald's letters are good; his talk, cheerful and frank, and vivid; and with real sympathy not over-expressed. But all their letters are void of all reference to the only things I really care about now; the fight for the Republic, Miss MacSwiney, and the fight for Erskine Childers life. Whether it is want of understanding or want of sympathy or respect for the censor, I cannot guess. It makes all their letters seem little false.

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Fri 17th Nov

Nóinín has preoccupied friends, who being on the run and busy, cannot write to her, and she is desolate. And she has other ex-prisoner friends who write delightfully and send her apple tarts and trifles and chickens roasted at home. Receiving presents give us a childish joy.

The ideal Prisoner family is I suppose; first heart-soul Republican, therefore a little proud of its prisoner; second, a little non-political and domestic, therefore able to attend to the minor comfort of life and third; full of the affectionate clan spirit that takes the care of the prisoner as a pleasant duty and all good qualities of imagination, heart and brain contribute to the writing of letters which give wings to the prisoner's day.

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Friday (cont.)

Mrs Humphreys warned us this morning that Miss MacSwiney was getting worse. She had three collapses between 4 and 6 am. A priest visited her but told her he would not give her absolution.

We got yesterday's paper; a [d...tion] has gone to the government. Her release is expected. It was a lifting of dread, a dawn of hope, but we could not be sure. She hardly expects herself to be released and is troubled this evening. "It will be such a disgrace to Ireland if they let me die. What I want is that they should refuse on the 6th to take the oath. I would die", she said, "to prevent one Irishman from taking that oath on the 6th". If she dies before the 6th; I wonder will it make one of these renegades ashamed?

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Fri 17th Nov

The evening paper was smuggled to us. It contained awful news. Four boys have been captured and secretly tried and executed, "for illegal possession of a revolver". Killed without even their parents being told. James Fisher, Peter Cassidy, Richard Twohig, John Gaffney.

The horror of this thing done is intensified by the ominous significance for what is to come. Erskine Childers was in, "illegal possession of revolver". He is being tried in Portobello Barracks today.

To make war on man with artillery, capture them then and execute them for possession of a revolver. What an appalling degradation of war.

"The government has no intention", the paper said "of releasing Miss MacSwiney". The paper cannot be kept from her. She insists on

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knowing everything. There is no cheating that powerful will. She had promised us a list of her favourite songs and sent them down to us. All varieties were named; 'The Wests' Awake' – [ifusher] - 'Clare's Dragoons' - 'My Old Kentucky Home Goodnight' and she had written at the bottom of the page, "Don't shirk the jolly ones". We tried to sing the jolly ones, but it was hard for Nónín. Desperation and dread beyond expression were on us when we were locked into our cells. We were afraid for Mary MacSwiney, afraid for Erskine Childers, afraid for Ireland. Cecilia tried to hearten us, but

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Fri 17th Nov

her plan was pure schoolboy pranks and fooling, not good enough to make one forget. Davy and Tessie were caught into it. Lili gallantly pretended to be. I was so wretched, and my wretchedness so longed for peace and gentleness and music that I could not even pretend. When prayer time came, and they were quiet, I tried to pray. Then outside the window, a wild outcry began; you could not tell whether it was from the yard or the guard room or from B. Wing.

It seemed as if hundreds of voices, not human, were raised in a savage, triumphant- howling. It swelled into yells and sank to a grumble. It made me think of bloodhounds tearing a human victim in a Grand Guignol play. It made me remember the descriptions of the pogroms

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which Miss McSwiney gave me in Belfast. I remembered rumours that had come out to us from this prison. When Teeling and other infamous Free State soldiers ran amok in the basement cell. The howling grew hideous, and my senses were pierced with long shrieks of frantic terror and pain. We looked at one another; the others were exerting fierce control. We kept silence, trying to guess where it came from, but it was no use. I could not help trembling, and they were angry with me. "Pray", Lili said and we fell on our knees. The others said the rosary. I prayed for quiet to fall on those savage spirits. I tried to make quiet come over them but the noises went on and on. Our lights went out, and we lay in silence except for the laughter and teasing of

p.78

Sat 18th Nov

Cecilia until, at last the awful noises died away.

Saturday

The nurse came in, in the morning. Miss MacSwiney was worse. Her sister had come to the Goal and had been refused admission and had stayed outside the gate all night. Those noises were [...]. The guards entertained themselves like that when they were paid on Friday nights. No harm had been done. Outside, she said, the tension was heaving/bearing...keen. "The faces of your men are terrible", she said. The executions were too much.

The news about her sister came to Mary MacSwiney. Since 3 o' C on Friday; Annie had been on

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hunger strike at the gate.^{iv} Her lovely tranquility was broken. She was agitated, wretched. She looked up at us with piteous eyes and could not smile. There was only one more thing she could do to protest, until her sister was admitted; she would refuse the attendance of the nurses. She smiled wistfully at me, "you will have to be my nurses now".

I was afraid for the I.R.A. The provocation was fearful now. I was afraid they would think reprisals the only way to stop the torture of prisoners and executions like those on Friday. All this time though, they have taken thousands of prisoners and had

p.80

Sat 18th Nov

no means at all of detaining them. They have not killed or injured one, except of course the execution of spies. They have set their prisoners free, although that meant that these men were instantly fighting and hunting them again [all to recognize them in d.....] It is a wonderful record, but it seems impossible that this standard of chivalry should be maintained on one side while the other tortures its prisoners and kills them, "For illegal possession of a revolver".

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All these days, we have been making desultory efforts to organise ourselves and form a prisoners' Council. There is opposition from the members of the Cuman Na mBan upstairs who want no control in the prison but their own and cannot realise that those who are not members of the military organisation count as Republicans at all. We propagandists in 'Suffolk St.' are unanimous in wanting to resist this and have an organisation to include all prisoners, but we have failed to put our minds to it these anxious days. We have asked Lili to be our spokeswoman, that is all.

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Sat 18th Nov

Ms Humphries has promised Miss MacSwiney that vigils will be kept for her all day, and has made a little altar on the upper landing outside her room. The trouble now is about nursing her at night. We sent for the Governor Phil Cosgrove, and he came about 8 o' C. He was, or appeared to be distressed. We protested against Miss Annie MacSwiney's treatment.^v

He said it was wrong, but he could do nothing. He had tried to get her admitted - Portobello refused.

We asked that our cells should be unlocked all night so that we might nurse Mary MacSwiney and hold vigils.

In turn, we offered parole not to attempt during the night hours to escape. He consented almost with relief.

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Miss MacSwiney was very grateful and glad of this. She has been crying. A letter came into her from her sister - underground. She had been attacked and drenched from hose pipes at the gates. It was unbearable to see Mary MacSwiney crying. It makes one hate, hate, hate. One has returned to childhood here in many ways.

Here we are playing with real excitement in that ugly compound. Prisoners and the games I used to play with the little [...] Merrion Sq! I have not played games at all for years. It is surprising to find how enlivening it is to run and how enjoyable mere physical exercise of one's limbs and

p.84

Sat 18th Nov

muscles can be. But I came in very tired, and the cell was empty. Solitude is a rare blessing here. I lay down on my bed and watched the three red, barred squares of sunlight moving along the wall. I have a great longing to be out under the stars. I will walk over the hills all night when I am free; or with Donald along the Thames.

I wrote for Nóinín to sing a song about Terence MacSwiney, 'The Beacon Song'. It goes to the old time 'The Heath is brown on Carrigdhoun'. She liked it and

sang it to us all gloriously. She will sing it for Miss MacSwiney soon.

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The vigils are to begin at 9 pm, and we are to watch and pray for two hours and a half each. Miss MacSwiney's suggestion that we should pray for three things. First, that Annie may be let in.^{vi} Second, that Erskine Childers may not be killed. And third, for her release.

We are obeying even to the order of the prayers - she is obeyed in everything. She is distressed and restless tonight.

Tonight, we have heard the whole town is to be searched for de Valera. If he is taken, it will be defeat. O God! What Ireland has to suffer to become free!

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Sat 17th Nov

Yesterday, Kevin O Higgins made a speech in the Provisional Parliament hinting that the reason for executing the four boys was to prepare the way for the execution of Mr Childers.

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Sun 19th Nov

My vigil was from 4.30 pm to 7. A strange experience; peace-giving and strengthening. But how slowly, how intolerably slowly left to itself in solitude and silence, time goes! So slowly, the moments are passing over her, every moment loaded with patience and pain. She lies with her eyes closed, her rosary between her folded hands, endurance in every line. She opens her eyes when she knows one is watching and smiles. And

one has to say some light-hearted, tranquil thing. She is troubled that we are losing a little sleep.

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Sun 19th Nov

I went with the others to early mass because I wanted to hear them sing. We walked over the dark compound before dawn and were led through labyrinthine corridors of the convict Jail. More hideous this place is than anything I have ever imagined. A vast steel cage for human beings; vista upon vista of iron rails, iron stairways, iron galleries, and low deep doors inset to the convicts' cells. God grant that the Republic of Ireland will not put men and women in iron hells. The chapel is ugly, the priest ugly, the window behind the altar cheap and crude. On the right-hand pew ~~seat~~, the convict women sat in quaint grey dresses and white caps,

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glancing wistfully across the aisle at us.

