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MISS MADGE DALY'S STORY - 1916.

My sister Laura and myself were unable to reach Dublin until the 3rd of May 1916, owing to my uncle's illness and the dislocation of the train service. When we got up Richmond Avenue we saw my sister, Mrs. Clarke, opening the door, and immediately we got to her she burst out crying. She told us she had prayed all the morning for God to send her some of her own people - (she had been alone all during the trouble) - that Tom had been shot that morning; and that Ned, Sean MacDermott, and all our other friends were in the toils, and would probably share the same fate.

The blow was stunning; yet our first impression on hearing that Ned would probably be shot was one of relief, that his martyrdom would be short; and that he would not live to suffer the hell of life as an Irish political convict, of which we knew as much as anyone could who did not actually go through the ordeal, from our uncle, John Daly, and his Fenian comrades, Tom Clarke and James J. Egan.

My sister told us the whole story, and we tried to console her as best we could. We got to bed that night worn out and exhausted, but determined to try and save what strength we had to face bravely all the trials that God had decreed for us. But our test came sooner than we expected.

At 12.30 o'clock on that night, the 4th May, my sister jumped up and called to us to get ready, that she heard in the distance the sound of the military motor lorry, and that the last call to Ned was coming. A policeman knocked and gave Mrs. Clarke a permit to visit her brother. So we all got up. I and my sister Laura seemed the veriest cowards. When it came to the test we shook to pieces. Our hands refused to work; and it was with the greatest difficulty and delay that we got into our clothes. However, we were ready, and were escorted by the policeman and two soldiers to the motor lorry, more dead than alive. It was a terrible drive and seemed endless. We were challenged and held up by sentries. Every dozen yards the car was surrounded by soldiers, who put the bayonets and lanterns close to our faces to examine us; but for them we cared not, our only fear being that we would not be able to bear up before my brother as would become the sisters of such a hero, and the daughters and

nieces of Fenians. We prayed to Heaven for strength; but for all that we shook to pieces and could not keep the tears back while we were in the car, when the soldiers could not see us.

But God did not desert us. He heard our prayer, for the minute we stepped across the gateway at Kilmainham Prison and entered into the presence of the soldiers, our pride of race, our pride in our heroes and in their great sacrifice, strengthened our failing limbs, and we walked in with heads erect, told our names with pride, and could have then faced death - anything. As we crossed the threshold, the jailor called out: "relatives of Daly to be shot in the morning".

At first the Commandant ordered that we should be taken to Ned one at a time; so we decided that Mrs. Clarke would be first, I then, and Laura - who was Ned's special chum - last; but the officer countermanded that order and decided that we should go together. We were escorted by five soldiers carrying a candle lantern, through a passage and up what seemed an endless stairs running up the centre of a big square; then along a corridor to a cell, with the number 66 on a tin or metal tab at the side of the door. I was not conscious of observing any details at the time. One of the soldiers

called "Daly". Ned's voice answered just as gruffly "Yes".

The door was then opened just as our boy jumped from the floor, where he had been lying on a half blanket or rug.

He was dressed in his Volunteer suit, minus cap, belt, bandolier, sword, etc.,; and he looked so proud and strong and noble, with eyes alert and full of the fire of the enthusiast, that it was impossible to believe he was a doomed captive, destined to be shot in a few short hours. Rather he looked like a brave young knight who had won some great victory. And so he had; for he and the men who died with him saved for Ireland her soul. And when God decreed that they were not to win the material benefits of freedom this time, the brutal killing of our men by England has been the next best thing that could have happened for National Ireland - for the bullets that did their dread work in Kilmainham swept from the eyes of the people the false teachings.

We rushed to Ned and twined our arms round him, and so stood in the centre of the cell during the interview of how long I do not know, surrounded closely by the soldiers with bayonets, until the dread words, "Come - time's up" were uttered.

The officer in charge told us that anything we might say would be regarded as private; but our talk, except one or

two instances, was all of Ireland, for our hero's talk and enthusiasm swept us to the heights where the things of this world count not. My first words were: "Oh! Ned, why are they going to give you the highest honours? You did not sign the proclamation? You must have done great work to earn a place with Emmet and Wolfe Tone and all the others". He replied that he did his best, and then started to talk of the great fight, and in the most glowing terms of the men, especially in his own command. He said such heroes - such soldiers never lived; and that they never lost heart until the word of surrender came, when strong, big men wept like children, and rebelled, too, against the order.

