

ARTHUR GRIFFITH DIES SUDDENLY

Heart Attack Follows an Operation a Few Days Ago for Tonsillitis.

WEAKENED BY OVERWORK

Dublin Is Shocked and the First Question Asked Is What Effect Will Be on the Future.

MOURNING ON ALL SIDES

Lloyd George Expresses Admiration of Man and Says His Death Is Loss to Ireland.

DUBLIN, Aug. 12 (Associated Press).—Dublin was shocked early today to learn of the sudden death of Arthur Griffith, President of the Dail Eireann, and everywhere it was commented on as one of the most tragic and wholly unexpected events in troubled Ireland.

Death came at a nursing home, apparently from a heart attack following an operation a few days ago for tonsillitis. Few people in Dublin even knew that the ardent worker for the Free State cause had been ill. Immediately signs of mourning were displayed; flags were set at half-mast on buildings and on ships in the harbor.

The first question on all sides was what effect the death of the leader would have on the solution of the problems before the provisional Government.

His colleague, Michael Collins, has recently devoted his attention almost entirely to the military operations against the irregulars, while the country looked to Mr. Griffith to manage the civil affairs until the rebellion was suppressed.

Though President of the Dail Eireann, Mr. Griffith held no ministerial portfolio. William Cosgrove, Minister of Local Government, acted as head of the Irish executive during Mr. Griffith's illness.

The President's associates were stunned by the news of his death. Not one of them was prepared to discuss its effects, but they all agreed that Ireland had sustained a great loss.

The official statement issued this afternoon announcing the death of Mr. Griffith said:

"The Government announces with great sorrow that President Griffith, who had been ill for a short time past, died this morning at a private hotel in lower Leeson Street, Dublin, at 10 o'clock."

Mr. Griffith's physicians had strongly urged him to take a holiday, but he insisted on remaining at his post, saying the urgent requirements of the country did not permit his leaving. One of the doctors said Mr. Griffith had not had a holiday for years.

"If ever there was a martyr to duty, it was he," said the doctor.

His sudden death followed a gradual weakening of his physical reserve believed to have been caused by the strain of his experiences during the period of "terror" preceding the truce with England, the long and arduous negotiations with the British Government and the heavy work entailed in connection with setting up the Free State Government.

Mr. Griffith appeared quite well this morning, as prior to leaving for his office, just before 10 o'clock, he cheerfully bade good morning to the nursing staff. He stopped to tie a shoelace which had become undone when he suddenly fell forward unconscious.

The members of the staff rushed to assist him. He regained consciousness, but soon after collapsed again, when blood was seen coming from his mouth. Three physicians rendered all aid possible, but without success.

Father John Lee of the Marist Fathers administered extreme unction and Mr. Griffith expired as the priest was reciting the concluding prayer.

As a consequence of the death of Mr.

Griffith all theatres and motion picture houses will be closed until Tuesday night. The opening of the Dublin Horse Show will be postponed until Tuesday afternoon.

Mr. Griffith leaves a wife and two children.

Griffith Founded Sinn Fein.

Arthur Griffith was one of the most conspicuous leaders in the creation of the new Irish Free State and one of the founders, if not the founder, of the Sinn Fein. His sudden death removes one of the foremost figures in modern Ireland.

Head of the Irish delegation which signed the agreement with the British Government, subsequently ratified by the Dail Eireann, Griffith took an active and effect part in the struggle to set up the Free State Government. He succeeded Eamon de Valera as President of the Dail Eireann when the latter resigned, and with Michael Collins, his principal associate in the London negotiations, as head of the provisional Government formed a combination which resisted the efforts of de Valera and his adherents to defeat it.

Griffith was generally considered the brains and Collins the arm of the Free State Government, and the two undoubtedly had the support of the majority of the Irish people in their efforts to bring about a lasting peace with England by the acceptance of what amounted to a partnership in the British Empire instead of complete independence.

During the recent military activities, Griffith had been somewhat out of the limelight, as the Free State forces have been largely directed by Collins as the executive head of the Provisional Government and Commander-in-Chief in the field, but he was active in the organization of the new Irish Government, overwork bringing on the malady which caused his death.

Griffith was 50 years old, having been born in Dublin in 1872. Although believed to be partly of Welsh ancestry, as his name would indicate, Griffith was wholly Irish in sentiment. He signed the Free State agreement with the Gaelic name of Art of Griobtha.

