

# AN T-ÓSLÁC

REGISTERED]

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE ARMY.

[NEWSPAPER.

Vol. IV. No. 12 (New Series).

AUGUST 26, 1922.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## The Dead Chief

It is difficult to write calmly of an event that moves such deep emotions as the death of our Commander-in-Chief, Micheal O Coileain, but it is no exaggeration, no impulsive or emotional declaration, to say that his death is the greatest blow that Ireland has sustained in all her sad history. This is only the more reason why we who knew and loved Micheal, who understood what he meant to Ireland, should not lose our heads at the present juncture, but should endeavour to carry on the work just as he would have wished it done, patiently, courageously, energetically, until Ireland of the Sorrows has attained that peace and freedom which he gave his life's best effort to secure.

To those of us who were privileged by intimacy with Micheal during the time when the agents of the Terror were raking up Dublin for him, he will always be "the Big Man." It was our favourite nickname for him, and no name was ever more obviously appropriate. He was big in body, big in mind and big in heart. There was no room in his large, expansive nature for small passions, narrow prejudices, petty vanities and selfishnesses such as have caused misguided men to turn our Ireland into a land of blood, ashes and tears. Where they thought of their petty jealousies and vanities, their formulas and face-saving, he thought of Ireland. He knew and loved the plain people of Ireland; he was at home with the coalheaver of the Coombe and the Carbery fisherman, for he knew that these men were Ireland. No army ever had a chief who had so fine an appreciation of the men under his command. In one of my last interviews with him, his conversation, cheery and confident as ever, turned on the soldiers of the National Army. "Aren't the boys great?" he said. Both in this fight and in the fighting with the British he always loved to note and chronicle any act of heroism, any clever stroke by any man or men in the Army. It will cheer the men and officers of the National Army in this hour of sorrow to hear the verdict of the dead Commander-in-Chief on the way they fought—"The boys are wonderful!"

As one of the founders of the Volunteers, as the officer with longest service in the whole Army, as one who served on G.H.Q. for four years with Micheal, I have no hesitation in endorsing the

tribute of President Griffith to him—"the man who won the war." Himself a miracle of energy and efficiency, he had the power of inspiring energy and efficiency in others. He would be the first to admit that success was rendered possible by the loyalty, courage and efficiency of others—and he would particularly insist on the credit due to those who served in an humble capacity—but it is none the less true that all who served from the highest to the lowest felt the inspiration of his energy and courage. To-day many feel in the mood interpreted by Davis in his "Lament for Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill":—"Sure we never won a battle; 'twas Eoghan won them all."

It is hard to believe that the inspiration he gave us will die with himself. For all the officers and men of the National Army in the midst of their grief at this tragic blow there is one thing to do. Let them banish from their minds all hate and bitterness, all futile recriminations and passions, and say only to themselves in a spirit of high and holy resolve:—"May I give just such loyal service to Ireland as the 'Big Man' would wish. May I, in my small way, be as faithful, as unflinching, as energetic, and as generous as himself." If they find it hard to say this—and human nature being what it is, it is hard not to feel bitterness against the misguided men who are seeking to engulf Ireland in ruin to satisfy their feeble vanity—I will give them these words from a private letter of Micheal's, written to a dear personal friend, only a few days before his death, which I am permitted to publish:—"Anybody who is out for blood or scalps is of little use to the country; equally, of course, the real issue cannot be departed from."

This was typical of the brave and generous spirit of our late Commander-in-Chief. "The real issue cannot be departed from." The real issue is whether the Irish people are to be masters in their own house or not. Micheal was not the man to shrink from stern measures when necessary. He stood for things during the late war for which others, now opposed to us, shrunk from accepting responsibility. He would have preferred to see the will of the people prevail without bloodshed. If that were impossible he preferred a minimum of bloodshed. But whatever happened he was determined that the will of the Irish people would prevail, and, in his own words, that "Ireland would get a chance." It is for us all, acting in the spirit of his noble, manly and generous career to ensure that Ireland gets a chance. The officers and men of the National Army will do their best, as far as is possible, to carry out the task entrusted to them, just as their beloved Commander-in-Chief would have wished it done. "The boys are wonderful!"

PIARAS BEASLAI.

# AN T-ÓGLÁC

AUGUST 26, 1922.

## The Army's Great Loss

General Michael Collins, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, has died as he lived—a brave and dauntless soldier.

His life was an inspiration and sustaining force to Irish soldiers during the dark days of the terror.