It was a strange situation my comrades were in. Catholics in whom the fire of their religion burnt pure and strong to martyrdom. Lili, Ms Humphries... I think Davy could suffer any agony for their faith. They seem to me sanctified by prayer and self-denial and holy thought. To be with them is to breathe their religion with the [air]. And these women, because they will not take a false oath, and bow to an alien King, betray all that is to them honourable, and outlawed from their church; denied its sacraments, refused absolution for their sins, refused the body and blood of the Redeemer.

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Sun 19th Nov

The mass seemed to them a strange duel between them and the priest. He preached about the seed falling on stony ground; a sermon implying condemnation of them as renegade Catholics. They answered gloriously, standing to sing their hymns: 'Faith of our Fathers'.

The prisoners met to form a Council ^{vii}

B.O.M and other members of Cuman na Mban refused to form a Prisoners Council, wishing the Commandant of the Prison Branch of C.na mB. to be an independent authority. The non-militarists, Nóinín, myself and indeed all 'Suffolk St.' are indignant at them.

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To the communion rails went the poor convicts, went our wardresses and Honor Murphy, who has forsworn the Republic, pushed past Mrs Humphreys to go. They were given communion. The rest stayed behind. When the time came, they sang sweetly, wistfully, confidently.

'Sweet Sacrament Divine'

I think it is good for the Irish People to follow this stupid and slavish action of their Bishops; they will learn to search their own hearts and obey their own conscience and make their communion directly with their God. They will be priest-ridden no more. But they suffer by the denial of the sacrifice, a pain that I can scarcely understand.

p.92

Sun 19th Nov

Miss MacSwiney is consumed with unhappiness about her sister, who is still fasting at the gate. ^{viii}She wanted a letter written about it to the Archbishop, and the others asked me to draft one. The letter I wrote was an appeal; he could hardly have refused it, I think, and the others wanted to send it as it was. But Miss MacSwiney, though she praised it, said it would 'let the Republic down!' We must send not an appeal but a demand. The letter I drafted then was hateful, but we sent it. It was the best I could do.

Nurse told us the soldiers fired on the meeting in O'Connell St. Maeve's meeting. She and Iseult there

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as I saw them before. She, dead white, still, holding the women, while the soldiers fired over their heads. Iseult aflame, self-forgetting. Her arms flung out, standing between the people and the guns. Women have been killed and wounded. Nurse does not know who. I ought to have been there with Iseult.

They have condemned Erskine Childers to death. Lili thinks he will be shot tomorrow at dawn.

Love for him, desire and longing for him, passionate craving for him, Childers and Bobby and Erskine Óg rushed over us like a stormy ocean of pain. I would have drowned in it, half lost my senses, I think, only Lili was so marvelously brave.

He is her friend, and her life's work is his. She loves him as few [natures] can love at all, and yet she can bear this as he will be bearing it himself. She is playing cards with others, and her face is smiling and sweet.

My memory is torturing me. I remember every look and word of his everything I wanted to ask and say.

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Tues 21st Nov

Monday: Erskine Childers has not been executed.

There are no names I know among the wounded and killed. [Copied letters from M. about A.]

Tues

An action of Habeus Corpus has been taken on behalf of Mr Childers. He may be saved.

Wed 22nd Nov

It is a code that I am learning only slowly from the others, who have learnt to endure things for the Republic from Lili who was a prisoner in Kilmainham in 1916 and heard her friends and leaders being executed outside that when there is much to suffer talk must be all about happy foolish things.

Mrs Humphrey's makes us all sew shirts for soldiers.

There are penniless men in the I.R.A. Lili, and Sighle are holding classes in Irish. We play rounders in the compound. I would be writing, but no pen or ink or paper has come for me yet.

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Wed 22nd Nov

We had delight and excitement over parcels. A

beautiful dressing gown for me - a most lovely blue.

Somebody came into the cell with news that was both sorrowful and happy. A priest was with Miss

MacSwiney. She was being anointed; receiving the sacrament for death. To the others, it was relief. The

refusal of the sacraments had seemed to them such a terrible thing.

We went into her afterwards, one by one, all the restlessness and despair had gone. She looked full of content.

[A Newspaper clipping dated November 25th, 1922:
Miss M. MacSwiney T.D. sister returns to the prison gate.^{ix}]

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After Miss MacSwiney's Release

See Book 6 for interval

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Thurs 30th Nov

Now that the sublime fight of Miss MacSwiney is victoriously over and she has left us, life here will begin to settle into its narrow ways; a little, little world it will become, full of feverish little activities and rivalries, and even I am afraid, squabbles. There are some of us like Lili, whose thoughts still flow with the great tides of the movement for which we are here, and to whom no little thing will ever shut out the sun. There are some like Nóinín and me who want to write and read and study here, but there are others, younger and more full of exuberant energy, who will forever be inventing distractions and adventures for themselves and who will expend wit, daring excitement from morning to night on the little histories of our own little world. Today it is a question of attendance. The kind convict women who carried our food up from the

passage and brought it to us and who scrubbed and cleaned

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Thurs 30th Nov

the floors have been sent away, and we are expected to do this work ourselves. We were invited to cook our own food but refused, and this is probably Paudeen's 'Revenge'. We are not of course going to undertake the work of the prisoners, and have refused through our Council to go down for the food. Cosgrove said last night that it would be arranged for us, but today the food has not been brought up; it has been left in the lower passage to cool. Our policy is to go without the food until we are reduced one after another to lying in bed, then Doctors and Nurses will be required to attend on us and bring us our meals. On this, we are sure to win. The splendid demonstration they have been given of how a woman can stand hunger means that we shall win this way. A victory of endurance. A day of hunger has left me very limp.

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Thurs 30th Nov

Chaos! Anarchy! Fury, insult and revenge! As a private protest for attendance; four girls stayed outside after 5 o'C. They were still walking about in the dark and cold at about 7. They were dragged in by soldiers. O 'Keefe arrived with his army. Nóinín and I were in our cell, speechless with wrath at this disloyalty to the Council and the ruin of our plans. We would not to go out to show interest or take part in the struggle. The rest 35 [women gathered] on the stairs. O' Keefe ordered the prisoners into their cells to be locked up. They refused

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Thurs 30th Nov

by three soldiers, it was too much for my resolution. I rushed out, blazing at O' Keefe, accusing him. He seemed ashamed and made them let her go. Rita Farrelly, Sighle and other mutineers were thrown into our cell and locked in with us; laughing, jesting, saying, "We shall be lynched here". Later Davy was brought in; sick, white and shattered from the horror of being handled by the men, and crept miserably to bed. Indignation was poured out on the delinquents until they were a little subdued by the result of their little enterprise.

When the prisoners were restored to their proper cell, discussion and wrath were loosed. Half the night, our anger was exploding in little gusts; what would happen next? How could the situation be met now? Everyone's character, attitude and motives all possibilities lost and remaining

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Thurs 30th Nov

to us were [resolved]. Very late, we fell asleep. We woke to a day of contentions, plans, interviews, [penalties], angers and despairs. If there had been a principle at stake, there would be some meaning in

this, but it is only impatience. Our way would have won.

To some, prison life has become bright and exhilarating. To some, including Nónín and Lily and me; it has become discordant, wretched, scarcely tolerable. All parcels and letters are stopped. Mother's birthday will be on Monday. If she does not hear from me, she will be terribly anxious. And the deputy has offered us all the conditions of an internment camp. Reasons for and against questions of principle are volleying to and fro. Prospects of ceaseless contention are before us.

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Fri Dec 1st

The effect of prison on the convictions of Republicans is curious. One effect; the obvious is to crystallise into blind, unquestioning allegiance what has been perhaps a reasoned, clear-eyed faith. We are enduring something for a cause - all human [natures/creatures] craving for self-justification makes us [~~assure~~/sure] ourselves a thousand times that the cause is worth it - the greatest cause in the world. We are here confined together, fighting Republicans, refused all friendly association with people of other and neutral views. Each impregnates the other with her own convictions until each becomes seven times the Republican she was, seven times armed with knowledge and argument.

We meet the other side now, no longer represented by interesting gentlemen and women who used to be our friends

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Fri Dec 1st

but represented solely by those whose very existence is a humiliation and offence - our gaolers. The guards and sentries who parade fully armed and uniformed for our coercion and give us orders in rough, vulgar tones. Soldiers who haul us with beastly insults into our cells. Contempt for our opponents becomes a passion. We become [confirmed] emotionally against the other side.

But what of our Republican allegiance and ideals?

I who have been quite outside army councils and inner secrets of the Republican leaders am hearing now about those things. I am meeting in ceaseless and closest contact, and in [] acutely revealing character- representative Republican types, can deduce from the attitudes and mentality of these something of the character of

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Fri Dec 1st

those who control the movement. What are the qualities they reveal?

I think, generalising, that the most [tame, fineness] of character, purity of motive, sincerity and power of sacrifice, detachment from material things, moral, mental and physical courage are in all and every one of those whom I am learning intimately here and with all this a charity tolerance so large that it is hard to believe they could win any war. And with this goes the last and wistful longing for cosmopolitan and intellectual experience of which, by their very devotion to an enslaved country, they have been deprived. Their

minds except one or two, except on moral questions,
are less interesting, less rich

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Fri Dec 1st

than those of my English friends. There is only one
with whom one can talk of books.

