

IN MEMORIAM.

Roger : : :
Casement:

A Man of Resolute Mould,
and Lover of Ireland . . .

DIED 3rd AUGUST, 1916.

Specially Written by Benmore.

THE AUTHOR

Dedicates this Memoir of
ROGER CASEMENT,
To his dearest surviving friend on earth,
his loving Sister,
MRS. NEWMAN.

Throughout his distinguished career she was passionately attached to him. In all his works for Ireland she took the liveliest interest. During the period of his imprisonment and trial she struggled with the courage of a true woman to obtain for him the best legal defence, and the influence of thousands of merciful and learned minds for his preservation. May the God of Mercy give her soul strength to bear the sorrow and the sacrifice.

"Benmore."

August, 1916.

Roger Casement.

We loved him for those lessons grand
He taught to many a slave;
We love him still, though cold he lies,
In the felon's prison grave.

We'll love him through the changing years
Because he stirred to life
The storied ideals of the Gael
Handed on through blood and strife.

We'll keep his memory green within
The soul of Rossian-Dubh,
That Queen for which he proudly died,
The bruised, unconquered, true.

The author of this humble tribute to the memory of a great, learned, and distinguished Irishman, Roger Casement, has paid tribute over many years to toilers and workers for the cause of Rossian Dhu. Yet the present effort must needs be one contributed while sorrow is weighing down upon the soul of the writer at the early

passing from life unto greater life through death, of one who was loved by every lover of the old land, no matter in what part of the old world the Celt found habitation. Let no man make mistake about it—there is a sorrow stirring in the depths of men's souls to-day in Ireland, and far beyond her shores, for the mighty dead that now after death on the scaffold at Pentonville Prison, finds a felon's quick-lime grave within the shadow of those black and gloomy prison walls. The sorrow that is moving the souls of millions of our people to-day is like unto the sorrow which stirred the whole Irish race when three humble sons of Ireland went proudly to their deaths in the gray of a November morning almost half a century ago. The Irish people are a spiritual race, which clings with passionate devotion to the memory of their dead. And men need not wonder at this soul-moving veneration and love which has survived through so many bitter years. The nation has been endowed by the Creator with myriads of talented and gifted children, and it has happened that these glorious gifts bequeathed by the

Omnipotent Hand have led forward to suffering, punishment, and death many of our people. It has been the fate of hundreds of the noblest, purest, and best men of our race to suffer death in what they believed to be a sacred cause—the Independence and Freedom of their country. They have linked up with men like George Washington, Patrick Henry, Andreas Hofer, William Tell, Kosciusko, and Sobieski, in spreading and sustaining the creed of nations to be free. Their actions have in the eyes of rulers been branded as criminal and illegal, hence, death in many cases was the penalty demanded to satisfy that desire which craved for their blood. Such men have been in conflict with great forces: some of them have carried their aims to success and won the approval of a world that can only see triumph in success. Out of such efforts great and small countries have sprung to national life and greatness, taking their places among the kingdoms of earth. Other men equally as brave, as high-minded, and as gifted, have witnessed the defeat of their desires; they went out

passing from life unto greater life through death, of one who was loved by every lover of the old land, no matter in what part of the old world the Celt found habitation. Let no man make mistake about it—there is a sorrow stirring in the depths of men's souls to-day in Ireland, and far beyond her shores, for the mighty dead that now after death on the scaffold at Pentonville Prison, finds a felon's quick-lime grave within the shadow of those black and gloomy prison walls. The sorrow that is moving the souls of millions of our people to-day is like unto the sorrow which stirred the whole Irish race when three humble sons of Ireland went proudly to their deaths in the gray of a November morning almost half a century ago. The Irish people are a spiritual race, which clings with passionate devotion to the memory of their dead. And men need not wonder at this soul-moving veneration and love which has survived through so many bitter years. The nation has been endowed by the Creator with myriads of talented and gifted children, and it has happened that these glorious gifts bequeathed by the

