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—THE—  
**Limerick Curfew Murders**  
OF  
MARCH 7TH, 1921.

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**THE CASE OF MICHAEL O'CALLAGHAN**

*(Councillor and ex-Mayor)*

PRESENTED BY HIS WIDOW.

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### Connection with National Activities.

MICHAEL O'CALLAGHAN loved Ireland, worked for Ireland, and died for Ireland. Knowing well the danger, he chose the hard road of service to his Motherland, and his logical end was murder by the hand of a hired English assassin. His passionate interest in Irish affairs was not the growth of these last few tortured years. As a boy, he was proud of the fact that it was his grandfather, Eugene O'Callaghan, who in 1843 proposed the Repeal of the Union in Limerick Corporation. His collection of books shows how deeply he read and thought on Irish history and economics. In politics, he was a member of the first Sinn Fein Club in Limerick in 1905, and died a member of the O'Rahilly Club of the same city. He was a member of the Irish Industrial Development Association, and was one of a gifted group of Limerick men, who Sunday after Sunday for some years, addressed meetings in Limerick and the neighbouring counties, impressing on the people the importance of supporting native goods. He was a member of the Gaelic League, and during his Mayoralty presented the local branch with a scholarship for its students. He believed that the Gaelic League was the training ground for the men who were to save Ireland, and in the midst of his business cares he made time to take lessons in the Irish language from the man who met his death on the same tragic night—George Clancy.

In January, 1914, he was present at the meeting in the Athenæum to establish the Irish Volunteers in Limerick, and spoke on the platform with Patrick Pearse and Roger Casement. He was on the Executive Committee of the Irish Volunteers from 1914 to 1916, and spoke at Pearse's last lecture in Limerick in February, 1916.

After the 1916 Rising, he was one of the small band that kept the heart of the country alive. He was treasurer of the local branch of the National Aid Association. He threw himself into propaganda work, for which he was so fitted, and helped to circulate throughout the country thousands of copies of Bishop O'Dwyer's letters, and other seditious pamphlets. He was one of the founders of the Nation League, and was instrumental in getting the Abstention Policy carried by that League and accepted by the country. He fought for the release of the 1916 prisoners interned and jailed in England, and used his wonderful gift of eloquence in the East Clare Election in 1917.



He was the friend of the extremists, and well realised the need for a military as well as a legislative and constructive side to the national movement. He helped the General Election in 1919, and, aided by George Clancy, wrote the election address for M. Colivet, who was in jail at the time.

He entered the Limerick Corporation in 1911 as a Councillor for the Irishtown Ward, and took a keen interest in municipal matters. This training was of value to him when, in 1920, he was elected Mayor of the City of Limerick by the newly elected Corporation. He and the Corporation at once pledged allegiance to *Dáil Éireann* and the Irish Republic, and he was proud of the fact that he was the first Republican Mayor of Limerick.

Michael O'Callaghan was a pacifist: he loathed war and all that it means, and he used to say that, when Ireland was free, he would stump the world for universal peace. In the Irish fight for freedom, however, he saw eye to eye with the military and political leaders of Sinn Féin; his loss is felt deeply by them now, and will be felt more keenly when they are remoulding a free Ireland.

In truth, Michael O'Callaghan was the brains of Sinn Féin in Limerick and well was that fact known to those who planned and paid for his murder.

### Mayoralty, 1920.

My husband, Michael O'Callaghan, was elected Mayor of Limerick on Friday, January 30th, 1920, and his first official act was the pledging of his allegiance and the allegiance of the Limerick Corporation to *Dáil Éireann*. Owing to the critical and difficult times, and for the credit of the Republic, he devoted himself entirely to the work of the Corporation, and it is admitted that no mayor of Limerick was ever so successful in managing the city affairs. He had a sympathetic understanding, and appreciated the point of view of the different groups of citizens. A member of the manufacturing class and an employer, he was yet, as a working man said to me on one of the first sad days, a labour leader; a Sinn Féiner and a Republican, he tolerated the Unionists of the Chamber of Commerce and hoped to win their service for Ireland.

From the very first day of his Mayoralty, he was noted for his uncompromising national stand, and it led to his murder. In the first week of his Mayoralty, two citizens—Miss Johnson and Mr. O'Dwyer—were shot by the Crown troops. My husband, at a meeting of the Corporation on Thursday, February 5th, said that under the present regime, men's homes were no longer sacred nor their lives safe. He would say to the British Government: "Clear your soldiers out of the country and we will see to it that every citizen is safeguarded. Withdraw the soldiers, place the police under municipal control, and we will look after our own city."

At the inquest on these two victims, he stated that he had not been consulted in an advisory or in any other capacity about the preservation of the peace of the city. "The elected representatives of the people," he said, "have only one connection with these armed patrols that parade our streets; as taxpayers, they have to foot the bill."

### First Death Notice.

On Friday, March 18th, he attended a meeting of the Governing Body of University College, Cork, and lunched with the Mayor of Waterford and Lord Mayor MacCurtain. He returned to Limerick that night and heard next day with horror of the murder of his friend, following the receipt of a threatening letter. He went to Cork on Monday, March 21st, to attend the funeral ceremonies, and on his return received a similar threatening letter on the morning of Tuesday, March 22nd. This letter he published in the local press. It bore the Clonmel postmark, was in typescript, and read as follows:—



*Prepare for death. You are a doomed man.  
Rory of the Hills.*



On advice from the Volunteers, he left his house and went to stay in the George Hotel, and a guard of Irish Volunteers watched at night across the street in the Sinn Fein Club Rooms over Herbert's bootshop. The Mayor occupied the end front bedroom in the first floor corridor. One night he was given another bedroom. That night, a motor car stopped at the hotel, a tall woman got out, interviewed the night porter, and said she was looking for an eloping couple who were sleeping in Room X—the room in which my husband had been sleeping. The night porter protested, the lady pushed past him, and entered the bedroom to find—as she told the porter—that the people there were not her friends. By this time others were roused, and the motor drove away. My husband laughed at the incident, but the Volunteers thought that he would be safer in our own house, so he moved back to St. Margaret's Villa, and slept at ease while the Volunteers changed guard outside.

This arrangement lasted for some months. Much has been said by General Cameron and others of the British Government regarding the way in which my husband kept the peace of the city. I would like to put on record that General Cameron's armed forces baptised my husband's year of office in the first week with the murder of Miss Johnson and Mr. O'Dwyer, and marked his last week with the blood of Tom Blake, I.R.A. How far the year 1920 was a peaceful one in Limerick is known through the press to the public. During the first six months of the year, there were more "shootings-up" and more Crown outrages in Limerick than elsewhere in Ireland. It was reported in the issue of the "Limerick Leader" for June 30th, that owing to the tension due to outrages there was an abnormal number of patients suffering from nervous complaints and diseases. During this time of "peace" Michael O'Callaghan was the people's champion against Crown aggressors and law breakers. It was to him citizens went when their homes were robbed, wrecked or burned by the Crown forces; it was to him they turned when they themselves were brutally beaten by members of the English garrison; it was he who enlightened foreign newspaper correspondents as to the truth of happenings in Limerick and district; it was he who forced the truth on the notice of General Sir Neville Macready in an open letter on August 21st, 1921. A sentence from that letter gives his attitude:—

"I know you have no real right to exercise any authority in this country, and I address you simply to insure that your professed ignorance of outrage and atrocity shall be culpable, and that you shall not be able to assume ignorance of what has occurred in my city."

