

A DIARY OF THE TERROR

Lady Gregory on the

I WONDER how many people kept a day-to-day diary of the Terror in Ireland in 1920 and 1921. There must be several such records stowed away among family papers throughout the country. I know of a few which have got partial publication. Lily MacManus' "White Light and Flame" which I wrote of recently was one of them and it made me realise sharply what life was like for the ordinary people in those days.

"Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916-1930," have their greatest appeal for me in that they trap the atmosphere of "the troubles" so. The book, edited by Lennox Robinson, was published just after the Second World War.

In the last page of it Lady Gregory sums up her life: "I sometimes think my life has been a series of enthusiasms." So too others will think. She loved Ireland and Coole Park, her beautiful home in County Galway, where so many Irish poets and playwrights were encouraged. It was in that house that Yeats wrote some of his loveliest poetry.

Quite early Lady Gregory realised that the days of the Big House were drawing in and when at last Coole Park was sold she seemed to have taken it philosophically, but the yearning for its preservation pulses through this book.

Since her death it has been dismantled and what would have been a place of interest for Irish men and women and for literary people all over the world is gone.

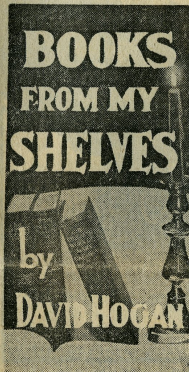
Her enthusiasm for the Abbey Theatre lasted her

one of the inspirers of the movement but one of the great participants. She wrote many plays; she also acted when some leading actress fell sick and could not be replaced; she helped to manage and direct the theatre and aided the playwrights in pushing their dramas for the Abbey stage.

Lane pictures

ANOTHER enthusiasm was evidenced by her long, unflinching fight to bring the Hugh Lane pictures to Dublin. Hugh Lane was her nephew and she fought for years like a tigress to get back the art treasures he willed to Ireland but which Britain, relying on a legal technicality, kept and still keeps, mainly in the cellars of her art galleries.

But Lady Gregory's over-all enthusiasm was in recording the moods and sayings of the people around her. She had the ear for wonderful phrases as much of her writing shows. Like Synge, she took whole passages from the lips of the imaginative small farmers who lived around Coole Park. It is this local spicing that gives her record of the Terror its dramatic force. The entries



In the very words of her informants.

She records one of the great tragedies of the Terror—the shooting dead of the young wife of Malachi Quinn of Gort. Mrs. Quinn had already a little family and was about to have another child when a lorry load of Black and Tans drove through the little town

Black and Tans



Lady Gregory, whose "Journals" have trapped the atmosphere of the days of terror in the West.

On November 15 one of her friends in London sends her a letter:

"Una Pope - Hennessy writes about Terence MacSwiney: 'You could not see the face of that man in his coffin without feeling the most awful moral wrong had been done — it overwhelmed you.'"

Terror worsens

THE Terror in the West grew deeper. Towards the end of November there are many illuminating notices in the

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"To be beaten on the back and the neck, and to have a prod of a rifle in the head, a man might as well be dead. There could be no worse happen out in Turkey."

Awful occurrence

what happened and next day Lady Gregory records:

"Dec. 4th. J. says it is feared that there was 'bad work'—that the two Loughnane boys from Shanaglish were done away with. 'A man, MacGill, took notice where a lorry had turned on the road where it was narrow, and had knocked down part of the wall. He wondered to see it broken and looked behind and there were two boys lying, their heads near one another and dark clothes on them. He went home and it was three days before he could rise from the bed. He told others and, when some went to look there after, the bodies were gone and no word of them.'"

"Dec. 5th. The mason here says the Black and Tans have come back to Shanaglish, after two days, looking for the Loughnanes, said they had escaped and everyone believes they were done away with . . ."

The truth was discovered in the next few days:

"Dec. 6. J. says 'There was news brought to him last night that the bodies of those two Loughnane boys were found near Murty Sheehan's cross roads in a pond that is back from it towards Ballinaderreen.

"It is said they had no clothes on them, and had the appearance of being choked. It looks very bad, but those Black-and-Tans can do what they like and no check on them'. . . Going to the woods with J. he says 'At my dinner hour I met two boys from Shanaglish. It is true about the Loughnanes. Friends had gone to the place where they were found and saw

DAVID HOGAN

In the very words of her informants.

She records one of the great tragedies of the Terror—the shooting dead of the young wife of Malachi Quinn of Gort. Mrs. Quinn had already a little family and was about to have another child when a lorry load of Black and Tans drove through the little town firing at every living thing they saw.

They killed fowl, cattle in the fields, donkeys by the wayside and then fired at Mrs. Quinn, who was standing at her door, one of her children in her arms. As Lady Gregory, using the speech of the people, describes it, in the first week of November, 1920:

"They (the Black and Tans) say now that it was not done by them but the dying woman herself was the witness—told her mother and the priest that she had been shot by the Black and Tans. They fired at Callinan's house as they passed on and broke the windows. The old police in Gort are ashamed of them. They stopped a man the other day turning up the road and robbed him of £50; he had just sold calves and was bringing it home.

"Malachi (the dead woman's husband) cannot stand alone—has to be led 'linked.' They were so happy, they had just got in the harvest, just dug the potatoes and threshed the corn and were ready for the winter. . . . Malachi Quinn came to see me looking dreadfully worn and changed and his nerves broken, he could hardly speak when he came in.

"There had been an aeroplane flying very low over the place all day and as he came from Raheen one had swooped and fired three shots at him. He believes they shot her on purpose—they came in so close. He was so fond of his wife. . . . A letter from poor Malachi in answer to mine. 'My God, it is too cruel.'"

