

SWEETHEART'S LAST KISS IS SOLEMN REQUIEM FOR "MICK" COLLINS, IRELAND'S MAN OF IRON

Sniper's Shot Put Tragic Final Chapter to Romance of Pretty Kitty Kiernan and Leader of Free State Army as They Awaited Wedding Day

DEATH CAME ON FIRST DAY SET FOR CEREMONY, BUT POSTPONED FOR A MONTH

Will-o'-Wisp of Revolution, Who Laughed at Traps of Foes, Gave Word of Betrothal in Retort to Slur at Princess Mary

A COLLEEN weeps today in Ireland over her heroic dead! There are doubtless others today who weep in Ireland, but none has been dealt with so ironically by death as she.

Because she has come to be known everywhere, because she is identified with the leader of a great national movement, one thinks of her as something apart from life, apart from human tragic tears.

But her heart is broken today, because "Micky" Collins is dead and gone. Plain "Micky" Collins—not the Minister of Finance of the Dail Eireann, nor the commander-in-chief of the Irish National Army—but "Micky" Collins, with his brogue, his flashing smile, his capricious ways.

Shot through the head on the day he and Miss Kitty Kiernan, of County Langford, had a year ago planned to be married.

Shot through the head by men of his own country after he had eluded for half a decade the guns of the forces of England, which had placed a bounty of \$50,000 on his head, dead or alive.

It doesn't much matter to anybody now what the politics and the sympathies of "Micky" were. Today he is a heroic figure who has passed away. The fate of a nation or nations may hang on his going, but what is that compared to the heart of a maid broken.

Often Warned Collins When Foes Were Near

Many's the time has Kitty run through the darkness of the night to warn the man she loved that his enemies were close upon him. Many's the time has she saved him. But today all that is over.

Today she has only her immortal dreams. Today she can but recall that dark night the Black and Tans were after her fiancé. He was lying in a hut, catching a few hours' sleep on the run.

She heard the motor lorries of the enemy rumbling by her father's old tavern at Granard. Not an hour before she had left "Micky" with a brave smile. She rushed out of the door, through the black night, skirted hedges, jumped ditches and waked "Micky" with a hysterical knocking at the door. When the lorries arrived "Micky" was gone.

Kitty is a tall woman, a fit mate for a six-footer, with an indomitable will—light brown hair and blue eyes, with something of the wayward will of the boy about her.

Triumphant, glad in her heart that she had saved the man whom a great nation feared, she returned to the tavern and found it smoldering in ruins. Her parents had died when she was young and she had some money. She was wrapped up in love for her land and devoted her efforts to the service of the Irish White Cross, the nurses' branch of the Sinn Fein.

Taunt From Countess Brought Story of Wooing

The world did not know she was betrothed to Michael Collins until the day that negotiations were being made between Great Britain and Ireland for the peace treaty. During the debate on the treaty in the Dail Eireann, Collins took Countess Markiewicz to task for referring humorously to the probability that Princess Mary's engagement to Lord Lascelles might be broken off, so she could marry Michael Collins.

Collins in his speech declared that the Countess' statement might cause pain to the Princess or to the lady who is betrothed to me. I will not allow it to pass without challenge or allow any deputy in this assembly of my nation to insult any lady of this nation or any other nation.

And that was "Micky's" way. The pair were betrothed formally about a year ago. The marriage was set for Tuesday, August 22. But Arthur Griffith, president of the Irish nation, died on August 12 and the wedding was postponed for a month.

It was on the night of August 22, however, that Collins and eleven other men were returning from an important meeting. They had reached Bandon, County Cork, when on a lonely road their machines were fired upon from behind bordering trees. About 250 men comprised the ambushade.

The driver of Collins' car wanted to speed ahead, but Collins ordered him to halt. And in his open machine this man of adventure directed the defense against a force twenty times larger than his own.

During a lull in the fire, Collins spied a sniper moving along the ditch beside the road. He leaped from his car and cautiously approached the man. At that moment there was a sharp crackling of guns and "Micky" spun around and crumpled to the ground.

"My God! Micky's shot!" cried one of his own men. But Collins, though mortally wounded, was far from giving up. During the fifteen minutes that he lived he hung over the side of his car, pumping bullets into the brush where the irregulars were concealed.

Finally he fell back and gasped "Forgive me! And let the Dublin guards bury me with the boys!" They were the last words.

his trunk. They did and he thanked them profusely. And they never knew that it was Michael Collins himself they were helping.

Collins happened to be hiding in a friendly home one day which had just had a bereavement. In an upper room, a son of the family lay dead in his coffin.