In character, I find one fault in all - lack of foresight and
calculation. This is more extreme in the militants and
has been the cause of enterprises which produced a
split. With it goes a lack of insight into the [enemy's
case and resources]. The exception, I think is Noinin,
the one cosmopolitan here. The feeling I have now
about our movement is that it is all [...] and heroism
and charity; a beautiful, splendid cause, but I am sure
that there is a lack of wisdom and that the wise and
patient leaders see

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Fri Dec 1st

all their policy ruined, all their constructive work
undone, by a reckless [rebellious], thoughtless military
clan. Great and deep pride in a few of our more
[patient / politic] leaders; Erskine Childers and de
Valera above all, a half angry despair against our
militarists, and a fear that they will wreck all remains
and there remains a religious faith and joy in the
cause- a feeling that to go out to a defeated Ireland
would be worse than any imprisonment – a feeling
that victory must be. But prison is doing this also to
me; breaking me from the desire to do political work. I
realise the follies and [obstructions] so much
committed incessantly by our own and feel nervously

incapable of overcoming them. It has stopped the
course of work: editing and writing

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Fri Dec 1st

in which I had learnt to go forward easily, the initial
impetus still sending me forward in a rhythmic routine.
I feel too tired and too sad to initiate again.

My leader, who turned me to that work and made me
able to do it, and under whose inspiration I thought to
work again, has been taken by the enemy and killed,
and with him I almost fear the thoughtful, constructive
aspect of the movement, which I loved best to help has
almost disappeared. I am adrift from my habit of work,
adrift from my leader, adrift from all the courses that I
know. It will be very

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Fri Dec 1st

difficult to find a way to work again.

After these past days of deprivation, [...], I know that
an insatiable craving will be on me for a wide-ranging,
irresponsible, loving life - all new experiences and
varying sights and sounds and companionships of rich
and various minds. I shall not want, for a month or
two, to go into [larmes?] and work in the narrow
familiar ways. Yet, I shall be penniless. There is no
pleasure or travel or adventure before me after this,
even if I am free.

[ASIDE: *Poblacht* has been brought in. Childers last
splendid statement. Heard of the executions yesterday
of J. Spooner, Pat Farrelly, John Murphy]

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Fri Dec 1st

There are two phases in the feeling which prison produces towards the wide world.

At first, it seemed to me that Freedom is in itself so glorious a thing that every street corner, every familiar place would be dear and precious and beautiful to me forever afterwards when I become free: that the most grey places would content me.

But now it has become quite different. I think I'm free and that the world is all before me where to choose. I shall choose a suffocating little hotel in Kensington where from day to day, there is no savour of life, no change, no adventure, no beauty, not one of the grand or poignant emotions of life.

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Fri Dec 1st

I feel angry and bitter with all the waste of life in the world that I have endured. Or I will be choosing Dublin and all well-known, familiar things. I know now how good those things are. My big yellow room at the top of 73, with three windows looking out on the changes of day and night and all the weathers and seasons over St. Stephens Green, and my cushioned corner by the fire, all copper and orange and red and gold and the strange, beautiful friends who gather there. Even with the whole world and all its wealth to choose from, from Egypt to the Golden Gate, I could not choose more wisely and happily than this. Yet there is a world elsewhere, there are other places, other minds. I want to see Scotland and Munich and Assisi and Florence and Rome.

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Fri Dec 1st

There is a [something], very different affect which prison is having on some of us. Honor Murphy's allegiance to the Republic is broken. For a month, she was here alone. They were kind and petted her. In seeing the human kindness, that is, of course, somewhere in these men, she ~~forgot~~ lost sight of the dishonour for which they stand; cut off from all Republican thought, she fell victim to the confusions and misrepresentation of the new state press. Her vision failed, and her resistance weakened. Her weakness takes refuge in a kind of passivism. She will not support killing by either side. She will not

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Fri Dec 1st

serve the Republic at all for fear of encouraging its war. In spite of this recantation, she has lived in the [kindest relation] with all of us in spite even of her friendly conversations with our gaolers under our eyes. Miss MacSwiney was distressed and reproachful. Honor would not sign even our statements about her, but to compensate, went on vigil for her every night. And for her, she endured with sweet illogical loyalty three days hunger strike. But she has given the Free State undertaking. The day after Miss MacSwiney, she was released. She went out almost wretched, afraid to meet both Republican and Free State friends.

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Fri Dec 1st

Mrs Humphries, in all this long time to think, and escape from the mere current and force of habit, had become half subject to the Bishop's Pastoral. [She ____] in this, Mary MacSwiney's strength.

Others have become so angry with the obstructive and dis-ordinate elements among Republicans that they feel they do not want to work among Republicans again. Others, seeing the demoralisation it has produced in the Free State Soldiers, and of the terrible sacrifices among our own, feel that nothing is worth war. So prison and the long thoughts it brings are losing some allegiance to the cause.

Again, so hideously evil do imperialism and treachery seem so unthinkable that Ireland should not be saved from it, and from such men that to fight to the last seems everything now.

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Sat Dec 2nd

~~(ASIDE: A tinge of passivism that was in my whole outlook and [... my] incapacity to understand physical force has been [cured]. I realise that superior physical force brought us here and keeps us here and that nothing but physical victory (except surrender, which is unthinkable) can bring us out. I understand how much is [based] on it.)~~

Saturday

O' Keefe informed Bridie last night of new regulations: no attendance, no letters, no parcels. Complete isolation from the outside world. With a sudden feeling of exhilaration, Suffolk St. prepared for a big fight. Meanwhile, the food is being left downstairs, and we

are not eating it. We are living on what has been sent in, and distributing biscuits and ham to the other cells. Our council's policy is to refuse to handle the food unless it is brought up to the landings. Miss Farrell, representing the Kerry Girls, agreed. This morning we heard suspicious sounds outside. The Kerry girls were going down and helping themselves to food. I went out and tried to dissuade them. It was no good. At dinner time, the same thing happened again. It is disastrous. The Council interviewed O' Keefe. He offered to divide food into three portions because the Kerry girls would not resist. They had to consent to our going down for it. This is defeat.

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Sat Dec 2nd

O' Keefe says nine men were taken prisoner last night and killed today. We don't know whether to believe it. He promises our letters and parcels tonight.

We are becoming obsessed with ugly little struggles about scrubbing, cooking and parcels, the use of the kettle and the fire; and very jaded and angry with one another. It is sad. I don't want to waste good paper any more on the petty, sordid story of our days.

~~O Keefe has read to our Council some new regulations from Portobello. No letters—no parcels of food or cigarettes.~~ The order to soldiers to fire wide to frighten prisoners is withdrawn. The order stands now, 'fire to hit'.

~~The order about letters and parcels is not yet enforced.~~

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Sat Dec 2nd / Mon Dec 4th

We have been writing handbills to the soldiers, "When you take prisoners, do you give them up to be killed?"

"To lie faithful to H. M. King George..."

These have been sent, I hear, into the guardroom where about 80 men should see them. But these men seem so demoralised we have little hope that they will succeed.

Mon 4th Dec

There is an irrepressible superstition that things will change, a time will come. We women will be released on Dec 6th. I can see no hope of it. December 6th will be the shameful anniversary of Ireland's most lamentable day. On the 6th, The Irish Free State will be supposed to have come into being: the Irish Republic to be dead.

The Republic of Ireland! Beautiful, dream-built city, living, invisible only to those who

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Mon Dec 4th

loved thee among the poor sordid houses, and tumbled hovels of the Ireland that was not free, shining with a purity and grandeur, surpassing the purity and grandeur of ancient Athens or Rome. How men have loved thee. How rejoicingly have they lived. How freely and proudly died for thee. How great and holy was life in the day's men call the Terror when the prisons gallows of thine enemy overshadowed the land, and the clamour of their tortures and murders filled the night. With what glorious serenity then, we defied and ignored that terror and declared and lived our passionate allegiance to thee!

What little state in the whole world's history has been served and

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[...] and guarded with so much noble love.

It was a splendour and valour mankind is not able to maintain; too bright to live long in this decadent world.

With a spell of softening peace, the enemy [unstrung] the sinews of our valour, with slow flattery and subtle threats. They won some of our most trusted to their will with a fearful threat. They overwhelmed others and at that moment trapped them into signing away the Republic they were pledged and [missioned] to defend.

And those who signed away the Republic had the love and praise and [sling/sting] aid of the enemy so that against those who would not sign they might make war, and the war they made is as

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shameful and as brutal as the war that two years ago, the enemy was making against them. A year has gone.

On the 6th of December, the power of those who signed is to be held by the enemy established. They will be allies strongly rooted in power. We who would not desert the Republic will be outlaws in Ireland without place or citizenship, without power to work for Ireland – defeated, subject to our ancient enemy unreconciled. The last of our comrades in prison or exile, forbidden to write or speak, labour for the Ireland of our love. Living in the dead, unbeautiful cities of a betrayed and conquered land.

Nóinín Cogley came in while I was writing this. Crying, the gay, valiant-hearted woman had

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Mon Dec 4th

a letter in her hand. They have imprisoned her husband now. Her little boys are without any relatives in the country. She is in despair. They have Frank Gallagher here in B. Wing. He and Cecilia, who has been a few months married to him, wave to each other every morning at 8.30 through the bars. This is how Republicans will have to live, or in exile, or quiet and subdued in Ireland - a defeated life.

