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History Recalled by Death of Woman Deputy Mayor

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Born in mid-Cork, at Crossmahon, Lassarda, some miles from the town of Macroom, Mrs. O'Donovan (nee Murphy) belonged to a family long established in that district, tracing itself to John Murphy, who lived from 1738 to 1826. Indeed, the same Christian names are in the family to-day that were borne by the members of the clan in that townland listed in the Fian's of the Elizabethan era.

Mary Murphy grew up in a household where love of religion, love of learning and love of country were the formative influences and where local tales of the great Famine and its terrible aftermath made a natural background for the growth of the military Fenian movement in which her father, Cornelius Murphy, had his part.

Her uncle, Rev. Timothy Murphy, of the Irish College, Paris, who was to die later P.P. of Kilmichael Parish, was a noted classical and Gaelic scholar, and it was he who first guided her steps in the path of learning. After some private study with him, she became a pupil of the Ursuline Nuns at St. Angela's High School, opened in 1887. Here,

Gaelic League and in the Co-Operative Movement, and they both welcomed the rise of Sinn Fein and the formation of the Volunteers.

From 1914 onwards Mrs. O'Donovan was a prominent member of the Limerick Cumann na mBan, and she and her sister, Mrs. Michael O'Callaghan, and the late Eilis Murphy, played leading parts in the whole freedom struggle in Limerick City. Mrs. O'Donovan's calmness, her dignity of bearing and her fine qualities of character and personality were an inspiration in those troubled and dangerous years.

After the murders of Mayor Seoirse Cancy and ex-Mayor Michael O'Callaghan in March, 1921, she was co-opted Alderman by the Limerick Borough Council and when in May, 1921, Mayor Stephen O'Mara was sent to U.S.A. in connection with the Republican Loan, he named Alderman Mrs. O'Donovan as Deputy Mayor, a post she held till the Mayor's return in January, 1922.

This period, the last two months of the Black and Tan terror regime and the months of the Truce from July 11, 1921, was full of difficulties, but the Deputy Mayor was more than able for the burden. She presided on the historic occasion when, in the Theatre Royal on December 5, 1921, the Freedom of Limerick was conferred on President de Valera and on Mrs. Kathleen O'Connell.

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place in Greek in the senior grade in 1890. Here, too, she was one of a brilliant group of girls with whom the Ursuline Order gained renown in the early days of the school, a group that included the future University professors, Mary Ryan and Elizabeth O'Sullivan.

Not only did she study Greek and Latin with success, she was the sole pupil in the school who in these early days before the founding of the Gaelic League took Celtic as one of her languages.

For her B.A. Degree she moved to Dublin to the Dominican Order's Convent of St. Mary's in Merrion Square, where she studied under Hugh McNeill, great classical scholar and brother of Eoin McNeill. She took an Honours Degree in Classics in the Royal University in 1897 and read for the M.A. Course. Choosing teaching for her career, she went to the Training College, Cambridge, where she took her Teacher's Diploma in 1901.

After some years as teacher in Furness Lodge, Cambridge, a high school run by the Loreto Order, she was called in 1903 to the Limerick Training College as Lecturer in Education by Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick. Her years in the Training College from 1903 to 1909 were fruitful years of work both inside and outside the College. She joined the Gaelic League, then in rooms in the Connaught Chambers, O'Connell St. She helped to organise and run Feis Tuadh Mhumban and she was particularly successful in the drama section of the Gaelic League. Her part in Lady Gregory's "Devorgilla" in the Theatre Royal is still remembered even amid the great stride drama has taken of late years.

She was a close friend and helper of the Laurel Hill nuns of the F.C.J. Order, like Mo'her Lelia and Mo'her Maria, who took their degrees at that time. She helped the Limerick Industrial Development Association and was a member of the small band of women who worked in the Suffrage Movement.

Her marriage in 1905 to Diarmuid O'Donovan, celebrated in Irish by Fa'her Tom Wall, was a happy one, for their interests were identical in all national and cultured matters. He was a pioneer in the

The year 1922 brought no ease from strained living to Mrs. O'Donovan and her family, for the Civil War caused disruption and bitterness in the ranks of those who, up till now, had fought the common enemy side by side. The stirring of the Four Courts began on the more the routine of war conditions, the midnight raids, the killings, the arrests, the jailings. With numerous others, her brother, Matt, and her sister, Dr. Eilis Murphy, and the widowed Mrs. O'Callaghan got to know the pattern of jail life. In spite of it all, Mrs. O'Donovan kept open house for men sore pressed on the run, as she had done in 1920 and 1921; she helped to organise the support for their dependents and she was in a very real way an influence in a time of national near despair.

After this testing time she did not seek re-election on the City Council, but turned instead to her many cultured interests. For years she was a classical examiner for the Secondary examinations; she was an active member and Vice-President of the Thomond Archaeological Society and enjoyed its pleasant outings and stimulating lectures. She and her husband were the two most active members of the committee who kept the O'Curry College, Carrigaholt, Co. Clare, going so successfully for long years, beginning with their friendship with Neilli Ni Bhriain in 1911 and lasting till the 1950's, when age forced Diarmuid to retire.

She was a keen gardener, knowledgeable about apples and rock plants, and she kept bees for some years in a Limerick suburb. She was a skilful knitter in her day and interested in embroidery, and from her girlhood to the end of her life she always bought Irish manufacture, whether it was carpets or furniture, silver ware, linen or tweed.

