



## 4.0 The seven members of the Provisional Government

### 4.4 Patrick Pearse

Patrick Henry Pearse (1879-1916) was born at 27 Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street), Dublin, the son of James Pearse, an Englishman with a stone-carving business, and his wife Margaret Brady. Brought up as a devout Catholic, he is supposed to have been influenced in his childhood by his maternal aunt Margaret who regaled him with stories of mythological Irish heroes and patriot revolutionaries such as Theobald Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet. During his years at the Christian Brothers' secondary school in Westland Row, he developed an intense interest in the Irish language and Irish literature, in furtherance of which he joined the Gaelic League at the age of seventeen. He attended University College, Dublin, graduating with a good degree in English, French and Irish. He later studied law at Trinity College, Dublin and the King's Inns, and was called to the bar.

The Gaelic League became practically a way of life for Pearse. He was active on various committees and contributed articles to *An Claidheamh Soluis* on a wide range of topics—literature, history, education, emigration, politics, religion. The articles chart his intellectual progress over several years, revealing him as liberal, progressive and anti-sectarian. At this stage of his career his concern was more with cultural than political nationalism. He took on the editorship of *An Claidheamh Soluis* in a paid capacity for the period 1903-9, giving it a more literary orientation, but also becoming involved in various controversies, some with members of the Catholic clergy with whom he was more than able to fight his corner. Meanwhile, he wrote poems and stories of considerable literary quality in Irish and

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English. He generally spent his summer holidays at Rosmuc, Co. Galway, where he drew inspiration from the Irish speakers and the rural way of life.

Pearse taught Irish part-time in various schools and in University College Dublin. In 1908 he established a bilingual boys' school, Saint Enda's (Sgoil Éanna), at Cullenswood House in Ranelagh, transferring it two years later to a mansion set in fifty acres of parkland at Rathfarnham, where it operated as a boarding school. The ethos of the school was distinctively Irish and was enlivened by occasional plays and pageants. The teachers included Thomas MacDonagh (French and English), Pearse's brother Willie (art and English), and Con Colbert (drill), all three of whom took part in the 1916 Rising and were subsequently executed. He also established Saint Ita's, a school for senior girls and mixed preparatory at Cullenswood House.

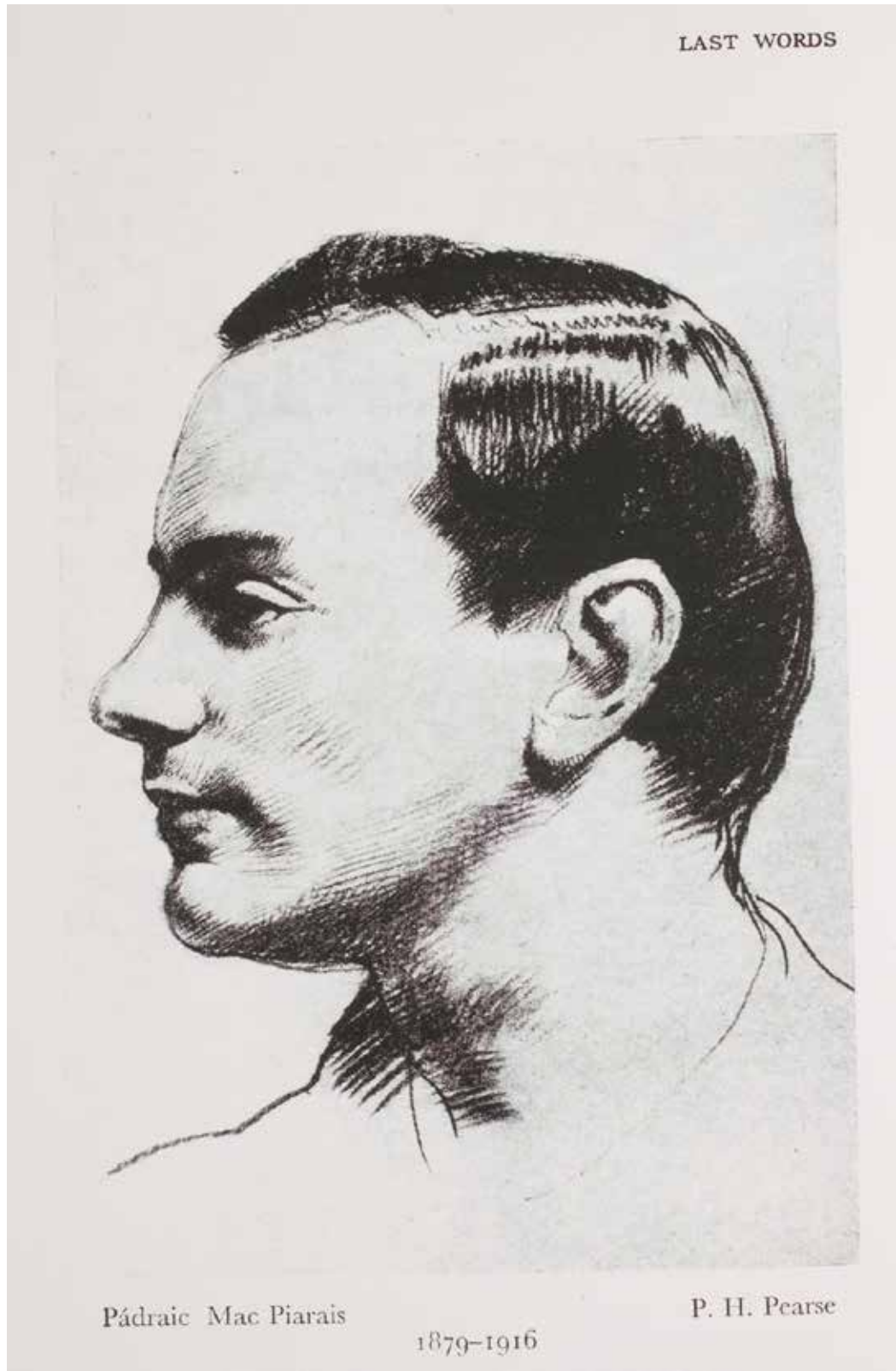
Politically, Pearse was a moderate nationalist, supporting the Home Rule bill as late as 1912, but threatening revolution if it were not enacted. In November 1913, he was one of the twelve-member steering committee that set up the Irish Volunteers; he later held the important office of director of military operations. In December 1914 he was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood by Bulmer Hobson. While on a lecture tour for St Enda's in the United States, he came under the influence of John Devoy and Joseph McGarrity who completed his conversion to extreme republicanism. In September 1915 he was elected to the Supreme Council of the IRB and co-opted to the Military Council where he had a major role in planning the Rising.

Pearse drafted the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, some of the content being suggested by others, particularly James Connolly and Thomas MacDonagh. Because of his rank in the Volunteers and because he was widely respected, his fellow signatories of the Proclamation nominated him president of the Provisional Government. His title of commandant general was nominal as James Connolly was in charge of military operations. As president, Pearse read the Proclamation outside the General Post Office on Easter Monday.

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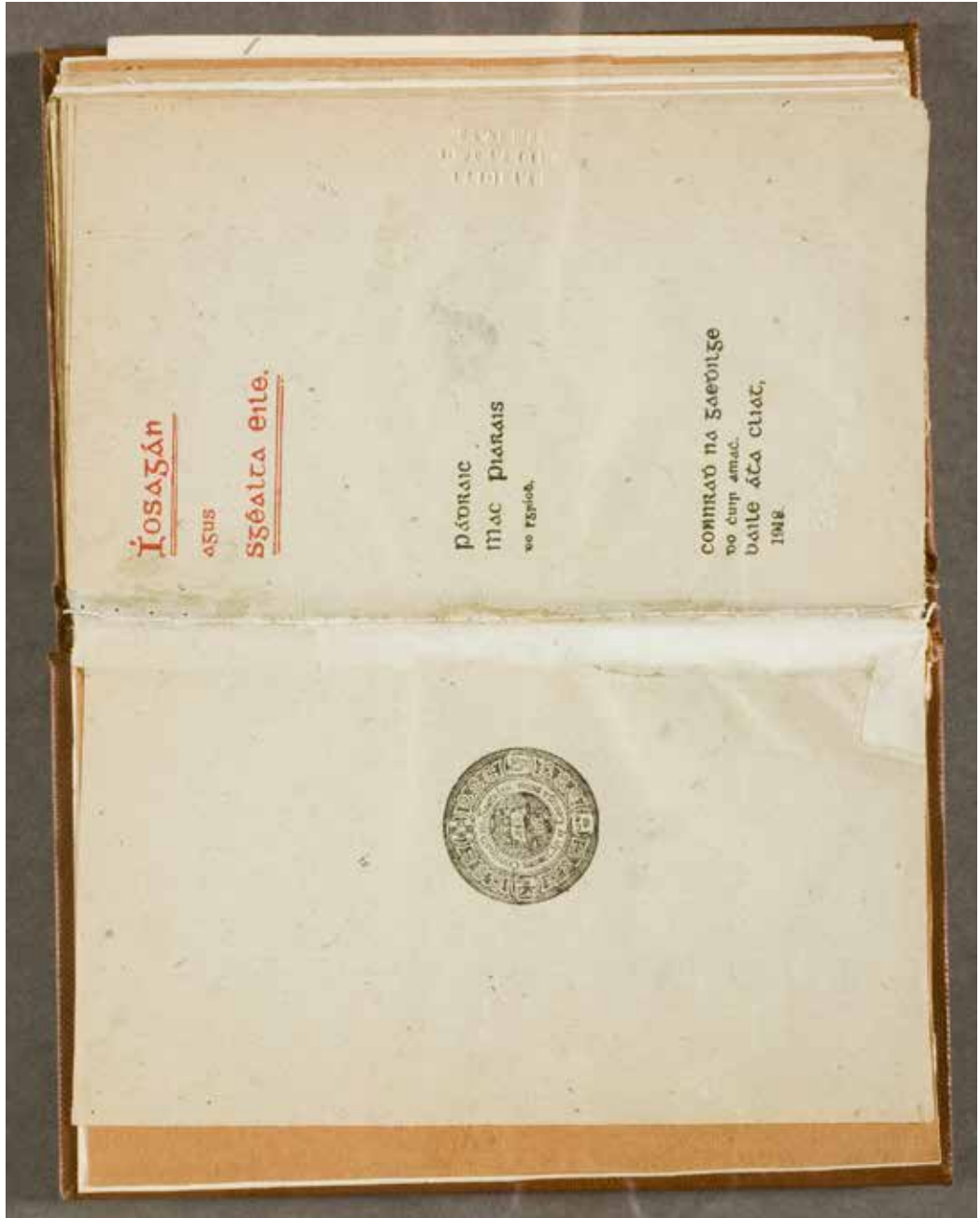
At the meeting of the five available members of the Provisional Government in 16 Moore Street on Saturday morning, Pearse urged that they surrender to prevent further loss of life. He was tried by court-martial and executed by firing squad in Kilmainham Jail on 3 May. He was unmarried.