"I would die a thousand times", Miss MacSwiney wrote in one of those magnificent letters she sent out from here, "to save the shame of one Irishman taking an oath to England on Dec 6th". Next Wednesday, they will be taking it. They will make themselves British subjects. But I will not be a British subject and

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Mon Dec 4th

there are thousands in these gaols who will still be free. And the Republic of Ireland, because its existence is a thing of the laws of nature: the law of freedom will not be dead, and we have splendid men: de Valera, Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor still. I shall be glad always that on this black 6th of December, I was a Republican Prisoner of War.

[Daily Mail - Childers letters (Dec 2nd) *Poblacht* – a statement of his.]

Prison Moods

Nóinín has taken charge of our housekeeping, organized a cupboard in the surgery, and arranged our larder there. I have been sent teaspoons, and little green-handled knives and china cups and saucers- white and gold. I thought it would make a little touch of elegance and civilization would make it easier to be cheerful here, but the result is just the contrary, to my

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Mon Dec 4th

dismay. It was when I first opened Nóinín's cupboard and took out the butter in the butter dish and the little tea- knives from their tin box that the sense of being a caged and impotent prisoner, and an utter loathing of my captivity fell on me like a sickening blight. For hours after, I could talk and joke and play games only with difficulty and dare not look forward at all. I can't quite comprehend why it is. Is it that the familiar, home-like cupboard gave me a sudden nostalgia for my own kitchen, with its [...] pictures and [...] plates and blue cups, or for Iseult or was it that all Nóinín's dainty

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Mon Dec 4th

careful arrangements looked as if they were planned for a long time?

Or is it that prison half-civilized thus loses the stimulus of a new experience, and the courage [strung] to meet it relaxes, and the ordinary mood of life takes place of that fighting mood and claims piteously the sweet freedom of natural life? I suppose it is a mixture of all these things. Certainly, I am a less courageous prisoner since I opened that cupboard than are any of my companions here.

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Tues 5th Dec

Donald ended his letter wisely, 'Goodnight and happy dreams'.^x

Last night I had a dream that gathered together all the happiest things of natural life. It was in England. "I love England and pray", Erskine Childers said in his last message, "that her attitude to Ireland will change completely and finally".^{xi} It was that saying perhaps that made all the lovely things that are peculiarly England's haunt my mind: that and huge-Walpole's "Cathedral" and a kind letter from [CLT] who quarrels with me about Ireland whenever we meet. If England was innocent of Empire, there would be no lovelier country in the world. I was in England in my dream, visiting some woman whom I greatly loved, visiting her early in the morning because I was only for a few hours in her little town. It was her quiet little house that was so beautiful; hidden in a wide, high-walled garden whose flowers overflowed into the low rooms. The rooms were softly lit, softly furnished and filled with treasures

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Tues Dec 5th

of beaten brass and carved ivory from the Far East and all fragrant and full of colour and peace. The dear woman was created I think out of many women I have loved; mother, who is friendlier to my imagination now than she has been for years, and others; and then she changed into Cecilia Gallagher and she told me that the house was Franks and Frank was in Ireland, in Gaol,

that whenever he went to Ireland, he was imprisoned, but that he would always be going again and again, in a forlorn hope to awaken the Republic. Yet, I praised them in my dream, that possessing peace and luxury, they kept the brave Republican virtue of poverty still. I have thought sometimes that the Irish are so ready to sacrifice all they have because nothing that they have is very desirable...prosperity has made traitors and cowards of thousands now.

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Tues Dec 5th

Tomorrow will be December 6th. It would be such misery to be Free that I think one should be thankful to be in Gaol.

At night, after the light was out, we began to recall these days last year. Lili was in London with the delegation, taking care of Erskine Childers and acting as his secretary. She told us about the evening of the 5th. Barton's misery, the pressure used against him, her own desperate prayers. How they went out at 10 o' C. to Downing Street; Erskine Childers, with the look of a man doomed. Of those who were together that night-two are in prison

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Wed Dec 6th

and three are dead. The one who was faithful killed in captivity by the inheritors of the work of those who failed.

Wed 6th Dec

There has been no good in today, nothing but the sense of the death of honour, the death of beauty and

hope. The triumph of cynical, fraudulent, unholy powers. But it is weakness and cowardice to be so overwhelmed. The Republic is not dead because the King of England has given the [royal as..cut]
We shall live to make Ireland free.

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As we were falling asleep, we heard singing of a kind and laughter began outside. The Free state soldiers celebrating the birth of Irish Freedom, I suppose. They were familiar songs and familiar accents that we heard, reminiscent of British Tommies on their way to victory: "Here we are, here we are, here we are again", was the last outburst that we heard.
"Very true", Nóinín murmured sleepily, "very true".

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Thurs 7th Dec

Nóinín is a woman quite different from any others I have ever known; perhaps because of her French nationality and French girlhood and her South American adventures and her life among artists and singers, and her little boys. Pleasure, even nowadays, pleasure is to her an art. Such tales as she tells of [wagers] and disguises and wild nights. She is as pretty as an angel or a [sineu]; all womanhood and kindness and charm. Yet tragic emotion is never very far away. She was the first of us I think to cry. I woke and heard her sobbing on our second night. She was hardly able to stay for five minutes in Miss MacSwiney's room and singing the 'Ave Maria' to her

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Thurs Dec 7th

p.131 Thurs Dec 7th

she broke down altogether. She was in terror for her little boys. I could not have endured it in her place. I would have said that this constituted duress and have signed the form. I told her so. I did not [not] know she did not know herself, what she would do.

She is ill too from a bronchial cold and anaemic and over wrought. She doesn't sleep. I helped her to write a letter to Portobello enquiring whether she was to be released. She gave it to Paudeen to deliver but rushed in from him, shaking and flung herself on her bed, shaken with sobs. He had said she must sign the form, and she can't, can't.....

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she has no scruples about any promise to them. Would not think twice about signing and breaking it, but she can't, can't. Poor little saint. Except Lili, she is the finest Republican of all!

I am feeling what [Flory Fahy?] calls, "Mammonish".

I long for the fleshpots of Egypt! Mrs [Floweiss] tea table in the Loggie at the hill: the lovely old Tudor Manor House where I met Walter de la Mare; the wide garden of St. Hughs and the room they gave me there. The room of the [.....], rich with books, all the luxurious peace which England has won for herself by her plunderous adventures and murderous conquests over all the globe.

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Thurs Dec 7th

I can want them and laugh at them and do without - the winds of God blow more freely, sweetly through our spirits, I think, who are Irish and honest and in Gaol.

A good letter from Donald, a real good letter, the best anyone has written me yet. But he is being hard hit, blow after blow, about what he cares for most. It will be hard for him not to lose heart. It is very painful to be 22.

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Thurs Dec 7th

Nóinín has been telling us our fortunes with cards and almost frightened me. All my thoughts, she said, are towards a rather fair young man and an elderly woman. They are quarrelling about money. The woman thinks of sending for professional advice.

Someone with whom I have been in close daily intimacy is going to give me a very great shock - something to do with money. It will upset me very much. The rather fair young man is fighting for me. A group of people are discussing me and my possibilities and my work. The young man is defending. A woman is attacking me. The young man and I are enjoying a brilliant [success] in a crowded house. Before this, there is a difficulty. I am cheated about money.

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Thurs Dec 7th

I have been in prison with Miss MacSwiney, making her suffering easier for her, witnessing the fortitude and loving courage of her all that time that is worth much. To have been here with Lili and good Republicans who loved her at the time of Erskine Childers death, that saved one anger and bitterness and desperate misery. It was easier to be here than to be outside, trying to think of other things, trying to work. I could not have lectured in college that afternoon. And on this miserable 6th of December, when the Republic is sold and Ireland's honour flung away, the only bearable place and only honourable place to be is in prison: a Republican Prisoner of War.

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Thurs Dec 7th

What security this prison life has given to one's allegiance! It is to me, as a Republican, the sacrament of confirmation. The long empty hours for thinking, the companionship of pure Republican spirits and brave Republican minds, the inspiration of Miss MacSwiney's

~~There was a lot of noise all night outside. The others went out in the dark to early mass.~~

It was a happy evening. Had we all been free, we could not have chosen a better occupation or a better company. We came down from the rosary in a peaceful mood. We had recovered well from the crushing shock and misery about Erskine Childers. There is a kind of peace.

Nurse Philips came up the stairs in her outdoor things.

A buzzing crowd encompassed her at once, "Any news, any news". "Yes", she said gravely. "Two members fired at leaving the Dail: Sean Hales shot dead, O 'Maille wounded". Two of our girls cried out, "good". Others tried to hush them and questioning bewilderedly whether this should have been done. We gathered in our cells. These men were guilty of high treason. Yesterday, they took the shameful oath. They were guilty of the execution of 8 prisoners of war. They had condoned the murders

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Thurs 7th Dec

of some twenty or thirty young Republicans within the last few months. There is no doubt they were evil and guilty men. Yet to kill like this, in the street, is murder and to murder even a murderer is a terrible thing. It will be done on both sides now. So far, it has been done only on one. And there will be hideous reprisals for this and reprisals for those reprisals again. Another multiplying horror added to this horrible war. There was strong difference of opinion among the seven of us about it all. Nóinín and Cecilia regretted it. So do I.

