

Irish Flay Collins for Treaty Negotiations

Eighth installment of "Michael Collins' Own Story," is presented today to readers of The Omaha Sunday Bee.

Love of country, instilled while yet a boy, was the outstanding characteristic of the young Irish leader, who, through an American newspaper correspondent, has bared the facts of Erin's struggle for freedom never before revealed. Final chapters of the narrative were given the correspondent shortly before Collins' assassination.

How the Easter week uprising, instead of being an ignominious failure, became a spur to Irish loyalty because England treated the disturbance seriously has been explained in previous installments.

Erskine Childers' asinine scheme to get England to consent to a "hands off" policy toward Ireland, deporta-

tions of Sinn Feiners, Boland's devotion to De Valera and the Sinn Fein convention in October, 1917, also have been detailed.

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By HAYDEN TALBOT.
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CHAPTER XVI—(Continued)

"Before that first conference of Griffith and I realized what we must expect from those men and women with whom all through the years we had fought the fight for Irish freedom. From colleagues they had suddenly changed into enemies. And yet then—as always ever since—Griffith and I hoped against hope that we could persuade them."

"It is all very well for critics of the policy which Griffith and I adopted to declare that this minority should not have been met by kid glove methods—but the Irish people needed and still need unity above any other one thing—and unity is not to be achieved by killing all those whose opinions make unity impossible. Harmony does not spring from murder. There are few men in the world whom you can bring to your point of view by knocking them down."

"Griffith and I held that the most honest and sane treaty was the first act of which was played in Dublin in 1912, when Henry II of England compelled Ireland's trial kings to swear fealty to him. But the little group of men and women facing us in the Mansion House held a different opinion."

"They told us—and for the most part they were sincere—that the treaty we had signed was the most infamous document any Irishman ever signed; that every martyr's widow and most of the army leaders considered we were guilty of treason. It was our duty, they said, to hold the floor, and had their say, but finally I had my chance."

"I told them that the treaty was not a surrender, but a declaration of independence. It was a declaration that Ireland was no longer a part of the British Empire, but a free nation. It was a declaration that Ireland was no longer a colony, but a sovereign state. It was a declaration that Ireland was no longer a subject, but a citizen of the world."

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Valera as their leader. They applauded him when he told them, 'We have counted the cost, and we shall not quit even though the full price of our freedom has to be paid.' Brave words, truly! Applauded, certainly! But reason was yet to prevail.

"Brugh told us in one of the secret sessions that we had fallen to the magic of Lloyd George. Mrs. Markievicz held us in scorn because we had proved ourselves incapable of matching words with the Welsh wizard."

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Among the supporters of the treaty are almost as great as the gulf that separates the free state party as a whole and the republican party. There is an unbridgeable chasm between the uncompromising extremists of the radical wing of the republican party and its moderate adherents.

"The Valera is a moderate at heart. An idealist, he is at the same time less radical than many of his followers. Proof of this can be adduced. To do so I shall lift a corner of the veil of secrecy that covered the three-hour conference that took place just before the opening of the Ard Fheis between the leaders of the two parties."

"The army as a whole and still a part of the army has no moral right to declare itself independent of all civil authority in the country. Such a claim is subversive of all civil liberty."

"The army, more than any other order in society, from the nature of its institution, is the servant of the nation's government. We appeal in the name of God, of Ireland and of all Ireland's dignity, to the leaders on both sides, civil and military, to meet again, to remember old fellowship in danger and suffering, and if they cannot agree upon the main question at all events—that the use of the revolver must cease, and the elections, the national expression of self-determination, be allowed to be held free from all violence."

"To this appeal Griffith and I responded wholeheartedly. The result is known by the world. The military executive that was set up in the Four Courts was the answer of the army to the appeal."

"When a majority has struggled for 750 years against subjection, it is perhaps not strange that the one dominating characteristic of such a people should be a certain and moderate antagonism. And antagonism has come to be an ingrained quality of many Irishmen."

