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THE FATE OF THE BROTHERS LOUGHNANE: NOVEMBER 1920.

Amongst the long list of Galway victims there are no names which arouse such passionate sympathy as those of Pat and Harry Loughnane. These feelings are the outcome of their blameless lives and terrible deaths. Of gigantic stature, able, pure-souled, lovable and intensely patriotic the brothers lived a model life on a model farm with their widowed mother at Shanaglish, near Gort. They had another brother away in England, two sisters, national teachers in North Galway, and a brother and sister in U.S.A..

In every phase of human activity in the district, Pat took a prominent part, and was known and esteemed throughout South Galway and Clare. President of the Sinn Fein Club, a fearless soldier of the I.R.A., Beagh G.A.A. full-back, he deeply regretted he took no part in the 1916 struggle, being then a member of the U.I.L. "It grieves me to think that we stood by whilst others suffered, but if I only got the least inkling of the Rising, and what Sinn Fein stood for, I too, would do my part," he often declared to the writer. He was a well-known figure in G.A.A. circles, and shone out prominently in the seven-a-side contests: he invariably played full back, where he was a tower of strength and was the one hurler in all Galway that the giant hurler, Gibbons, of Ballinderreen could not tackle.

Harry was the Beagh goal keeper and Secretary of the local Sinn Fein Club. Although he stood six foot two and a half inches in height, yet beside his brother Pat he was but a mere stripling. He was not yet twenty two years, and was of a gentle retiring disposition. His ambition was to be a teacher, but, his health breaking down, he rejoined his brother at farming. He was very religious; he helped his mother in the kitchen after the day's toil, and his leisure hours were spent in reading and in playing with children.

On the 26th November 1920, (Friday) whilst the brothers were engaged in the peaceful occupation of threshing corn, a force of Auxiliaries and some R.I.C. surrounded the haggard and placed the brothers under arrest. They were subjected to gross maltreatment on their way to Gort. There, the R.I.C. surrendered them up to the Auxiliaries, who, after commandeering eleven yards of rope at Mr. Coen's store bore them away. On the Monday night following, a force of Auxiliaries called at Mrs. Loughnane's and said that her sons had escaped from Drimharsna Castle, Ardahan, where a body of Auxiliaries were quartered. Their friends became anxious for their safety, and their sister, Nora, made a diligent but fruitless search, calling on military officers in Galway and elsewhere, but she feared the worst. One told her that eight of the prisoners including her brothers had escaped, that one was re-arrested and that the other seven were supposed to be 'running south! In the meantime disquieting rumours were circulated to the effect that the Auxiliaries returned to Mr. Coen's with the rope, that a girl overheard the Auxiliaries conversing with an R.I.C. man, and that the latter asked what they did with the two prisoners, and the reply was, "Oh, we have killed them", that the brothers were made carry large stones and run before the lorries, the crown forces prodding them with bayonets, until they fell

exhausted, that they were then tied to the lorries and dragged along the road, that four shots were fired in Moy O'Hynes' wood, near Kinvara on Friday night, that men answering their description were seen in O'Hynes' wood dead or in a dying state on Saturday, that several saw Crown Forces in the wood on Sunday night, that shots were heard and that the two men were taken away in a lorry, and that a fire was seen near Drimharsna, and that the Loughnanes were burnt to cinders.

Then contradictory rumours were widely and persistently circulated to the effect that the ~~brothers~~ were safe and well, and were actually seen chipping wood in Earl's Island Camp, Galway.

These rumours disconcerted the search parties and although one man found brain matter in Moy O'Hynes's wood when the men, who were supposed to know all about the torture and murder of the Loughnanes were interviewed, they denied that they ever knew, heard, or told anybody anything about them. Further search seemed useless.

The discovery of the bodies came about in a remarkable manner. A comrade of the Loughnanes often saw Pat in vision. One night as he sat inside a stone crusher van, with his employer, "Why didn't you stay longer with Pat Loughnane?" the boy asked, and when his employer asked him if he was dreaming, "No", replied the boy, "I surely saw Pat Loughnane with you, and he leaning over his bicycle."