His bravery in death leaves a memory that will long be cherished in the hearts of every true Irish soldier.

Brave, gallant, gayest of Irish soldiers, he faced death, as he faced duty, unflinchingly, and with a courage born of unwavering faith in the high cause he espoused.

While we mourn deeply the loss of our greatest soldier and leader, we are proud of the splendid and heroic gesture with which he yielded up his fearless soul to its Maker.

Ireland has already appraised his life and work at its real worth.

The completion of the great task he had in hand falls to the Army of to-day. He championed the rule of the people over and above all. He gave his life that this sacred and immortal principle should be safeguarded in our own land and amongst our own people.

To the Army of to-day falls the duty of bringing the hopes and aspirations of General Michael Collins to fruition.

This will be our greatest and most enduring tribute to the memory of the dead chief.

In the creation of the young and resurgent Gaelic nation he visualised we perpetuate his work.

In the emulation of his fine soldierly qualities, and the prosecution of his noble purpose, we carry on the traditions he has left to the Army of which he more than any other, was the founder, architect, and most heroic soldier.

## More "Chivalry"

### A DESPICABLE ACT.

The Irregulars must be hard set for good opinions when they print a testimonial to their chivalry from Mr. Erskine Childers.

A farm-looter's ideas of chivalry differ so radically from those of the average "materialist" that we shall not be surprised if one of these days he treats us to a eulogy of the creatures who did Lieut. Commandant Cregan to death in exceptionally barbarous circumstances on Sunday last.

The deceased officer, with a party of seven men, were ambushed near Liscarroll by a force of sixty Irregulars. At the first volley Commandant Cregan was badly wounded, but his men leaped from the car to engage their assailants, the driver remaining behind with the wounded officer.

The troops were compelled to retreat before superior numbers; and the Irregulars coming up, took the driver prisoner, and then set the car on fire while Commandant Cregan was still in it.

Later the driver succeeded in escaping from his captors, and made his way back to the scene of the ambush. Rescuing the dying officer from the burning car, he laid him by the roadside, where in a few moments he expired.

Mr. Childers may be able to find yet another high-sounding word in his remarkable vocabulary to gild this exploit; we, in our hopeless lack of idealism, can only call it fiendish.

## Unnatural Exultation

The most astounding feature of the present campaign against the liberties of the Irish people is the news-sheet published by the Irregulars. That any body of Irishmen could endure to have its policy promulgated and its actions chronicled by a paper which so openly glories—nay, delights—in the slaughter of fellow-Irishmen, seems absolutely incredible.

It is a sad feature of our history that Irishmen have often had to take violently opposite stand-points over their national affairs, and sometimes even have had to shed each other's blood. But hitherto it has been regarded as a most painful necessity, and no side has ever found in it any cause for jubilation.

We did not give way to unmanly exultation over the deaths of members of the British forces who fell fighting against our freedom.

To-day we feel nothing but sorrow for those who have lost their lives in their misguided action against their country.

The Irregulars' sheet, however, cannot contain its glee when it has National Army casualties to report.

The brave soldiers who are fighting for the supremacy of Dail Eireann and the Irish people are referred to as "the enemy," and every loss they suffer is recorded with unmixed satisfaction.

We are at a loss to understand this unholy gloating over the shedding of Irish blood. Can it be that the editor of the sheet in question is a member of the race that has already spilt it so freely? or is he an Irishman who has dipped his pen in gall to prove us mistaken in releasing him as harmless?

## The Irregulars' Aims

Mr. Ernest O'Malley's recent letter to the "Independent" contains certain definite statements which can be categorically contradicted.

(1) "The Irregulars are engaged in a 'just and holy' war 'in defence of the Republic.'" This is a mis-statement. The Parliament of the Republic ratified a Treaty with Great Britain, and the Irregulars have gone into insurrection against its authority.

(2) "At the recent elections the people voted for the pact and peace, not for the Treaty." This is false. The people voted, not for the pact, but for the Treaty, as is proved by the fact that in nearly all the contested constituencies the anti-Treaty candidates lost their seats to Independent candidates.

(3) "The Dail was not consulted before this war was launched." Quite true. The Irregular leaders did not consult An Dail before they seized Irish public buildings, looted Irish property, kidnapped an Irish General, and notified England that the Truce made with her by An Dail was at an end.

(4) "The people who accepted the Treaty did so because they thought it would give peace." This statement is inconsistent with point 2. But it is true, and merely serves to demonstrate the wickedness of the Irregulars' action. They admit the people want peace, and they therefore give them war.