Of Commandant MacDonagh he spoke too. He said he was very great amongst the great. Speaking of himself, he said he was glad and proud to die for Ireland; that he had no regrets; that he knew their effort would revive the soul of his country; and that he felt an absolute conviction, facing his God in a few hours, that the next effort for freedom would be successful; and his only regret was that he would not live to take part in it. I told him how proud my uncle, his mother and his sisters were when they heard of his great soldier's work, and that I knew they would be prouder still when they learned that England had crowned him with the highest martyr's crown. I said, that England might kill his body, but that his spirit and his name would live for

for ever, as would the spirit of Ireland, which his blood would revive; that we would live on, trying to follow, however faultily, in his footsteps, so that one day we should all be together in the other world. He replied yes, that thought gave him added joy, and when I told him that Tom Clarke, T. MacDonagh and P.H. Pearse had gone that morning, he added: "We shall have a glorious meeting in Heaven."

He gave us a copy of the charge at the courtmartial, which was as follows:-

Did an act, to wit; Did take part in an armed rebellion and in the waging of war against his Majesty the King, such act being of such a nature as to be calculated to be prejudicial to the defence of the Realm, and being done with the intention and for the purpose of assisting the enemy.

He said he strongly protested against the portion of the charge "aiding the enemy" - that all he did, and he did his very best, was for Ireland, his own land, to try and free her from the only enemy he knew of - England; and that he acted, as he was bound to do, as a soldier of Ireland, in all matters under the orders of his superior officers. He also added that he had only one regret - the surrender; and that if he did not understand it was an honorable one, he and

his men would have fought to the end. He mentioned that he had had a large number of English soldiers as prisoners, also some officers, and that he gave them the best he had, and treated them with kindness and courtesy.

Here my sister Laura exclaimed: "Why did you not do as they are now doing to you - shoot them?" "Ah! No, Laura," he replied, "that would not be playing the game fair. We all got strict orders that all prisoners were to be treated under the rules of civilised warfare as prisoners of war and as kindly as possible under the conditions, and in every case this rule was strictly carried out.

He sent loving messages to his mother, aunt and sisters, and said: "Tell Uncle John I did my best"; and then gave us a small purse with a few coins, and when we asked him for his watch he looked straight at one of the soldiers and said: "A gentleman kindly relieved me of it," We asked him had he been given food or drink, and he said: "Oh! yes; I have food," and pointed to what looked to me like dog biscuits thrown on the floor as you would throw them to a dog. I have since learned that a priest who attended them tried to get them a drink of any kind on that night, and failed. Well, our interview was really over. The soldiers called to us: "Time's up", so we kissed and embraced our boy - once only, and

walked from his cell without a tear or moan, with heads up; and looking back now I wonder. But God helped us and Ned too with His great courage and heart: and then the cell door banged on our all. We walked down the endless stairs. I felt Laura's steps faltering, and feared she would faint and fall, so I whispered to her: "Keep up. You must not break down here." I got the answer: "Fear not." We reached the entrance hall, where two pale girls waited seemingly on a like errand. They rushed up to us and asked: "Who are you? and who have you been to see?" We told them. They were the Misses O'Hanrahans; and when they heard of Ned's fate one moaned: "Oh! Miceal!" They had got a permit stating that their brother was to be deported, and so they came, quite unprepared for his death. Yet I afterwards learned that they bore themselves bravely until they left their brother. One of the sisters afterwards became unconscious.

(As we entered ^{upstairs} the prison the escort called out: "Sisters of Daly, to be shot in the morning". Before leaving ^{we} put in formal claims ^{in writing} for the bodies of T.J. Clarke and Ned, and asked if ^{permission would} ~~they could not~~ be given ~~to us at present if we~~ ^{could} send coffins in, so that they ^{could} be identified and laid to rest with their own. ~~We~~ ^{we} also claimed our men's tunics and belongings. ^I ~~We~~ got a formal refusal to the demand for the bodies, but no reply to the other ~~request~~.

When we got to the jail gate escorted by an officer, the lorry to take us home could not be got so we were taken back to an office. The officer - when alone with us - told us that we had his deepest sympathy - but that he could not understand our outlook - or that of the prisoners. I replied that probably he was English and loved his country - that if the Germans won the war and took possession of his country - how would he feel? Well if he could vision that, he would understand how we felt towards the conqueror of our country. We would suffer and risk anything to win freedom. He was kind - so often, I have got sympathy and understanding from individuals of the enemy forces.

After a short delay we were escorted by soldiers to the motor car and taken back to my sister's house. And on the way we passed similar cars carrying passengers on a similar errand; for with Ned that morning died also Micheal O'Hanrahan, Joseph Plunkett and William Pearse. The rest of that night is our own and God's; but we did not miss one moment of agony. We counted every second until dawn, when our heroes souls flew to their reward.

MADGE DALY.

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