General Cameron spoke so strongly at the Military Inquiry about the help my husband gave him in keeping the peace of the

city that it was thought that they had many meetings and discussions. The *only* meeting between Michael O'Callaghan and General Cameron was of General Cameron's seeking. The English garrison broke barracks on Monday, April 26th, a riot followed in which a soldier of the Welsh Fusiliers was killed; the troops did a certain amount of damage to property, and the General called on the Mayor at the Town Hall to discuss plans for keeping order in the streets. The Mayor said that he could keep the peace of the city with Volunteer peace patrols, if the English soldiers and police were confined to barracks. General Cameron put that suggestion aside as impossible, but suggested instead that both bodies could work together, the Volunteers to wear a distinguishing badge. Michael O'Callaghan knew only too well what treatment awaited Volunteers so badged, and the discussion ended there.

### First Raid.

In July and August, 1920, raids on private houses in Limerick became more frequent. My husband, knowing that it would be a serious matter if his armed guard fired on the Crown forces coming on a "legal" raid, decided to do without them, and relied for safety on the presence of the ordinary guests, Americans and others, who came and went during the summer months. We had decided to take a three weeks' holiday in London from September 1st, and on the night of Monday, August 30th, when there was neither guard nor guest in the house, we had our first search. On that night, at 11.45, a mixed party of soldiers, police and black-and-tans, accompanied by some military officers in uniform and in civilian clothes, in charge of Mr. E.—, the local District Inspector of Police, also in civilian clothes, having fired off volleys of shots at the Sarsfield Bridge, climbed over the front wall of our garden and knocked at the door. Hearing the shots, I got out of bed and, watching from my bedroom window, saw the dark figures coming over the wall and rushing up the grass in the moonlight. Long before that night, we had decided that Michael should never go down to open the door at night, so it was I who went accompanied by the maid. I asked who was there, and the answer was "Police!" When we opened the door and saw the crowd in mixed uniform and civilian clothes, armed with revolvers and rifles, the maid, Brigid, said to the man who was in front: "Oh, sir, you are not going to murder the master." When I was convinced that it was a "legal" search, not a murder raid, I called my husband, and the search began, but not before I had handed to them the key of the garden gate which was kept locked at night. The District Inspector said that he was most anxious that there should be no looting, and asked Michael and me to accompany the men into the different rooms, but as they



poured into all the rooms in the ground floor, the drawing-room floor, and the bed-room floor, that was an impossibility.

Searches are a commonplace in Irish homes now, but they are not the less painful. A search means carpets pulled up, presses, wardrobes, cupboards and beds pulled out and ransacked, writing desks rifled, private letters read aloud and commented on, jeering questions put to an unarmed man, the humiliation of the women of the house standing for hours in their night clothes and hastily-donned dressing gowns. Such was this search in all particulars, and we were glad to see them go after a few hours. One thing I did notice: the District Inspector, in answer to my question, said that he was in charge of the search; yet, when he said to the military officers: "Come on, that's finished," they refused, saying: "We're not finished here yet."

A few days after, I wrote the District Inspector the following letter, which he acknowledged. "St. Margaret's, i/x/1920. Sir—After your search of my house on the night of Monday, August 30th, the following articles were missing:—

Silver Drawingroom Clock,  
Silver Pepper Castor,  
Silver Cigarette Case and Match-box,  
Silver Butter Fork, 2 Tea Spoons,  
Cards, Toilet Soap, Corkscrew.

All the articles, with the exception of the clock, were taken from the downstairs portion of the house, where your men also helped themselves to claret and stout. I am telling you this, not that I want restitution, but merely as a matter of information for you, because you personally seemed anxious that nothing like this should occur."

### "On the Run."

We left for London on September 1st, 1920, and while there received letters pressing us to stay away as long as possible. My husband wrote to say that he intended returning to Limerick after three weeks. Again we were urged to take at least six weeks, if not the three months' rest we needed. My husband agreed with me that there must be something behind all this, but he said that his post awaited him, so back we came to Limerick on Saturday, September 25th, to learn that secret information had been got from Colonel — that my husband's life was in great danger, and that it would be folly for him to sleep at home. From Saturday, September 25th, until Christmas Eve, my husband never slept a night at home. That is to say, he attended during the day to his Mayoral duties at the Town Hall, walked home to meals unattended through the public streets, but at night, owing to the information we had received, he dared not sleep in his own house.

It meant that, if there was a Corporation meeting at 6-30 p.m., he left his home about that time and did not return. If there was no meeting of the Corporation, he left his home about 9 o'clock—Curfew being at 10 o'clock—and walked to the house he had selected for that night. On such nights, I stood in the hall with my sister and waited for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. If there were shots—and very often there were—my sister ran out holding an electric torch and searched the roadway as far as Sarsfield Bridge. Coming back she used say to me: "Well, he's not there to-night." It was a trying time, but for my husband's sake I pretended not to mind.

### Final Death Notice.

He received his final death notice on October 15th, 1920. It read as follows:—

*Final Warning. Whereas, it has come to our knowledge that the Sinn Fein Organisation of which you are a prominent official through the so-called I.R.A., or murder gang, has been committing outrages in this hitherto God-fearing and law-abiding Country.*

*This reign of terror must be stopped. You are, therefore, most earnestly warned that in the event of the continuance of these heartless and cowardly crimes you will be personally held responsible and punished in such a manner that others will be deterred from criminal courses.—By order.*

We examined it very carefully and noted the typing and postmark, and I put it aside for future reference. Some weeks afterwards, about 10-30 one night, there was a telephone call to say that my husband could have the trunk-call that he was asking for during the day. I knew nothing about this, but I said that my husband was not at home. Next day, Michael, on being told of the matter, said that he had not asked for a trunk-call. I wondered if the authors of the Final Warning wanted to find him at home that night. Here, to show my husband's close connection with the I.R.A. in these autumn and winter months, I wish to state that he was one of the three persons who supported financially —, the local commandant of the I.R.A. When — was arrested, the newly appointed officer called at once on the Mayor to tell of his appointment, and to keep up the necessary relations between the military and civil sides of the Republican Government. My husband was, too, in constant communication with all the Departments of an *Óst*, and carried out their orders. When in Dublin, he got into personal touch with the Cabinet Ministers, and their relations were most cordial.

On Christmas Eve, we decided that even the British Government kept some rules and that assassins would stay their hands for the time commemorating the birth of the Prince of Peace. So my husband slept at home that night. On Christmas Day, however, he



decided that, no matter what the risk was, he was not going to leave his home again. It worried him that I had stayed by myself all the winter, though I pointed out that there were three of us women in the house.

On January 19th, 1921, my husband got a copy of the "Weekly Summary" through the post. We were interested in the wrapper, and getting out the envelope that brought the Final Warning on October 15th, 1920, we could see that the postmarks were the same, and that there were the same peculiarities in the typing and punctuation of the addresses. They had been typed by the same machine. The final warning and the anonymous copy of the police gazette, "The Weekly Summary," published in the Castle, came from the same source. I have these two, the wrapper and the envelope.