The night was full of shouting and firing and hideous noise. There is some excitement among the guards. We have been here a month today.

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Fri 8th Dec

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

We all slept badly.

The others went out in the dark to early mass. I was still drowsy when I heard them coming in, talking in

low voices: "Haven't you heard?", Lili said when I looked up.

Mrs Humphrey's had heard the sound of pick axes at work through the night. Coming from mass, they had seen a throng of officials behind the iron gate in the place of graves. The place where Kevin Barry was buried. Isn't that where Kevin Barry was shot? Lili said. "Shot? Kevin Barry?" The others couldn't understand her. A convict man had called out to them from the window- "Four men executed this morning".

We heard shots, one after another. You could not tell whether they were single shots. Lili, who was in Kilmainham when the leaders were shot outside her cell in 1916 said this was not the sound. We could not know

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Fri 8th Dec

who the victims would be. Any four chosen at random from among their 900 prisoners would do, I suppose for the vengeance they intend. Would they dare to kill Rory or Liam Mellows? Would they kill Seán MacBride. seemed to be looking at me, laughing, with his dark, teasing face. Or would it be four poor, obscure boys caught lately, like they executed two weeks ago? Would poor Cooney be one; the heroic boy who when the attempt at escape ended so disastrously with four deaths took all the responsibility on himself? "Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Cooney and a man named [Barry]", one of the Wardresses says. I think this is a guess work. They are the first names one would guess. But there is no reason, can be no

pretense of any reason - they surrendered after a clean fight four months ago - for killing them.

We went about our mornings work; washing the supper things, waiting for that sound, making breakfast. We were sitting round the table at half past nine when suddenly shots rang out; not a single shot but a volley and after it, single

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revolver shots, one after another, close... they went on and on. We looked at Lili, 'That is an execution', she said.

Sheila Humphries saw the firing party coming back. At dinner time, we heard the stop-press. After evening exercise in the dusk, as we were coming in, nurse came to the passage door and told us the news. Rory O' Connor, Liam Mellows, Dick Barrett, Jo Mc Kelvey; a reprisal for Sean Hales. ^{xii}

~~They were court-martialled at 12 o'clock last night.~~

p.143 Wed 13th Dec
I have not kept this journal these last few days because it seems senseless to write or to record such unconsolated horror there has been. Some said on Friday, "we are beaten, the Republic should surrender now". The younger ones cried out in dismayed reproach, "No!" These people had shown themselves so evil, so mad, so savage. Ireland must be saved from them at any cost. As for me I believe with equal intensity two contrary things; I believe that if Ireland is not to become a hell of corruption and slavish degradation, this Provisional Government and all it

stands for must be thrust out and that the men who can support it are so bestial and so dangerously insane that to kill them could hardly be a sin. And I believe what I said on Friday night, "We are defeated now". The Imperialists have

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taken up a weapon too vile for us to use. They are punishing acts of war ~~by murdering the helpless,~~ not by war, not even by tracking and trying and executing those they call criminals but by secretly murdering the people we love who are helpless prisoners in their hands.

Nothing that we can do to them can be as terrible as that. We can't kill our prisoners; ~~we can't attack their women and children~~ to compete with them, we should have to threaten helpless people whom they love. We should have to kill their children. We should surrender rather than do that. Awful news has come since then. The burning of Mrs McGarry's house.

Children have been injured by the I.R.A.

The death of Erskine Childers was not so destroying to faith and hope and courage as this news. Lili declares it cannot be true. I am sure there [are lies in the reports of it]. But children have been hurt by the I.R.A.

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I suppose Republican houses will be burnt and the children of Republicans hurt. It will be like the Belfast pogrom very soon. I cannot believe that De Valera will let it come to that. Yet, I cannot believe that he will let

Ireland be given up to this loathsome treaty, these base, [...] God pity us, what are we to do?

Geasa

How is it that Mulcahy and his comrades, once true Irishman; have become so malignant, so callous and dead to honour that they can murder old comrades who never fought but in self-defence, and who have been for months prisoners at their hands? It is because there is a law for true Irishmen which if they break, they shut out light and life forever from their souls. It is 'Geasa' to an Irishman to stand against the freedom of Ireland, to be free is the destiny god has in

p.146

mind for holy Ireland. To stand for the Freedom of his country and the destiny of every Irishman. While he lives obeying this holy land, he lives gloriously, in spite of hunger, danger, prison, torture, any [...], any pain. If he dies obeying it, he dies exultant and serene.

But if he breaks this law, the punishment falls on him that only the breaking of a [man's peace] can bring peace, security, wealth, fame, power may come to him, and he may believe himself content. But honour and beauty and glory are shut out from his spirit. He does not even desire them, does not remember them because his soul is dead.

Those who have never known the law and have neglected to live by it, listening to this and following the easy way of the enemies garrison in our land, are punished by a great loss the height the depths of - To them

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the heights of love and hope and loyalty are unknown and all the splendour that can be [pain]. Yet they may be without evil, gentle and kindly men.

But those to whom this law has been revealed and who have obeyed it, as [sworn] to live and die obeying it, giving their allegiance to the freedom of their land.

If these fail, their punishment is that they become slaves and liars and must live lying to themselves for fear they should perceive that they are slaves.

And if these, through fear or that compassion which fears death less than dishonour for those it loves, or through dishonest thought or [...] or greed for power, give themselves over to the enemy and betray the freedom of their land - it is their punishment that the corruption of their enemy enters into them and joining with the corruption of treachery fills them with the foul and loathsome life which is when it sees purity must kill.

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Wed 13th Dec

In the evening, shots were fired by a sentry into Sadie Dowling, and Eithne Coyle's cell. Three bullets came through the windows and were embedded in the walls.

We sent for the governor deputy. They did not come.

Eithne had settled me in her cell to write, and I had just finished and come back to 'Suffolk Street' when three terrific shots rang out. Two bullets had crashed through the window over Sadie's cell where she and [Ester ____Dowd] were sitting and [...] into the wall.

One had gone through Eithne's cell. There was

excitement, of course. Poor Sadie was frightened but the rest were full of [...] and laughter and chatter. They seem incapable of taking anything seriously, indeed! With [the ruling] passion strong upon me, I sat down to write a detailed report ^{xiii} to get the Council to send for the Governor to put the responsibility on him. Bridie strongly objected. She thinks it should be taken as the [fortune of war!]

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Thurs 14th Dec

Farewell to Dervorgilla

One by one, they thrust themselves into my memory, the people of my vanished plays, born out of the life my imagination, foredoomed ever and be given life. Poor Cassandra is crying out me from among the flames. She was wild and beautiful, and I loved her. She and I, at the making of her, were so young. I was undistracted, and all given up to poetry then, and I wrote this ambitious drama in the Greek Style, with lyrical choruses between the acts. It was chaotic; a mingling of slow, lyrical poetry and violent action. It could never have been played on any stage. But poor Casandra was very loveable and sad. Asthara, I cannot believe dead. She had three nights of such rapturous, enchanted life. I had a free fantastic imagination then

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and mingled Arabian Alchemy recklessly with old Gaelic Myth: there was poetry in it, James Stephen's said. I do not believe Asthara can be dead.

And Dervorgilla, I am sure that she is gone. She was to be an Irish masterpiece. A great historical drama of the beginning of this endless war, a more complete and massive work than any Irish dramatist has done.

Dervorgilla was to be innocent, infinitely tragic, noble and adorable as Maeve. How wonderfully the events of that dreadful history grouped themselves for the dramatic scenes. I know the movement of my play was fierce and inevitable and strong. I laboured severely over those scenes and over the verse.

I will try again, maybe, to write a play of Devorgilla, but I will have to write it in prose. My poetry is all over now. They are burnt offerings to the Republic of Ireland, my tragic women; may the Gods be appeased!

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Sat 16th Dec

College has dismissed me 'for being absent from college without leave!'. The more I see of that class of Irish people, the more pitifully slavish they seem.

Afraid to keep a Republican on their staff and afraid to give the real reason for dismissing me!

I knew of course since I wrote and told the Council I was helping with a campaign for prisoners, that this would come. It had to be accepted.

And though I have been long enough tied to sessions and the conventions of their narrow world, there is real loss in the loss of my lecturing work.

To be working at glorious poetry with people like my girls, whose lives are

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lost for these years in the studious worlds and to feel their quick response and intelligent enquiry and their vivid love of it all, and to have that channel for all the criticism of poetry and drama that never quite stops buzzing in my mind. It was very pleasant and good. All that I am as a teacher and interpreter of literature, all that I planned and trained myself to be will be nothing always to my comrades in Republican work. It is the death of a happy part of one's personality. May it rest in peace and not be waiting to come alive again!

They are pretending I hear in College, that I broke my promise, concealing my letter to the Council. Injustice is very bitter. ^{xiv}There is even injustice here. Lily even says bitter things to me about taking all this too easily - not feeling it enough.

Aside: There is Erskine Childers and his unconquerable gentleness to remember in spite of injustice that would have driven me insane.

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All these nights, I am awake for long hours and awake in pain, and the pain is heavy over the days without compensation or relief. It is that Erskine Childers is dead. That is the one unbearable thing. If I could [discover ...it it not ...] if I could [... live in Ireland], I can not believe that anything else would seem to hurt at all. I should know that while he lived, the Republic lived, and its honour and nobility were secure. And all the rich, happy life of love that was with him and the boys and Molly Childers in their warm house that not

to be broken into the agony it is. And for myself, to be talking to him and telling him all this and hearing his grateful, sweet-spirited talk about things again. To be working with him, maybe. Last night, when the torment of it was worn out and I fell asleep, I dreamt that someone told me he was not dead.

