

DEATH IN DUBLIN

NURSING HOME OF

PIARAS BEASLAI

THE death took place yesterday morning in the Mater Private Nursing Home, Dublin, of Major General Piaras Béaslai, patriot, dramatist and Irish scholar.

Piaras Béaslai was born in Liverpool, in 1881, where his father, Patrick Langford Béaslai, was editor of the Catholic Times. He was educated in the Jesuit Seminary, Liverpool. Early in life he became an enthusiastic student of Irish.

It was partly owing to this enthusiasm for the language that he associated constantly with the Irish speakers among the large number of Irish persons resident in Liverpool.

He came to Dublin about 1905. For some years, he was actively engaged as a journalist and successively was on the reporting and editorial staffs of the Evening Telegraph. He was associated also with the Irish Independent and Evening Herald.

In Dublin, Mr. Béaslai became permanently identified with the Gaelic League. As a poet, prose writer and dramatist, he was one of the outstanding creative literary men of the movement.

He was editor of the official organ of the Gaelic League, and was the founder of An Fainne and of the Irish language dramatic movement.

FOUGHT IN 1916

During the 1916 Rising, he was Vice-Commandant of the First Battalion of the Volunteers operating in the North King Street area under Comdt. Edward Daly, who was subsequently executed. Mr. Béaslai was arrested with the others at the surrender and was sentenced to penal servitude.

He was released at the general amnesty but later was arrested and detained in Mountjoy for a speech delivered in Co. Kerry.

He escaped from Mountjoy with about 20 others on St. Patrick's Day, 1918. He was captured some time later at Finglas, Co. Dublin, and taken to Strangeways Prison, Manchester, to serve a sentence of two years.

JAIL ESCAPE

However, with the late Austin Stack and others, he escaped from Strangeways and returned to Dublin, where he had charge of the publicity department of the I.R.A.

After the signing of the Treaty he toured the United States on a publicity campaign. During the hostilities of 1922 he was chief of the Press censorship department.

Elected to East Kerry in 1918, Mr. Béaslai continued to represent this constituency until 1923. He held the rank of major-general in the Army, but resigned in 1924.

A proficient Irish scholar, he wrote several plays and other works in the Irish language, but was best known, perhaps, for the monumental work in two volumes on the life of Michael Collins.

In later years, Mr. Béaslai took an active interest in the welfare of old members of the I.R.A., and was president of the 1916-21 Club.

WROTE MEMOIRS

He figured frequently on Radio Eireann programmes and also adjudicated at feiseanna and drama festivals.

In 1957 he wrote a series of articles in the Irish Independent under the general title, "A Veteran Remembers," in which he detailed many of the outstanding events in the Irish restoration and independence movements.

He recounted his own part in the Rising of 1916, his terms in Irish and British jails before his escape from Manchester Jail and subsequent experiences "on the run" during the War of Independence.

He also told of the many literary and theatre figures whom he knew and admired.

Since 1961, he had been contributing "Moods and Memories" to the Irish Independent, an extension of his reminiscences and comments on many facets of Irish life. His last article appeared on Wednesday last.

FULL MILITARY HONOURS AT FUNERAL

The remains will be removed at 5.30 this evening to St. Columba's Church, Iona Road, and the funeral will take place tomorrow

after 10 o'clock Mass to Glasnevin Cemetery. The remains will be interred in the Republican Plot with full military honours.

Old I.R.A. members are asked to report to Comdt. Vincent Byrne at St. Columba's Church this evening at 5.30.

Comrades pay their tributes

IN a tribute to Piaras Béaslai, General Mulcahy said he was one of the most remarkable, significant and talented of those who were wrenched from the language and cultural movement of the pre-1913 years to be absorbed into a very different activity.

In October, 1913, he attended the first meeting of the Provisional Committee which came together to start the Irish Volunteer Movement. The result was that he was to spend 10 years in a vortex of ever-increasing stress and danger.

His zeal and his ceaseless activity in the new sphere, his power of influencing others, were to bring him the very heavy responsibilities of a commanding officer in the First Battalion area in the 1916 Rising. In the councils of the post-rising penal servitude prisoners he played a leading part.

WAS ARRESTED

Released from penal servitude he became a member of the Sinn Féin National Executive in October, 1917. He was arrested for speech making in March, 1918, shortly before the General H.Q. Staff was established, but joined the General H.Q. Staff immediately on his release in August, 1918, as Editor of an t-Oglach.

In subsequent close association with Michael Collins, Director of Intelligence, and Dick McKee, O.C. of the Dublin Brigade, he was one of that group whose living and moving amid danger, made Parnell Square so much the citadel of the Dublin Brigade as to earn for Parnell Square the title of "Caislean na hAiseirighe". In all Collins's activities he was never very far away and he has left in his two-volume life of Collins a national legacy in a monumental tribute which is remarkable when the circumstances in which it was written are taken into consideration.

His versatility as well as his daring was marked by two very daring escapes from jail, from Mountjoy Jail in March, 1918, and from Manchester Jail in October, 1919.

GREAT PATRIOT

Mr. William T. Cosgrave said Piaras Béaslai "was a very great patriot; a brilliant journalist, and a most capable writer. He was a very distinguished Irishman and his death is a great loss."

Down the long path . . .

IN his final contribution to his Wednesday feature, "Moods and Memories," in the *Irish Independent* just a week ago today, Piaras Beaslai summed up his approach to life—and death.

Paying tribute to yet another old friend he had lost through death he quoted from a poem of Oliver St. John Gogarty:

*Our friends go with us as we go
Down the long path where Beauty wends,
Where all we love foregather, so
Why should we fear to join our friends?*

Now Piaras too has gone to join his friends, men and women who, like him, had played a notable part in the struggle for Irish freedom and in the shaping of the young State that emerged after so many centuries of foreign rule.

Many will miss him sadly. And none more than his colleagues in Independent House who came to know and to admire so much his gentleness, his integrity, his culture, his remarkable knowledge and his prodigious memory. They recall, too, with admiration and respect, his qualities as a newspaperman — his meticulous attention to detail, his devotion to accuracy, his concern that his copy should be delivered on time and his industry in reading and correcting the proofs of his weekly articles.

Now this grand old man of the Irish revolutionary and literary and language movement—soldier, poet, playwright and scholar — has gone "down the long path where Beauty wends." He has written his last lines, said his last words and met his last deadline. His memory will live with us for as long as courage and love of country are qualities to be remembered and revered.

THE EDITOR

BEASLAI (Baile Atha Cliath)—
Meitheamh 22, 1965, ag Teach
Banaltrais Mater, Sráid Eccles, an
Maor-Ghinearál Piaras Béaslai.
R.I.P. Sochraid go Reilig Ghlas Naoin
ta: cis Aifrinn a 10 a chlog 1
hEaglais Cholm Cille Naofa, Bothar I
nniu (Déardaoin).

BEASLAI (Dublin)—June 22, 1965,
at the Mater Nursing Home, Eccles St.,
Major-General Piaras Beaslai. R.I.P.
Funeral to Glasnevin Cemetery after
10 o'clock Mass in St. Columba's Church,
Iona Rd to-day (Thursday).