Omnipotent Hand have led forward to suffering, punishment, and death many of our people. It has been the fate of hundreds of the noblest, purest, and best men of our race to suffer death in what they believed to be a sacred cause—the Independence and Freedom of their country. They have linked up with men like George Washington, Patrick Henry, Andreas Hofer, William Tell, Kosciusko, and Sobieski, in spreading and sustaining the creed of nations to be free. Their actions have in the eyes of rulers been branded as criminal and illegal, hence, death in many cases was the penalty demanded to satisfy that desire which craved for their blood. Such men have been in conflict with great forces: some of them have carried their aims to success and won the approval of a world that can only see triumph in success. Out of such efforts great and small countries have sprung to national life and greatness, taking their places among the kingdoms of earth. Other men equally as brave, as high-minded, and as gifted, have witnessed the defeat of their desires; they went out

beaten, as the world thought and thinks. Yet, after all, let no man think that such spirits have been born into the world to die after apparent defeat. Such noble men have been to a sordid world its cleansing influence, they have saved from destruction those elevating principles which have enabled man to value some things in life as more valuable than money and vast possessions. The spirit mind has toiled, suffered privation, sacrificed all earthly treasures, rather than permit corruption and selfishness to become its guardian. And the world will go on witnessing the birth, career, and death of nobility of soul till that dread moment when the Archangel appears heralding the call of Him Who in His mysterious ways shall bring to a finish mortal life on this planet.

Whom Irishmen Mourn.

To return to him whom all Irishmen mourn to day, a man who felt as a Gael, a man who from that moment when he learned the fact that the land which gave him birth had a wonderful history, never ceased

seeking knowledge of her history and achievements. The Elizabethan atmosphere of Trinity did not destroy that inherent love of country which developed and increased in the hearts of many who studied in her halls. Tone graduated there, the glorious young Emmet expounded those principles at the Trinity Historical Association which put others on the highway to freedom's summit. Davis, the teacher, thinker, and statesman, whose life-work had such a beautiful effect on the minds of so many since his day, passed many studious days therein. And he who now sleeps in a lonely prison grave learned to know something of that Ireland for which so many worked so faithfully. Much has been already written in the Press concerning Roger Casement's public and official career. With that the writer does not deal in this memoir to his memory.

Glens of Antrim.

As one who was a close and attached friend of the writer, I thought well to deal with a few matters concerning his visits to

the historic and romantic Glens of Antrim. I was first introduced to him by one who took the most lively interest in the propagation of the National literature and language of the Gael, at a time when a strong, combined movement was on foot to arouse an interest in the National language, art, industry, music, drama, and games of the Gael in the Antrim Glens, a movement which undoubtedly did much to create a living interest in our most valuable National assets, and which sent a wave of patriotic enthusiasm surging through every one of Antrim's storied glens. Thoughts on those receding years, with all their hopes and works and achievements, cause a happiness of soul at times when sorrow is heavy on the heart, and Eire of the wounds lies bleeding afresh. Hundreds of young boys and girls were brought into contact with their motherland; the schoolroom became a centre of activity, the Gaelic classes aroused a great interest in subjects that had slept for years. The quaint songs of the Gael took the place of the vulgar productions from overseas. The clash of the caman resounded in every glen, and stout young hurlers were to be seen at play on many a field on the glorious summer days of a dozen years ago. The travelling teacher, in the teeth of wild, tempestuous storms,

cycled around the rugged coast of Antrim, between Ballycastle and Glenarm, showering his Gaelic lessons around. The Gael was resurgent in those days in the Glens. Seeds were dropped here and there in those days that will yet fructify, and the gleaners of Gaelic Ireland will in other years with a freshness and strength gather the harvest. And now many figures loom up on the horizon of my mind, and pass quickly in succession. Small men and big men, keen thinkers, great workers, grand intellects, men and women who shaped and fashioned a clean Gaelic policy for the children of the North. Some are living and still active, others are scattered here and there. One great intellect who pioneered the language movement with his whole strength, and was present at our first great Glens Feis in June 1904, was the Vice-President of the Gaelic League, Eoin M'Neill, now in the penal prison of Dartmoor.