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Jan 3rd

O' Keefe submitted the form to me today. I never thought I would mind, but it is like a sourness in one's blood - the insult that it is. They do not submit it to Republicans whose faith has been proved. He did, at least, tell me very sheepishly and held it well away.

Mother writes, hinting that those who sign have "pluck", to insinuate I suppose that I will be a coward refusing to sign. The burning bitterness of it. I wrote her a most bitter letter but have torn it up. It is a hideous thing that one can't stop the pain of an insult except by insulting in return and mother mustn't be hurt.

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I remember how when Mona was staying with me at 73, two or three months ago; we joked about risking all established comfort for adventure and the hope of richer life. "I daresay it is quite a good thing", I remember saying, "To cast your bread upon the waters and burn your boats". I had sent to the Council of Alexandra College then a letter telling them I felt constrained to take part in a campaign for the proper treatment of Republican prisoners and that this might

involve public work. I know this would almost certainly mean dismissal, and had no notion of what I should do after that except try to publish my book on the language of poetry at last. Now that book and nearly all my other manuscripts have gone up in smoke - raiders shot up 73 and made a bonfire of my papers

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on the night of my arrest. Yesterday, Iseult wrote that they have had to take all my things out of the house. Fare well to my beloved rooms. And today, I hear that the Council of Alexandra College are depriving me of my post. I have to give up my flat.

It is interesting - the world is all before me where to choose. I have a family including a good sister and the best of brothers (only that the Republic is Greek to him) and good friends, and about £130 a year. I shall not be derelict and I shall not have to leave Ireland, which after all, is all I care for much. I suppose there will be work to do for the Republic still. But Erskine Childers is the only man I could be happy and content to work for except

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de Valera; because among fighting men, such scrupulous care for peace and charity and justice are hard to find. And Erskine Childers has been killed. I will travel around Ireland and travel abroad. I will take no post. I will be poor and free. I will maybe write. Bitter longing for the beautiful life at 73 comes in little gushes now and then, and bitter longing for prose and verse that I have written and liked and to be giving out

the theories and the praises of poetry that I wrote in that book and to have that wonderful intellectual relation again, all [...] among noble things, that one can never have so well as with one's pupils, and yet, I dare say, I shall live to be glad that I have lost all this.

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They were loves and possessions, maybe holding me back from my destiny. Perhaps in the wilderness, I shall find a way to travel and a better service to be giving to Ireland than I have known.

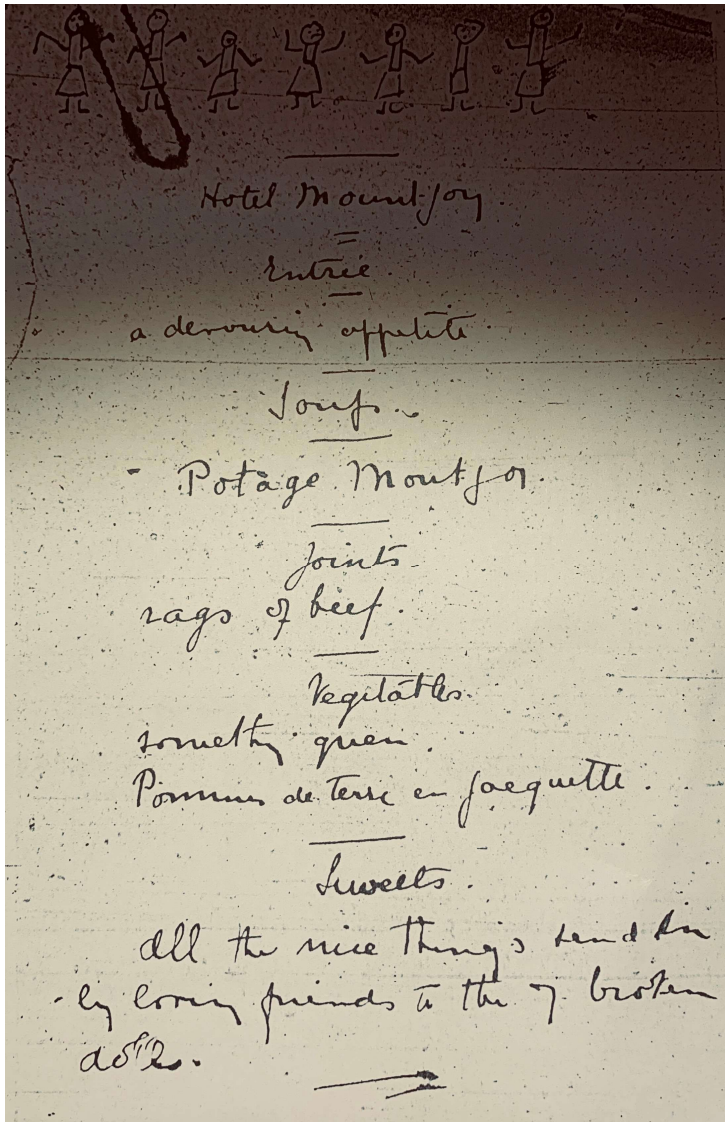
I have sworn that I will not be crushed by these little losses into an unadventurous, discontented, imprisoned life. They shall make me free. I will travel Ireland. I will go to the western mountains and the rocky coasts and the lakes. I will see the world. Sighle has been talking to me about the Blasket Islands. It is to Dingle and those Islands I will go.

I have written a ghost story founded on a tale Tessie told me. It is called 'Samhain'.

ⁱ 1. Newspaper cutting dated 9 November 1922. A photo of Muriel MacSwiney seen demonstrating near the British embassy in Washington on behalf of Miss Mary MacSwiney was arrested.

2. Newspaper Cutting – Herald, Wed Nov 15th 1922. Miss MacSwiney Protest Demonstration in Washington against Detention.

ii Illustrated Menu Card: Hotel Mountjoy



Hotel Mountjoy
 Entrée
 A devouring appetite
 Soups
 Potage Mountjoy
 Joints
 Sags Of beef
 Vegetables
 Something Green
 Pommes de Terres en Faquette
 Sweets
 All the nice thing sent in by a loving friend to the 7 broken [dolls]

iii Newspaper Cutting – Herald, Wed Nov 15th 1922. 'A Message from Mountjoy to the people of Ireland'

Wet. Nov. 15
Herald

THE EVENING

MISS MACSWINEY

Protest Demonstration in Washington Against Detention

Mrs. Muriel MacSwiney, widow of the late Lord Mayor of Cork, and eight other women, members of the A.A.R.I.R., were arrested while marching before the British Embassy in Washington with banners demanding the release of Miss Mary MacSwiney.

(Reuter's Telegram.)

Washington, Wednesday.

Mrs. MacSwiney and two of the women who were arrested with her yesterday evening while marching in front of the British Embassy remained in the House of Detention throughout the night. The other five women were released on bail.

The prisoners declared they had no intention to hunger strike, and they ate the regular supper.

Mrs. MacSwiney made a statement in which she said she had no intention of violating any law. She would insist on immediate trial.

A MESSAGE.

We have received the following for publication:—"A message from Mountjoy. To the people of Ireland.

"We the 16 women of the Republic who share Miss MacSwiney's imprisonment in Mountjoy send out to the men and women of Ireland a most urgent and vehement appeal.

"Miss MacSwiney has now fasted for 11 days, denied the Sacraments which were her brother's consolation. Her thoughts have been all for Ireland and for our welfare here. Patient and loving, she has struggled to hide her sufferings from us. But to-day a terrible change has come; exhaustion has set in; she is scarcely able to speak. We know, as do all who ever knew her, that she will persist to the end, and we know that the end is near. Our hearts are breaking, but here we are helpless; we can do nothing but pray.

"What effort, what danger, what sacrifice is it not worth, to die for Ireland so noble a life as this? What is it not worth to save Ireland from the ineffaceable shame of having, through cowardice or inaction, allowed to die MacSwiney's sister to die in an Irish jail? He gave his life willingly, a prisoner in the hands of the English enemy. Mary MacSwiney is a prisoner in the hands of Irishmen.

"No one friend or enemy needs to be told what Miss MacSwiney's protest means. As Ireland, physically weak but spiritually unconquerable, withstood the brute force of an empire, so this great woman, imprisoned and helpless, challenges with her dauntless will the force that would give Ireland for ever over to the domination of a foreign Power.

"Whichever way this struggle ends, victory will be with her who can endure so much, and with the cause for which she is going to her agony, joyous if her death would bring back her fellow-countrymen to their ideals, and make them brothers-in-arms again.

