

No 13

March 30 1922 Dublin

March & April 1922

To K S

I must now tell you that with very great regret I have decided not to go to Belfast just at present. My reasons are three. First I had ~~already~~ made up my mind that a fortnight was all I could spare for them because there is such a press of work here.

Secondly there is the perfectly horrible state of Belfast. Never no never did I read or hear of such a state of things. It is altogether unique. The people appear to be raging mad, and everyone consulted makes them worse. Sir Henry Wilson has written a letter to Sir James Craig which I suppose you will see in the English papers so I will only say that if he wanted to add fuel to ~~the~~ the already raging flames, he could hardly have chosen his topics better. As far as I can make out from the papers about half the outrages are to some slight extent political. They take place either in ~~the~~ "Sinn Fein" or in "Unionist" districts, and they take place more or less

No 13

March 30 1922
Dublin

alternately in such districts. There seems some rough rule of outrage, and counter outrage. The other ~~half~~^{half} are frankly the work of robbers.

People walk into shops and rob tills, or they rob men going to pay wages, or they take things from people in the streets, I heard from Miss Clerk today I will enclose her letter because it is so very odd.

My third reason weighs with me more than either of the others really. I think any day or ~~any~~ hour real fighting might start on the boundary. If a real big fight begins, and communications are interrupted I think I must be here. I do not see what X could do if something turned clean head over heels here. You see the poor provisional government is not provoking all these outrages in the North. Obviously this burning of farm houses is being carried out by republicans, who want to make government by the Northern Parliament impossible. Suppose they do make it impossible everywhere as they have in the streets of Belfast, they may any day get

No 13

March 30 1922
Dublin

seriously to work on the border, and if real fighting starts anywhere you do not know what may happen in Dublin . De Valera may make a great push to become a real president in Dublin , or ...in fact any mad thing may happen . And though I long to be in Belfast, and though I know how much it would cheer all the cottage people to see me, still I do feel that this house has first claim . So many seem to depend on me here, and there are all the books. As I explain it to you I feel clearer and clearer that it is better to stay than to go, though there is much loss in staying.

It is evidently very bad at the border. There is a place called Caledon in Tyrone , which seems to be the worst neighbourhood. The Northern specials blew up a stone bridge on their side, and they blew it up so badly that it fell into the river, and there will probably be very bad flooding in consequence. . You know I expect that the I R A and the specials would fight very

no 13

March 30 1922 Dublin

equally if left alone. If the imperial troops help there will be no facing them by anyone, But their position will be awful once they get involved. It will first be necessary for them to help the specials, who are as good fighters as described, and the next thing they will have to come to Dublin to help the Rats. Do you know who the Rats are? They are the people who want to have the treaty ratified. I have always said that it will not be civil war till the army is fighting on both sides. But once King George is helping both Specials and Rats civil war will not be so very far off.

I think it is only being at a distance frightens.....Things are actually much safer now in Dublin than they were a year ago. There is no daily danger of any sort now. Of course the whole situation is sad and tragic to the last degree. It is appalling to see the beloved country go to pieces, but that cannot be avoided. That is so and one sees it wherever one lives, but for

No 13

March 30 1922
Dublin

the moment I feel rather specially safe. It is perfectly lovely to have no curfew, and now that I am not going north I feel a horrible safety, ~~th~~ the safety of the shirker. Only I am sure it is best to feel whatever one does feel by staying here.

Letter from Miss Clerk

March 27 1922 Belfast

Dear Miss Stephen

In answer to your letter about coming to Belfast I should say myself that the longer you can put it off the better. We are ~~al~~ always hoping that the worst of the trouble is over, and certainly this side of the city has been quieter this last week, but of course the military are pervading everywhere. Edith says the nurses are going about as usual now. They have been intermittingly staying away from disturbed districts. Of course the real danger is from the snipers who do not care whom they hit. Things may improve, but if you come I think you ought to be content

no 13
enclosure.

March 30 1922
Dublin

to do your writing and not wander about much. The
There is no use in being pessimistic, but many
people say the worst is yet to come.

If you do decide to come it will be very nice
to see you so please let us know.

hs 14

March 31 1922
Dublin

To K S

I see today that " Peace is declared " between Belfast and the rest of Ireland. I think that is only because peace cannot be enforced.

Griffith says that the activities of the I R A in the Northern area shall cease, but we know that he has now no control over the I R A . He says a good part of it is in a " state of mutiny " but he cannot shoot the mutineers. I doubt can he dismiss them. Craig says he will reorganize the police, and his first suggestion for doing so shows that he does not know, or cannot secure, the first condition on which a crown force should be organized. He says that in mixed districts he will employ a mixed force, half Protestant and half Roman. I am ashamed of anyone printing such nonsense. A real police force is taught to be impartial and to carry out the law regardless of party or denomination. Craig admits that he cannot raise, or drill or educate an impartial police

No 14

March 31 1922
Dublin

force, though he has lived with one all his life. and he proposes a carefully mixed police I suppose he thinks they will be so busy fighting one another that the civil population will get a chance to survive.

I think very likely there may come a few weeks of calm in Belfast. I think the mobs may have raved themselves stupid for the moment. But security there is none.