### Election of George Clancy to Mayoralty.

As the end of the Mayoral year drew nigh, pressure was brought to bear on my husband to continue in office a second year. He pleaded that he was not a strong man, that he had put his own business aside for 1920, and that one year of the Mayoralty under present circumstances was the most that could be expected from even the best citizen of the Republic. George Clancy was elected Mayor on Monday, January 31st, 1921. Public bodies, particularly since the Republic was established, do not waste time on praise, but I felt, on reading the report of the proceedings, that my husband's year of splendid work for the city was valued, and that our year's anxiety and strain had not been wasted. On this day, my husband made his last public speech. I quote the following—and remember it was delivered in a martial law area where freedom of speech was banned, and any utterance might be seditious:—The outgoing Mayor said that his Mayoralty had opened in tragedy by the death of Miss Johnson and Mr. O'Dwyer, and had ended in tragedy by the death of Mr. Thomas Blake. It was smybolical of the history of the country. While they all realised the tragedy of the situation, and while all of them deplored it, nevertheless the hearts of the people beat high with hope. The Republican movement was strong, it had swept the country at the General Election of 1918, and the Municipal Elections of 1920, and was even stronger at the present time, notwithstanding inspired statements to the contrary. He would state it positively as his considered opinion that the Republican movement had more adherents to-day than it had twelve months ago. That was due perhaps not so much to the positive merits of the Republican representatives, but certainly to a great extent to the demerits of the British enemy. Sir Hamar Greenwood figured himself before the world as the one trying to rescue the Irish Andromeda from the Sinn Fein monster, but Ireland was not afraid

of Sinn Fein and was determined to stand by it. It was quite true that Sir Hamar Greenwood and his forces might reduce Ireland to a desert and call its peace, but the Irish race he could never exterminate. If the enemies of Ireland left the boys and girls alive, they would have the same trouble all over again in twenty-five years' time, for the youth of the present day were imbued with patriotism and nationality. Republicanism had more adherents to-day than a year ago, and would sweep the country if another election were held.

On Thursday, January 27th, 1921, I, as Mayoress, went to a dance at the George Hotel in aid of St. Munchin's Church Building Fund. I was told on arrival that Auxiliary Cadets were present, but to satisfy myself on this point, I sat in the dancing hall and had these members of the Irregulars pointed out to me. In particular I was shown one man —, and I remembered that I had heard of a raid on the house of Tom Blake about a week before when this person, accompanied by three military officers in uniform, threatened to shoot Tom Blake. What I had heard about the conduct of this man during that raid was in my mind, and I sought out two matrons of the dance, a Catholic and a Protestant, and I objected to the presence of such guests, declaring that I as Mayoress was about to leave the dance as a protest. I tell this merely to show that I had occasion to examine with attention one of the army of occupation, whose name was given to me and about whose behaviour I had heard. What his particular function was I could not say for, at different times he wore mufti, military officer's uniform, and at times the tam o' shanter that marks the Auxiliary Cadets.

Tom Blake was murdered next evening on Friday, January 28th, on his way home from work. His mother and other members of the family heard the officer I saw at the dance threaten during the raid to shoot him, to "spoil his face," etc. Tom Blake was buried on Sunday, January 30th. and my husband and I walked in his funeral. Next day, when George Clancy was elected Mayor, he and my husband called on the bereaved mother.

After the Mayoral election, my husband at once plunged into the affairs of his firm, the City Tannery. We had been promising ourselves a holiday in the south of France after the worry and strain of the year, but pressure of business decided him to postpone such a holiday. He was, besides, full of the propaganda work he was now free to do for the cause, and he insisted that the time was ripe for a genuine boom in home manufactured goods. He felt that this was just as much a means of attack as military operations, and that it had the advantage of putting, as it were, every Irish man and every Irish woman on active service.



### Second Raid.

On Shrove Tuesday night, February 8th, my husband and I were having supper in the dining-room at a few minutes after 10 o'clock. There was a frantic knocking at the hall door and at the service door. The maid and I went to the hall door, and I asked who was there, getting the answer: "Police!" I opened the door, and in rushed a body of policemen, armed with rifles and revolvers. They shouted as they rushed past me in the hall, and up and down the stairs: "Who lives here?" "Hold the doors." I noticed that they were very red in the face and excited, their clothes were dusty and untidy, and some of the men were drunk. I ran into the dining room, and said to my husband, who was standing with his back to the fire:—"Have you that relic in your pocket?" Oh, I'm afraid. They have come to do something dreadful. They are very drunk."

"Come over here," he said, "and stand near me. Whatever it is, it will be all over in a minute." After a little time, the police came down the stairs from the bedrooms and up from the kitchen floor, and my husband asked the meaning of their visit. I cannot describe this raid, for it was like a nightmare. There were both English and Irish police, and we owed our lives to two members of the old R.I.C., who seemed to have a slight restraining influence. All the others rushed about, shouting and pulling things out, overturning vases, jeering at the long agony of Terence McSwiney, threatening to put a speedy end to my husband's propaganda, yelling that there was no God, God was dead, asking me how I would like my house to "go up," saying that I would soon know more about murder. I had to accompany one man who went off on his own initiative to search the bedrooms, though all the time I was afraid for my husband's safety downstairs. This constable found a military whistle and the mourning armlet which my husband had worn at the funerals of Lord Mayor MacCurtain and Lord Mayor MacSwiney, so I had to go downstairs with a rifle to my back. They all agreed that I was treasuring the whistle because it had been robbed from a policeman killed in an ambush. When they had been an hour and an half with us, they asked for the key of the gate as they did not want the trouble of climbing out over the gate and wall. My husband asked them why they came at night like this, frightening his wife and pulling the house about, adding, however, that he was glad they came so early. "We'll come later the next time," they replied in a threatening manner.

After this raid I was frightened for the first time, for again and again during it, when my husband was quietly and courteously answering the questions shouted at him, I saw hate and murder in the faces of a few of these men. It appalled me that anyone should feel so towards my husband, and next day when I met one of my

sisters, we walked along the quayside, while I told her of the raid. "Our bad time is in front of us," I said, and overwhelmed by some vague terror, I broke down and cried. Women do not cry much in Ireland during this war: the trouble goes too deep. My husband said during the following day, as he had said so often since the trouble started, whenever he heard of the brutal treatment of prisoners at the barracks or of brutal murders: "I hope they will neither beat nor torture me. I am not afraid of death, but I must confess that I should like a quick one."

### Third Raid.

On Tuesday, February 22nd, just a fortnight after the last raid, we were visited again. There was the usual knocking at the door about 10-30; the maid and I having asked who was there and getting the usual answer, "Police," opened it. On the steps were a crowd of police and soldiers, and shining over the wall at the end of the garden I could see the search light. The man in front, in mufti, armed with a revolver, was the Auxiliary Cadet whom I had seen at the dance, whose name had been given to me, and about whose conduct at Tom Blake's house I had heard. Tom Blake had been murdered since then, so I looked at the man with interest and apprehension. He was obviously in charge of the raid as he was in front of the others, and asked "Who lives here?" On being told, he said that he had come to make a search. Then he said: "I want the key of the gate." My husband, having heard that it was merely a search, came out of the dining-room. I walked back to the hall table in view of all who were standing at the door, and taking the key from the little tray handed it to him. In a few moments I saw the need for opening the gate, because three women searchers came hurrying in; also the search-light, shining now through the open gateway, lighted up the whole house and gave ample light for the search of the front rooms. I could see that the garden was full of soldiers in war outfit. They stayed outside, and the search was carried out by about twenty English police, in charge of the Cadet I mentioned and another young officer. At once, the women hurried the maid and me upstairs, while my husband was lead into the dining-room. The women searched the wardrobes, linen press, cupboards, drawers, beds, etc., etc., very carefully. Even the heels of my boots and shoes and the hems of my gowns were examined. The manner of the senior women searcher was insolent in the extreme. At last she searched me personally. This seems a small matter, but the circumstances—the time, 11 o'clock, the place, my own house, the insolent manner—were such as to cause me great humiliation. This woman, I could see, had learned her methods and her manners in London dealing with a class of English crime very different from my offences under the Restoration of Order Act in Ireland.