In one way or other the English discovered that he was hiding in that house. "Micky" heard them, rushed to the upper floor, took the corpse out of the coffin and lay down in it himself. Because it was the room of the dead, the constabulary only made a cursory examination of it. They left, and "Micky" respectfully surrendered his place of concealment to the dead man, whose refuge by right it was.

One night the house in which he slept was raided. Collins jumped out of bed, leaped through a window, climbed over the roof. He was in his nightshirt, but carried his gun. In a dark alley he put on his clothes and then stealthily walked around to the front of the house where he had been sleeping and enjoyed the remaining activity of the raiders.

Arranged Teeling Escape From British Stronghold

Perhaps his most spectacular feat was the escape of Francis Teeling from the Kilminalilla Jail. Collins, whom the police were scouting for with eyes of hawk, arranged the entire scheme. He got three pretty little girls of the Cannon Namban, or Girl Scouts, to flirt with three Tommies who guarded the entrance to the prison. The merry girls lured the soldiers into a neighbor's house. And there, instead of the joy of their feminine smiles, the soldiers gazed into the cold muzzles of automatics. They were stripped of their clothes. Three of Collins' men

with the De Valeristas over the question of the treaty, although no longer hounded by the British, he was not on the heat of terms with the irregulars.

Forced to Fight for Life Against Fellow Countrymen

On April 17 he was on his way to his home in Dublin, when a group of irregulars fell upon his party. He and the few men with him fired back, and the ambushers fled.

"We only shot a few rounds," he grinned after that affair. "I don't believe in wasting ammunition."

Two days before he was actually killed he missed assassination by mere chance. It was known that he was going to Greystones, County Wicklow. But it happened that his Rolls-Royce, known to every one of his enemies, broke down. He changed cars. But a band of irregulars, unaware of the change in machines, waited to spot his car at Stillorgan. The broken car, towed along, rounded a corner of the road, and the irregulars fired on it. The driver was wounded and the car wrecked. Had Collins been in it he probably would have been slain then.

Under the circumstances of the peculiarly hazardous life he led, it is small wonder that "Micky" had a premonition of his death. Certain it is he never told Kitty, but her heart doubtless told her.

Just before the day of his death, when he was leaving a friend, the heavy boyish soldier bid good-by to a friend.

"Good-by," he said, with a slow, sad smile. "I will say good-by, because I don't expect I will be seeing you again."

And he didn't, although it seemed then impossible to his friend that "Micky" would ever perish. His life seemed curiously guarded against the tragedies that fall upon the usual life of a soldier. He was something of a pixie, something of the strange combination of humor and magic which haunts the heroic tales of Dark Rosa-

deen. During, powerfully built, with a body as grive as his uncanny wits, he rushed through the sinister days of the fight for Irish liberty like some mysterious elf.

Talked to Lloyd George With Price on His Head

It is said that he was a past master at disguises. Stories are told that during the very days when English were combing the whole of Ireland for the man they considered the most dangerous there, he was in London. Once, it is reported, he met Lloyd George, and Lloyd George never recognized the slim, young, gently natured man who talked with him about the weather. It is until the day of the treaty agreement with England, Collins was something of a mystery to even his own men.

He dodged publicity. He did not permit his picture to be taken. When he went to meetings he entered by the back way. Crowds rarely saw him. Half the British forces knew his appearance only from a portrait which had been taken when Collins was in his twenties.

Once, indeed, in Dublin, the constabulary were instructed to get Collins who, they had learned, was in the city. He was described to the soldiers as a rather tall young man with a Charlie Chaplin mustache.

The police guard at the station were especially cautioned to watch for Collins. In the middle of the day a young, smooth-faced priest entered the station and spoke to the soldiers. He asked them to help him a moment with

donned the uniforms and went swaggering back to the jail. A little later three "Tommies" were seen strolling out of the prison with the prisoner, Teeling. A car clung up to the gate of the prison. Teeling and the "Tommies" boarded the car and chugged away. The driver of that car was a native "Micky," chuckling and triumphant.

Collins was thirty-one years old when the irregular's bullet crashed into his head. And his thirty-one years, judged by his experience, were three times longer than mortal years.

He was born in County Cork and schooled at Clonakilly, near Rossarebery. He was the son of a humble farmer, and barefoot he went to the lower school. It is said that he was even then a mischievous lad, getting into tricks that appalled his elders.

"Micky" didn't like school much, and the lower grades proved sufficient enough for him. He had a sister working in the postoffice at London, and when he was fifteen joined her there and became a sorter of mails.

Before the World War broke out he had taken a course at King's College and had entered the employ of the London office of the Guaranty Trust Company. It is here he got training which enabled him to take over the work of the finance department of the Dail Eireann.