Thank
~~th~~nk God for this agreement. I think God will think us very silly if we do any such thing. There is no real settlement there

I will tell you what there is though There is a drawing together of Craig and ~~Griff~~ Griffith against the foreign anarchists. The truth is that the whole style and tone of the thing annoyed me so much that I felt at first it was a sham and no more. But now I begin to think as I write that it may do good at a very low level. If we do not aim at being a well

No 14

March 31 1922
Dublin governe

governed country , at having high ideals or anything like that, if we just want to avoid the grosser forms of massacre and fraud we may perhaps avoid them by means of devices at this level . I suggest that possibly it may be so, because of course one must make any best one can out of what happens.

I take your letters now ^{always} ~~always~~ to Westland Row. I have a feel as if t'were safer so

No 15

April 7. 1922.

Andreenish

My dear Kate

This really almost too suitable. Whatever day did that miserable Free State take over its powers from Westminster but on April 1st The bill got the Royal Assent on March 31st

Mr Q's money is on deposit. I have such a feeling that it is fairy gold and may cease at any minute that I am not going to spend it till I can make it extinguish my overdraft.

x
rent for the room where he taught Irish.
He paid me £7.10 yesterday. He must be taking £50 a month I should think. It is tremendous hard work. He teaches solidly from 4 till 9 always and quite often from 4 till 10.30. And he corrects exercises, vast piles of exercise books have to be corrected.

I shudder at the sight of them.
That goes on Mondays, Wednesdays
and Thursdays. He asks half a
crown a lesson and makes a
reduction on some ground or
other for nearly everyone.

He has bought a motor and
he goes home on Monday night
and on Thursday night. He only
leaves her alone on Wednesdays,
but of course the whole thing
depends on the country remain-
ing quiet. He can neither leave
her so much, nor can he run
about the roads in the dark if
disturbance begins again. The
motor cost £300, and I do hope he
will make that up before the bubble
bursts.

He is I am told one of the best

Ap 7. 1922

teachers in Rublin and as a Protestant teacher he is unique.

Rid I tell you that Mrs Wills is just dead. I am glad, and I am sure ^{her daughter} is too, really, for it is very terrible to have charge of old people in this city. Last year she got so frightened she wanted her daughters to be always in her sight, and you may imagine the harrowing questions which followed on that desire. Mary said it was delusion and she would grow worse if it were too much indulged, but then where did "too much" come in? They were awfully good daughters, and very fond and proud of her, but they could not hinder her being three times in a hold up, and all but getting her claim [for rebate of income tax] burnt in the Custom House

like mine. For some days they thought it was burnt, and she could not throw it off and laugh as I did. It bothered her very much.

Do you know really and truly I think this is civil war. DeValera's I. R. A. are fighting Collins's I. R. A. actually and in fact. They arrested ever so many men in Cork who were coming up here to enlist in the Free State army. and they keep this abominable murder business going as you see in the papers.

Belfast is said to be quieting, but a rifle shot was fired in New Lodge Road, off Antrim Road, and a child of nine was killed on the spot, and later a bomb was thrown into a house

Apr 7. 1922

in Spamout Street, and two sisters were badly injured and taken to hospital. I shall have no confidence in Liu J. C. till he disarms the whole civilian population. It is useless to do anything else at all till he takes away all the guns, unearths all the bombs, and has a ring fence round to prevent more from coming in, and he could do that fairly and disarm all alike.

I am really not able to follow all the I. R. A are doing, but it is quite clear that De Valera intends to terrorize everybody till he has the country back again where the black and tans got it last year.

I read in a book that no government is ever overthrown, but

that from time to time a Govern-
ment commits suicide.

Do you think it is true? "General
Tudor was directed that men [of the
R. I. C.] should only be disbanded
in places whence they can as a
matter of fact get out of Ireland
in safety." "The government would
not make arrangements officially
for housing these men and their
families who were coming to Great
Britain" "The real fact of the
matter was that the members of
the R. I. C. were such outstanding
brave and gallant men that
they would run risks" that last
because two of them were murder-
ed in Ballyhaunis while arrang-
ing for the departure of their
families. Is it worth while

Apr 7. 1922.

to harrow oneself with reading stuff like that? Is it any harm not to read what the ministers of the Crown say in England? The British cabinet seems incapable of remembering or applying anything whatever.

I have been worried the last few days by having no voice. Also I have a great torpor of the mind. I think it is a cold induced by fatigue. I do not know how I have got overtired.

Of course it is tiring to have a civil war going on. Yes. I think it is civil war because the two sides fight fairly equal. As long as no real soldiers interfere with the two sections of the I. R. A. I think they can get up a civil war. And I think it is

civil war in practise when De Valera's
I. R. A. fight the northern Specials.
They also are equally matched
and might fight battles.

And yet they do not fight
battles. It is more like the old clan
fighting. That was not war at all.
Perhaps this is not war. Perhaps it
is a sort of reversion to type, going
back to clan ways. Yes, as I write
I begin to think "civil war" is the
wrong phrase. I will go over the
matter in my head, and try
to find a better one.

It was not war at all last
year when the I. R. A. was against
the troops. I think that was a high
degree of "civil commotion". Battles
were impossible and the end would
have been a foregone conclusion had

No 15

Apr 7. 1922

The Government not been so determined on suicide. With a small wish to live they must have won. Perhaps now we have only widespread anarchy and riot.

I will think it over. Gps. R.

March 30
March 30