"Among ourselves, in the 26 counties there is hardly less of antagonism between the labor group and those not so labeled than there is between the so-called republicans and those who support the treaty. The arrangement with the British government has removed Ireland's one great inspiration for unity and has made many Irishmen forget that after we are every one of us—republican, extremist and moderate free states, radical laborite and idealistic separatist—Irish."

Michael Collins thus introduced his narrative of the two years' reign of violence in Belfast—some night while he lay ill at the house of a friend in Dublin. He told me the story only after he had become convinced of the uselessness of further conferences with Sir James Craig.

"Mistaking the means for the end is perhaps the greatest blunder a man can make," he continued. "Unhappily it is a blunder of which many Irishmen are guilty. In some instances fighting for freedom has come to mean fighting for fighting's sake. Bringing the victims of this delusion to realize their folly constitutes the gravest problem confronting the Free State government. For it is this spirit of suspicion and hostility animating opposing groups of Irishmen that has largely responsible for the situation in Ulster. If unity is impossible among us, how can we expect understanding and reconciliation with Ulster?"

"The semblance of unity which we managed to manufacture at the recent session of the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis was artificial in the sense that it was but temporary expedient, but it would be a mistake to imagine for a moment that that unity would not become very real and absolutely effective if either Britain or Ulster attempted to take advantage of any apparent split between the largely opposing groups. It has always been so in Ireland. Enemies of today are brothers in arms tomorrow—instantly an outsider seeks to exploit either to his own end."

"I have every reason to believe, however, that neither Britain nor Ulster has any thought of trading on our disunion. Those of us who negotiated the treaty are convinced of the good faith of the English signatories. This in itself precludes the possibility of any aggressive action on the part of either. While the wall inevitably shows Belfast the way, the bitterest our quarrel becomes the more virtuous will be the attitude of both Britain and Ulster."

In the light of subsequent events this prophecy is of unusual interest, insofar as it proves the great insight of the Irish leader. At the time he gave me this interview, news of the outbreak of the civil war in southern Ireland had just broken in Ulster, caused as it by English troops. I shall say no more of the situation in Ulster, therefore, I want to emphasize the one fact that is worthy of more than any other—the decision that exists within our own parties. Inevitably of opinion

"At that conference De Valera and Stack met Griffith and me in an attempt to find a common ground on which to appeal to the 2,600 Sinn Fein delegates for unity. As I think I have already made plain there is no follower of De Valera—not even exopting Cathal Brugha—more bitterly hostile to the treaty than Abin Stacks."

"Yet an agreement was reached—and reached in the face of Stack's stout opposition. To prove De Valera's moderation it is necessary to reproduce a portion of our discussion in the conference."

"I have a clear majority of 600 in that Ard Fheis," said De Valera. "You have not," I told him. "Stack intimated that their majority was quite 600—and a blind man could have seen the chip on his shoulder."

"You're wrong," I told them. "And before they could say anything further I showed them how wrong they were. I told them they had a majority of more than a thousand!"

"In spite of this admission of mine we reached an agreement not to take the vote which I acknowledged would see us beaten by two to one. The reason De Valera consented to forego this victory was simple. He knew that Ard Fheis was as typical of the Irish nation as Tammany hall is typical of New York state. As well expect Tammany to endorse the republican candidate for president as to expect the Ard Fheis to vote to disestablish the Irish republic."

"A vote in the Ard Fheis would leave the situation in the country unchanged. No good could come from taking a vote then. I drove the point home with a paraphrase of the alleged threat of Mr. Lloyd George (which he never avoided) of 'immediate and terrible war.'"

"If you force the issue here I told De Valera, it will mean that we shall be taken to the country and have an immediate and terrible election."