All this time I was anxious about my husband downstairs. Afterwards he told me that the second officer said to him: "We were thinking of giving the new Mayor a Lord Mayor's Show." Michael, scenting a jeering note, flung back: "Well, you could have done so. You have the power, the guns, the armoured cars, the tanks." Even then, my husband's "peaceful" character was being built up, for the officer replied: "I hope he'll keep the city as quiet as you kept it." The Cadet in charge and the second in command then came upstairs, and the Cadet asked me particularly which was my room. I pointed it out, overlooking the front garden. Then they noticed the disposition of all the rooms, and meantime, the soldiers were examining all the windows opening on to the next garden and the back of the house. In the hall, when the Auxiliary Cadet, Intelligence Officer, or whatever he really was, was leaving, I said:—"Are you aware that we were raided just a fortnight ago?" He hesitated a little, but replied at length: "Yes." Then I complained that it was a drunken raid, and that the attitude of some of the men taking part in it was most hostile and threatening. I pointed out that it was not really a search, for some of the rooms were not entered, so that I could only conclude that it was an "irregular" raid, merely to worry and frighten us. He was sympathetic about this, and very polite, and left saying good night, having made arrangements to have the gate locked by one of the black-and-tans, who would bring us back the key and get out over the wall. After they had gone, my husband and I had a chat about the raid. We discussed the Cadet in charge, and my husband remarked that he had a charming cultivated voice, and wondered if he were English. We could come to no conclusion about his nationality as his name suggested that he might be of Jewish extraction. "Anyhow," said Michael, "the rascal has a nice voice, but a very dirty job."

### Murder Raid.

On the night of Sunday, March 6th, Michael and I went to bed about 11 o'clock, having spent a very happy day together. After a morning visit to his mother, I wrote letters while he attended the funeral of George Clancy's father-in-law. In the afternoon, Mr. William Hard of America, called, and my husband never was in a happier humour nor in a better vein for brilliant talk. Later my two sisters and my brother-in-law came, and when they left before Curfew, we sat, and read and chatted at the drawing-room fire. As we were going to sleep, I said: "This has been a happy day." "Very happy, thank God," he replied. I fell asleep, and was wakened by a loud knocking at the hall door. I got up and, throwing up the bed-room window, said: "Who's there?" It was

a darkish night, and I could see nothing, but a voice from the steps, a voice I recognised, replied: "Who lives here?" I said, "Michael O'Callaghan." "We want him," came immediately, two voices this time. My mind stabbed me with the thought that this formula preceded murder in Ireland, and I felt faint with horror, but I said calmly enough: "Well, you can't see him at this hour of the night." The voice I knew said again: "We want him, and we're coming in any how." I grew fainter at this, but when the voice said in the tone and words I had heard on the previous raid: "And we want the key of the gate," I felt reassured, thinking at once of the women searchers. Turning to my husband who was getting out of bed, I said: "It's the usual thing. What shall I do?" He said: "Oh, I wish they would not worry us like this, but ask them is there an officer in charge."

I bent out again, heartened by his calmness and asked:—"Is there an officer in charge?" "Oh, yes," came the answer, "one officer." "Two officers," said the other voice. In spite of myself, while I put on my dressing-gown and shoes, I cried a little, and my husband said: "Don't bother about Brigid to-night. You're nervous, and I'll come down with you this time. 'Tis the usual thing. Don't be afraid, dear."

"I'll bring my rosary beads," I said. He had lighted the candle, and put on his gown and shoes, and we went down stairs together. I heard Brigid's door opening, and she told me afterwards that she wondered to see the master going down with me in spite of all our arrangements. She heard him say to me on the stairs: "Don't worry, dear. It will be all right."

He lighted the hall gas, and put the candlestick on the hall table, and, as I went towards the door, I said: "Don't stand there in the middle of the hall. You never know what is going to happen." He said: "It's all right," and stood just behind me while I unlocked and unchained the door. I opened the door wide, and when I saw the two men with goggles, and hats pulled down, and coat collars up about their ears, my heart leaped in my breast. I knew it was murder. Both men said together, waving their revolvers at Michael: "You come out here. Come out." My mind worked like madness. I thought of the dark garden, of the river, of all the horrors, and stretching out both my arms to cover Michael and pushing him back behind me, I shouted: "No. No. My God! not that."

I heard Michael say, "No. No," just twice, as the men advanced after us in the hall. I caught at their hands as they tried to get me out of the way; there was a struggle for a second, and the man on my right hand, the man with the clear glasses and the blue eyes freed his right arm and fired over my shoulder. I turned to see Michael stagger from the hall table, against which I had pushed



him and fall on to the mat at the foot of the stairs. In my agony, I relaxed my hold of the man, and that same devil slipped past me and emptied his revolver into my dear husband's body as he lay on the ground. I was struggling with the other man—the man whose voice brought me down stairs—but as the man who had shot Michael was passing us to go out, I flew at him. I had the strength of a maniac. We three fought together in the hall, while I screamed all the time. I knocked them twice as our feet slipped on the polished floor; my shoes fell off; I tore at their faces and heads instinctively; they never said a word, but beat me with their hands on the head, shoulders and arms. We fell against the umbrella stand, and at last with an effort, they threw me off, and I fell heavily on my hip on the floor.

I shall never forget the agony I suffered as I lay there screaming and helpless while I watched them running down the grass in the shaft of light from the hall door.

I crawled back to my husband and fell across his body, all my being crying out to God to spare him to me. I had never seen anybody die, so I hoped where from the first shot there was no hope. His eyes were closed and he gave just a little sigh. Brigid had flung on a coat, and was on the landing when she heard the first shot. Others followed, and she knew what it meant. At once, she got her rosary beads with the cross blessed for the hour of death, my crucifix and holy water, and ran down to find us both lying at the foot of the stairs. At first she thought us both dead. She roused me, and I asked her: "Is this a bad dream?" She held the crucifix to my husband's lips, and said the Aet of Contrition before I could think.

I went mad at times during this night, but I can remember some things only too well. After that one little sigh, my husband did not even moan, thank God. I refused to let Brigid move him, lest we should hurt him, and knowing that I would lose my reason if I saw his wounds or his blood. We got pillows, put rugs over him, and placed a hot water bottle to his feet. The brandy bottle we neither of us could open, so we broke the neck off, and I bathed his poor forehead. In a distracted state, Brigid ran down the garden to go for help, but hearing talking outside the garden wall, on the road, she did not like to leave me. When we had done all we could, it was she also thought of the telephone. While she was looking up the numbers, I saw on the table the glasses I had pulled off the murderer in the struggle. I did not know I had done so, yet here they were lying folded on the table.