He was the son of a printer and began to write in the cause of the self-government of Ireland upon reaching ma-

turity. He was a convincing though not an inspiring speaker, but it was through his writings that he influenced the thought of his fellow-Irishmen.

More than twenty years ago Griffith and a handful of disciples launched the Sinn Fein movement. His policy was one of Irish self-reliance (Sinn Fein means "we ourselves"), and he persisted despite many discouragements in his efforts to bring about the self-government of Ireland by peaceful means.

Armed revolt was no part of his program. In contrast with the constitutional home rule policy of Parnell, Redmond and other Irish leaders, he urged abstention by the Irish members from the British House of Commons, and argued that for the Irish people to send representation to the British Parliament was an admission of its right to legislate for Ireland. When elected a Sinn Fein member of Parliament for East Cavan in 1918, Griffith put his policy of abstention from attendance into effect personally.

Worked to Start Irish Industries.

Restoration of the independent Irish Parliament which existed before the British act of Union of 1800 was advocated by Griffith. He and his associates worked also for the development of Irish industries, the revival of the national games, the national music and the Irish language.

After being employed as a proof-reader on a Dublin newspaper in his youth, Griffith went to South Africa. For a time he was at Johannesburg and his pen name in those days was "Cuguan," not an Irish name but a Kaffir one—the native mine laborers bestowed it on him and it means "The Gentle One" or "The Dove."

On his return to Dublin about 1898, he founded a paper called The United Irishman, which he edited and which was suppressed by the authorities. Later he published Sinn Fein, followed by Nationality. His writings attracted wide attention at once. He also wrote a book upon the re-establishment of the Hungarian kingdom within the Austrian Empire.

He and his followers saw in the effort to establish the former Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy a parallel to the attempt to establish a national self-government for Ireland. The es-

tablishment of the Irish Free State was not inconsistent with this theory.

Griffith was one of the leaders of the Sinn Fein at the time of the Easter rebellion in 1916, as a result of which a number of leaders were executed. The rising greatly strengthened the Sinn Fein movement, which soon built up an extensive organization.

In October, 1917, Griffith was elected presiding officer for the opening of the Sinn Fein conference in Dublin. During the peace conference at Paris in 1919 he was chosen as an Irish delegate to present the Irish case, but failure to get a safe conduct from the British Government prevented his attendance. In July, 1919, Griffith was elected acting President of the Irish National Assembly in the absence of de Valera, who was in the United States. In October of the same year he was elected one of the permanent Vice Presidents of the Sinn Fein organization.

Spent Seven Months in Prison.

Griffith was arrested in Dublin in November, 1920, and spent seven months in Mountjoy Prison. During his imprisonment he issued a message to the Irish people as to the conduct of the Sinn Fein organization. An attempt was made to rescue him from prison but the armored car used for the purpose failed to carry out its mission.

The return of de Valera from the United States was attributed to Griffith's imprisonment, for the former went back to Ireland and resumed the active direction of Sinn Fein affairs. Early in June, 1921, there were reports that a conference would be held in London at which Irish leaders would be invited to consult with members of the British Cabinet. Griffith was mentioned as one of the probable delegates. His release from prison followed later in the month.

Griffith accompanied de Valera to London in July, 1921, when the series of conferences opened. Later he was appointed Chairman of the Sinn Fein Mission, the other members of which were Michael Collins, Robert C. Barton, Eamon J. Dugan and George Gavan Duffy. Griffith was the principal factor on the Irish side in carrying on the negotiations, which culminated with the signing of the treaty between Great Britain and Ireland establishing the Irish Free State, which has since been approved by the British Parliament and the Dail Eireann.

Personally, Griffith was a calm, tactful man, unlike the typical Irishman. He was short in stature but broad and strongly built. He wore a neatly kept mustache and was very near-sighted.

Although a hard worker in his office, Griffith was very much of an outdoors man. He was a splendid swimmer and went into the sea near Dublin almost every day, except in winter, before his public activities took practically all his time. He enjoyed tramping as a recreation and would frequently go on long walking trips with friends.

Griffith was a great reader. He was an authority on the history of the American Revolution, and frequently used quotations from Washington in his writings advocating Irish independence.