"Even Stack snubbed. But his opposition to any kind of agreement was not in the least abated. He was still dissatisfied even after De Valera had managed to persuade us to postpone the general election for three months. That agreement was popularly supposed to be a victory for De Valera. Actually it earned him the displeasure of all the extremists among his followers. His moderation, as then expressed, accounts for the ascendancy today of Tor O'Connell."

"De Valera recently qualified an earlier statement of his by saying that whereas he had stood on the rock of the republic he now felt he held a stronger position in that he was standing on the rock of Sinn Fein. The truth is he knows that rejection of the treaty will not bring the republic in its practical being any more than it has ever been a practical entity. He knows, moreover, that the republican ideal is as dear to us who support the treaty as it is to himself."

"He knows the achievement of that complete independence which a recognition of the republic would bring to Ireland is much more nearly certain of being won through the medium of the treaty than by its rejection. He knows that we who oppose him will work to make Ireland strong enough to declare her independence—strong enough to force world recognition of her status as a sovereign state."

"Says Craig Powerless"

"He knows these things—but his followers do not."

"I have given into this purely domestic business in order the more clearly to set forth the actual facts regarding the situation of Ulster. For, outwardly though, there is a perfect parallel there."

"Sir James Craig is powerless to control his followers. The madmen responsible for the bloody warfare in southern Ulster in Belfast and elsewhere throughout the north and south counties have gone about their slaughtering with complete disregard of their own authorities. They are continuing their murdering with absolute impunity."

"Final installment of 'Michael Collins' Own Story' will appear in The Omaha Sunday Bee, next Sunday."

Brother and Sisters at Grave of Collins



At the grave of Michael Collins at burial in Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin, were his sisters, one a nun, and a brother, a priest (center).

denationalizing influence of Anglicization.

"The task before us, having got rid of the British, is to get rid of the remaining influences—to denationalize ourselves."

"It is no restriction nor limitation in the treaty that will prevent our nation from becoming great and potent. The presence of a representative of the British crown—depending upon us for his resources—cannot prevent us from doing that. The words of a document as to what our status is cannot prevent us from doing that."

Opportunity to Make Good

"One thing only can prevent us—and that is disunion among ourselves. Can we not concentrate and unite not on the negative, but on the positive task of making a real Ireland—a nation of our own?"

"The only way to get rid of the British contamination and the evils of corrupt materialism is to secure a united Ireland intent on democratic ways, to make our free Ireland a fact, and not to keep it forever in dreamland as something that will never come true, and which has no practical effect or reality except as giving rise to everlasting fighting and destruction. Destructive conflict seems almost to have become the end itself in the minds of some."

"In those early days of the year we clung hopefully to the belief that our political opponents must sooner or later cease their opposition and accept the will of the people which was daily becoming more and more overwhelmingly in favor of the treaty."

"At that time Ireland was perhaps the only country in Europe which had living hopes of a better civilization. We had an unparalleled opportunity of making good. Much was within our grasp. Who could lay a finger on our liberties?"

"But he knew more than this. He knew that Ireland's freedom was absolutely dependent on the good will of Britain. He made us know it! He made us see the common sense of entering into friendly relations—a course dictated, if by nothing else, by the instinct of self-preservation. He put clearly before us the irrefutable fact that our economic interests are identical. It was our task to convince our people that these were the facts!"

"To many Irishmen the treaty had come as a crushing disappointment. There is no gainsaying it. They had believed that in some magical way the use of the delegation would be able to make possible the youth and regeneration of the Gaelic state on a stupendous scale. Anything less than this seemed impossible to accept. Yet we could not forever live in dreamland, or 'The reality of the situation had to be made plain from Cahal down to Kerry. Griffith voiced the urgent need of unity on the part of all sections of the Irish nation in raising the structure and shaping the destiny of our new free state. And slowly the people began to understand."

Difficulty Not in Treaty

"The Valera at first insisted that the treaty would never be accepted by the people. He declared that 'The terms of this agreement are in violent conflict with the wishes of the majority of the nation.' Little by little he began to realize that this was not the case."