The boy could bear the suspense no longer. He returned to his home near Shanaglish on Saturday evening, the ninth day after the disappearance of his friends. He visited Shanaglish Church and prayed to the Sacred Heart to show him where the Loughnanes were, and that night he dreamt he saw his beloved comrades in a pond at Dombriste near Drimharsna. After hearing Mass at Gort on Sunday, the boy took a comrade with him, cycled to Dombriste, crossed a field to the pond, and there lay the ~~brothers~~ exactly as he saw them in the dream.

The boys told nobody of their discovery until they reached Kinvara. The Kinvara Volunteers, I.R.A. immediately procured a horse and van and went with all haste to Dombriste. They were 'men on the run', and on reaching the pond they rushed into the water, and taking the charred remains laid them side by side on the grass. The bodies were hideously mutilated. They were naked, not a particle of clothing remained, save one of Harry's boots. His once graceful figure was a mass of unsightly scars and gashes; two of his fingers were lopped off; his right arm was broken at the shoulder, being almost completely severed from the body; whilst of the face nothing remained save the chin and lips, and the skull was entirely blown away. The remains were badly charred. Patrick's body was not charred to the same extent as his brother's. His back and shoulders remained intact. The limbs of both were charred to such an extent that the bones were exposed, the flesh and sinews being completely burned away. Mock decorations in the form of diamonds were cut along Pat's ribs and chest. Both his wrists were broken and ~~also~~ also his right arm above the elbow. Patrick's face was completely lashed away, so as to be unrecognisable, and his skull was very much fractured.

Notwithstanding that they had been ten days dead, the bodies were in a wonderful state of preservation, without a sign of decomposition.

After being taken out of the water blood began to flow copiously from a wound in Harry's side. This bleeding was again renewed when the bodies were laid in Hynes's barn, leaving a brilliant red stain on the linens.

Hundreds dipped their handkerchiefs in the martyrs' blood, which they treasured highly. Having recovered the bodies the next problem was to get them away. The Auxiliary stronghold at Drimharsna was only a mile distant overlooking the pond, and the Volunteers were 'wanted men'. Already a stranger cycled up and enquired casually where the bodies were being brought to. "To Ballinderreen Chapel," was the reply. The funeral had proceeded but a short distance when a lorry of Auxiliaries drove up and halted near the pond, where the Auxiliaries remained searching for some time. They then proceeded to Kilcolgan, and in the meantime the funeral had turned on towards Kinvara. Not discovering anything in Kilcolgan, the lorry also moved on in the direction of Kinvara, but meeting two men on the road the Auxiliaries believed one of them to be a 'much wanted man' and brought him back in triumph to Kilcolgan Barracks. By this time the funeral, augmented by large crowds that joined along the route, had reached Kinvara.

Whilst the coffins were being got ready, Mr. P. Hynes gave the use of his barn for the wake. It was the only habitation left to him, his house and outoffices being already burned down by Crown Forces. This barn together with the dwelling of the man who had charge of the funeral arrangements were burnt down by Auxiliaries a few days later.

The brothers, wrapped in linen cloths were laid side by side on the floor. The Rosary was recited in Irish. The blood began to trickle from Harry's wounds, and the responses were interspersed with the sobs and wails of a grief-stricken people, whose handkerchiefs were dipped in the martyr's blood.

Soon after, Miss Nora Loughnane arrived. She bore the trying ordeal with Spartan heroism. She insisted on seeing the corpses, and when several tried to dissuade her, she replied: "Their souls are in heaven, of that I am confident; and they died for Ireland, so it really doesn't matter how their bodies look. They were ready to make this sacrifice for their country's sake, and because I have the same ideas of nationality that they had, I too can bear this ordeal."

For a moment the fearful sight almost unnerved her and she trembled from head to foot, but, by a superhuman effort, she braced herself together and again she was calm and resigned. "Oh, poor Harry," she exclaimed, as she beheld the mutilated features of her younger brother. She could not identify the elder brother, except for his broad shoulders and his stature. A medical officer was also in attendance, and a number of I.R.A. officers held an investigation and ordered the verdict to be written on the breast-plates of the coffins. When a Clergyman arrived the Rosary was again recited, and the bodies were placed in coffins and taken to Kinvara Church. The coffins were draped in Sinn Fein flags with the letters, I.R.A., and the breast-plates bore these inscriptions:

Padraic Ó Locnáin

a gabad, a marbuigead, 7 a dóigead
leis na Sasanaícaib. Mí Samna 1920.
in aois a naoi mbliadain is fíce.