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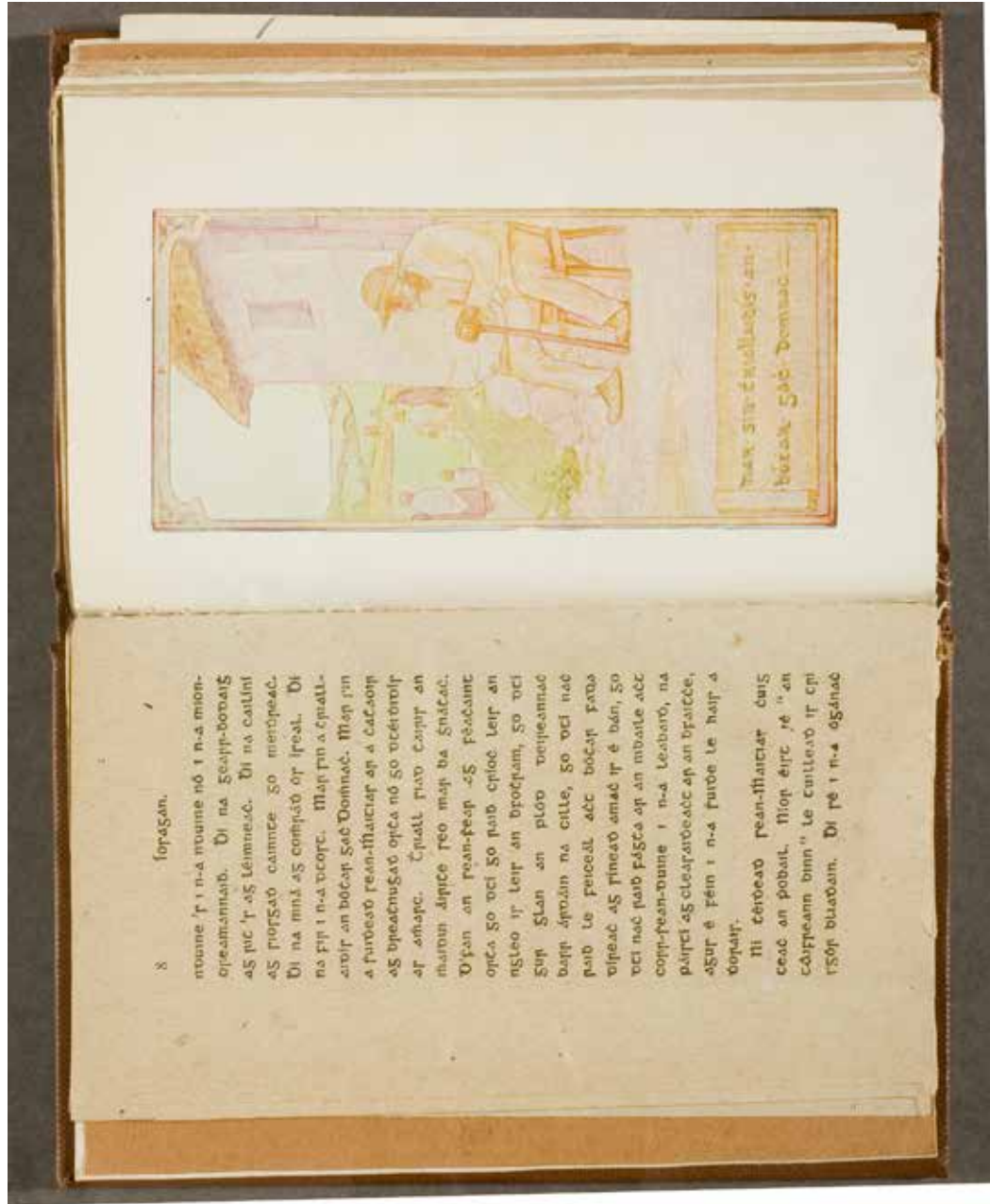
A charcoal portrait of Patrick Pearse by Seán O'Sullivan RHA. He has been described as being of average height and of sturdy build. (National Museum of Ireland).

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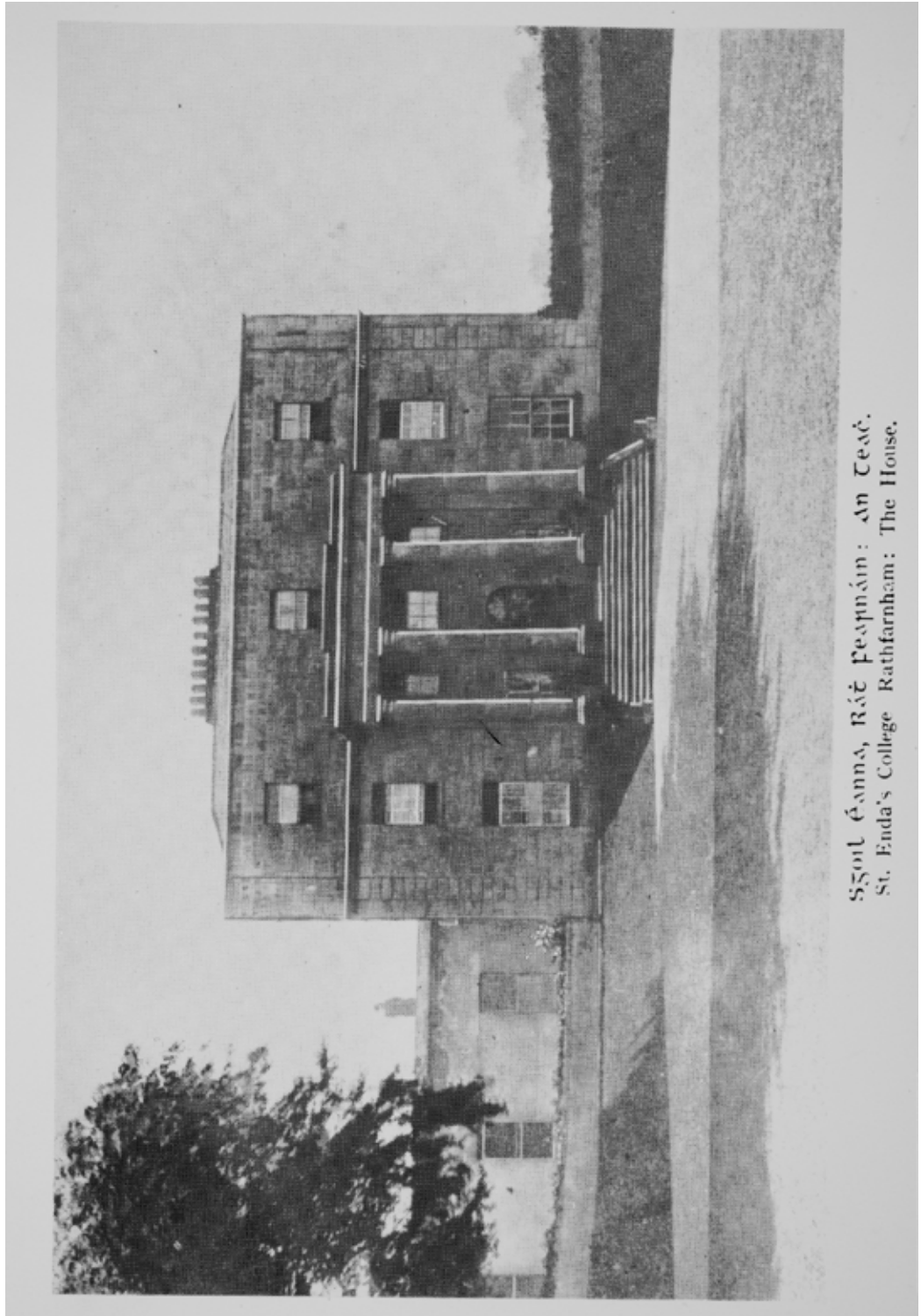
Pages from one of Pearse's collections of stories.

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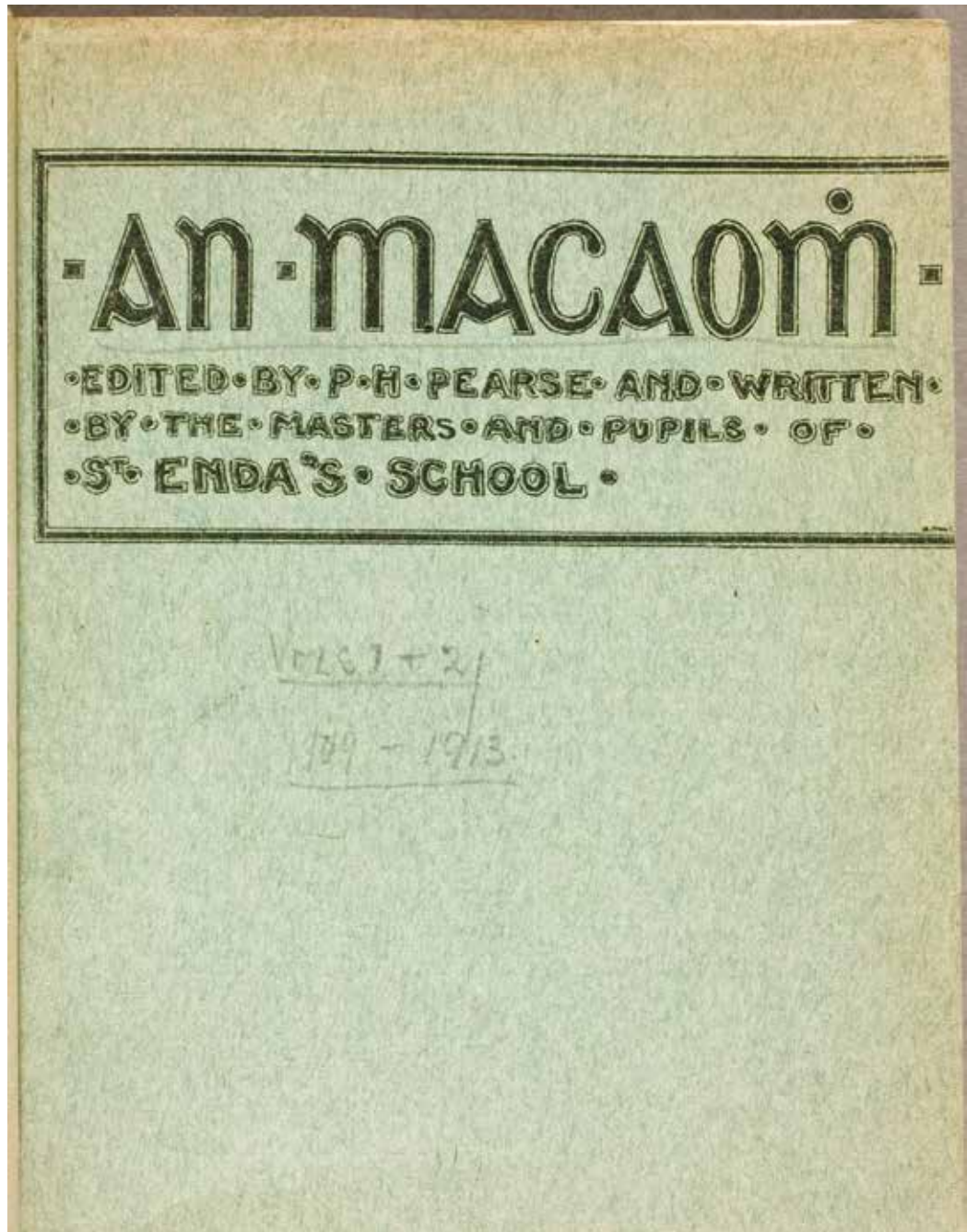
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Postcard featuring Saint Enda's School (Scoil Éanna), Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin.