"But in the initial stages of the fight within the cabinet De Valera and his followers seemed incapable of making a pliable compromise."

"His difficulty there—as it is still—was to make plain to the people that the task of making a viable Irish Ireland lies in the people themselves. It cannot be stated too often that our people for hundreds of years have been subjected to

escape would be forsooth to fall upon."

"The point was—how to nominate the lucky 30. Every one of us knew in his heart that our return to the army meant more to Ireland than that of any other man! That was only human, of course. The selection was not safely to be left in our hands. Only someone less self-interested ought to name the 30."

"Among ourselves we discussed our various leaders—to find one upon whose judgment we could all rely. Brugh, as titular head of the army, was objected to by many of us. De Valera likewise was proposed. Not one man of the 1,200 had any objections to him. And so we left our fate in his hands. We did it because we had implicit trust in him."

"The little story was told me by Desmond Fitzgerald several months after the signing of the treaty. I told it here to make clear the hold Collins had on all classes of Irishmen. But in the case of De Valera there was also a kind of blind faith on the part of hundreds of thousands of Irish people which accounted for his very real power in the Dail Eireann."

"The campaign being waged by the uncompromising republicans," Collins said at one of our last conferences, "had its beginnings in the bitter fight in the early sessions of the Dail."

De Valera Is Unmovable

"De Valera would not head the delegation that went to London. Every member of the cabinet and every Teachta of the Dail Eireann wanted him to conduct the treaty negotiations, and many of us pleaded with him not to remain behind. But he was unmovable. The reason he gave was two-fold. First, he said, it was beneath his dignity as president of the Irish republic to leave his country; and, second, he could not afford to put himself in a position in which he might do his nation irreparable harm by a chance word across the man of the hour. He insisted his value to the Irish people would be greatest by remaining in Dublin, and from that distance guide us in our task."

"I, for one, accepted what he said as being his sincere belief—although I differed from him. But he persisted in forcing us to present to the British delegation Document No. 2—after we had told him time and again that it meant the breaking off of the negotiations."

"De Valera's Alternative contained very little that was not in the treaty, and little that England could have objected to, but for that very reason our insistence on its unapproved refusal our insistence, and the De Burgos became absorbed. The old unionists, home rulers, revolutionists—and now the uncompromising republicans—we had to have them all. We are still at it. If with each passing week our efforts seem to be more and more futile, at least it will not be because those of us enlisted in the cause of an Irish Ireland have not used every means in our power to put an end to internecine conflict."

"We had seen our freedom. But next we had to consolidate our gains—to prove ourselves worthy of the victory. The fight must go on until it is won. It will go on until law and order have been established in every square mile of the 32 counties. To that we have dedicated ourselves."

CHAPTER XVII

There were 1,200 of us in the internment camp. Almost every man of the lot had done his share in digging the tunnel through which a few of us would be able to make our escape. By mutual agreement this number was fixed at 15. If a greater number attempted it the

its authorship. But this is relatively unimportant."

"As to the differences between the treaty and this alternative, there is, for instance, the definite stipulation in Document No. 2 for Britain's ratification of the alternative. And had he in hand with that fact is De Valera's vehement protest against the British conferring on us of the rights and powers of the treaty."

Vagueness of Document No. 2

"Under certain clauses of the alternative Ireland is committed to an association so vague that it might afford grounds for claims by Britain which might give her an opportunity to press for control in Irish affairs as 'common concerns,' and to use or to threaten to use force."

"The Irish people would never have agreed to commit themselves to anything so vague. We know that there are many things which the states of the British Commonwealth can afford to regard as 'common concerns' which we could not afford to regard—one of the disadvantages of geographical proximity."

"We had to find some form of association which would safeguard us—as far as we could be safeguarded—in some of the same degree as the 3,000 miles of ocean safeguard Canada."

"The Valera knew when he accepted the British prime minister's invitation to discuss association with the British Commonwealth that that meant association of a different kind from that of mere alliance of isolated nations."

