

Death in Prison

(In Memory of Richard Coleman. Died in Usk Gaol, December 9, 1918)

Richard Coleman's remains, dressed in a habit kindly given by Fr. Knight and draped in the Republican colours, were borne by Mr. Peter Hughes, Chairman Dundalk Urban Council, Mr. Geraghty, Chairman Roscommon Urban Council, and Mr. Rory Haskins, Sinn Fein candidate for the Duncain Division of Belfast, from the prison hospital across two prison yards and up the stairs and corridors of the wing where the untried Irish prisoners were confined. Here the little chapel was found too small to admit the remains, so they were placed in the passage outside it.

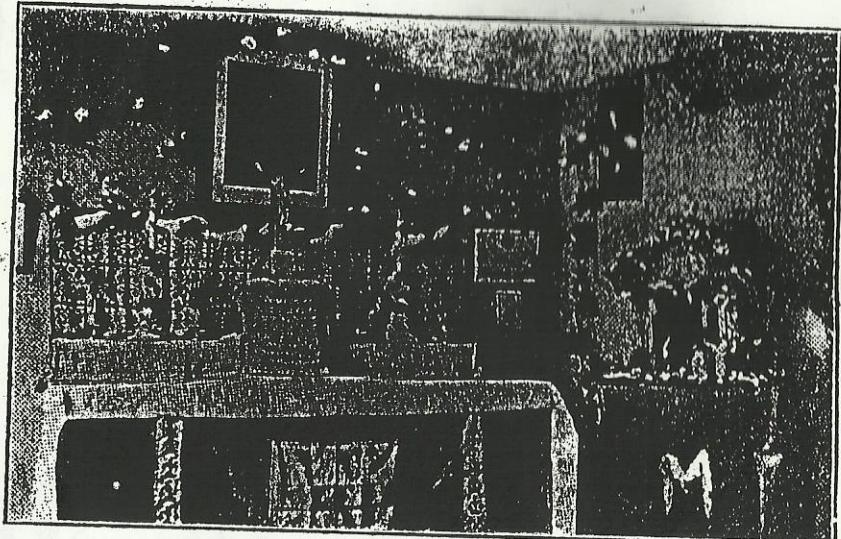
From out the drear hospital ward
With melancholy tread,
Across the gloomy prison yard,
O'er rugged path and shingle hard,
They bear our comrade—dead.

Led by the Warden's lantern light
They come with silent breath;
Like shadows moving through the night
They bear his corpse arrayed in white,
Oh ! bitter scene of death.

All things in dismal gloom around,
Night hangs a sable pall,
The rain falls thick with sobbing sound
As if 'twould melt the blighted ground
And hush each sad footfall.

Fall thick and fast, oh ! kindly rain !
And melt each stone to clay,
Sweet Heaven hath sent this symbol plain
That he we mourn hath broke the chain
Of prisonment for aye.

Oh ! woe and grief in every eye
That views that scene apart,
That views that cortège passing by
And anguish smothered in a sigh
From every bleeding heart.



CHAPEL AT USK PRISON.

ALTAR ERECTED BY RICHARD COLEMAN.

And woe and grief and ANGER swells
The threefold passions tear;
Fierce anger in each bosom swells
The hot blush on each visage tells
The pangs that rattle there.

But hush ! the little band draws near,
That bears his sacred clay,
And through our prison portals here
They come with many a silent tear,
We calm our hearts and pray—

May Heaven be thy bed to-night
No more on earth a slave;
May angels twine a wreath of light
And crown thee in the Saviour's sight
Among the true and brave.

Geo. A. LYONS.

The altar of the church, of which an illustration is here given, and of which Mr. Coleman acted as sacristan, was erected by himself from improvised prison furniture and decorated with gifts from the friends of the Irish prisoners.