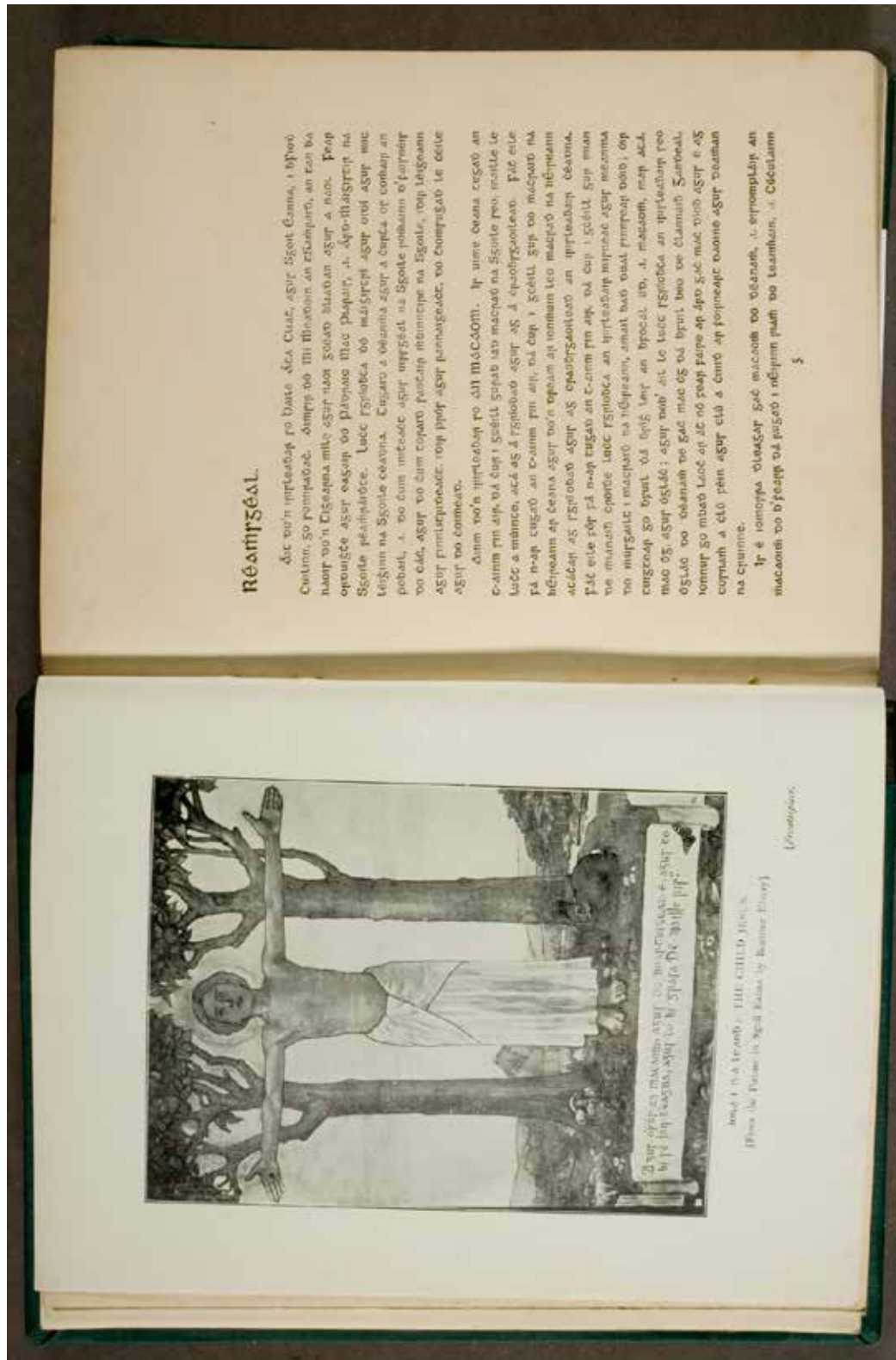
4.4 Patrick Pearse



The Saint Enda's School magazine, An Macaomh (The Youth). Four issues were published between 1909 and 1913. This introduction reveals some of Pearse's enlightened views on education. (An Macaomh, Vol. I, No. 1, Mid-Summer 1909).

