

COPY/

Drumcollogher.

20. 1. '22.

Sir,

On May 14th last an Ambush took place here, in which one member of the British Forces was killed and two wounded. For days afterwards we had the usual running hither and thither of motor lorries filled with Military and Black and Tans who were let loose on the place and who went round writing threatening and offensive inscriptions on doors, windows and walls of many houses in the town. About 10 days later four lorries of British Soldiers accompanied by an Aeroplane and armed with all the machinery of war made a sudden swoop on the little town and immediately surrounded my place. With drawn revolvers and rifles at the ready, two officers and half a dozen men entered and inquired for my assistant and I, needless to say we were both 'not at home'. They read a list of charges against me such as being a Sinn Feiner, sympathising with Volunteers and such other charges, which in any country would be considered patriotic but which in Ireland was punished with long terms of imprisonment and even death. They gave my wife half an hour to clear food-stuffs and valuables in other words she might remove a loaf of bread or a pint of milk but could not remove valuable drapery and boots with which my shop was stocked. My little boy aged five years had to be taken out in his cot suffering from diphtheria about ten minutes before the house was blown to atoms.

There was not a stone left upon a stone, the only thing that was left was a picture of the Sacred Heart being on a gable wall was not damaged in any way though parts of the house were blown from 50 to 100 yds. away. The picture stood there suspended by a light cord on a small nail, the glass of which was not even soiled. One of the British Officers said after that, though he was not a Catholic he had to give in to that.

After blowing up the house they went to the other end of the town to a store which I had newly built and which was filled with valuable drapery and boots, they took out all the goods they found and piled them in heaps, poured petrol over them and set them on fire - they then blew up the store. Some people in the vicinity attempted to save some boots and succeeded in doing so, but some Black and Tans came on, took the rescued stuff from them and threw it back again into the flames.

Fearing arrest, or even worse, I could not stay at home and did not come back until the Truce. Even then owing to the doubt as to whether hostilities would break out again I could not re-start business even in a temporary premises, consequently I am without earning one penny to support my wife and children since May last. The White Cross Reconstruction Commission granted me £500. towards erecting a temporary premises out of which I got a cheque for £200. Needless to say that cheque was of the greatest

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assistance to me. I am enclosing you photographs of the house as it was before being wrecked and as it looked after.

I remain, Sir,
Yours truly,
(sd) M.J. Murray.

P.S. Please return photographs and oblige.