I got the Exchange at once, and, telling the operator what was the matter, tried to get on to the Jesuit Fathers, for I knew Father Hackett would come to Michael. I failed to get an answer from

them, or from my husband's doctor whom I tried next. Then the operator suggested Dr. Roberts, whom I did get. He seemed to think from what I said about the number of shots that there was no hope, but I asked him to come for God's sake, and he said he would chance it. Then I thought of Father Philip of the Franciscans, who had been my husband's chaplain and friend when he was Mayor. He would come to Michael if I could only get word to him, so I asked the operator at the Exchange to walk down to the Franciscan Friary and call up Father Philip. It is but a few minutes' walk from the Telephone Exchange to the Friary, but, though he was kind and wanted to help, he could not leave his post; besides he could not risk the Curfew streets. He suggested ringing up the Lying-in Hospital in Bedford Row, which is just across the street from the Friary: the night nurse there could call Father Philip. There was no answer from the Lying-in Hospital. Then I thought of the Fire Station: I rang them up and the man on duty answered. I told him that my husband had been shot, and that I wanted Father Philip, and I asked him to walk down from the Fire Station and call up Father Philip. He said: "I would do anything on God's earth for Mr. O'Callaghan, but I dare not go out into the streets during Curfew." Next the operator suggested asking Dr. Roberts to call up Father Philip on his way to my house. I rang up the doctor, and his wife answered that he had just left the house. Then my husband's words flashed back to me: "If anything ever happens, throw the matter over on to them at once. Remember their number 184." I rang up 184, William Street Police Barracks, and when I got on, I said: "This is Mrs. Michael O'Callaghan of St. Margaret's, North Strand, speaking. My husband has been shot and I want the priest and doctor." The voice asked: "What name?" I repeated what I had said before. "What name? What name?" came the voice again. I repeated in desperation: "Mrs. O'Callaghan, wife of Michael O'Callaghan, who was Mayor of the City, of St. Margaret's, North Strand. I want a priest. My husband has been murdered." Again came the question: "What name?" I threw down the receiver and cried to Brigid: "Oh, they are mocking me. They will not understand what I am saying." I went to kneel down beside my husband, when the telephone bell rang. I took the receiver, and repeated that my husband had been shot and that I wanted a priest. A decisive voice replied this time, and I explained where Father Philip lived—on the way from the Barracks to my house. Then I rang off. Brigid went down to the gate again and again to find if the doctor was coming. At last she heard foot-steps. She called out: "Is that the doctor?" He answered, so she unlocked the gate and they came in together. I was crouching near my husband's body, so the doctor took me up and lead me into the drawing-room. Then he went back to the hall to examine Michael,



closing the door behind him, while I knelt in the dark praying and in agony. I knew, and yet I hoped. In a moment he was back in the room, telling me that there was no hope. I cried out, and would not—could not believe him. He lifted me from the floor, and he and Brigid did what they could for me. At last he said: "I can't do anything for him, but I can get Father Philip." When he was gone, Brigid and I knelt and prayed that my husband would live till Father Philip came. The time passed, and Brigid, watching, cried out: "Here's Father Philip."

He knelt at once to anoint Michael, while I went to the hall door holding the glasses in my hands. Knowing who the murderers of my husband were, I wanted to keep the police out until all was over. There were four men on the steps—a district inspector, a sergeant, and two constables—all looking coldly and curiously over my shoulders into the hall, where at the foot of the stairs my husband was receiving the last rites of the Church. They saw what was happening, that a man, whom they afterwards described as a man of peace, was dying, murdered, and they did not remove their caps; nor was there a single word of sympathy for a woman in sorrow. Pictures of soldiers saluting the dead bodies of their opponents flashed through my mind, pictures of men saluting he dead all the world over. No salute here, only cold curiosity.

"Have you any idea who has done this?" asked the District Inspector. I replied: "I will not say, but I have these glasses belonging to the murderer." He seemed interested in them, and put out his hand, but I drew back saying I would keep them.

"When did it happen?" he continued. "I don't know," I replied. "Ten minutes past one," said the sergeant. "We heard the shots at the Barracks, turned out, but could not locate them."

Father Philip finished his work, and then made me go into the drawing-room where he lighted the gas. I could hear the police moving round the hall and the kitchen stairs, looking for bullets. "Find the puzzle," said one to the other. After a little time, the sergeant came in to us with a note-book, and asked me to tell what happened. "The District Inspector is a new man," he said, "he does not know what to do, so I am forced into the work." I told him simply what happened, for I was exhausted. He said he would come back the following day for more information, to which I made no reply. He also questioned Brigid, but she had seen nothing till she came down to find us lying together at the foot of the stairs.

Suddenly a thought seemed to strike Father Philip; he walked with me to the drawing-room door, and called out: "You can't help Mrs. O'Callaghan. Why not go and see if the Mayor, George Clancy, is safe." The police left at once. I dressed, we made up the fire, and I tried to face the overwhelming tragedy that had come on me. Time seemed to stand still. At last, Father Philip telephoned

to the William Street Police Barracks for a motor and escort to take him to Eden Terrace to break the news to my sister, and to my husband's brother. In a very short time, the car came, and he went to Eden Terrace. In the car, as part of the escort, was the sergeant who had been with us some hours before, and he chatted with Father Philip on the way out and back. My sister and her husband, my brother-in-law and his wife all walked over together, and their coming was a help to me. Father Philip left to say Mass at 6 o'clock, and at the same time my sister's husband went to tell the Mayor, George Clancy, that Michael had been murdered and to make arrangements. At the 6 o'clock Mass, Father Philip prayed for Michael's soul. After the Mass, a woman rushed to him. "You have made a mistake," she said, "it is not Michael O'Callaghan who has been murdered, it is the Mayor, George Clancy." My sister's husband learned the same news at the Mayor's house.

As the morning grew, other friends flocked to my aid, and at last about 9.30 a.m., I was put to bed exhausted and in need of the doctor's care, for I was bruised all over and my hip hurt me.

All Monday and Tuesday, the people of Limerick streamed into the house to look at my dear husband's face and to kiss his dead hand. All Monday night and all Tuesday night, members of the I.R.A., "wanted" men from the Flying Column stood guard in his room. All night long, I could hear them saying the Rosary. On Wednesday the bodies were placed before the High Altar in St. John's Cathedral, and on Thursday, March 10th, they were laid to rest in the Republican Plot in the City Cemetery. I am proud to think that my husband lies besides the Gaelic Leaguer and the Irish Volunteer, the two types he loved most in the Ireland of to-day, the types who were making the dream of his life come true. God speed the day.

### Refusal to Attend Military Inquiry.

During these days of mourning, the police and military visited my house again and again. From the first, I refused to see them. When I returned to St. Margaret's, on Thursday, 10th March, after the funeral, I saw a policeman climbing over the wall. He came to deliver to me the invitation to attend the Military Inquiry into my husband's murder on Friday, March 11th, together with a bundle of permits for people who might wish to attend. He also asked what my attitude would be if I were *compelled* to attend. I answered this invitation in the Press as follows:—



10/iii/1921. Dear Sir,—I have received a request from the military to attend a Military Court of Inquiry to-morrow with reference to the murder of my husband, Michael O'Callaghan. I am quite willing to appear before a jury of my countrymen and to give evidence and every assistance. I shall not attend any Military Court of Inquiry, as I believe that these courts are but a farce and a travesty of justice. I have several times conveyed my decision on this point to those concerned.

Faithfully yours, K. O'CALLAGHAN.

All I have written above is the truth.

### Important Points in my Case.

I wish now, to build up my case both from what I know, and from the sworn evidence at the Military Inquiry on March 11th, 1921. First, I would like those who have read my statement to answer me one question: *What side, English or Irish, would benefit by the removal of a man like Michael O'Callaghan?*

Consider, then, the following points in my case:—

(1) Joseph O'Donoghue, I.R.A., was murdered about 11.30 p.m. on the night of Sunday, March 6th. *No one knew he was murdered, save his murderers, until his body was found in the street the following morning.*

George Clancy, Mayor of Limerick, was murdered about 1.35 a.m. on the morning of Monday, March 7th. *None of the Crown forces knew he was murdered till Canon O'Driscoll, P.P., St. Munchin's, went to the North Strand Military Barracks about 2.30 a.m. to get a doctor for the Mayoress, Mrs. Clancy, who was shot through the wrist.*

The *only* murder known officially was that of my husband at 1.10 a.m. about which I telephoned to William Street Police Barracks at 1.30 a.m.

Keep these facts in mind, and note the following conversation that took place between District Inspector I—— and Father Philip on their way to my husband at 2 o'clock that night;—

D.I.—Let us walk down by the river side, they may be still around. Father Philip—Who?