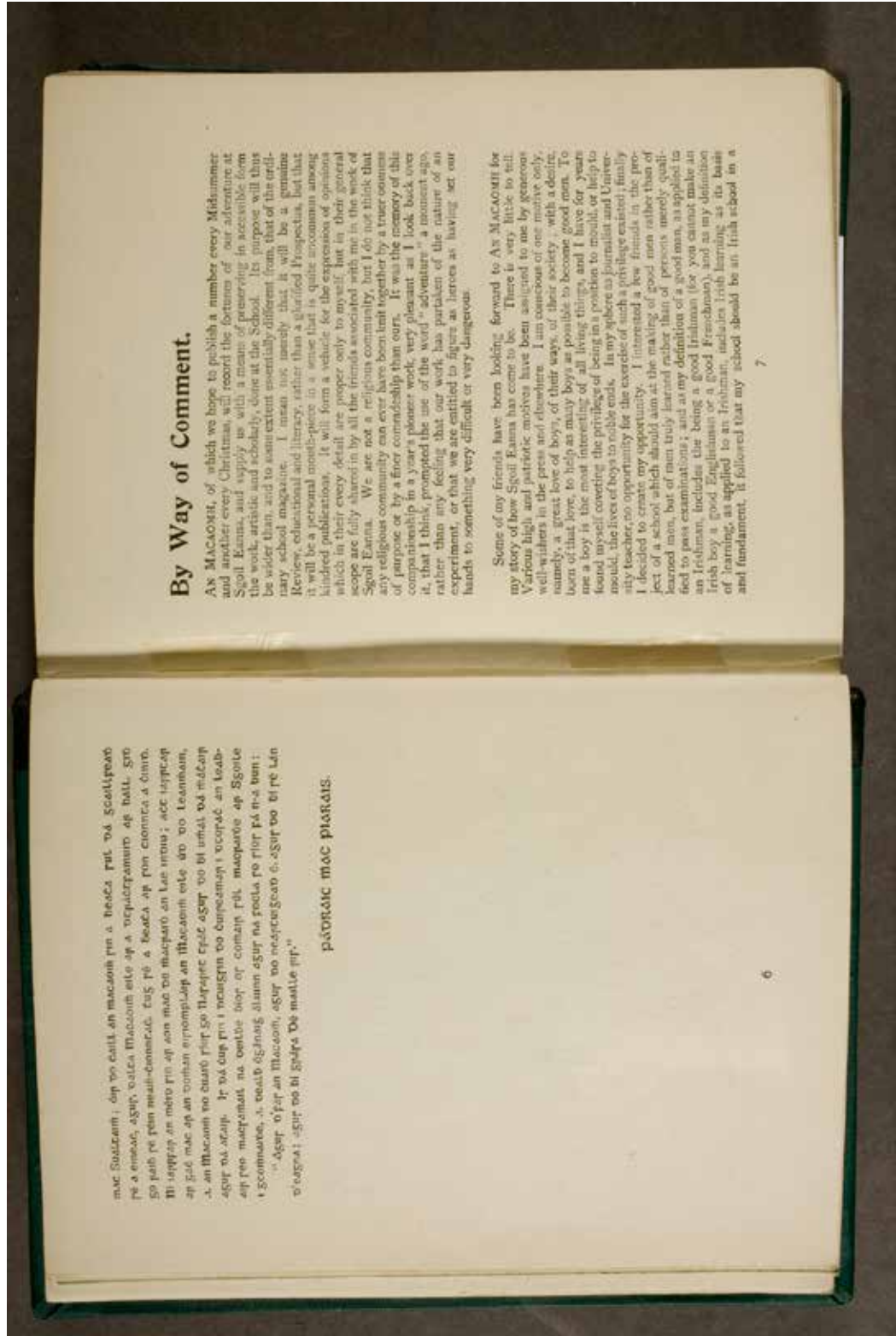


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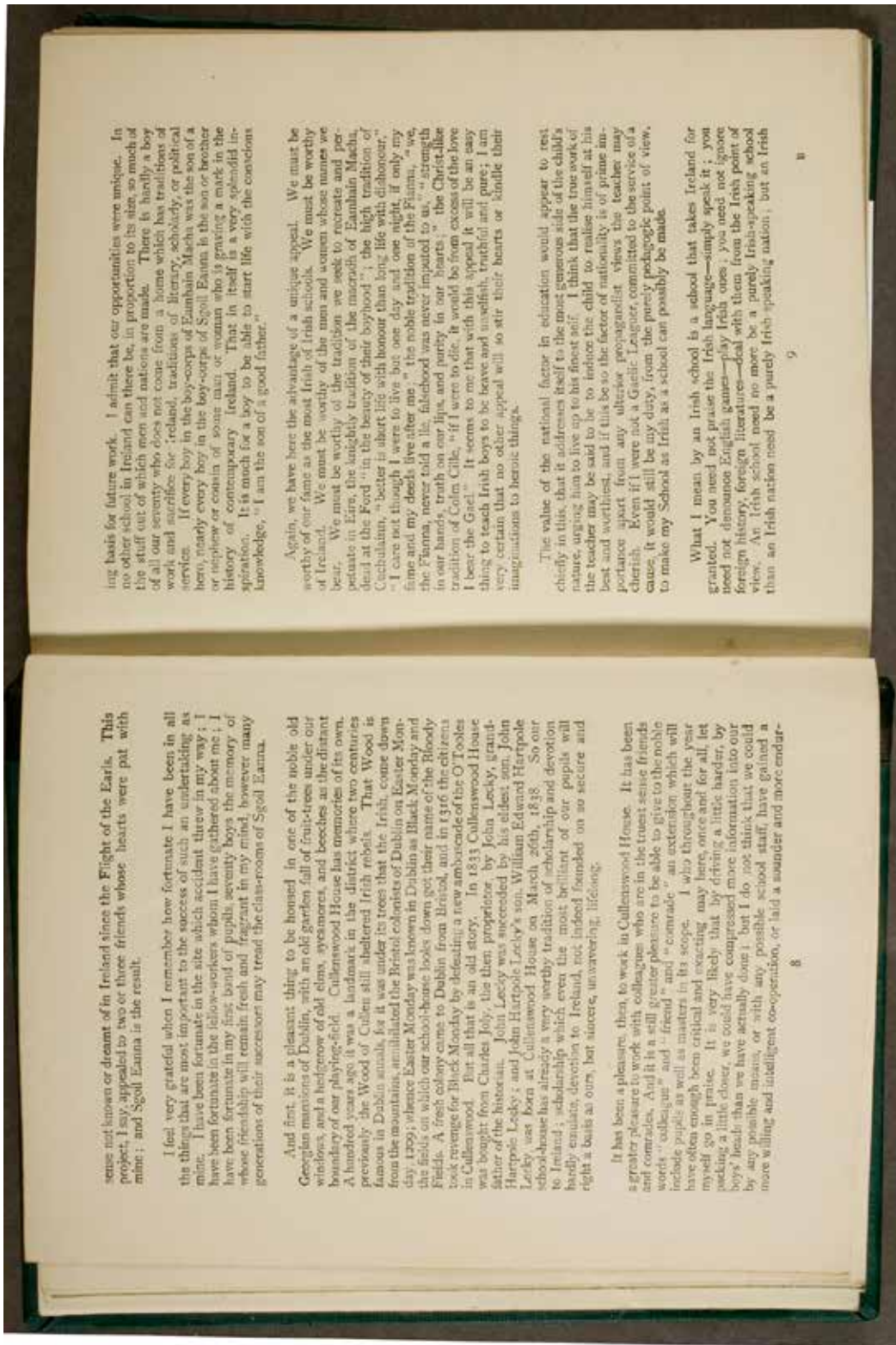
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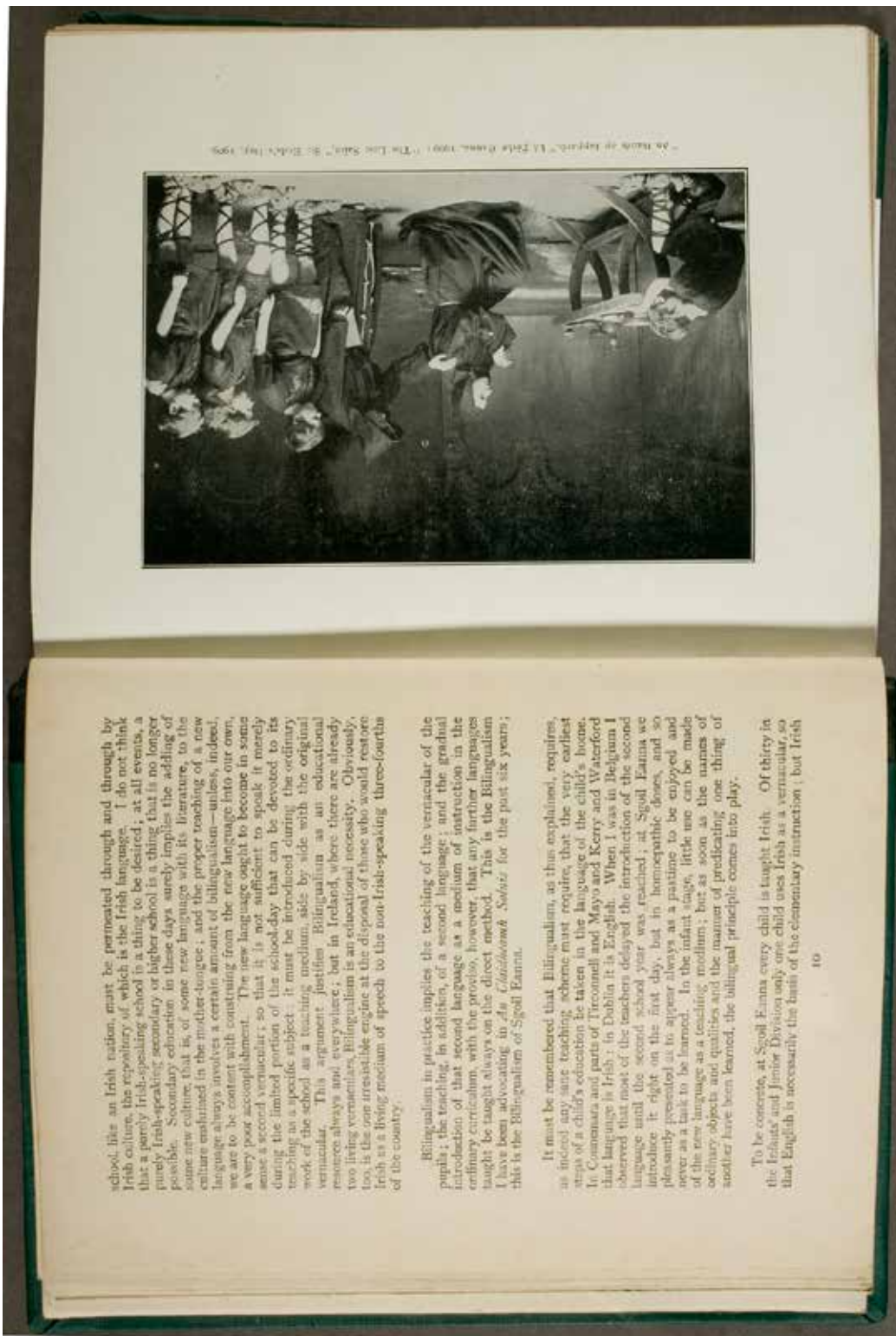
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school, like an Irish nation, must be re-created through and through by Irish culture, the repository of which is the Irish language. I do not think that a purely Irish-speaking secondary or higher school is a thing that is no longer possible. Secondary education in these days surely implies the adding of some new culture, that is, of some new language with its literature, to the language already in the mother-tongue; and the proper teaching of a new language always involves a certain amount of bilingualism—unless, indeed, we are to be content with constituting from the new language into our own, a very poor second vernacular. The new language ought to become in some degree a second vernacular; so that it is not sufficient to speak it merely during the limited portion of the schoolday that can be devoted to its teaching as a specific subject: it must be introduced during the ordinary work of the school as a teaching medium, side by side with the original vernacular. This argument justifies Bilingualism as an educational resource always and everywhere; but in Ireland, where there are already two living vernaculars, Bilingualism is an educational necessity. Obviously, too, is the iron irresistible engine at the disposal of those who would restore Irish as a living medium of speech to the non-Irish-speaking three-fourths of the country.

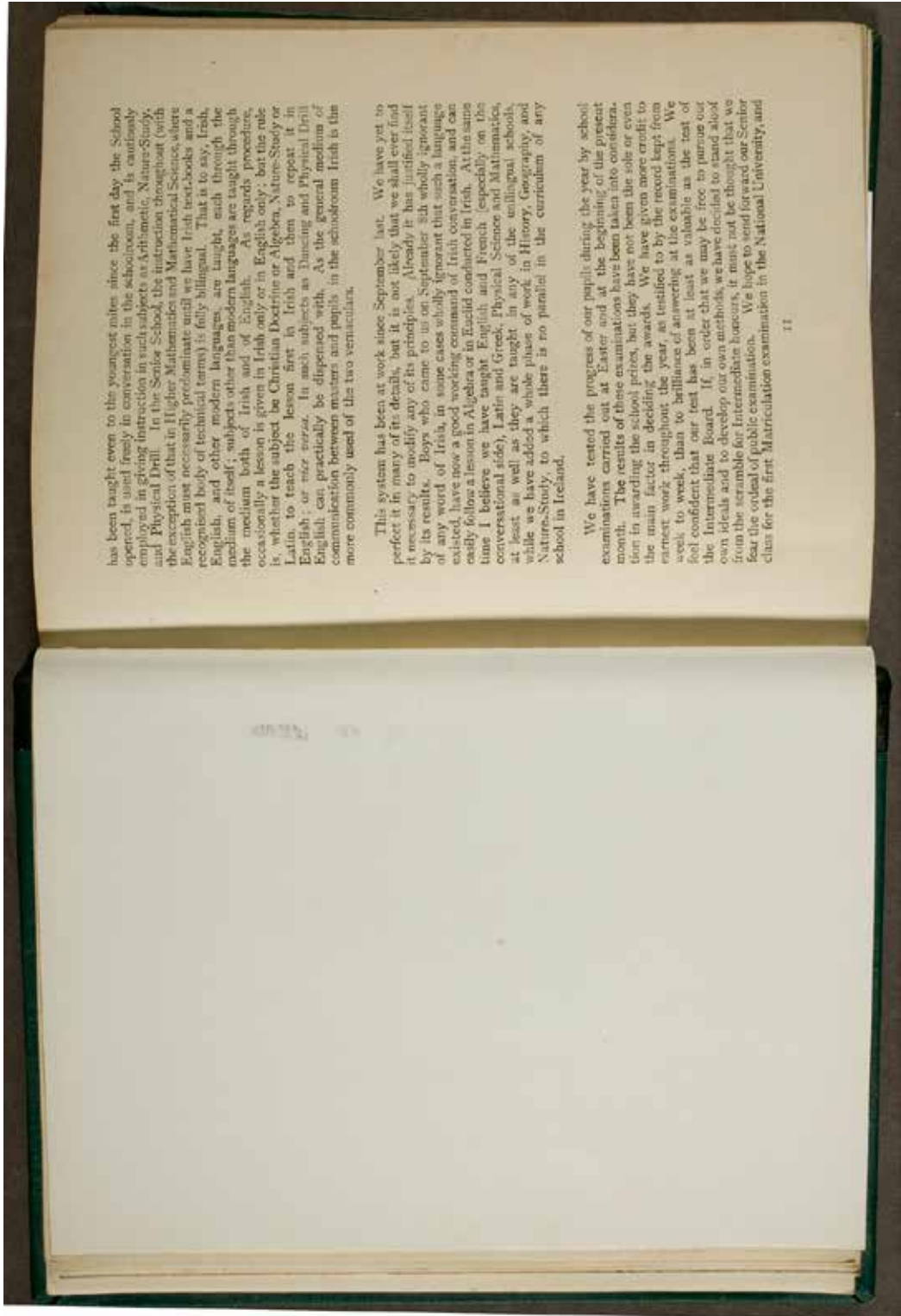
Bilingualism in practice implies the teaching of the vernacular of the pupils; the teaching, in addition, of a second language; and the gradual introduction of that second language as a medium of instruction in the ordinary curriculum, with the proviso, however, that any further languages taught be taught always on the direct method. This is the Bilingualism I have been advocating in *An Clárúchán Náisiúnta* for the past six years; this is the Bilingualism of Spóil Éanna.