(5) "The Irregulars are not taking any measures not recognised in war." Is it a war measure to attempt to starve the civil population by such means as were employed recently in the Dublin area? Or to cut off the water supplies of towns and cities as planned by Mr. Enright? Or to fire on the Red Cross and dress up soldiers as Red Cross nurses?

This point also mentions that the Irregulars are serving without pay. What then has become of the thousands of pounds looted from banks, and the goods looted from shops? It is now a notorious fact that many Irregulars have retired into private life as wealthy citizens.

The letter, as it appeared in the "Independent," had been blue-pencilled by the editor. Mr. Childers' propaganda sheet now supplies the blanks, which are nothing less than a threat of assassination against the editor and proprietors of the journal. Would this be called a "war-measure" by the new idealists?

## Summary of Events

AUGUST 14th TO AUGUST 20th, 1922.

The past week has been marked by an exceptional number of important events. In the numerous engagements that have been fought, the National Troops have been almost invariably successful; the Irregulars have nowhere made any determined stand; and their one counter-attack, though temporarily it achieved its object, was quickly turned to disaster. Every day has produced fresh evidence that the Irregulars' policy of destruction has forfeited any sympathy they may have anywhere enjoyed; and, wherever the Troops have gone, they have been overwhelmed by demonstrations of popular enthusiasm. Nor are signs lacking that the people are determined that they will no longer be passive onlookers at the destruction of their property; and in many places they have already taken successful action to prevent it. The growing demoralisation of the Irregulars, resulting from their recurring defeats and from their sense that the people are against them, is well illustrated by a letter written on Saturday by some of the lesser "officers" imprisoned in Customs Barracks, who recognise the criminality and futility of their recent action, and denounce the political and military folly of those who led them into it.

The outstanding feature of the week has been the sweeping success of the Munster drive. Town after town has fallen, and the only serious obstacle to the troops has been the destruction of roads by the retreating mutineers. In a few cases, notably at Killarney, there has been some outpost skirmishing, always with the same result. In this way Buttevant, Charleville, Killarney, Cahir and Fethard have fallen; Macroom was taken owing to a dispute among the Irregulars leading to the disbandment of the garrison; and Kenmare fell to a surprise attack from the sea, the leader of the mutineers being made prisoner. The greatest success of all came at the end of the week, Fermoy, Mallow, Mitchelstown, Newmarket, and Kanturk being captured on the same day. Minor incidents worthy of mention in this area were the discovery by the National Troops, in a raid in Cork City, of some artillery in course of manufacture by the Irregulars; the capture of large quantities of arms, ammunition and armoured cars nearby; the failure of an ambush near Tralee, and the wreck of a goods train near Killurin, owing to the removal of a rail by the Irregulars.

On the 15th the Irregulars recommenced action against Leinster by a sudden swoop on Dundalk. The garrison of National Troops, taken by surprise, fought hard, but eventually were overwhelmed by numbers and forced to surrender. A few who still held out in the gaol were induced to capitulate by a device which reflects little credit on the humanity of the Irregulars. The National soldiers wounded

in the fight (some score in number) were lying in agony on the street, and the Irregular leader refused to allow them to be removed to hospital until he had received the surrender of their comrades. Dundalk secured; the Irregulars advanced on Dunleer, whence the National garrison retired on Drogheda. The success of the mutineers was short-lived. Next day the National Forces advanced from Drogheda in strength, drove the Irregulars before them and re-entered Dundalk, taking eighty prisoners.

Dublin was comparatively quiet this week. Only a couple of small ambushes broke the calm, the sufferers in each case being civilians, chiefly women. A melancholy feature of the streets all through this period has been the constant stream of funerals bearing the bodies of our fallen soldiers to Glasnevin.

Wednesday week saw what was probably the most impressive funeral pageant in our history, when the mortal remains of President Griffith were carried to their last resting-place amid the sorrow of the whole nation.

The Wexford County Council's peace resolution received a stiff reply from Professor MacNeill on the 16th inst. Dealing with their suggestions categorically, he pointed out that the initiative in this struggle lay with the Irregulars, whose deliberate attempt to paralyse the economic life of the country and to make government impossible had made forcible action by the Government inevitable. A meeting of the Dail would not help the chance of peace. Had the County Council any guarantee that it would not be used by the minority to further their policy of paralysing Dail Eireann? It was vain to discuss peace until the policy of paralysing the country was clearly and completely renounced and abandoned.