Eluded Clever Traps Set by British Foes

And it was Collins' coolness and resource that made it possible for him to elude the British. He was an indefatigable worker, sleeping when he could get his sleep. Besides, he could live on about as little sleep as it is possible for any man to live on. His working days lasted usually from six in the morning to three the next morning—three hours' sleep apparently being enough for this man of dangerous days.

There is no doubt but what Collins grew in mental breadth with his cause. He was originally not what might be called a schoolboy. He was good at arithmetic, but the other branches of learning didn't interest him much. But he loved history. He read every thing, as a boy, he could find on Irish history, and strangely enough, when he was as nervous as a cat. He never sat at that historic meeting in Down-

thinker. That he could talk with and convince gentlemen with gentlemen's speech on his tongue, as well as whip a rounder into thinking his way. Besides this, he convinced his associates that he was an organizer—a young man who found out facts, knowing their strength beyond all oratory, a young man with an inexplicable control over men.

From the middle of 1918 on, he was organizer and adjutant of the Irish Revolutionary Army. This was called variously "the murder gang," "the band of gunners," "the blackguards," by the English.

He fought in the rebellion of 1916, though at the time, he was simply an inconspicuous member of a large force of young men as enthusiastic and as courageous as himself. He was captured during that rebellion and deported to Wandsworth Prison and later sent to the Frongoch internment camp.

It was in 1918, after months of guerrilla warfare that he was elected a member of the Dail Eireann from his home district of South Cork. And here in this tumultuous council chamber, "Micky" surprised all his friends.

"They knew he could handle an argument with the best of them, but they had not realized that he was a



Michael Collins (left) and his fiancée, Kitty Kiernan



Collins as commander of Irish Army



Patrick Collins, a Chicago policeman, brother of dead leader



Collins in a debating mood



Tom Hales, reported leader of ambush party which killed Collins



Irish soldiers in Dublin

sted all over Ireland addressing secret meetings—an impassioned advocate of wrongs not to be suffered. It was really long before 1919 that he was recognized as the unofficial head of this very unofficial movement, and from that time on he was wanted by the empire as the empire wanted no other in the whole movement.

A story is told of him during the German-plot round-up of 1919. He rode up to his home in his silver one-day and found Crown soldiers in possession. He paraded his jitney across the street from his house, lit a cigarette and sat on the running board to watch the English officers direct the search for him. When they had ransacked his place and had left he drove his machine into the yard and went to bed.

Dancers Put to Rout by Collins Unthinkingly

A curious bedtime story is one relating how he broke up a Cindarella dance at the Gresham Hotel in Dublin. Collins was engaged in a conference which did not end until midnight. In another hall of the hotel a ball was in progress.

A correspondent, detailed to question Collins about an event which had been only casually mentioned in publication, arrived a moment or so after Collins had left the conference for his room. The bellboy who carried the correspondent's message to Collins found him already in his pajamas.

"Micky," always obliging, readily slipped on his well-known raincoat and followed the boy downstairs.

In the hall leading upon the brilliant dancehall, Micky, for some unknown reason, stopped, and said he would wait for the correspondent. The correspondent came, and Collins, entirely oblivious of his garb and surroundings, immediately lost himself in his answer to the correspondent's questions.

In a moment he was vigorously swinging his arms. His raincoat flapped open and the shirt of his pajama suit flapped out. Collins had just begun to pound his great broad bare chest when two young women approached. They were shocked at the sight, screamed a bit and ran away—Collins unmindful of them. A short moment after other women came to the hall to be shocked. They were; finally the matron of the hotel was summoned.

The matron, indignant, approached the floor waiter and complained. "But 'tis himself," said the waiter. "I don't care who he may be," she

protested. "It's disgraceful to have a naked man—"

"Sure and Mick had more clothes on him than she had at that," commented the waiter.

"If you don't do something," said the woman, "I'll call the manager."

"But, ma'am, you don't understand. Can't you see that it do be Mick Collins himself?"

She gasped and fled.

Latest reports state that Tom Hales, who admits he is responsible for the ambushade which resulted in the death of the Irish general, has since repudiated the entire business. He has thrown down his arms and offered to join the national forces.

Micky was dressed for burial in the blood-stained uniform which he wore when the sniper's shot killed him.

While the pipes of Ireland were sounding lament, Kitty Kiernan leaned over his bier, placed her gentle hand on the black stain and kissed her lover's bronzed forehead.

It was a simple thing—much simpler than the pomp and ceremony of the funeral service. And yet it seems to be the most bitterly pathetic moment of Micky's tragedy.