It must be remembered that Bilingualism, as thus explained, requires, as indeed any sane teaching scheme must require, that the very earliest steps of a child's education be taken in the language of the child's home. In Connemara and parts of Tyrconnell and Mayo and Kerry and Waterford that language is Irish; in Dublin it is English. When I was in Belgium I observed that most of the teachers delayed the introduction of the second language until the second school year was reached; at Spóil Éanna we introduce it right on the first day, but in homoeopathic doses, and so pleasantly presented as to appear always as a pastime to be enjoyed and never as a task to be learned. In the infant stage, little use can be made of the new language as a teaching medium; but as soon as the names of ordinary objects and qualities and the manner of predicating one thing of another have been learned, the bilingual principle comes into play.

To be concrete, at Spóil Éanna every child is taught Irish. Of thirty in the infants and Junior Division only one child uses Irish as a vernacular, so that English is necessarily the basis of the elementary instruction; but Irish

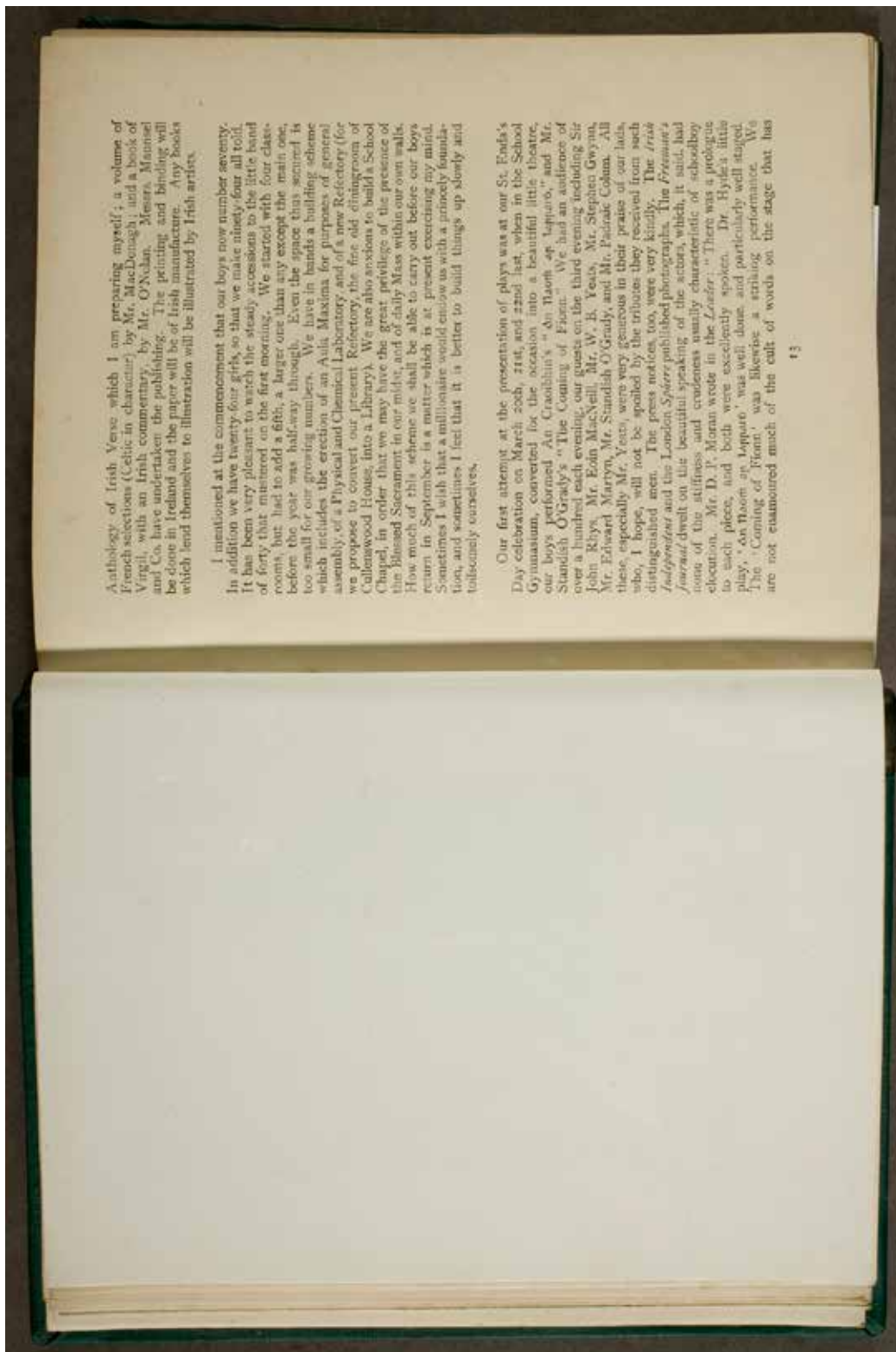
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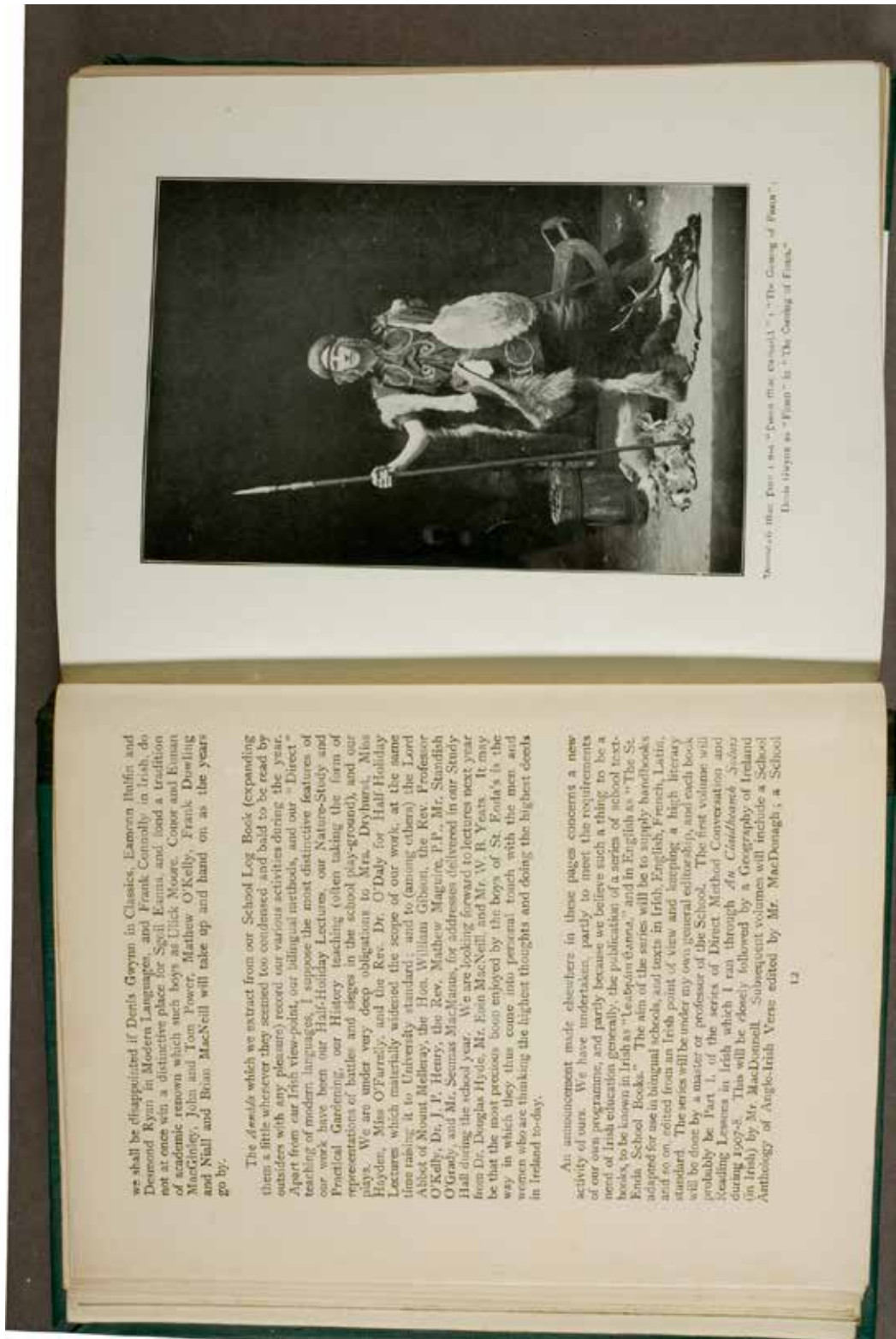
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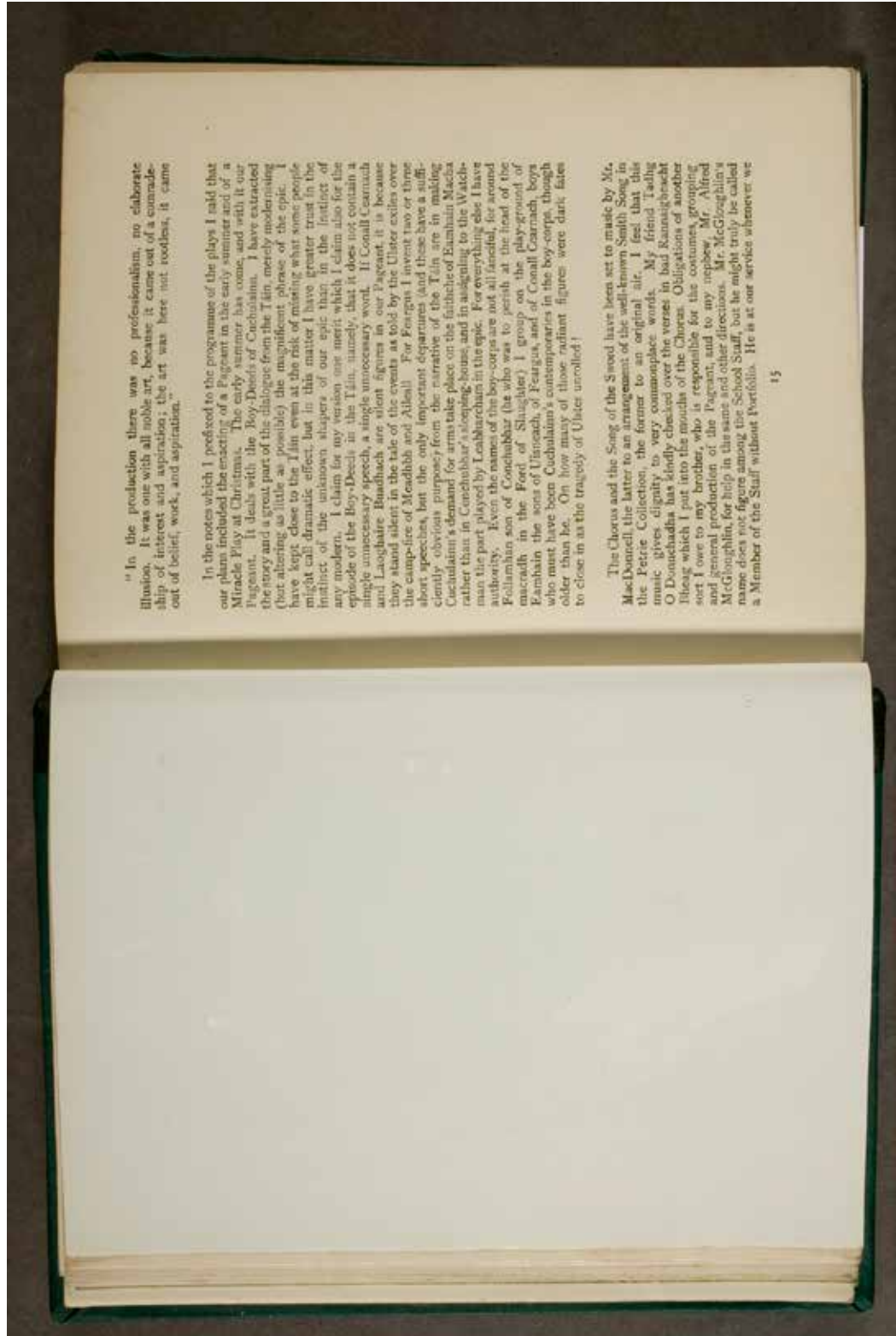
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"In the production there was no professionalism, no elaborate illusion. It was one with all noble art, because it came out of a comradeship of interest and aspiration; the art was here not rootless, it came out of belief, work, and aspiration."