D.I.—The murder-gang. Father Philip—What murder-gang?

D.I.—The Sinn Fein murder gang. We have been after them the last five days. We nearly got them in the Library. It is they who have done *these murders* to-night.

Father Philip—Murders! My God, has some one else been murdered besides Michael O'Callaghan?

D.I.—Oh, I don't say that, but they will surely do more before the night is over.

This man knew about the murders. He was "new" to the work of a District Inspector, the sergeant told me. I learned that he was a promoted Auxiliary Cadet.

(2) This story of a Sinn Fein murder gang was planned when the murders were being planned. It was used here for the first time before the Crown forces had even seen my husband's body, or had questioned me, the only witness to the murder.

The desire of the Crown forces to apprehend the Sinn Fein murder gang can be gauged from the number of the forces sent to investigate the murder—a party of *four men on foot*. I remember occasions when, if a policeman were wounded or even threatened in the city or within miles of it, troops poured from all the barracks,



the whole city was surrounded, the bridges were closed, and the citizens were roused and searched in order to discover the criminals.

The same idea of a murder by extreme Sinn Fein was bodied forth on Monday, March 7th, in the letters of condolence addressed to the Limerick Corporation by General Cameron and General Prescott Decie. Here are the replies of the Corporation to these gentlemen:—

To Colonel-Commandant Cameron. Town Hall, Limerick.

Sir, in view of the fact that Alderman Clancy (the late Mayor) and Councillor O'Callaghan (the late ex-Mayor) were murdered by certain members of the Crown forces, we cannot accept your sympathy or convey it to the relatives. Your offer to help in tracing the perpetrators of the cowardly outrage was belated. The time to have done that was when three of the murderers were reported by the soldier in the Strand Barracks to the corporal, and by him to the officer in charge of the guard, to have passed down the Strand towards Alderman Clancy's house, and to have re-passed some little time later, having accomplished their foul deed within hearing of the said soldier. We would like to add that both the Mayor and ex-Mayor had the confidence of every section of their fellow-countrymen, including the I.R.A., during their lives, and were mourned by them in their death.—We are, Sir, yours, The Members of the Limerick Corporation.

To Div. Commissioner Prescott Decie. Town Hall, Limerick.

Sir, In view of the fact that Alderman Clancy (the late Mayor) and Councillor O'Callaghan (the late ex-Mayor) were murdered by certain members of the forces of the Crown, we do not believe and we cannot accept your phrases of sympathy. We further decline to convey these phrases to the bereaved relatives. You say that the police authorities will endeavour to bring the murderers to justice. The time to have this done was when Mrs. O'Callaghan telephoned to William Street Barracks subsequent to the murder of her husband, and prior to the murder of Alderman Clancy. These men, though of a peaceable disposition, as you say, had the confidence of every section of their fellow-countrymen, including the I.R.A.—We are, Sir, yours, The Members of the Limerick Corporation.

Finally, the Prime Minister of England, Mr. George, stated in the British House of Commons that it was his impression that Michael O'Callaghan was murdered by the extreme section of Sinn Fein because he refused to carry out the orders of the Irish Republican Army. I gave the lie to this man's statement in a letter dated April 11th, 1921.

I know one of two men who murdered my husband.

(3) The remark of the District Inspector about murders came back to Father Philip, when he had anointed my husband, and it moved him to say to the District Inspector and to the sergeant: "Why not go to see if George Clancy, the Mayor, is safe." They left about 2.25 a.m., as I have already described. When Father Philip telephoned at about 4 o'clock a.m. for an escort it was this sergeant who came in the military car as part of the escort. He talked to Father Philip about many things on the way to Eden Terrace and back, but *he did not mention that he had been in the meantime to Clancy's—as he had—and there had found George Clancy murdered.*

(4) The doctor left his house in Mallow Street at 1.27 on that night to walk to St. Margaret's to attend to my husband. I telephoned to William Street Police Barracks for a priest between that time and 1.30. Yet the doctor, who had a good distance to come, as one can see from a plan of the city, walked to St. Margaret's, attended to my husband and to me, and had walked back again to the Franciscan Friary before he met the party of four police coming to get me the priest. I telephoned the barracks between 1.27 and 1.30, yet these police did not leave the barracks till about 1.50, and then on foot. *Who or what kept the police from leaving the barracks at 1.30 when I telephoned?*

*My answer is that the murderers had not got back to Cruise's Hotel at that time, as the next point will show.*

(5) The city was that night in charge of Curfew troops who are supposed to patrol the streets to safeguard the lives and properties of citizens. The doctor, who swore that he was always challenged at night, sometimes twice in a block, walked *unchallenged* that night from his house in Mallow Street to St. Margaret's. Why? Because Crown murderers were abroad, and the patrols were withdrawn from the streets.

The doctor, leaving his house at 1.27 a.m. walked rapidly down O'Connell Street. As he turned into Sarsfield Street, he met five men walking leisurely up Sarsfield Street. They were about 84 yards from Cruise's Hotel (in occupation of military officers and auxiliary cadets), and 100 yards from the William Street Police Barracks, and they were walking in that direction. The doctor left his home at 1.27; he met these five men about 1.35. *I contend that these five men who had charge of my husband's murder, and the three men who murdered George Clancy (the three men whom the sentry at the Strand Barracks swore he heard passing and repassing) had to be back in Cruise's Hotel before the police in William Street Police Barracks were detailed to fetch a priest to my husband.* District



Inspector I—— who came in charge of the police had been a month previously an auxiliary cadet. I accuse him of being a party to the murder.

(6) The doctor, for an obvious reason, did not tell that he had met these five men, until under oath at the Military Inquiry. At the Courthouse on Friday, March 11th, Father Philip, who was present, was sitting besides District Inspector G—— while the sergeant, who had come to my house the night Michael was murdered and who had later that night escorted Father Philip to Eden Terrace, was standing behind his chair. When Dr. Roberts stated that he met these five men in Sarsfield Street, there was a sensation in court. District Inspector G—— started and whispered excitedly to the sergeant in Father Philip's hearing: "Get the books. *It's the Cruise's Hotel crowd that did it.*"

(7) There were no patrols in Limerick streets that night. Consider the following: No patrol saw the murderers of Joseph O'Donoghue shooting him in the open street at 11-30 on Sunday night, March 6th. The murderers then walked down the Roxboro' Road, unchallenged past the Ordnance Barracks, unchallenged down William Street, past William Street Police Barracks, and across Sarsfield Bridge. Between 12 o'clock and 1 o'clock a.m. they were in the grounds of Strand House, the residence of Stephen O'Mara, the present Mayor of Limerick. The suspicious conduct of a newly engaged maid-servant, afterwards discovered to be a spy, frightened the women of the house, and all the lights were kept on during the night. So the murderers left Strand House grounds, walked down the North Strand to St. Margaret's, murdered my husband at 1-10 a.m., and after some talk and delay outside the gate—probably about the glasses I had unconsciously pulled off in the struggle—walked leisurely away. Three of the gang walked down the North Strand to Mayor Clancy's house. The sentry at the Strand Barracks swore that he heard the footsteps of three men passing the Barracks going down the Strand. He did not challenge them, but he reported the matter to the captain of the guard. Nothing was done. He swore that, after a little while, he heard shots, and then after some minutes the footsteps of three men hurriedly passing the Barrack going towards Sarsfield Bridge. Again he did not challenge them, but he reported the matter. *Why did not the sentry challenge these men, out in Curfew hours? Why did not the guard turn out to question them? Why was not the captain of the guard summoned to the Military Inquiry to explain his conduct? Because Crown murderers were abroad, and someone had given orders.*

Dr. Roberts swore that always at night he was challenged, sometimes as often as twice in a block. That night he walked unchallenged from Mallow Street to St. Margaret's and back to the

Franciscan Friary where he met the four police coming to fetch a priest in answer to my agonised telephone call. He walked back from the Friary to Mallow Street unchallenged.

