

IRISH APPALLED AT DEATH OF COLLINS; FELL FIGHTING WITH VICTORY AT HAND; DAIL MEETS SOON TO SEEK NEW LEADER

IRELAND'S FUTURE IN DOUBT

Meeting of Dail Eireann
Is Awaited With
Anxiety.

MULCAHY MAY HEAD ARMY

Cosgrave Is Considered Most
Likely to Become Director
of Civil Affairs.

BLOW TO THE FREE STATE

British Regard Irish Chief's
Death as Irreparable Loss
to His Country.

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By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Aug. 23.—Michael Collins's death is regarded in circles in close touch with the realities of the Irish situation as deplorable, not only in its removal of a brave soldier and a loyal supporter of the treaty, but also in depriving Ireland in the moment of her greatest stress of one of the very few men who had succeeded in attaining real leadership. As The Evening Standard says tonight:

"What threatens is not the strength of the enemies of the Free State but the weakness of its supporters, and we have to fear not so much the sharp agonies of a vigorously renewed civil war but the rot of more and more anarchy."

In the weary months of strife which preceded the peace negotiations of a year ago the British Government found that one of its chief difficulties lay in discovering any man who could speak with authority for Irish opinion. Eamon de Valera was in America, Arthur Griffith professed to have nothing to do with the militant Sinn Fein and Michael Collins had not yet emerged on the political stage. Sir Horace Plunkett, Lord Midleton and countless other moderate of various types were ready to suggest all kinds of solutions for the Irish problem, but not one of them possessed the one essential qualification of the ability to deliver the goods.

Then came the peace negotiations, and at least one factor in their success was the gratification that the British Government felt when it realized that at last it was face to face with men who had the confidence of the Irish people and who could make a bargain in their name.

Now the question arises, Who will take the places of Collins and Griffith? The newspapers tonight remark how strangely the Free State has lost the services of four of the five signatories to the treaty. Collins and Griffith are dead, Robert C. Barton has gone over to Eamon de Valera, George Gavan Duffy has resigned through disagreement with the Provisional Government's domestic policy on courts and other matters. Only E. J. Dugan remains available. He, however, does not seem to be of sufficient weight to carry on Griffith's and Collins's work.

It seems more probable that Alderman Cosgrave and General Mulcahy will now take the lead. Many people, says an Irish publicist, writing in The Star, think Mulcahy is an abler man than Collins. It was his decision to support the Free State that sealed the fate of de Valera's revolt, and he has a clear understanding of the actualities of Ireland's situation. He knows, says The Star's informant, that if Great Britain decided to resume control of Ireland the Irish army would be powerless to resist for long, and he recognized that the treaty gives Ireland a great measure of national independence.

Cosgrave is also uncommonly able and fair-minded, and it is to be hoped that the situation will clear up when the new Irish Parliament meets in a few days.

Premier Lloyd George received the news by telephone from London while he was in bed at Criccieth at 5 o'clock in the morning. He was greatly distressed and at once arose and got into communication with several members of the British Government.

Collins possessed just that touch of courage and adventure which appeals to the Welsh instincts of the Prime Minister. The story is quite authentic that on his entry into Downing Street Collins took down an old carbine and shouldered it and that Lloyd George took down a Welsh shepherd's crook and in offering it to him said: "This is our national weapon and is a better emblem of peace."

The Prime Minister was also much interested by what he termed the boy in Collins's nature, for the Irish leader was always ready to joke and to give play to his wits in the most serious moments of the negotiations.

The members of the Government have frequently said that the negotiations in these latter days with the Irish representatives never had a real chance until Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins came over. In the words of Sir Robert Horne, they were a perfectly complementary, while Griffith was a statesman, far-seeing, and cool in emergencies, Collins had both courage and confidence. Every Minister in the Government was convinced of the honest sincerity of these two leaders, who sup-

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planted in direct negotiation de Valera, Barton and others.

Personality Was Interesting.

To those who watched day by day the progress of the treaty negotiations in London the figure of Michael Collins was a most interesting one. When he first came he was entirely unknown, and it was evident that he was by no means sorry that it was so. He would hurry from his automobile across the sidewalk into the Premier's residence in 10 Downing Street, and he was clearly distressed at the pertinacity of newspaper photographers who tried to snapshot him.