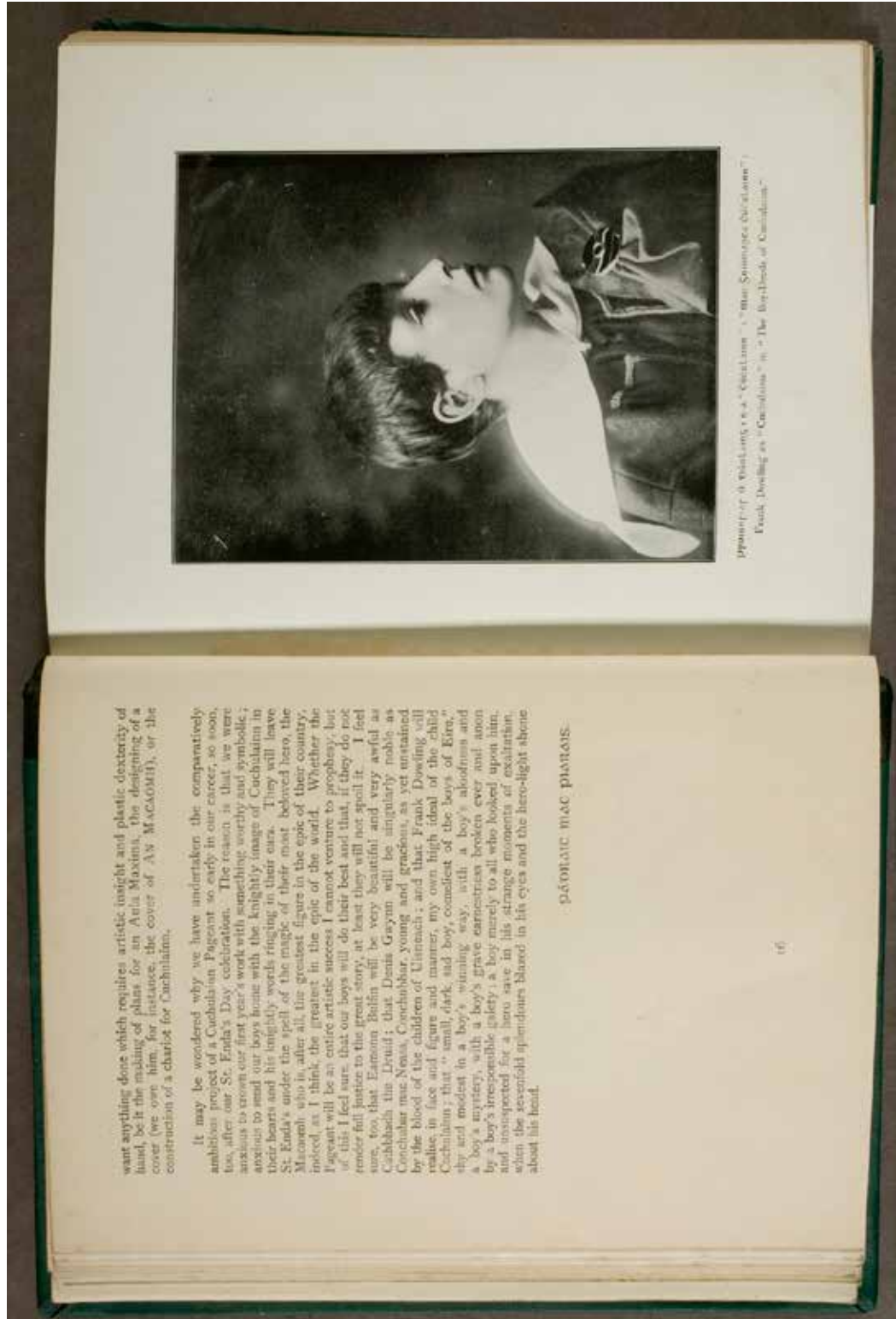
In the notes which I prefixed to the programme of the plays I said that our plans included the erecting of a Pigeant in the early summer and of a Miracle Play at Christmas. The early summer has come, and with it our Pigeant. It deals with the Boy-Deeds of Cuchulainn. I have extracted the story and a great part of the dialogue from the Tain, merely modernising (but altering as little as possible) the magnificent phrase of the epic. I have kept close to the Tain even at the risk of mistaking what some people might call dramatic effect, but in this matter I have greater trust in the instinct of the unknown shapers of our epic than in the instinct of any modern. I claim for my version one merit which I claim also for the episode of the Boy-Deeds in the Tain, namely, that it does not contain a single unnecessary speech, a single unnecessary word. If Conall Ceannach and Laoighaire Buidhach are silent figures in our Pigeant, it is because they stand silent in the tale of the events as told by the Ulster exiles over the camp-fire of Meadhbh and Ailbh. For Feargus I invent two or three short speeches, but the only important departures (and these have a sufficient) obvious purpose) from the narrative of the Tain are in making Cuchulainn's demand for arms take place on the faithless of Eamhain Macra rather than in Conchobair's sleeping house and in assigning to the Watchman the part played by Leabharthain in the epic. For everything else I have authority. Even the names of the boy-corps are not all invented, for several Follamhan sons of Conchobair (the who was to perish at the head of the macra) in the Ford of Slaughtail) I group on the play-ground of Eamhain the sons of Uisneach, of Feargus and of Conall Ceannach boys who must have been Cuchulainn's contemporaries in the boy-corps, though older than he. On how many of those radiant figures were dark fates to close in as the tragedy of Ulster unrolled!

The Chorus and the Song of the Sword have been set to music by Mr. MacDonnell the latter to an arrangement of the well-known Smith Song in the Petrie Collection, the former to an original air. I feel that this music gives dignity to very commonplace words. My friend Tadhg O'Donohue has kindly checked over the verses in his Rannsigheacht litheag which I put into the mouths of the Chorus. Obligations of another sort I owe to my brother, who is responsible for the costumes, grouping and general production of the Pigeant, and to my nephew, Mr. Alfred McLaughlin, for help in the same and other directions. Mr. McLaughlin's name does not figure among the School Staff, but he might truly be called a Member of the Staff without portolá. He is at our service whenever we

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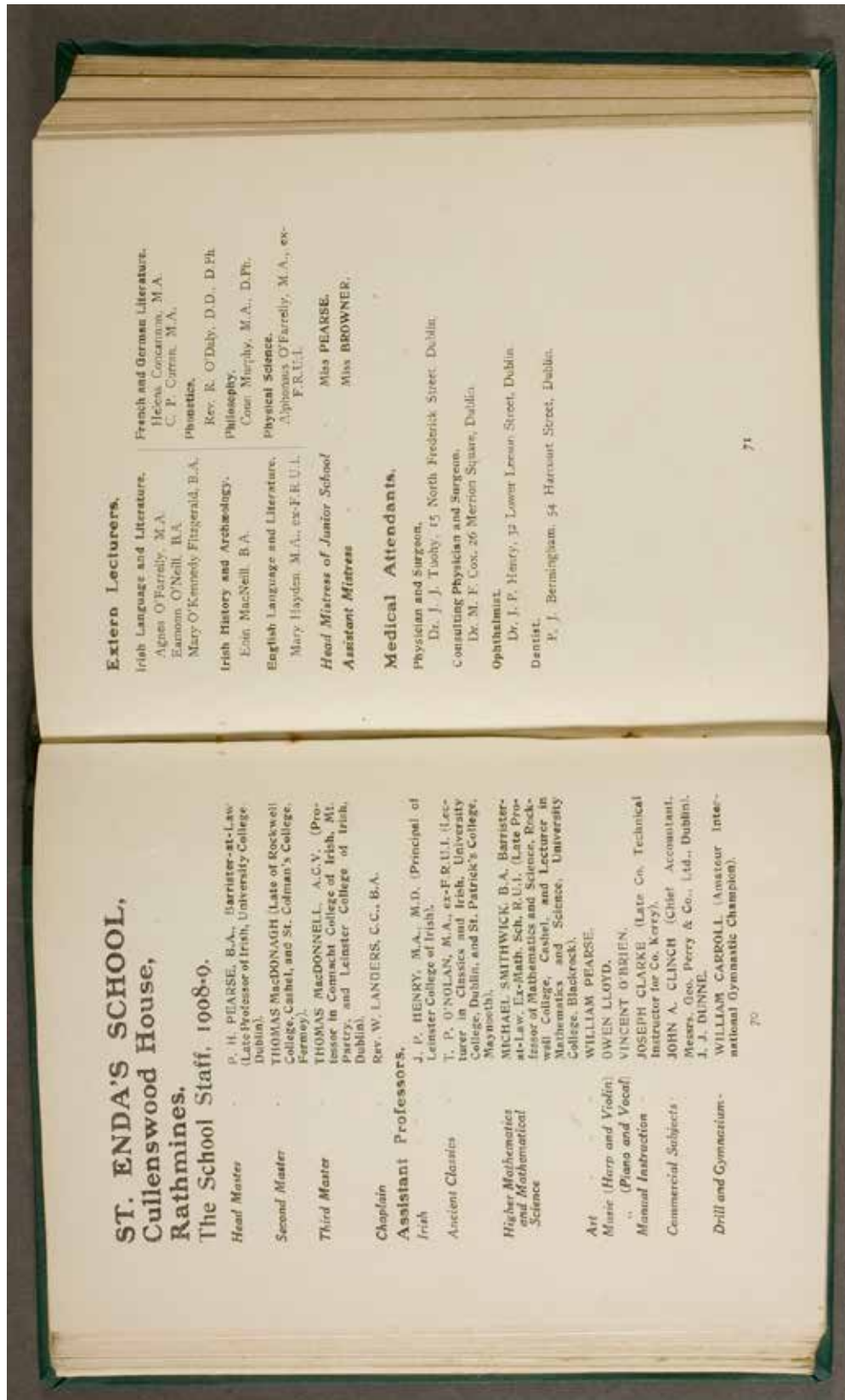


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**ST. ENDA'S SCHOOL,**  
**Cullenswood House,**  
**Rathmines.**  
**The School Staff, 1908-9.**

**Head Master**  
P. H. PEARSE, B.A., Barrister-at-Law  
(Late Professor of Irish, University College  
Dublin).  
**Second Master**  
THOMAS MACDONAGH (Late of Rockwell  
College, Cahel, and St. Columba's College,  
Farnley).  
**Third Master**  
THOMAS MACDONNELL, A.C.V. (Pro-  
fessor in Connacht College of Irish, M.  
Parry, and Leinster College of Irish,  
Dublin).  
Rev. W. LANDERS, C.C., B.A.