It is hard in a brief account to convey the flavour of Mrs. O'Donovan's personality. She made friends in all walks of life, because she had wide sympathies, great distinction and refinements of mind and a true nobility of character. She will be remembered by many with affection and admiration and the world will be a poorer place for her passing.

Limerick County Committee of Agriculture adjourned its meeting to-day as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Mrs. O'Donovan.

All members stood in silence.

Deaths

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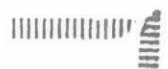
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CURRENT REVIEW

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

Told To Cut Down

The new Director of Radio Eireann, Mr. E. J. Roth, is carrying out a campaign amongst Radio Eireann personnel with a view to cutting down on expenses. Mr. Roth, according to his own statement, does not as yet know how this is to be done, but he is seeking ways of streamlining the service. Well, very many licence holders are of opinion that Radio Eireann very badly needs a shot in the arm. It is costing the taxpayers about £435,000 a year to maintain, and while the actual service is fairly adequate in respect of the number of hours of transmissions it must be said that much of the material is sadly lacking in imagination. If this American expert can bring about new life into the programmes he will well justify his salary. It is all too true that Irish listeners prefer to tune into British stations or Radio Luxembourg rather than be bothered with some of the dreariness and repetitions which is spilled out from their own home station. Yet, it seems rather impossible to cut down expenses without making the programmes less attractive. Perhaps with the fresher outlook Mr. Roth will be able to succeed.

The 'Flu Again

Periodically each year we have a 'flu epidemic such as is now sweeping the country and affecting the staffs in shops and factories. Although the present epidemic does not appear to be a serious one in the way it affects the victims, it is, nevertheless, distressing enough to cause many people to take to their beds. Influenza, like the common cold, does not seem to yield to any form of treatment, although apparently a number of firms do take the precaution of having their staffs inoculated. The virus takes many forms such as pains and dizziness and if the warning signs are not heeded the consequences can be very serious. The "flu," for some reason or another, always makes its appearance around January and is obviously infectious judging from the number of people who are laid low. The consequence is a considerable loss of working hours and the slowing down of output from factories and workshops. It is to be hoped that the present epidemic will be shortlived, and that it will not become one of major proportions.

Mrs. Mairi O'Donovan

The death of Mrs. Maire O'Donovan yesterday in a Limerick nursing home will be learned with deep regret not alone in the city of her adoption but throughout the country. She was a member of a distinguished Co. Cork family, all the members of which reached high academic qualifications. Mrs. O'Donovan, the eldest of the family, was, with her husband, Diarmuid, and her sisters, Mrs. Michael O'Callaghan and Dr. Ellis Murphy, foremost in the struggle for national freedom in Limerick and in the process went through many hardships and vicissitudes, not the least of which was the murder of ex-Mayor Michael O'Callaghan — a calamity which, however, only strengthened their determination to continue the struggle. Her appointment as Deputy Mayor of Limerick was a unique event in Mrs. O'Donovan's career and in the annals of the city. While holding that position during very troubled times, she carried out the duties with a calm dignity and determination which were wholly admirable. Indeed, her gracious dignity on the occasion when the Freedom of the City was conferred on President de Valera and Mrs. Tom Clarke, in a crowded Theatre Royal, evoked the highest possible praise from the many foreign journalists present.

The Ground Rents

It is understood that the Government is planning legislation to ensure that ground rents will not be created in future. There would appear to be a considerable degree of support for any such move, which would be of immense benefit to those building under the Small Dwellings Acts. In this respect, the idea is that the Corporations concerned should assist the purchasers of such houses with loans or grants to enable them to buy out the ground. Nevertheless, similar provision should be made for those who have already built their houses and who, unless there is a repeal of the law, will have to pay ground rents for ever and a day. This system has always been unjust and iniquitous. It enabled absentee landlords to batten on the people of this country for centuries and it has been carried down to the present day. It has been stated that the abolition of the existing ground rents would be financially prohibitive and difficult to achieve. Unfortunately, that may be only too true, since it is always difficult to interfere with vested interests.

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Deaths

CREAN—January 21, at St. John's Hospital, Martin, beloved husband of Christine Crean, 26 O'Dwyer Villas, Thomondgate, Limerick (late of Ranks). Deeply regretted by his loving wife, son, daughter, sisters and relatives. R.I.P. Remains will be removed to St. Munchin's Church this (Saturday) evening at 8 o'clock. Requiem Mass on Monday at 10 o'clock. Funeral at 4 o'clock same day to Mount St. Laurence Cemetery.

Ó DONOVÁIN (Lúimneac)—20ú Eanáir, 1961, 45 Teac Dan-Atráis na Dea-Cómarle, Máire, baintreabac Diarmuid Uí Ó Donováin, Árdán, Dúrráis, méala mór a bás. R.I.P. Déanfar an corp go dtí Eaglais Naomh Maincín inniu (Óé Satáin) ar a 7 a'clog. Acreann na marb ar an Luan ar a 11 a'clog. Sócráid oiread ina diaid go dtí Róilig Chnoc San Ládráis.

O'DONOVAN—January 20, 1961, at the Good Counsel Nursing Home, Maire, widow of Diarmuid O'Donovan, Eden Terrace, Limerick. Deeply regretted. R.I.P. Remains will be removed to St. Munchin's Church this (Saturday) evening at 8 o'clock. Requiem Mass Monday at 11 o'clock. Funeral immediately afterwards to Mount St. Laurence Cemetery.

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