"More than that, the association of the treaty was equivocal than the association proposed in Document No. 2. The external association mentioned in Document No. 2 had neither the honesty of complete isolation—a questionable advantage in these days of warlike nationalism—nor the strength of free partnership satisfying the different partners. Such external association was not practical politics."

"The Valera and Childers labored long over the framing of an oath which they knew had to be incorporated in an agreement that would be acceptable to Britain. Their first essay read as follows:

Oath Shelved for Another

"That for the purposes of the association Ireland shall recognize his Britannic majesty as head of the association."

"Here surely is recognition as that given to the treaty, but it met with such disapproval that De Valera and Childers shelved it in favor of another, namely:

"I do swear to bear true faith and allegiance in the constitution of Ireland and in the treaty of association with the British Commonwealth of Nations and to recognize the king of Great Britain as head of the associated states."

This alternative oath was discussed in the Dail for many long weary days—in private sessions De Valera attempted to explain that the king of Great Britain might fairly be regarded as a managing director—a mere name in common usage these days when industrial concerns are amalgamating and entering into agreements."

"The king of Great Britain would thus occupy the same relative position towards the associated states as a managing director occupies towards associated businesses. Now, a managing director is one who manages and directs."

"Whatever the practical value of moral prerogatives to modern democratic nations is managed and directed by one ruler. The task of a managing director was as unbecomingly as it was dishonest."

"Throughout the 'Shelved document' Document No. 2 there are dangerous fraction spots—which obviously were to be avoided by any one with Ireland's interests at heart."

"Ireland being the weaker nation, could not fail to suffer if a misleading clause had to be interpreted. As for the defense clauses, I have already told how De Valera and Childers gave way to England on the only point that really mattered—agreement not to build submarines."

"It would not do for them to say submarines would be of no use to us. Childers, with his experience in the royal navy, knows better. I cannot believe De Valera is so ignorant as not to know better, and he believes what I have told him more than once he does know better."

Advantages of Treaty Are Lost

"But before going into tire-some details, I want to state again that from beginning to end this document is for the most part a repetition of the treaty—with only such slight verbal alterations as no one but a fanatic would have dreamed of wrecking the treaty for."

"As an improvement in the treaty, Document No. 2 is not honest. It may have been more dictatorial in language. But it does not contain in principle a greater reconciliation with Irish national aspirations."

"It merely sought to attach a fresh label to the same parcel, or, rather, a label written of purpose illegitimately in the hope of making believe that the parcel was other than it is."

"Let a world who stands by now and expresses scorn of a people who permit outrages to be practiced upon them by a minority understand that this is not fair to the Irish people."

"Let the world remember that there have been only brief intervals between long periods of starvation—periods in which we could reflect upon our condition and awaken to the cause of our misery. The presence of the English had deprived us of life and liberty."

"An infamous machine was destroying us. Now that it has gone, the ravaging effects remain. No."

Fiancee of Collins Will Take the Veil

Miss Kitty Kiernan

Revealed by the assassination of her fiance, Michael Collins, head of the Irish free state, Miss Kitty Kiernan is to enter a convent and take the vows of a nun, according to her cousin, Francis O'Reilly, who has arrived in America.

national consciousness is not an overnight growth. Of patriotic fervor there is no lack, but a people must be schooled for generations to know how effectively to put their patriotism to practical ends."

"The history of 750 years must be reversed before we shall know the meaning of national freedom. And first of all we must acquire the habit of standing together. Already to a large degree the advantages of the treaty have been irretrievably lost."

"Our very national life is being threatened by this continued disunion. The country is too small to stand a big cleavage in the national ranks."

"When, during the treaty, King Edward issued the order making it a criminal offense for an Irishman to be in possession of arms, it was held to be the deathblow to our fight for freedom. Yet, today we are faced with a greater military time—disunity among ourselves."