**Chaplain**  
Assistant Professors.  
Irish  
J. P. HENRY, M.A., M.D. (Principal of  
Leinster College of Irish).  
Ancient Classics  
T. P. O'NOLAN, M.A., ex-F.R.U.I. (Lec-  
turer in Classics and Irish, University  
College Dublin, and St. Patrick's College,  
Maynooth).  
Higher Mathematics  
and Mathematical  
Science  
MICHAEL SMITHWICK, B.A., Barrister-  
at-Law, Ex-Rath. Sch. R.U.I. (Late Pro-  
fessor of Mathematics and Science, Rock-  
well College, Cahel), and Lecturer in  
Mathematics and Science, University  
College Blackrock).  
Art  
WILLIAM PEARSE.  
Music (Horn and Violin)  
OWEN LLOYD.  
" (Piano and Vocal)  
VINCENT O'BRIEN.  
Manual Instruction  
JOSEPH CLARKE (Late Co. Technical  
Instructor for Co. Kerry).  
Commercial Subjects  
JOHN A. GLINGH (Chief Accountant,  
Messrs. Geo. Perry & Co., Ltd., Dublin),  
J. J. DUNNE.  
Drill and Gymnasium-  
WILLIAM CARROLL (Amateur Inter-  
national Gymnastic Champion).

**Extern Lecturers.**

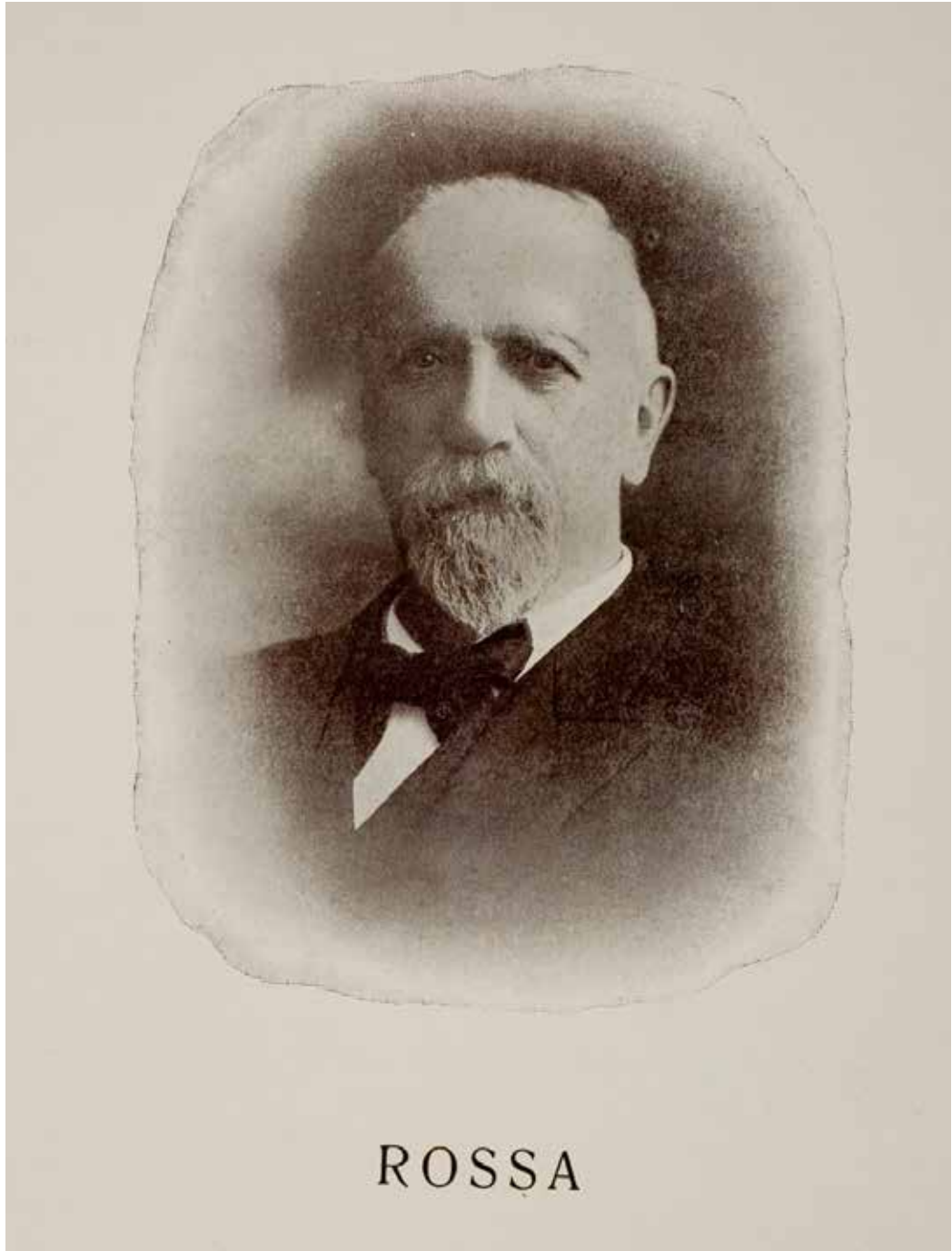
Irish Language and Literature.  
Agnes O'Farrelly, M.A.  
Eamon O'Neill, B.A.  
Mary O'Kennedy Fitzgerald, B.A.  
Irish History and Archaeology.  
Eoin MacNeill, B.A.  
English Language and Literature.  
Mary Hayden, M.A., ex-F.R.U.I.  
French and German Literature.  
Helen Concanan, M.A.  
C. P. Carrin, M.A.  
Phonetics.  
Rev. R. O'Daly, D.D., D.Ph.  
Philosophy.  
Conor Murphy, M.A., D.Ph.  
Physical Science.  
Alphonsus O'Farrelly, M.A., ex-  
F.R.U.I.

Head Mistress of Junior School  
Miss PEARSE.  
Assistant Mistress  
Miss BROWNER.

**Medical Attendants.**

Physician and Surgeon,  
Dr. J. J. Tobby, 15, North Frederick Street, Dublin.  
Consulting Physician and Surgeon.  
Dr. M. F. Cox, 26 Merrion Square, Dublin.  
Ophthalmist.  
Dr. J. P. Henry, 32 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin.  
Dentist.  
P. J. Bermingham, 54 Harcourt Street, Dublin.

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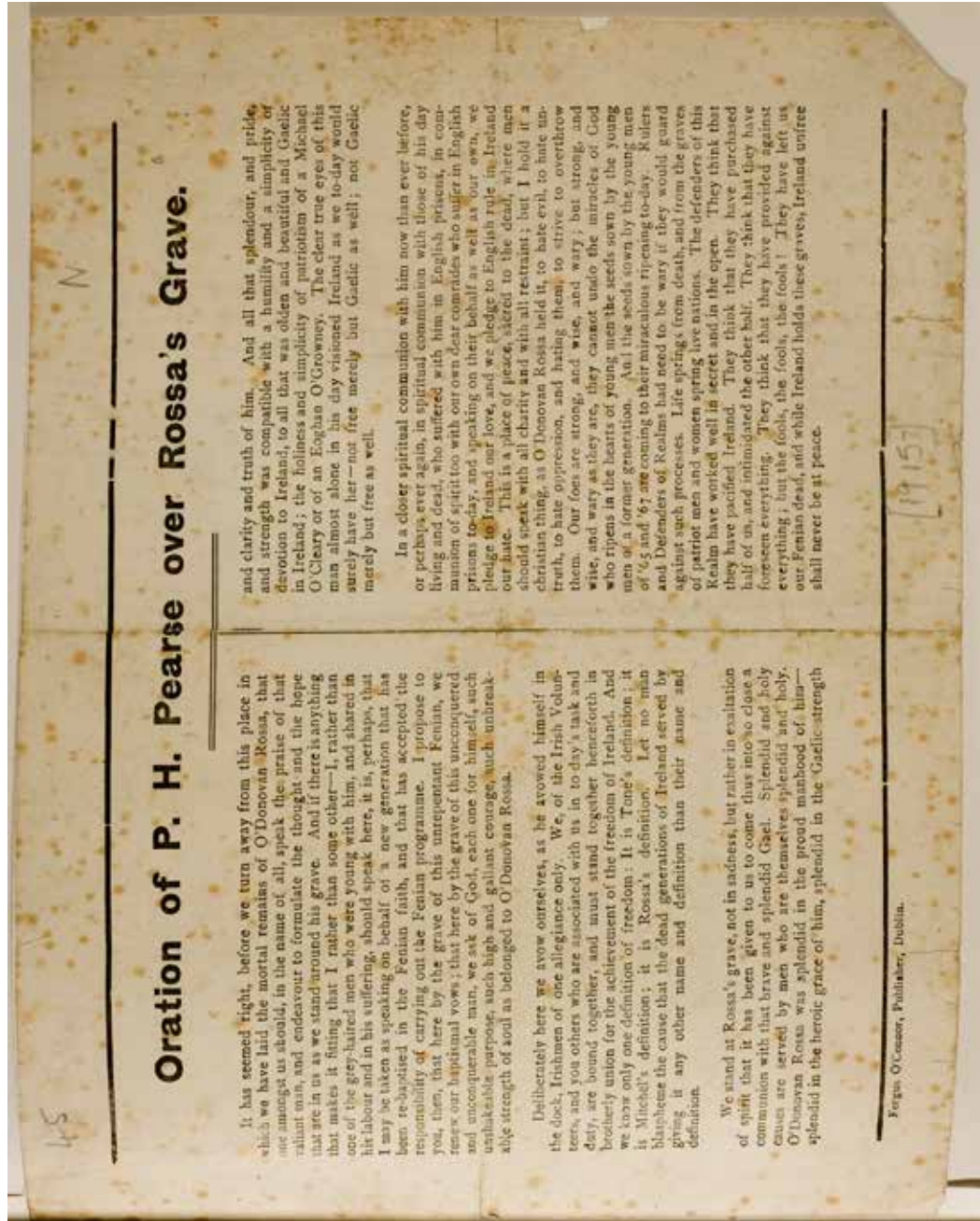
Jeremiah O'Donovan (1831-1915) from Ross Carbery, Co. Cork, best known as O'Donovan Rossa. His life was dedicated to securing an Irish republic; for the new generation of separatists he symbolised the spirit of Fenianism and revolt. Following his death in New York, his funeral in Dublin on 1 August 1915 was a rallying point for extreme nationalists.

