

WILLIAM PARTRIDGE.

As one who was on terms of intimacy with the late William Partridge, I would like to give your readers a few impressions of the man. His death, though not unexpected, came like something in the nature of a shock to his countrymen. His passing from amongst us leaves a void that cannot easily be filled. He was one of those whom it was a privilege to know. The purity of his motives was never questioned in the most heated moments of controversy even by those who differed from him, while he himself was ever ready to pay tribute to some good quality whether fancied or otherwise, in a political opponent. Though the circumstances that have led to his death have, more or less, overshadowed the varied and manifold activities of a strenuous career, his work on behalf of labour and the rights of his co-religionists alone should be sufficient to entitle him to a share in the affections of his countrymen all over the world. But his greatest claim to remembrance rests on the fact that when duty called him to the gap of danger he, though in poor health, did not falter, but gravered the gall like the man he was, prepared, if need be, to face death itself for the principles in which he believed.

William Partridge, or "Bill," as he was more affectionately known to his friends, was a native of the town of Sligo, where he was born 42 years ago, his father being an engine driver in the employment of the Midland Great Western Railway. Shortly afterwards the latter was transferred to Ballaghaderreen, where William was reared and educated. The elder Partridge was an Englishman of very liberal tendencies, who in his day always evinced a keen and practical sympathy with the people in their struggle for economic freedom, and when he died his funeral was one of the largest ever seen in the district. Young William inherited the democratic ideas of his father in the fullest measure. As a boy, too, he displayed considerable literary ability, being, with his brother, a frequent contributor of prose and verse to the pages of the "Shamrock."

He was a graceful writer, and had he so desired could have made a name for himself in the literary world. As it was, he early abandoned that sphere of activity to confine himself to the more prosaic atmosphere of municipal and labour politics. Having served an apprenticeship to the engineering trade, he went to Dublin where he secured employment in the works of the Great Southern Railway at Inchicore, where he remained until about six years ago. He was elected to the Dublin Corporation about 13 or 14 years ago and was one of the first members of that body to identify himself with the Sinn Féin policy when Arthur Griffith wrote the "Resurrection of Hungary," the pamphlet from which the policy was evolved. On the appearance of James Larkin in Dublin, Partridge became one of his most ardent supporters, and in all the great labour gatherings of the last few years he was one of the most familiar figures. But let it not be inferred from this that he was a mere disturber. By no means. He was one of those who did not go out of his way to look for trouble, but when a fight was put up to him he never shirked it. He sought nothing more than common justice, but he was satisfied with nothing less. This is fully borne out by the circumstances which led to his dismissal from the Great Southern Works at Inchicore.

In Inchicore no employee dared look for promotion who did not belong to the favoured creed. Against this system Partridge entered a vigorous protest and communicated that protest to the Directors. The result was he was asked to withdraw those charges or leave the service of the Company. Partridge manfully chose the latter alternative, refusing to stultify himself by withdrawing a charge which he knew to be true and justifiable. After this he became an organiser for the Irish Transport Workers and was re-elected to the Dublin Corporation, from which he had resigned a few years before. When Larkin established the Irish Citizen Army he became a member, and his contributions to the "Irish Worker" from this on were always signed "Private Wm. P. Partridge, I. C. A." When the rising of Easter week broke out he was at his post in the Royal College of Surgeons, where Michael Mallin, the silk weaver, was in command. Here he remained all through the conflict, and here he was made prisoner with his comrades. What followed is known to all, his court-martial and sentence of fifteen years' penal servitude, which was afterwards remitted to ten years' penal servitude, his subsequent release owing to the deplorable state of his health, and his death a few weeks ago.

None but those who knew him intimately can realise what a noble character was Wm. Partridge. Previous to the rising he was to many a reckless firebrand and demagogue who for his own ulterior motives played on the passions of the mob. What a gross distortion of the man's real character! It would be impossible to meet one more unassuming in manner or more broadminded. He was one of the most tolerant men I have ever met, conceding to everybody the right to their opinions, no matter how widely divergent from his own. He seemed always to smile. The sunshine seemed to radiate from his genial personality. He was also a deeply religious man. In the College of Surgeons every night he "gave out" the Rosary to the men, and saw to it that every man as well as he attended to the exercises of their common religion. To Partridge and to Michael Mallin does the Countess de Markievicz attribute her conversion to Catholicity. Poor Mallin, also, in his last letter to his wife before his execution speaks of Partridge holding him in his arms for "comfort and warmth." What feelings must have surged through the soul of William Partridge at that moment as he clasped his comrade in arms to his heart a few hours before Mallin was shot! Partridge now has heard the "last rally" and joined his friend in the spirit world beyond the grave.—SEANUS MACGLOWAN (in "Sligo Champion")

Ravage

BISHOP

His Lord Bishop of County Sligo said:—The note of warning, No God's mind the have among the heart must remain until reached the is recorded ages of 15 counted (has more other info chosen from current of whose hear The unfinger, but chills of some hand with slow rings the the words application

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Death of Mr W. Partridge, T.C.

The death took place at the age of 42, at Ballaghaderreen last week of Mr Wm Partridge, T.C. For his connection with the Dublin rising in Easter Week, 1916, he was sentenced to 10 years penal servitude, and sent to Dartmoor, and afterwards to Lewes prison. Last May his health became so enfeebled that his release was ordered. He had to enter an English nursing home, being unfit for the sea journey home, and in a letter written by him then he stated he was liberated when "only fit for the scrap heap." He was born in Sligo.

On his return to Ireland he stayed at his residence, Kialto, Dublin, and 2 months ago went to Ballaghaderreen, to stay with his brother. With a pronouncement of what was coming he said: "I am going to Ballaghaderreen to die."

Countess Markievicz attributed her conversion to Catholicity to the example of those who took part with her in the defence of the College of Surgeons, and especially to the influence of Mr Partridge, who took part in the fighting there.

When the Dublin Labour movement was at its height Mr Partridge was elected as a Labourer to the Corporation for Kilmashogue.

The remains of the late Councillor Wm Partridge were laid to rest on Saturday at St Coleman's Cemetery, Ballaghaderreen. Rev Fr. O'Flanagan and many other clergy attended. A section of the Citizen Army, under Countess Markievicz (who gave the graveside oration) with nine of the Lewes prisoners, formed a guard of honour round the coffin, which was draped with the tricolour, and followed by decessor's widow and family, and a gathering numbering thousands from the neighbouring counties.



Bill Partridge 1874 - 1917

One of the foremost figures of the 1913–14 lockout.

Born in Sligo, his family moved to Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon where he attended St. Nathy's College.

Countess Markievicz delivered the oration at the Partridge family plot in Kilcolman cemetery.

Image from Dictionary of Irish Biography