"She is one of the people's representatives. Let the people of Ireland see that this crime is not perpetrated against them. Irish men and women, will you allow the sister of Terence MacSwiney to die for you in an Irish jail?—(Signed),

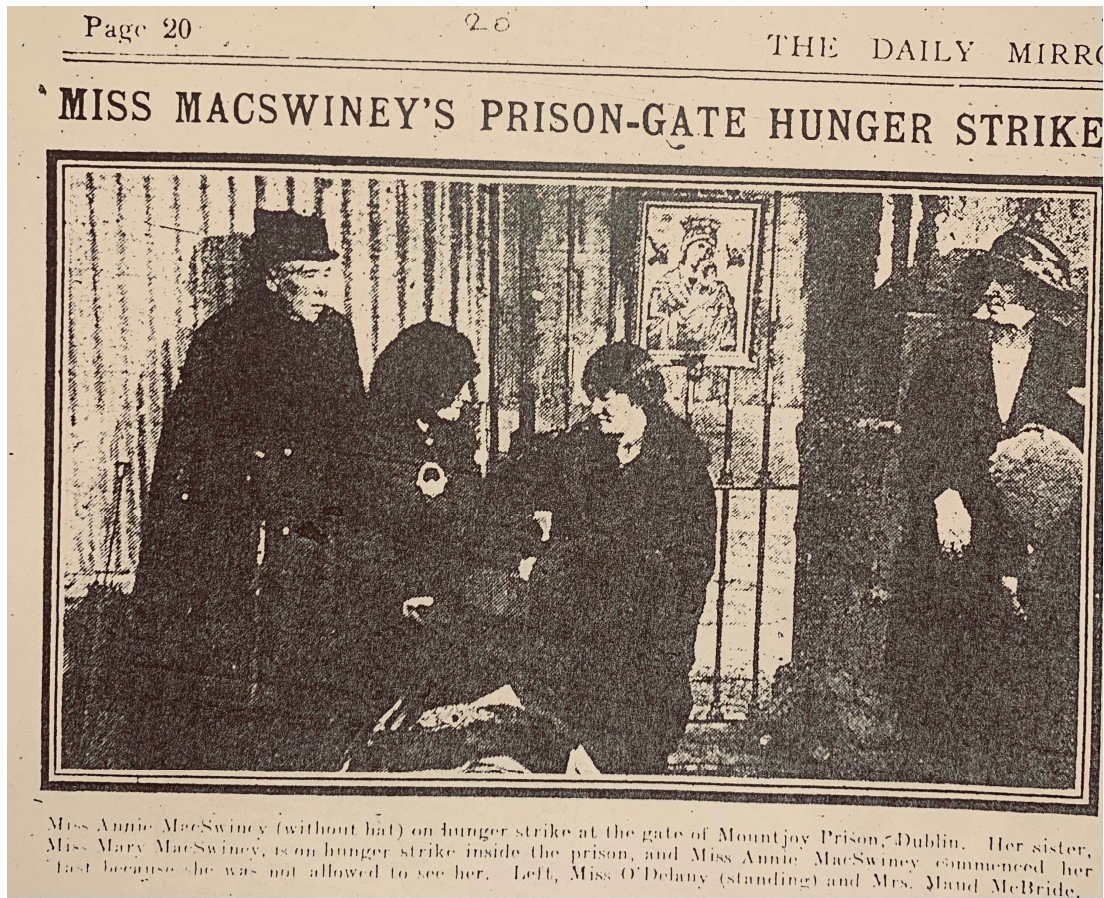
"Nol bean Mhíre Amhlaoibh, Lili Ní Bhraonain, Kathleen Devaney, Rita Bermingham, Cecilia Gallagher, Dorothy Macardle, Sigbú Níe Amhlaoibh, Brighid Ní Mhaolain, Esther Davis, Caitlín Ní Chearbháill, Maire McKee, K. Doody, T. O'Connell, S. Dowling, Maire Dergan, D. Cogley.

A LETTER.

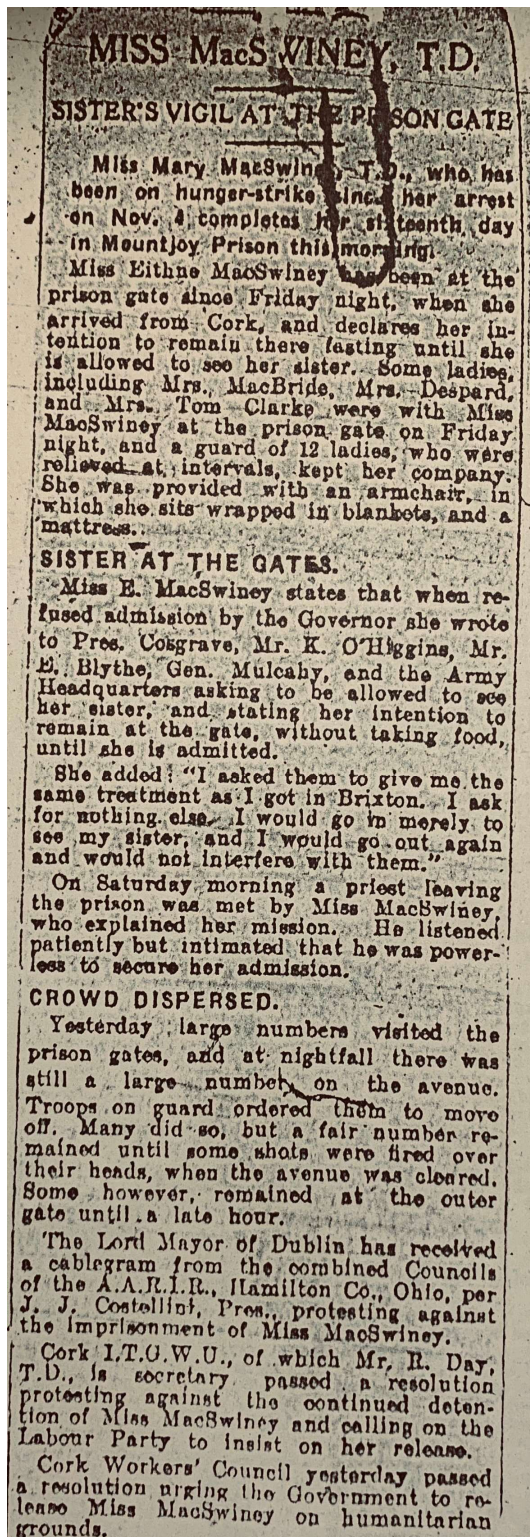
We have received the following letter signed Nora Rogers:—

"The claim of the hunger striker to public sympathy and support is based on the

iv Newspaper cuttings (Photo). The Daily Mirror. Nov 20th 1922: Miss MacSwiney's Prison Gate Hunger Strike.



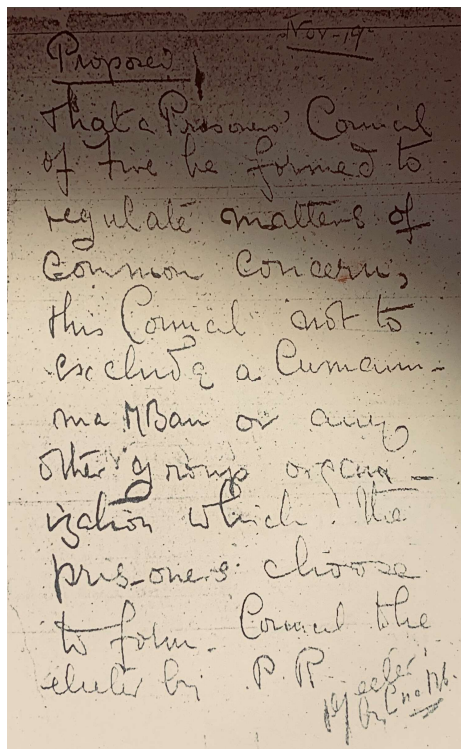
v Newspaper clipping. Miss MacSwiney, T.D Sister's Vigil at the Prison Gate



vi Newspaper clipping (photo) MacSwiney Sisters' Hunger-strike.