Force was given to this answer by the simultaneous publication of some documents captured at Kinvara on Mr. Enright, "Chief Field Engineering Inspector" of the Irregulars. These revealed plans for intensive war on the civil population by the destruction of water, gas and electricity supplies, in addition to such things as military necessity might possibly justify.

The week was brought to a close by the capture of Middleton and Bantry. The existing military situation is reviewed by the Army Publicity Department as follows:—

"A glance at the map is sufficient to indicate that the towns which have been described by the Irregulars as their special strongholds, upon which they were retiring according to plan, and where their forces were to concentrate and put up a powerful stand against the troops, have one by one been abandoned. The area in occupation of the Irregulars has grown appreciably smaller, and within this area there is no town or point of strategic importance held by them. Simultaneously with the advance of the troops in the Northern sector, the force which landed at Youghal,

## Micheal O Coileain

Tá leomhan an airm ar lár. I gcómharsanacht a pharóiste dúthchais féin, ag bun "Bán chnoc Eireann," i gCorcaigh a ghrádh, do thuit sé.

Bhí na cnuic seo ar an gcéad radharc ar ar fhéach súile a naoidheachta. Ar na cnocaibh seo ba ghnáth leis dul ag aeridheacht ag lorg aoibhnis agus draoidheachta na tuaithe tráth bhí sé na gharsún óg agus an croí-lán de dhóchas na hóige. Chun na gcnoc so do theitheadh smaointe an deorú le mian agus le dúil ag lorg an sámh shóláis abhí le fagháil 'na measg i gcómhnuí. Agus 'na luidhe imeasg na gcnoc so thug sé a fhéachaint deireannach ar na spéirthibh, na sléibhte agus na coillte do ghrádhugh sé le fíor ghrádh an Ghael; agus, do deargadh glas an fhéir taobh leis le fuil te an chroidhe mhóir. Bímís cinnte gur minic 'na sheasamh dó ar an mbáil so do deineadh an sean thaidhbhreamh úd do, Gaeil ag troid i gcoinne námhad na Fódla, i gcath na saoirse ar na cnocaibh agus is na gleanntaibh mór thimcheall. Nárbh uasal glórmhar an rud é bás dfhagháil i dtroid den tsórt san. Agus bás i dtroid ar mhaoilinn an chnuic a bhí indán dó. Lag an coinne abhí ag aoinne, ámh, gur ab iad Gael a "Corcaighe Caidhe" d'imreóchadh an bás úd air. Mo léan géar, sin domblas agus seirbhe an sgéil agus 'sí an fhirinne ghránda úd is mo ghoilleann ar chroí trom na tíre indiu. Ní gall ná eachtranach do sgaoil an urchar marbthach; do fágadh an bheart úd fé dhuine da chine féin, agus mar bhárr ar an gcineamhaint muna mbeadh misneach agus árd shaothar Mhíchíl sé is dóichíge ná beadh i gcumas an duine úd urchar do chaitheamh anois. Sin do dheineann a bhás chomh do fhulangthach.

D'éag sé shar a raibh sé d' uain aige críoch ceart do chur ar mór obair na tíre. Tá uraim ag cách dá thaisbáint dá ainm indiu. Más mian linn fíor onóir do thabhairt dá chuimhne ní mór dúinn leanúint do'n obair. Críochnú na hoibre ~~sin~~ an leacht is féarr féadfaí thógaint dá chuimhne.

Passage West and Union Hall has been adequately reinforced by fresh troops and material, and has been steadily pushing northwards, harassing the Irregulars on the way and driving them in disorderly retreat to the hills. Two weeks ago the Irregulars held a definite line in the South-west; that line, however, has been pierced at several points and the holders broken up into bands, who have retired to the mountains, from whence at intervals they launch predatory raids on the civilian population of adjacent villages. In Limerick, Tipperary, and Waterford counties every town of importance is controlled by the troops, whilst only a few posts on the seaboard of Kerry are held by the Irregulars. In Cork County they still hold a few towns, but here the Irregular communications are rapidly being cut off, and their positions must soon become untenable."

On the same day that saw the fall of Middleton and Bantry, President Griffith's last message was made known to the Irish people. "Let the people stand firm by the Free State," were his words; "it is their national need and economic salvation."

Printed for G.H.Q., Irish Republican Army, at Mahon's Printing Works, Yarnhall Street, Dublin.