Moreover, a great deal of interest was taken in the young man, who invariably sat in front of the automobile alongside the chauffeur. They seemed to be a bodyguard, as though Collins would not trust himself to the care of the London police without his own personal escort. Rumor had it that they were armed, but this was denied at Sinn Féin headquarters.

However, as the conference proceeded Collins began to feel more at home. It soon became known that he had made a favorable impression on the British negotiators, and Winston Churchill and Lord Birkenhead were said to be particularly taken with him.

During the most critical period of the negotiations Collins was the messenger between de Valera and the Sinn Féin representatives in London. He went backward and forward across the Irish Sea in an endeavor to use his personal influence with the stubborn theorist who had declined to come over to England to thrash out the difficulties with the British Government.

As long as the negotiations were in progress the Sinn Féin delegates maintained the strictest reticence. They would merely answer in the briefest fashion as they left the Downing Street meetings formal questions as to when the next meeting was to be held. It was noticeable, however, that short as were their answers it was generally Collins who made them. He gave no real information as to how things were going, but he was too good-natured to refuse to make any reply.

But as soon as the treaty had been signed Collins seemed to have dropped a load from his mind. A day or two later THE NEW YORK TIMES correspondent found him one afternoon standing on the sidewalk outside his headquarters in Cadogan Place with his hat off and his dark locks blowing about his forehead submitting to photographers with the best grace in the world. He even allowed one to take a "close-up" as though it no longer mattered who had his likeness on my, and when he was asked if he did not expect some trouble in getting the treaty through the Dail Eireann he replied with his cheery laugh: "Trouble! Well, I have met trouble before and got over it."

Had Many Narrow Escapes.

Innumerable are the stories told of Collins's hairbreadth escapes during the years of guerrilla struggle against the Crown forces in Ireland. Wherever he was, night or day he had always an avenue of exit arranged beforehand. One evening he was dining with friends

in Merrion Square. The thunder of knocking at the street door showed that the British intelligence authorities had tracked him down. Collins slipped through a trapdoor to the roof. Gliding from one chimney stack to another he made his way to the top of a hotel a few blocks away, where the night porter had promised to leave the skylight open and a ladder in position.

For once the arrangement failed. The porter had neglected to place the ladder. With the auxiliaries only a few yards behind him Collins reached the skylight and let himself down only to find himself hanging in mid-air.

Directly below him lay the vast staircase well of the hotel. Swinging to and fro until he had acquired sufficient impetus Collins launched himself forward into the darkness. He cleared the banisters on the top floor by inches and landed on all fours. Only a superb athlete could have done the trick.

Descending the stairs he passed quietly and unrecognized through the guests in the hall. Among them was the chief of the British intelligence forces who were hunting him down.

The extraordinary coolness of Collins saved him many times when actually face to face with troops whom he knew were out for the express purpose of catching him. One night during a walk through O'Connell Street to College Green he was held up by troops and police eight times and not detained longer than was requisite to satisfy his interlocutors of his harmlessness. What he always regarded as his narrowest escape occurred at a hotel in Sackville Street on the Christmas Eve before last. He had entered with three others as important as himself in the Irish Republican Army for dinner, and within a few minutes a party of auxiliaries had raided the establishment and were examining the four. Collins himself was the object of special attention, with cadets gripping his arms, he protesting the while against the indignity. An officer stood in front of him pushing his hair back and comparing his face with a photograph.

The result was that the auxiliaries departed and Collins and his companions quietly went on with their dinner. His intimates perceived, however, that his nerves were badly shaken, but within a short time he had recovered himself.

Some months ago there was an attempt made on his life in County Cork, but he did not allow the incident to be published at the time. As he was starting out to visit a sister living on the outskirts of the city he was warned that a party of men had been told off to shoot him. Collins took a revolver and kept a sharp lookout. Going round a turn he saw four men crouching against a wall. He dashed up to them with drawn revolver and ordered them to put their hands up.

Addressing the leader by name, Collins said: "I am told you want me; well, I am here! Now, what do you want me for?"

"I did not want you at all," answered the man in a trembling voice.

"Very well," said Collins, "right about face, march and clear."

He watched them out of sight, but refused to allow any further action to be taken in the matter.

DUBLIN, Aug. 23 (Associated Press).—

Among the innumerable messages of sympathy is one from General Sir Nevil Macready, who was commander of the British troops in Ireland, expressing sincere sympathy for the heavy loss which

has fallen on the Irish Government and people.