Dia le n-a n-anam.

Nanraoi Ó Locnáin

A gabad, a marbuigead, 7 a dóigead
leis na Sasanaícaib. Mí Samna 1920.
in aois dá bliadain is fíce.

Dia le n-a n-anam.

The I.R.A. kept guard during the night. A Requiem Mass was said on Monday after which the cortege started for Shanaglish Churchyard, the family burying ground; the members of the I.R.A. marching in front of the procession.

Like their sisters, their mother bore up remarkably well. A British Government inquiry was held on the remains on Tuesday. The Beagh P.P., Revd. Fr. Nagle, repeatedly asked the military and Police Officers to look at those bodies, and say if such an atrocity could be perpetrated in a civilised country. He had been Chaplain to the British forces during the Boer War, and had witnessed many unspeakable crimes, but never, he declared, could he even imagine such a hideous barbarity. Then turning to the younger brother, and recognising his lips and chin, he wept bitterly, crying out, "And oh! poor Harry too - a saint of God." Ere six months had passed, this good, upright and loving pastor was resting beside the friends whom he loved dearer than life.

Inured as the Galway people were to sights of woe, and steeled by ruthless repression, yet in this case grief prevailed, and there was scarcely an individual in that huge cortege who was not overwhelmed with sorrow. The people had heard of Mrs. Quinn, shot down while nursing her baby by the wayside, of Joe Howley shot in the back at the Broadstone of Fr. Griffin lured out and murdered on a lonely moor, and a long list of others too numerous to mention, yet they looked on in blank amazement. But this classic of atrocity was too much for them to bear. Strong men sobbed aloud, and women wailed piteously, and there was scarcely one dry eye when the heroic brothers, gentle-souled, noble-hearted and lovable, were laid side by side in a laurel-garlanded grave, with the Sinn Féin flag they loved so well wrapt round their coffins.

Pure-souled and gentle, true to God and Ireland, they loved their country and served her well. For her they suffered unparalleled torture, for her their bones were broken, their flesh torn to shreds and their bodies given to the flames.

And this was the fate of the Loughnane brothers, but they were true sons of Ireland, and they bore it all for their dear Motherland.

Ar deis Dé go raib síad.

Padhraig Fahy.

PATRICK AND HARRY LOUGHNANE

When shall we know, dear boys,
The horrors of that night,
You gave your souls to God
For Ireland's right ?

Yes, who shall tell the tale
Of that grand victory,
You snatched from hellish hosts
To make us free ?

Who'll tell us what you said,
And how you prayed and bore
The awful pangs that pierced
Your sad heart's core ?

Did angels weep to see
The bitter cup of woe,
Presented to your lips
By **Erin's** foe ?

Did Mary by you stand,
That wicked, dreadful night
And pour into your souls
Heaven's purest light ?

These queries of our hearts
To God and you are known
But sure we are, you died
To save your own.

Your names to us, dear boys,
Are treasured evermore
A Light, a joy, a flame,
Within our shore.

Rev. Maurice Slattery, S.M.A

THE MEMORIAL IN SHANAGLISH CEMETERY.

The Loughnane brothers' memorial now completed by Messrs. Regan Bros., monumentalists, Loughrea, reflects the highest credit for design and workmanship on these energetic and scientific sculptors. The memorial which takes the form of a large Celtic Cross (interlaced on all four sides), die-stone and three base stones, reaches a height of 13 feet almost. It is scientifically proportioned and massive in appearance, and is at present being erected in Shanaglish Cemetery where it will stand as a worthy token to the memory of those heroic brothers who were brutally murdered by Crown Forces during the Anglo-Irish War.

Who'll cry
And how you cry'd and bare
The awful pains that pierce
Your sad heart's core?

Did angels weep to see
The bitter cup of woe,
Presented to your lips
By Erin's foe?

Did stars by you stand,
That wicked, dreadful night
And pour into your souls
Heaven's purest light?

These queries of our hearts
To God and you are known
But sure we are, you died
To save your own.

Your names to us, dear boys,
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In light, a joy, a flame,
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