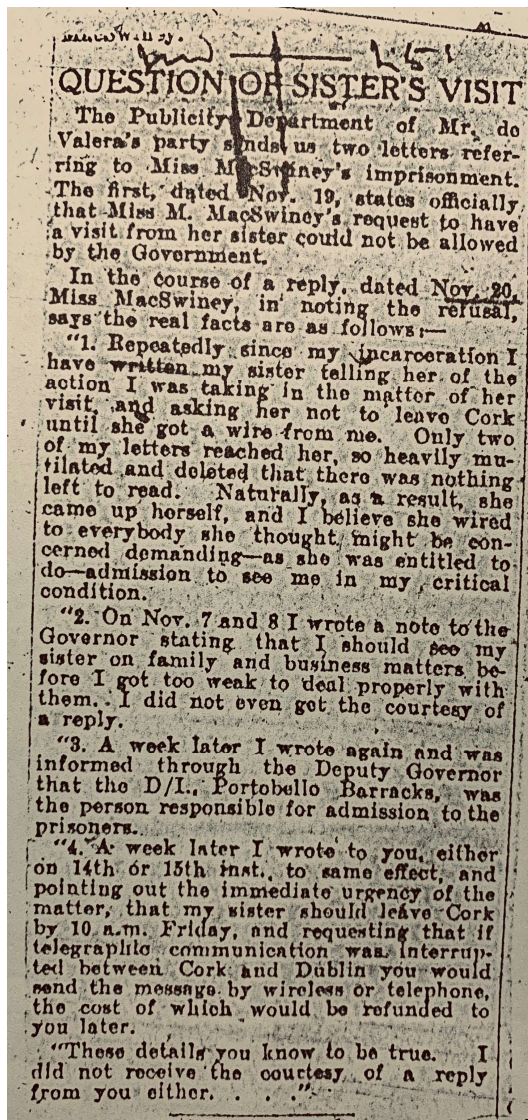


vii Proposed Nov 19th

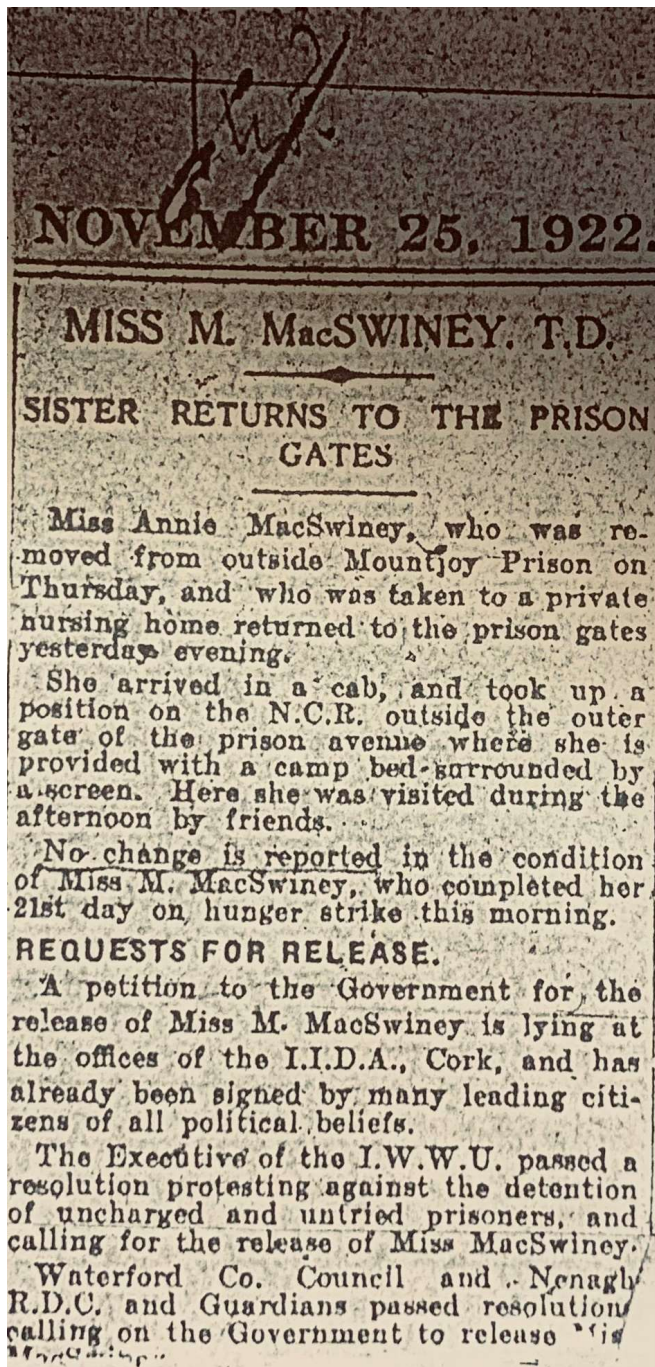


That a Prisoners Council of five be formed to regulate matters of common concern, this Council not to exclude a Cumann na mBan or any other groups of organisation which the prisoners choose to form. Council to be elected by P.R

viii A Newspaper clipping dated November 25th, 1922: 'Question of Sister's Visit'



^{ix} A Newspaper clipping dated November 25th, 1922: Miss M. MacSwiney T.D. Sister returns to the prison gate



^x 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 [faded words illegible] mirroring a cloudless heaven and the river flowing into the sea.

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 wear 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 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)

^{xi} Newspaper Cutting dated December 2, 1922. Childers & His Sentence. "A Great Thing for A Great Cause". His Last Letters.

DECEMBER 2, 1922.

CHILDERS & HIS SENTENCE.

"A GREAT THING FOR A GREAT CAUSE."

HIS LAST LETTERS.

MR. CHURCHILL'S CHARGE OF "HATRED AND MALICE."

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

DUBLIN, Friday.
I have just had an opportunity of inspecting some remarkable human documents, the last letters of Erskine Childers to his wife while awaiting execution in Beggar's Bush Barracks a week ago to-day.

They are remarkable for the detached air with which he viewed his impending death. He writes of his execution as a matter of little concern—an incident bound to take place.

It will be recalled that the execution was originally fixed for Tuesday, November 21. The night before he wrote:—

"I have been told that I am to be shot to-morrow at seven. I am fully prepared. I think it is best so, viewing it from the biggest standpoint. To have followed those other brave lads is a great thing for a great cause. It is such a simple thing, too, a soldier's death.

"Oh," he goes on, "will this nation soon understand and pay reverence to what actuates our comrades in the cause? I feel it will. If only I can die knowing that my death would somehow—I know not how—save the lives of others and arrest this policy of executions.

"Serenity, serenity. Yes, I have that at last, if never before. *Equanimitas!* What an infinity that expresses! Faith, hope, holiness, resignation, and good will to all. I die full of intense love for Ireland.

"I DIE LOVING ENGLAND."

"I hope one day my good name will be cleared in England. I felt what Churchill said about my 'hatred and malice' against England. How well we know it was not true! What line I ever wrote or spoke justifies that charge? I die loving England and passionately praying that she may change completely and finally towards Ireland."

A few hours later the same night he wrote:—

"My execution is postponed. That is all I know. It may be merely a postponement for a day when I would far rather it came at once if it were to come. How strange it all seems. I think of those four lads (the first four to be executed) and of the eight unknown linked with me in this postponing business.

"Oh, I hope that it is understood that my honour is unsullied; that I refused to act alone, and that it is by direction and orders I have acted at all, for the right as well, as it was by direction in the Black-and-Tan war in capital cases.

"At my trial it was definitely stated that I was not to recognise the court and that no *habeas corpus* action was to be brought on my behalf, the test to be made in another case. The same evening came news of the four secret executions and the eight unknown men. It changed the situation, for there was no possibility of a test save on my specific case."

"MY BELOVED COUNTRY."

He dismissed the day which was to

have been that of his execution with the comment, "Another day of waiting and meditation."

But writing on November 22, he returns to the court proceedings, and again emphasises the fact that *habeas corpus* proceedings were only taken in his case because he was the only prisoner whose name was known. He was jealous—that it should not be thought that he had sought preferential treatment. Then he adds:—

"In case I should forget, I wish to say that my treatment while under sentence here has been very considerate and courteous—commandant, officers and men of the guards, and all. Nothing to complain of; on the contrary, within the range of things allowed—food, writing material, papers, and so forth—I have been given whatever I asked for. It has made a vast difference. Everything that bridges this ghastly gulf between the armies is to the good, and I hope to God nothing has been conceded to me which is not to others."

Then comes the night before the execution, and he tells how his day guard going off duty crowd round him to say good-bye and God bless you, and I to them: They wanted souvenirs, but I have very few—some books and some signatures. So we, children of the universal mother, touch hands and go our ways in the very midst of the horror of this war of brothers."

Then comes the final letter, written in the early hours of Friday last, when he was expecting death at seven o'clock.

"My beloved country," he wrote, "God send you courage, victory, and rest, and to all our people harmony and love."

"It is 6 a.m. You will be pleased to see how imperturbably normal and tranquil I have been this night and am. It all seems perfectly simple and inevitable, like falling down after a long day's work."

As I have already told, he was to have been shot at seven o'clock, but because the morning was dark and dismal the execution was delayed till just before eight, when, behind the barrack in which he had been a prisoner, he faced the firing squad, having with him the rosary which had been especially blessed and had lain in the coffin of Cathal Brugha, the Republican leader killed in the Dublin fighting in July, and a crucifix especially blessed and sent to him by Father Albert, "Our Locket," as he wrote to his wife.

THE REBEL PLOTTERS

STREET HOLD-UP BY TROOPS IN DUBLIN.

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

DUBLIN, Friday.
I have already explained that the authorities are well aware of the presence in the capital of a number of men from the South charged with the execu-

tion of the rebels. How well we know it was not true! What line I ever wrote or spoke justifies that charge? I die loving England and passionately praying that she may change completely and finally towards Ireland."

A few hours later the same night he wrote:—

"My execution is postponed. That is all I know. It may be merely a postponement for a day when I would far rather it came at once if it were to come. How strange it all seems. I think of those four lads (the first four to be executed) and of the eight unknown linked with me in this postponing business.

"Oh, I hope that it is understood that my honour is unsullied; that I refused to act alone, and that it is by direction and orders I have acted at all, for the right as well, as it was by direction in the Black-and-Tan war in capital cases.

"At my trial it was definitely stated that I was not to recognise the court and that no *habeas corpus* action was to be brought on my behalf, the test to be made in another case. The same evening came news of the four secret executions and the eight unknown men. It changed the situation, for there was no possibility of a test save on my specific case."

"MY BELOVED COUNTRY."

He dismissed the day which was to

^{xii} Newspaper Clipping (photo) _Dated Dec 13th 1922. Tragedy of Irish Politics – The Execution of Rory O'Connor was defended in the Dail by Kevin O'Higgins. Rory O'Connor was best man at Mr. O'Higgins's wedding now a year ago, and de Valera was a guest.



^{xiii} 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.

^{xiv} 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