Eoin M'Neill.

His work for Ireland in the literary and language movement cannot be measured at the present moment; its influences on National effort in the future will be far-reaching and striking, and as the years pass our countrymen will reap the benefits resulting from years of ceaseless and earnest toiling by him for the nationalising of Irish opinion. Scarcely an Irishman of note in the Province of Ulster but was present on that day, when 7,000 assembled at Glen-

ariffe to carry out a day's work for resurgent Ireland. And the man who sleeps in that far off grave was with us: a man of splendid physique, well-built, towering conspicuously above many of average height, keen grey eyes that mirrored a living soul of great force within commanding appearance, with strength of character stamped on an extraordinary countenance, a beard raven black and pointed, with curls of loosely arranged black hair covering the brain of a man of genius. He was there because he loved the homely native race; there because his soul hungered after those ideals which made the life and story of ancient Ireland honoured and loved all over Europe; he was there because he believed himself to be a personality in the struggle which tended to encourage a true knowledge and a deep love of fatherland in the soul and heart of every born Irishman; he was there standing out daringly and conspicuously from amongst all those of his connections who held stoutly to the old narrow prejudiced oppressive opinions which had worked so much mischief in Ireland, and which destroyed in many cases Ireland's forward progress towards freedom. And he was proud on that day of being an Irishman. How his soul throbbed as the pipers marched past playing the battle marches of the great houses of Clan O'Neill and O'Donnell, with the flags of the chieftains of all Ireland floating on the breeze on a glorious day in June, 1904. 'Twas a great day for the Gael, a day which brought to-

gether many that never saw other since or before, a day which out of many other doubting days brought a glorious message to Roisin Dhu, the re-echo of other days, which bore testimony to Ireland's proud titles to sovereignty in national life. And he whom we all mourn to-day was in his happiest mood on the field of Gaelic sports, where the brave young manhood of the Glens struggled for supremacy in the contest for the great trophy,

The Shield of the Heroes.

Gaelic Ireland might well say that to her side she had drawn magnetically a figure which stood out impressively then for the perpetuation of a true Irish idea in native life. And in that future Roisin will cherish his name with a love that shall never die. The writer became acquainted with him early in the year 1904, on receipt of the following letter, a precious relic, accompanied by an original poem dedicated to the Irish language, possessed of much beauty and strength, prophetic of what has yet to be accomplished through the movement for the restoration of our National language and literature. The following is the context of the letter:—

Marine Hotel, Ballycastle,
3rd March, 1904.

Dear Benmore,—Miss M'Neill gave me your address, and I send you the enclosed which perhaps you may care for

your Fear an Gleanna. I saw your paper at Cushendun, and admired it greatly, and I wish you strength and health to continue it; you will not lack admirers and friends. I am trying to help the Feis for 30th June here during my stay in this part, and if I am in Ireland at the date I shall certainly come to the Feis. I do not know any Irish (I am ashamed to say), so you must pardon my poor attempt at writing it.

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

ROGER CASEMENT.

The Irish Language.

It is gone from the hill and the glen,
The strong speech of our sires;
It is sunk in the mire and the fen
Of our nameless desires.
We have bartered the speech of the Gael
For a tongue that would pay,
And we stand with the lips of us pale
And bloodless to-day.
We have bartered the birth-right of men,
That our sons should be liars.
It is gone from the hill and the glen:
The strong speech of our sires.
Like the flicker of gold on the whin
That the Spring breath unites,
It is deep in our hearts and shall win
Into flame where it smites.
It is there with the blood in our veins,
With the stream in the glen,

With the hill and the heath, and the wains
Shall think it again.
It shall surge to their lips, and shall win
The high road of our rights,
Like the flicker of gold on the whin
That the sunburst unites.

ROGER CASEMENT.

2nd March, 1904.

