

Dun Aobhinn

Skibbelein  
13th Dec: 16

Dear Tomas,

I wrote you some time ago but I understand the epistle didn't reach its destination. I don't know whether it was the quantity or quality of the news it contained that caused its doom. I intend trying a different channel this time where there is less danger of being torpedoed.

Many changes have taken place Tomas since the time we occupied W. in Richmond. And many changes will take place before such a happy crowd will live in that room again. Do you remember the evening concerts and the additional songs? And poor Sady O'Kea upstairs afraid of his life lest his men should be heard singing. I often think of that place and I believe that were it not for your resourcefulness the time would be dull. They have all been released except Berna, that quiet going lad who was so fond of a game of cards, and who didn't know why he was arrested. I remember writing his statement for him in Fongoch and it was so innocent. We could understand a man being arrested who would be guilty of holding up a

policeman on the public road and compelling him to produce any documents he may have but we couldn't understand why a law abiding man like Berna should be arrested. Mickey Griffin was a star turn too, especially when he was in an argumentative mood, and that wasn't seldom. He was most useful for reciting the Rosary and Doxology. He was one of the old school and true as steel just the same.

You heard of course that Dick Fitzgerald paid a second visit to Fongoch. I think Dick wouldn't give a damn where he was sent. Wakefield was just becoming happy when I left it but I was quite happy there after the first 2 days. Those claustrine sheets were a great boon. I remember that my first impression on seeing you scrubbing your cell was that you had been guilty of some dreadful misdemeanour. I learned afterwards that a well conducted prisoner was invited to perform that task. Fongoch I didn't like. The food there didn't suit me. Bill Duggan's kettle was an acquisition in that foul smelling barn where we were housed.

That was a great send-off the men gave the officers who were allocated to go to Reading. The incompetent old Commandant feared there was trouble brewing that day. He has, as you know, shown his teeth since. His removal from the Camp, or indeed from this vale

of tears, would meet with the approval of thousands of good men. I read a letter a few days ago which came from that hell upon earth, and the writer could only surmise how the men in the South Camp were being treated. They are cut off from the outside world altogether, and are, I suppose, compelled to live on the semi-rotten rations that are issued them. No letters or parcels are allowed them. I know only one man who is there, Gerrard Sullivan from Sligo. John Hayes - you remember him - is not there, he did not volunteer for it for he is, I believe, rather weak.

From all accounts I think things are bearable in Reading. I suppose Bernie O'D is sorry he wasn't promoted months ago. I saw a letter of his to Miss Buckley today. He seems to be in good form, and not hopeful of returning to his place for some time. I'm afraid he won't be out for some time, but if the war is going to continue as it has been for some time I won't be surprised to see him out soon. The general opinion is that the Allies are in a fix and are all but beaten to the ropes. The Government in each country is being remodelled but governments can't fight but they can muddle alright. A continuation of the muddling will bring about what will go a long way to complete what Germany has well in hand already. And there are ominous murmurs of a threatened revolution of the working classes in Merry England. In John Ball's

says and so other papers hint.

We in this country, are calmly looking on and waiting for the time when John Redmond will be convinced that the military situation demands conscription in Ireland. I think it would do the country some good if it were introduced. It is, in my humble opinion, the only thing that will make the people think for themselves. They are the slaves of party politics still.

You have seen by the papers I suppose that Cork is bidding hard to become the Capital of Ireland. Great hopes are entertained that there is a bright future in store for the Rebel City. If this enterprise will be successful, and it will if the English Treasury doesn't block it, it will be the making of Cork. Do make haste home James boy and assist in the good work.

I wrote to Peadar some 5 or 6 days after I wrote to you, and he hadn't rec'd my letter when he last wrote. The Consul must be falling in love with my letter. I haven't forgotten N: 1. of your Standing Order in Richmond, James but in any case it is the only one I can remember. I'm glad to know the motto is inscribed within the precincts of Reading Jail. Give my kind regards to Jerry and Bernie. I'll write to Peadar by this mail.

Slan leat now James. With sincere wishes for an early return home.

Sean  
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