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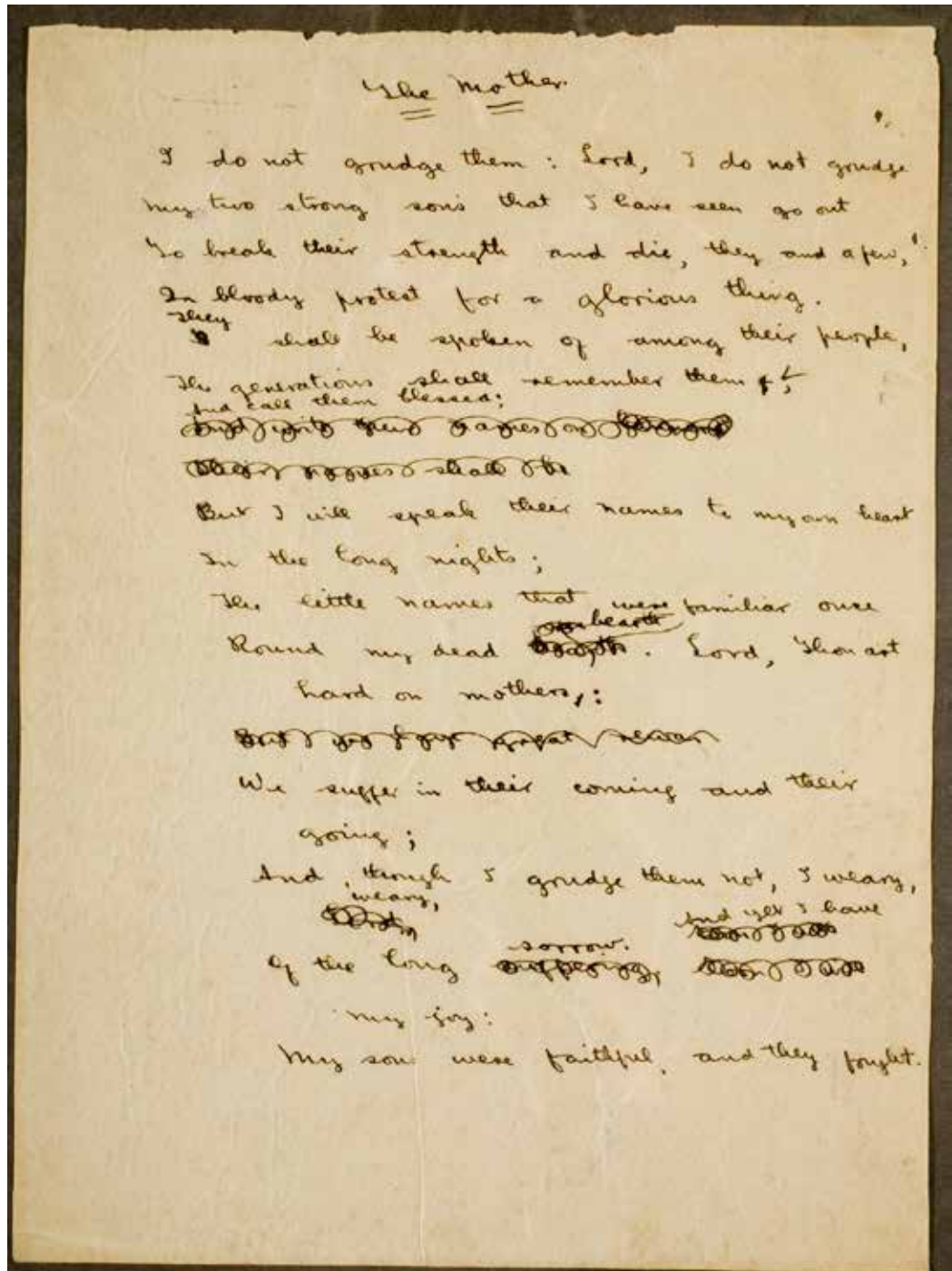
The scene in Glasnevin cemetery where Pearse dressed in the uniform of the Irish Volunteers delivered a stirring oration over Rossa's grave. In the photograph he appears to be putting his script back in his pocket. (Keogh 163).

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A printed text of Pearse's oration.

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4.4 Patrick Pearse

**Transcript**

**The Mother by Pádraic Pearse**

I do not grudge them: Lord, I do not grudge  
 My two strong sons that I have seen go out  
 To break their strength and die, they and a few,  
 In bloody protest for a glorious thing,  
 They shall be spoken of among their people,  
 The generations shall remember them,  
 And call them blessed;  
 But I will speak their names to my own heart  
 In the long nights;  
 The little names that were familiar once  
 Round my dead hearth.  
 Lord, thou art hard on mothers:  
 We suffer in their coming and their going;  
 And tho' I grudge them not, I weary, weary  
 Of the long sorrow – And yet I have my joy:  
 My sons were faithful, and they fought.

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The following is the substance of what I said when asked to day by the President of the Court Martial at Richmond Barracks whether I had anything to say in defence:

I desire in the first place to repeat what I have already said in letters to General Sir John Maxwell and to Brigadier General Lowe. My object in agreeing to an unconditional surrender was to prevent the further slaughter of the civil population of Dublin and to save the lives of our gallant followers who, having made for six days a stand unparalleled in military history, were now surrounded and (in the case of those under the immediate command of Headquarters) without food. I fully understood now, as then, that my own life is forfeit to British law, and I shall die very cheaply, if I can think that the British Government, ~~which~~ <sup>as it</sup> has already shown itself strong, ~~and~~ will now show itself magnanimous enough to accept my single life <sup>(in forfeit)</sup> and to give a general amnesty to the brave men and boys who have fought at my bidding.

In the second place I wish it to be understood that any admissions I make here are to be taken as involving myself alone. They do not involve ~~me~~ and must not be used against anyone <sup>myself</sup> who acted with me, not even those who set their names to documents with me [The Court assented to this].

I admit that I was Commandant General Commanding in chief the forces of the Irish Republic which have been acting against you for the past week, and that I was President of their Provisional Government. I stand over all ~~that~~ of my acts and words done or spoken in these capacities.

When I was a child of ten I went down on my

Pearse's recollection of his address to the court-martial, 2 May 1916. (Ms. 17,306).



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bare knees by my bedside one night and promised  
 God that I should devote my life to an effort to  
 free my country. I have kept that ~~promise~~ <sup>promise</sup>  
 As a boy and as a man I have worked for  
 Irish freedom, I have helped to organise, to  
 arm, to train, and to discipline my fellowcountry  
 men to the sole ~~end~~ <sup>end</sup> that, when the time came,  
 they might fight for Irish freedom. The time, as  
 it seemed to me, ~~came~~ <sup>did come</sup>, and we went into  
 the fight. I am glad we did. We seem to have lost.  
 We have not lost. To refuse to fight would have  
 been to lose; to fight is to win. We have kept faith  
 with the past, and handed on a tradition to the  
 future. ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> repudiate the accusation of the prosecutor  
 that ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> sought to aid and abet England's enemy,  
 Germany is no more to ~~us~~ <sup>us</sup> than England is. ~~We~~ <sup>we</sup> asked  
 and accepted German aid in the shape of arms  
 and an expeditionary force. We asked for ~~no~~ <sup>neither</sup>  
 accepted German gold, nor had other traffic with  
 Germany but what I state. ~~Our~~ <sup>my</sup> aim was to win  
 Irish freedom ~~without~~ <sup>but</sup> we struck the  
 first blow ourselves, but should have been  
 glad ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> an ally's aid. ~~But~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~yet~~ <sup>yet</sup>  
 I assume that I am speaking to Englishmen, who  
 value their own freedom ~~and~~ <sup>and who</sup> propose to be fighting for  
 the freedom of Belgium and Serbia. Believe that we,  
 too, ~~wish~~ <sup>love</sup> freedom and desire it. To us it is more  
 desirable than anything in the world. If you strike  
 us down now, we shall rise again and renew  
 the fight. You cannot conquer Ireland. You  
 cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If  
 our deed has not been sufficient to win, then  
 our children will win it by a better deed.

P. H. Pearse  
 24 May 1916

4.4

Patrick Pearse

**Transcript**

**P.H. Pearse: Address to Court Martial. Statement written in Kilmainham, 2 May 1916.**

The following is the substance of what I said when asked today by the President of the Court Martial at Richmond Barracks whether I had anything to say in defence:

I desire in the first place to repeat what I have already said in the letters to General Sir John Maxwell and to Brigadier General Lowe. My object in agreeing to an unconditional surrender was to prevent the further slaughter of the civil population of Dublin and to save the lives of our gallant followers who, having made for six days a stand unparalleled in military history, were now surrounded and (in the case of those under the immediate command of Headquarters) without food. I fully understand now, as then, that my own life is a forfeit to British law, and I shall die very cheerfully if I can think that the British Government, as it has already shown itself strong, will now show itself magnanimous enough to accept my single life in forfeiture and give a general amnesty to the brave men and boys who have fought at my bidding.

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I admit that I was Commandant General Commanding in Chief the forces of the Irish Republic which have been acting against you for the past week, and that I was President of their Provisional Government. I stand over all my acts and words done or spoken in those capacities.

When I was a child of ten I went down on my bare knees by my bedside one night and promised God that I should devote my life to an effort to free my country. I have kept that promise. As a boy and as a man I have worked for Irish freedom, first among all earthly things. I have helped to organise, to arm, to train, and to discipline my fellow-countrymen to the sole end that, when the time came, they might fight for Irish freedom. The time, as

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it seemed to me, did come, and we went into the fight. I am glad we did. We seem to have lost. We have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose; to fight is to win. We have kept faith with the past, and handed on a tradition to the future.

I repudiate the assertion of the prosecutor that I sought to aid and abet England's enemy. Germany is no more to me than England is. I asked and accepted German aid in the shape of arms and an expeditionary force. We neither asked for nor accepted Germany [sic] gold, nor had any traffic with Germany but what I state. My aim was to win Irish freedom: we struck the first blow ourselves, but should have been glad of an ally's aid.

I assume that I am speaking to Englishmen who value their freedom and who profess to be fighting for the freedom of Belgium and Serbia. Believe that we, too, love freedom and desire it. To us it is more desirable than anything in the world. If you strike us down now, we shall rise again and renew the fight. You cannot conquer Ireland. You cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by better deed.

P.H. Pearse, Kilmainham Prison. 2nd May 1916.