The little manuscript journal to which he referred, "The Glensman," was conducted by a few Gaels in Antrim during the early days of the Gaelic endeavour in the Glens. He was intensely interested in even the smallest efforts made for the preservation of Gaelic language, literature, music, art, customs, pastimes, and industries. He took the keenest interest in the Feisanna of the Glens and elsewhere, and was amongst the largest subscribers to its funds. He was present at the Feis Carnlough in 1907, and was a striking figure that day on the Gaelic athletic field. He acted in the capacity of a judge on the occasion. He attended a number of the organising meetings in connection with Gaelic work in the Glens. He believed, as Davis, that a true knowledge of Ireland would only come through proper and reliable Irish sources. He looked upon the educational system in Ireland with much doubt; hence his reasons for attaching so much importance to the cause of the Gaelic League movement. He knew the Antrim Glens well, having travelled on foot over every one of them, visiting the most historic spots and landmarks in these parts.

People of Connaught.

He was known to every Gaelic worker of note throughout Ireland; he visited them in their schools and homes from Antrim to Cork. He was particularly interested in the people of Connaught. I remember receiving from him a lengthy letter on his great work for the Tawin School in Galway, which he erected for the education of the poor Irish in that part of Ireland. He accomplished a great deal of sound work for his native country in a quiet way. The Tawin School, with its Gaelic students, will remain a memorial to his well-ordered work in the sphere of national education. Possessed of a generous heart, with a sympathetic disposition, he aided many a wanderer by the wayside. In many a home in Connemara, by the hearths in Donegal and elsewhere, a generous people will remember him for all his strivings on their behalf. The inauguration of the

Carn at Cushendun

was the outcome of Gaelic thought in the Glens. 'Tis peculiar to relate that Eoin MacNeill delivered the inauguration address at the Carn in June, 1908, in presence of a vast assemblage. The last public address at the same historic spot, which marks the burial place of Shane O'Neill, was delivered by Roger Casement on 28th June, 1914. 'Twas on that day the writer last looked upon the face of this wonderful man. At a

time when the remnants of the Ulster landlord party were doing their utmost to prevent the passage of a modicum of self-government for Ireland, Roger Casement, Mrs. Green, authoress, and others addressed a meeting at Ballymoney.

Partition of Ireland.

His address occasioned sharp criticism in the columns of the Tory Press. He stood for a whole Ireland, and had he been spared no man would have laboured with greater zeal to prevent the partition of Ireland. That spirit voice which stirred to action all the energies of soul and mind led him into difficult and dangerous pathways. Many others have listened over the centuries to the same, and have gone forward oftentimes to death regardless of consequences. A remarkable figure in latter-day Ireland has passed from life to that higher life over the threshold of the scaffold. The causes which urged him on and on shall perhaps remain a secret for a time—it may be for ever. He can suffer bodily no longer; he has passed out into that unfathomable world where the Unseen deals out mercy and judges exactly the motives of all men. As a man cast in heroic mould, strong as a lion on guard over her young, as gentle as a child, carried with him to the place of death all that gentleness and chivalry which distinguished him all through life. The final scenes in the tragedy were resplendent with greatness of character and nobility of mind.

On the place of death he gazed hopefully to that other world, and presaged that peace of mind in those dying declarations already given to the world. He died at peace with enemies and friends, invoking the Merciful Father to deliver his soul in peace, with a desire to be remembered to all those who helped him in any way. He emphasised his great love for Ireland in words which shall linger in the hearts of Irishmen throughout future ages: "I die for my country." One striking scene was witnessed outside the prison during the tolling of the bell which made known his death. Kneeling reverently together, with uncovered heads, a small body of Irishmen transmitted heavenwards a prayer to God for the repose of the soul of the great dead. 'Twas a striking testimony to the deep religious fervour of his fellow-countrymen, and compared beautifully and Christian-like with another scene already written of. Posterity will remember the dead with grateful veneration for the many works he put his hand to for the sake of Erin. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