Death Shocks London.

LONDON, Aug. 23 (Associated Press).

—The death of Michael Collins, has impressed the British public far more than did even the death of Arthur Griffith, while the circumstances of his death, fighting against desperate odds in a carefully arranged ambush during the course of an inspection of his troops' positions around Cork, adds to the halo surrounding his lamented death.

His daring and personal attractiveness, combined with his adventurous career, and his reputation as a courageous fighter as well as a prudent administrator helped to give him prominence and importance in the public eye, which was not shared to anything like the same extent by Griffith, who really was little known to the British people and whose retiring nature did not lend itself to public demonstrations.

The British press is filled with tributes, personal sketches, anecdotes and stories of the hair-breadth escapes of the dead commander in chief in the course of Ireland's warfare with Britain, together with testimony of his political strength, his sagacity and his loyalty in carrying out the conditions of the treaty he signed with England. Prominent men, at home and abroad, from the Prime Minister down, hasten to pay tributes of condolence and respect.

When Arthur Griffith died it was the subject of general comment that his life's work was virtually accomplished and his ideals achieved. With Michael Collins, his work was still to do, and perhaps the question most exercising the British public is what will follow upon the tragic disappearance of the two most important Irish leaders.

The new Constitution of the Irish Free State and legislation finally establishing that Government have stall to pass the British Parliament, and will be the chief business of the Autumn session at Westminster; hence the tragic fate which deprived Ireland at such a critical moment of its two greatest leaders is the subject of great anxiety in political quarters here as well as in Dublin.

Richard Mulcahy and William T. Cosgrave are the two names in greatest prominence as leaders of Irish affairs. The meeting of the Dail Eireann, which is under postponement until Saturday and which is expected to delegate the necessary ministerial charges, is therefore awaited with intense interest.

No Man of Collins's Ability Remains.

DUBLIN, Aug. 23 (Associated Press).—Who is to succeed Michael Collins as head of the Irish Free State is now the absorbing question here. No man remains in the present Irish Government with anything like the varied talents and dominating powers of the distinguished Irish leader. Under Collins the whole Ministry has been combined into a united body. The main outlines of Irish policy were fixed by Arthur Griffith and the departed Irish Commander in Chief. Their successors will undoubtedly continue along the lines that they laid down.

Next to Collins in military importance is Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff of the Free State Army, who holds the entire confidence of the rank and file in the Irish military establishment. His effective record in the conflict for Irish freedom also marks him as a strong candidate to succeed his departed chief. On the civil side is William T. Cosgrave, now the acting head of the Irish Provisional Government. He was always

entirely in accord with Griffith and Collins and is noted for his tenacity in pursuing a policy once decided upon.

George Gavan Duffy, who was Irish representative in Rome and later Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government, also is regarded as a man of great promise. He had been extremely active in the formation of the Free State Government and was one of the negotiators in the conferences with Premier Lloyd George.

General O'Connell, Assistant Chief of Staff of the national forces, and General Gerald O'Sullivan are considered as giving promise to assume the leadership of Ireland. Another leader, who is often spoken of as the new head of the Irish Free State, is Kevin O'Higgins, Minister of Economic Affairs in the Dail Eireann Cabinet.

The capacities of Michael Collins were so many-sided that his loss will be keenly felt in all departments of the Irish Government. He was the strongest driving power in the Administration and was accessible to all colleagues desiring his advice.

He dominated the Dail by the force of his personality, and but for his consistent and persistent efforts the treaty would have had small chance of acceptance. The most powerful slogan in the country was: "What is good enough for Collins is good enough for us."

He enjoyed the confidence of the Irish Republican brotherhood and was beloved by the army. He deeply impressed the leading members of the old Unionist Minority, and Protestant Bishops and Peers willingly recognized his character and talents and looked forward to his influence being devoted to national appeasement and fair play all round.

Though Michael Collins had been the fiercest fighter against the British, he was, when peace was made, treated as an opponent on whose word they could confidently rely. He was stiff in insisting on all rights secured by the treaty, yet in all unessential matters of detail he was reasonable and helpful. The Ulster Government appreciated his attitude and regretted the breakdown of his peace agreement with Sir James Craig, the Ulster Premier.