

THE "QUIET MAN" OF MONEGAE WILL BE HONOURED

"THE quiet man" was how a 10 year-old Limerick boy described Donal Sheehan during his short sojourn in Limerick shortly before his ill-fated journey to Kerry and a tragic death at Ballykissane Pier on Good Friday, 1916. Without realising it at the time the youth, now a well known Limerick citizen, presented a vivid and accurate picture of this West Limerick patriot, who was born in 1886 at Ballintubrid, Monegae, only a few miles west of Newcastle West. From his earliest boyhood until his death at the age of 30 years, Donal exhibited that quiet and unobtrusive but genial personality that was to remain one of his most notable characteristics throughout his short life.

WORTHY TRIBUTE

West Limerick, happily, has not forgotten Donal's contribution to the Easter Rising. A representative committee in his native Monegae has completed arrangements for the erection of a commemorative plaque in the little Parish Church in which he was baptised. The simple but none the less impressive memorial will be unveiled as part of the Easter Week Golden Jubilee celebrations when people from all parts of the west of the county will join with the parishioners in paying a worthy tribute to his memory.

Educated first at Killoughteen National School and later at the Courtenay Schools, Newcastle West, Donal displayed a fervent interest in the national and cultural movements from his earliest years. While in Newcastle West he became a keen student of Irish, and later when he went to London to take up an appointment as book-keeper, he immediately joined the Gaelic League.

In the English capital he was a general favourite amongst his compatriots. His sincere patriotism, founded on a thorough knowledge of his country's history, was widely appreciated. After the outbreak of World War I he returned to Ireland and worked for a short time at Geary's

biscuit factory at Merchants Quay, Limerick. During his stay in Limerick he resided with a Mrs. Hall of Assembly Mall, also known at the time as Charlotte Quay. Mrs. Hall's son, Paddy, now a well-known victualler in William Street, was only about ten years old at the time, but he remembers Donal quite well.

FATEFUL JOURNEY

Donal had a room at the top of the Hall house. And, if memory serves Paddy correctly, he was "tallish and sandy haired." One thing Paddy has no doubt about is that Donal was "a very quiet man," and as a child Paddy was very fond of him. It was Mr. Geary, a friend of the Hall family, who sent Donal to live with them in



DONAL SHEEHAN

by

DAN MULCAHY

Assembly Mall. Paddy Hall's last recollection of "the quiet man" was when he saw him leave one evening. It was the last he saw of Donal who, with three comrades, including Tom McInerney, a Limerick man, set out on the fateful journey that was to lead them to a watery grave at Ballykissane Pier. McInerney was the only survivor of the four.

NO WIRELESS!

Briefly, the facts leading up to the tragedy were that, after being recalled to Dublin, Donal Sheehan and the three other men were sent by the Military Council to Caherciveen. Their mission was to seize wireless equipment from the School of Wireless, conducted at the time in Caherciveen by a Mr. Fitzgerald. The objective was to bring the equipment to Tralee Bay and try to get into contact with the German arms ship, the "Aud." In this way it was

hoped to give directions to the commander of the vessel for a berthing at Fenit Pier to unload the eagerly awaited shipment of arms.

Ironically, it was disclosed later the "Aud" was not in fact equipped with wireless, so that the drowning tragedy in which the three men lost their lives did not materially affect the subsequent course of 1916 history, and the final disaster that befell the arms ship. Contrary to the view expressed in some quarters, Donal and his three comrades had nothing to do with the landing of Casement, as nobody was aware of his home-coming at the time.

"The Catholic Bulletin" at the time recorded that "when Donal Sheehan's body was recovered from the Laune River no one in Killorglin identified it, with the result that he was reverently buried in the local churchyard and his funeral was attended by the whole countryside." In view of the fate that was to befall so many of his comrades during the fateful weeks that followed, it seems reasonably safe to assume that the "quiet man" from Ballintubrid would not have wished it otherwise.

FRIENDS REMEMBER

And now, fifty years later,

his native parish is to pay a tribute that is a long time overdue. The commemorative plaque to be erected at Monegae Parish Church will bear the simple but significant inscription in Irish and English: "Pray for the soul of Donal Sheehan of Ballintubrid, Kimmage Garrison of Ogligh na hEireann, who was killed in action during the Easter Rising, 1916. Erected by his friends, Easter, 1966."

The members of the Memorial Committee are: Chairman, Mr. Wm. B. Dowling; Hon. Treasurers, Mr. M. Cregan and Mr. Eamon Dore (Limerick); Hon. Secretary, Mr. M. J. Healy; Committee: Messrs. J. Cregan, J. Harrold, J. McCarthy, John Mulcahy, P. Mulcahy, and Miss Ita Cregan.

Other Limerick men who took an active part in the Rising were: Tom Clarke (Freeman of Limerick), Con Colbert (Athea), Ned Daly (executed); Jim and Matt Flanagan; Killoughteen; Con Collins; Arranagh; Monegae; Patrick Mulcahy, Rathcahill (son of D. Mulcahy, Monegae); Pat and Jim McNamara; Knocknaboula, Loughill; Laura and Nora Daly; Limerick; Eamon Dore; Glin (now of Limerick); Garrett, McAuliffe; Newcastle West.