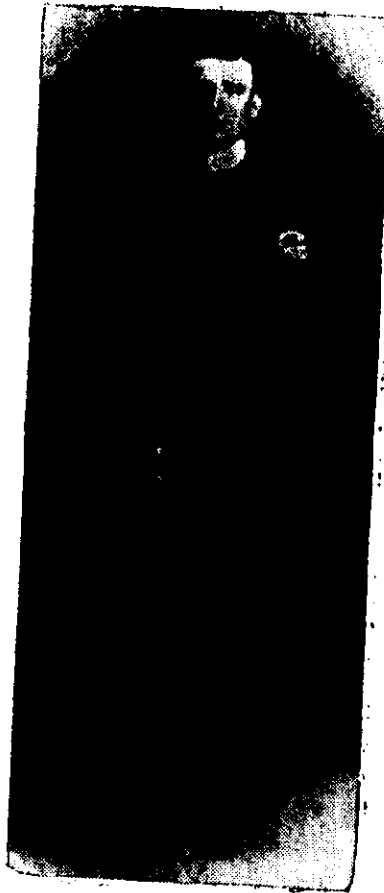


SEOIRSE Clancy - a patriot mayor

SEOIRSE CLANCY was born in Grange, County Limerick. From his youngest day he was steeped in an atmosphere of Irish nationality. His father was an active member of the Fenians and his grandfather filled the young Seoirse with a love of his native history and folklore. He attended the local school at Grange and from there he went to St. Patrick's Seminary at Bruff. He was always of a studious nature and a love of the Irish language grew with his love of learning.

When he had finished his preliminary studies, Seoirse went to Dublin and entered the Royal University. In Dublin he associated himself with all the national and cultural movements of the time. He joined the Celtic Literary Society, where Arthur Griffith was among his co-members. His love of the language naturally led him to membership of the Gaelic League and he was deeply impressed by one of his teachers there — a man called Pádraig Pearse. He took an active part in the Gaelic Athletic Association. We can truly say that all things that expressed the true spirit of Ireland found a place in the heart of Seoirse Clancy. One of his colleagues at the university was the novelist and poet, James Joyce. It has been said that the character of Davin, the nationalist, "the peasant scholar" in Joyce's "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," has been modelled on Clancy. From this portrait we can see how Clancy's enthusiasm impressed those with whom he came in contact.

In 1904 Seoirse graduated and took up a post in the Jesuit College of Clongowes Wood. Ill-health



forced him to give up this teaching post and he returned to Grange, but not to an idle life. He started classes to teach Irish to the local people and organised many functions of a Gaelic nature. In 1908 he came to Limerick City as a teacher of Irish. He taught the children in the city schools and was to be found many evenings at the premises of the Gaelic League at Thomas Street. I'm sure that many of the older generation, who were interested in Gaelic activities at that time, remember the gentle, kind teacher who by his earnestness filled

them with a love for their language and culture. He was a constant visitor to Colaiste na Mumhan at Ballingearry. In this little village in County Cork, many of the Limerick members of Connradh na Gaeilge spent their summer vacation perfecting their knowledge of the native language. In 1915 Seoirse married Maire Ni Cillín, a Limerick National Teacher, who shared all his interests and whom he first met at County Feisanna and as a member of the local Connradh.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Ireland had entered on a very troubled era. Seoirse Clancy was always in the forefront of any national movement. He became a founder member of the Irish Volunteers in Limerick and took a great interest in the formation of Fianna Éireann. After the Rising of 1916, the leaders of the Volunteers were under constant surveillance by the military, and numerous arrests were made. Seoirse was among those arrested and lodged in gaol in Cork. The prisoners went on hunger strike, however, before they could be brought to trial and were released. Back in Limerick again, he continued with his teaching in the schools. The greater part of the organisation of military activities fell to him as so many of the leaders and officers of the Volunteers were under arrest or in hiding. This was a trying time and the constant overwork undermined his health. After a severe attack of influenza he was forced to give up the teaching he loved and he took up a post with the National Assurance Company.

At the local election for a City Council in 1920, the people of Limerick showed the regard they had for Seoirse Clancy by

electing him an Alderman of the city. The Council would have elected him Mayor that same year but he declined the honour, thinking he had not got sufficient experience in civic matters. This honour, however, was conferred on him in the following year, 1921 — a year that was to prove a tragic one for the Clancy household.

In Limerick at that time, raids were made by night on the homes of those who were known to be active members of any national organisation. Men were taken from their homes by the military and lodged in gaol on little or no evidence. Seoirse Clancy was arrested and when he was released, he realised that it would not be safe for him to sleep in his own house if he was to avoid imprisonment. These raids were nightly events from 1916 to 1921.

In the early morning of March 7th, 1921, the Clancy family was awakened by a loud banging on the door. Seoirse was at home on this night because the family had suffered a bereavement in the death of his father-in-law, and Seoirse wanted to be with his wife in her sorrow. He insisted on opening the door himself, against the advice of his wife. He was confronted by three armed men who ordered him out of his house. When he refused to obey this order, one of the men stepped forward and fired. His distracted wife made a brave attempt to save her husband and was herself wounded by a bullet in the wrist. The bullets had found their mark Seoirse Clancy lay dead.

These sad years of our history were brought to life for me by Maire Bean Nic Flannachadha, a gracious lady left widowed by the assassins after a mere six years of married life.

—ROISIN DE NAIS.

NEW PRESIDENT FOR P.P.U.



At the annual general meeting of the St. Munchin's College Past Pupils' Union, held on 22nd November, Mr. Michael Toomey was elected President for the coming year. It was a well-deserved honour for Mr. Toomey as he has taken a very active interest in the Union since its foundation ten years ago. Our photo shows Mr. Toomey (right) being congratulated by Mr. Sean Walshe, N.T., who had been President for the past two years.

Other elections at the meeting were as follows:—Vice-Presidents, Dr. John Holmes, Mr. P. O'Riordan, N.T.; Mr. A. McDonogh and Very Rev. Michael Purtil, P.P. Secretaries, Mr. Martin Pennington and Rev. James Sadler, St. Munchin's College. Treasurer, Mr. John C. Thompson.

It was decided at the meeting that the cost of one of the side altars in the New College Chapel should be defrayed by the Past Pupils and all members will be invited to contribute.

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