Covered up

AS is the way of all conquerors and was Britain's way in those terrible years, deeds such as this were covered up and officialdom misrepresented Mrs. Quinn's neighbours as if they did not care whether she was shot or not. Lady Gregory, usually so even-tempered, burst out on November 18:

"I was so angry at the official account of Eileen Quinn's shooting—beginning 'The enquiry was open to all but few chose to attend it,' whereas what happened was that none but the family and the witnesses were allowed to attend it."

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Terror worsens

THE West grew deeper. Towards the end of November there are many illuminating notices in the Journals:

"Esther says the Black-and-Tans have been very busy around Athenry, many young men—three friends of hers amongst them—were dragged out and whipped with a thong. Her sister's house was raided one night in search of two young men, but they weren't there.

"They have told the mother of one of them that if her son is not given up her house will be burned. . . . Marian went to pay the bills in Gort yesterday. They told her the Highlanders had come there and 'done bad work the evening before, beating men, driving them before them even into the chapel.' . . . Peter Glynn to-day says to

me 'they are a bad crowd—they beat women and children as well as men with the butts of their rifles. . . . Their officers are bad — letting them get drunk and beating all they meet.

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Awful occurrence

ONE of the most awful occurrences of the Terror was the fate meted out to two brothers named Henry and Patrick Loughnane from Shanaglish. Lady Gregory's Journals from December 3rd, 1920, on has continual mention of this crime and the horror it spread through the countryside. The first mention of it:

"Dec. 3rd. Whispers on the countryside tell of anxiety. Marian tells me, about the two Shanglish boys who were taken away and have not been heard of. And the men who took them—military or Black and Tans—came back with them to Coen's in Gort and bought a crop."

Suspicion deepens about

Here's a happy home!

AND HERE'S ONE of the links that bind it together—Frisky, the terrier, who the family think is the world's wonder dog.

On his pedigree, Frisky is described as Francisco III of Ferndale, but young Harry was only three when the puppy arrived, and all he could manage was 'Fwisky.' A wonderful understanding grew up between them, and part of that understanding is that Frisky gets a Bob Martin's every day from his young master.

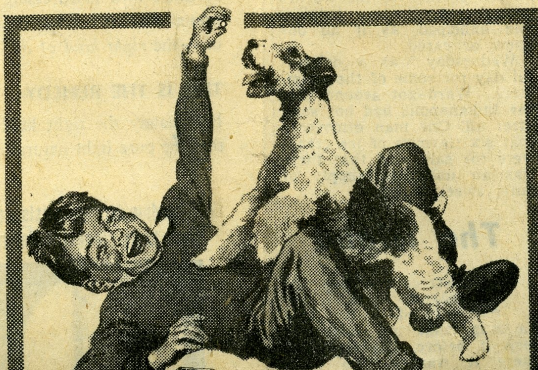
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Calcium Pantothenate (B Group)	0.6 mg.
Vitamin A	120 I.U.
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Dried Whole Liver & Liver Extract	15 mg.

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Deep in sorrow

THE whole countryside, deep in sorrow and aghast at what had been done, told many stories to Lady Gregory and she entered the substance of the conversations into her Journals to be preserved for us. So terrible was the condition of the bodies that various stories spread as to how they met their deaths.

"December 7th. Marian hears the two Loughnane boys could not be recognised—that the bodies looked as if they had been dragged after the lorries. 'When the men in the lorry came to Coen's shop for the rope they took a bottle of whiskey too and when he asked for payment all they did was to point a revolver at him. The bodies were brought home last night. When they passed through Gort at six o'clock the dead-bells were ringing. God help the poor mother, that is a poor widow!'"

"J. says: 'The two funerals passed last night going to Shanaglish. I don't know was the mother there, but the sister went to see the bodies after they were found. She could not recognise one of them but when she saw the other she cried out that it was her younger brother. It is not known for certain how they met their deaths. There are some who say they were burned.

"Murphy went out into the pond after they were found, to bring them in, and when he took hold of the hand of one of them it came off in his hand. . . . M. says 'It is said when they were taken they gave impudence to the Black and Tans. It will never be known what way they died. There is no one dare ask a question. But the work they are doing will never be forgotten in Ireland."

Next day, Lady Gregory writes of more information:

"Dec. 8. Marian having been at Mass says lorries packed with military are passing. Those boys there were winnowing at their mother's house when they were taken, they had been looked for before but they

corn and were ready for the winter . . . Malachi Quinn came to see me looking dreadfully worn and changed and his nerves broken, he could hardly speak when he came in.

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All through these months incidents of outrages are noted and the whole of them gives an extraordinary idea of the kind of banditry the Black and Tans had become and the amazing courage of the people who were not broken by their outrages. Under November 20 she records:

"Dr. Foley here yesterday. The family of the girls violated by the Black and Tans wish it to be hushed up . . . A man the Doctor had long known—an old Land Leaguer — had come to the dispensary to have his back treated."

"I think there was hardly a worse scourging given to Our Lord — the whole back black and blue with bruises and the blood drawn in some places. Other men there were beaten, 'one thrown on a dung-heap — a Black and Tan put one foot on his face to press it into the dung, another on his stomach. And then he and others, treated in the same way, were thrown into the village well to wash themselves."

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"Tim and Glynn working in the garden tell of the Loughnane boys: 'It would break your heart to see that funeral, the two hearses and the poor mother between them. She came from her house but she could not recognise her sons. . . .'

The Government of Lloyd George threw its cloak over the murderers. In answer to a question in the British Commons the reply of the Solicitor-General, as Lady Gregory records it, was:

"He was informed they escaped from custody and had not since been heard of."

It was afterwards believed throughout the West that the manner of Loughnane's death was this: that, living, they were roped to the back of a military lorry which was then driven through the countryside bouncing them to death.