*What murderers were given a free field that night in a Curfew City, from which the patrols had been withdrawn? I say, Crown murderers.*

(8) Why were the Divisional Commissioner of Police, County Inspector R——, and District Inspector I—— immediately transferred from Limerick?

(9) Father Philip, an essential witness to my case, had spoken at the Military Inquiry of the connection of my husband with Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army. He said, what was true, that "George Clancy was the heart and Michael O'Callaghan the brains of Sinn Fein in Limerick." Immediately after the Military Inquiry, two attempts were made, during Curfew hours, to get into Father Philip's room in the Franciscan Friary. Who made these attempts, and why? I have other important evidence bearing on this point of danger to the priest who was chaplain to the Mayor of Limerick.

(10) My letters on the subject of the murder were censored in the Irish Press. I was invited to a public Military Inquiry into my husband's murder. I refused, because I knew one of the men who murdered my husband, and I knew that I would get no justice from his comrades on the bench. I told the truth to the world in my letters, because, my husband being dead, I no longer had anything to fear. They were censored.—Why?

(11) The man whose voice brought me down stairs that night, the man who knew how to deceive me by asking for the key of the gate, the man who knew my house so well, the man who guided the murderers and who helped to murder my husband suffered from nerves at first. The farce of the Military Inquiry on March 11th served to re-assure him. He left Limerick when my letter of Thursday, March 31st, appeared, stating that if I got common justice I could bring the murder home to individuals. He returned to Limerick when Mr. George stated in the English House of Commons on April 7th that Michael O'Callaghan was murdered by the I.R.A. On Sunday, April 17th, I met this man face to face. He left Limerick next day.

What of the boys murdered in cold blood on Killaloe Bridge? What of Tom Blake shot on his way home from work? What of Joseph O'Donoghue, Irish Volunteer, and George Clancy, Mayor of Limerick? What of Michael O'Callaghan, the bravest and gentlest of men, a true friend to the people and a lover of his country, shot like a dog in the hall of his quiet house? One man's hand is fouled by pay for such deeds. Still, he was but the instrument; blacker criminals planned these assassinations and they sit in high places.



(12) I have corroboration from the heart of the enemy's camp. In his dossier, summarised by Mr. Hugh Martin of the "Daily News" on May 24th, Brigadier-General Crozier states that he has information as to the identity of the Intelligence Officer who murdered Michael O'Callaghan.

(13) I am prepared to swear that this man guided the murderers to our house, and helped to murder my husband, Michael O'Callaghan, on the morning of Monday, March 7th, 1921.

I charge the British Government with being accessory to the crime of these men, and with screening them from consequences when the crime had been committed.

I can say with perfect truth that I have no desire for vengeance on the two murderers and their helpers; that they are alive and may be a cause of grief to other Irishwomen is terrible to me. The drawing up of this statement has been indescribably painful, but I was urged to it by the thought of others. My husband's murder is a clear case of the use of assassination for political reasons by the British Government in Ireland. A government that sinks to this last dreadful and futile means of rule stands self-condemned.

The obviously right and selfless thing for me, and others like me who have been made its victims, is to use our every effort to bring the truth to light and so help to end the system. With that purpose, I still pursue my demand for an open and impartial inquiry into the Limerick murders.

I wrote the following letters in connection with my husband's murder:—

(1)

**The Limerick Murders and Military Inquiry.**

I was urged by official messengers from the military command, and also formally invited, to attend a Public Inquiry into the death of my husband, Michael O'Callaghan, ex-Mayor of Limerick, and I was assured that the military authorities desired to have everything *open* and as *public* as possible. How far the promise of publicity has been kept, I can judge by the newspaper reports, which state that a cordon of military surrounded the Courthouse, that the adjacent streets and the grounds of the adjoining Protestant Cathedral were held by armed troops, that no members of the general public were allowed to enter, or even to approach the building unless provided with special permits from the military authorities, and that even the press representatives had each to apply personally for a permit, and to submit to the usual search before being admitted.

In a letter to the press on the 10th inst., I stated that I believed these military inquiries to be a farce and a travesty of justice. That belief is shared by all my fellow-countrymen who have read the reports of similar proceedings elsewhere in Ireland. They do not need fresh evidence of it, but as possibly there may be some people outside this country who have not yet come to appreciate in full the working of the system by which we are at present governed, I wish to draw their attention to statements made at the Limerick Inquiry.

All the military and police witnesses examined at the inquiry seemed anxious to prove that the Limerick murders were committed by what they were pleased to call "the extreme section of the Irish Republican Army." I, however, have no doubt who the murderers were. They do not belong to the Irish Republican Army, *who protected my husband and my home while it was possible for them to do so, and who now join with me in my bitter mourning.*

My husband was unanimously elected Mayor by the *first Republican Corporation of Limerick* in January, 1920. In March that year, the very day after his return from Lord Mayor MacCurtain's funeral, *his first death notice* reached him, similar in terms to that received by the Lord Mayor of Cork. From that out my husband and I had no delusions of false security. We knew that those who sent it had the means and the will to carry out their threat. During the greater part of his Mayoral year *my husband seldom slept at home.* When he did sleep in his own house it was not the Crown forces that protected him, but a guard of the Irish Republican Army.

General Cameron is reported to have paid a tribute to the services which the late Mayor, Alderman George Clancy, and my husband rendered in preserving the peace of the city. Of General



Cameron personally I know nothing. His tribute to the dead may be sincere, but I should like to put on record the kind of tribute which the forces of the Crown in General Cameron's command paid to these men while they lived.

Alderman Clancy's home was frequently raided during Curfew by Crown troops, and his wife had to endure insults and threats.

In August last, on the eve of our departure for a short holiday, which was not spent in this country, my husband stayed for a few nights at home without his usual guard. *It was during this period that our house was first raided by a mixed party of Crown forces.* It was the kind of a raid with which Irish people are familiar—every room was tossed and littered; they helped themselves to some claret and stout, and when they had gone some articles, silver, etc., were missing. I notified the Officer of the R.I.C. barracks of my loss. The only result was an acknowledgment of the receipt of the list of articles “alleged to have been missing.”

Our house was again raided on Shrove Tuesday night by a party of police, some of whom were drunk, offensive, and menacing. Both my husband and I believed that he owed his life on that occasion to the presence and restraining influence of two Irishmen, members of the old R.I.C. I particularly remember being asked again and again if I believed in murder; a curious question to put to the wife of the man whom General Cameron now states to have been “opposed to violence.”

Our home was again raided on the 22nd February, 11 days before my husband's death, this time by a mixed party of auxiliaries, soldiers, *English* black and tans, and women searchers. During the raid my husband and I were kept apart, and, *a very significant feature*, I had to submit to the indignity of having my room and my person searched by the women attached to the Crown forces.

Curfew and martial law conditions put an end to our living under the protection of our Republican Guard, because my husband was unwilling to jeopardise these brave lives. While under the protection of the I.R.A. no harm came to us, thank God. The “extremists” kept their trust; they did their duty well, and now it is one of my proudest and most consoling memories that they guarded him living and dead, *My husband was murdered when the city was completely in the hands of the Curfew troops, when no citizen—not even the priest and doctor who attended him—could be out on the street without peril to their lives.*

The desire of the Crown forces in Limerick to apprehend the murder gang who were abroad on the night of Sunday, the 6th March, may be judged by a few facts:—

1. That one *D.I.* and *three constables* represented the entire strength of the forces which turned out *on foot* on hearing of my husband's murder, *thirty-five minutes after* I telephoned to them to get a priest.

2. Mayor Clancy's house lies about two hundred yards from the Strand Barracks. The sentry on guard swore at the inquiry that he *heard the steps of three men* pass going in the direction of the Mayor's house. Ten minutes afterwards he *heard six shots*, the sound of which came from that direction. He reported the matter, and *though he heard the footsteps of the murderers hurriedly returning in the direction of Sarsfield Bridge, the men were not challenged, no patrol was turned out, and the officer then in charge was not examined at the inquiry.*

3. On other occasions the citizens will remember that if a policeman were wounded or even threatened in the city or within miles of it, troops poured out from all the barracks, the whole city was surrounded, the bridges were closed, and the citizens were roused and searched in order to discover the criminals.

4. *About twenty-five minutes after my husband was murdered* the Doctor who was bravely coming to attend him *met five men* walking leisurely in Sarsfield Street, about *a hundred yards from William Street Barracks* to which I had telephoned, and *apparently going in that direction.*

5. General Cameron stated that the relations between the Crown forces and the inhabitants were friendly; that “about two months ago a girl was shot while walking out with a constable, and since then *nothing has happened.*” *Apparently many things happened without General Cameron's knowledge.* Has he not heard of the murder of Thomas Blake, a prominent Sinn Féiner, on Friday, January 28th, and is there no record of the raid on Blake's house the week before his murder, and of a species of court martial conducted at it by some members of Crown troops?

General Cameron, the head of the Crown military system in this area, invited me to attend a Military Inquiry, with the purpose, I presume, of bringing the murderers of my husband to account. He set up as a tribunal of investigation one section of those very Crown forces who held the city absolutely in their hands when the murder was done. He called the inquiry a *public* one, and he took extraordinary precautions, military and otherwise, to ensure that it should not be public.

*There are three women who have a bitter right to be satisfied that every step is taken to end this terror that walks by night under the military system in Ireland. I, the widow of Michael O'Callaghan, the murdered ex-Mayor of Limerick, am one of these women, and I am not satisfied.* In my agony that night, I thought of the countless



other women suffering as I suffered in my husband's threatened life and in his death. For their sakes, *I demand full and open inquiry before a jury of my own country-men and country-women into the murder of my husband.*

There is yet a God of Justice, and whatever verdict the Military Inquiry brings in, General Cameron and his Curfew troops are still accountable to Him and me.

K. O'CALLAGHAN.

St. Margaret's, Limerick, March 14th, 1921.

(2)

St. Margaret's, Limerick, March 30th, 1921.

Dear Sir, Mr. Denis Henry announced in the English Parliament on March 26th that the verdict of the Military Court of Inquiry into the Limerick Murders was *wilful murder by persons unknown*. The truth is not in this finding, and considering the kind of the inquiry, that is no surprise.

Consider the following facts :—

1. The city was entirely in the hands of the Crown forces when the murders were committed during Curfew hours. Nevertheless, the gentlemen who sat as a court of inquiry were members of a section of these forces. It is too much to expect an impartial investigation with a court so constituted.

2. As a further evidence that their task of investigation was not approached in an impartial spirit, consider expressions used in the letters of condolence written on March 7th by the General Commandant of the Forces, and the Divisional Commissioner of the R.I.C. to the Limerick Corporation, *plainly suggesting a motive for the murder of these men by extremists of their own party*. The lie has since grown in repetition in different forms, by practically every member of the Crown troops of all grades who called to this house of mourning. The General Commandant himself helped the growth of it at the Military Inquiry. Every official in the English Parliament has uttered it, and on March 24th the Prime Minister of England gave it final sanction.

The lie was started, as I can prove, *before any of the Crown Forces reached my house, after the murder of my husband, Michael O'Callaghan*. No man, no matter how honorable in himself, coming from such a milieu, that had for its own reasons, prejudged the case, could bring in an impartial verdict.

3. As I have already shown in my statement on March 14th, the so-called *public* inquiry was held in conditions of extraordinary secrecy. Since then, the military authorities have censored or entirely suppressed the publication of my statement of the facts in some Irish newspapers. That statement introduced no facts except those which had been elicited at the military inquiry. *I have other facts.*

At the Military Inquiry the avenues leading to the truth were never explored. Where were the military patrols that night? Why were men allowed to walk the streets of the city on that particular night unchallenged and unquestioned? Evidence at the military inquiry showed that on Sunday night five men were walking leisurely in Sarsfield Street towards the William Street Police Barracks and Cruise's Hotel (in occupation of military and auxiliary cadets), at about a distance of a hundred yards when the doctor was coming to my husband. Three men passed and repassed the Strand Military Barracks as the sentry then swore. *Other movements of persons on that night, not referred to at the military inquiry, have also yet to be explained.*

Who or what kept the police in William Street Barracks from turning out immediately in answer to my telephone call for a priest?

Handicapped as the Military Inquiry was by its constitution and attitude, if it had followed up all the clues with ordinary fidelity and care, it should have no difficulty in bringing the guilt home to the group of persons responsible for the murders.

Were I given an opportunity of placing the further facts in my possession before an impartial jury of my own countrymen and countrywomen, I would be able to bring the guilt home not only to the group but to individuals.—Yours faithfully, K. O'Callaghan.

(3)

St. Margaret's, Limerick, 11th April, 1921.

Right Hon. David Lloyd George, Prime Minister,  
House of Commons, Westminster, London.

Sir, You stated, in the English House of Commons, on Thursday, April 7th, that it was your impression, from inquiries you yourself had made, that the Mayor of Limerick (George Clancy) and the ex-Mayor (Michael O'Callaghan), my husband, were murdered because they were regarded as too moderate, and because they declined to carry out the orders of the Irish Republican Army. Your impression is based on lying statements, and you know it. Whatever the heads of your military organisation in Limerick told you, they know as well as I do the men who murdered my husband. Your "impression" is a very convenient one for the people, openly or covertly in your pay in Limerick and elsewhere, whose hands are red with Irish blood.

What "impression" have you formed as to the murder of Joseph O'Donoghue? He was an active member of the Irish Republican Army, was murdered on the same night as my husband by the same gang, and now lies near my husband and George Clancy in the Republican Plot in the City Graveyard.



You stated also that an impartial public Military Inquiry had been already held in to the Limerick murders, and that these courts are carefully chosen. *This court was carefully chosen for your purpose*, but Limerick citizens know, and I have already told even the English people through the Press, how "public" and "impartial" it was.

In answer to your offer to re-assemble the Military Court of Inquiry, I tell you once and for all, in my own name and in the name of others wronged as I am, that our claim for justice will never be satisfied by any court of inquiry where the guilty are on the bench instead of in the dock. Irish people have learned a bitter lesson from the inquiries into the Charleville and Rathfarnham murders, and from the notorious cases of the Mallow Inquiry and the Strickland Report.

Characteristically you shirked answering the straight questions I put in my letter of March 30th; I expected that, but I did not expect that you would continue to defame the dead by the vile assertion that they were murdered by the Irish Republican Army. You even go farther: you insinuate that I, the the widow of the first Republican Mayor of Limerick, live even now under the terror of the Irish Republican Army and so cannot speak the truth. My only difficulty in making the facts known arises from your military censorship on the truth of what is happening in Ireland.—Yours truly, K. O'Callaghan.