

ALOYS FLEISCHMANN

DIARY

FOR

1927



Transcribed and annotated by

Ruth Fleischmann

January 1927

Saturday 1

Imit annus novus! [Enter the new year] This year will probably be the most important of my life. 'The tide, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.' Let's hope that I'll 'take the current when it serves' and not lose my ventures. [*Julius Caesar* IV, 3].

Drove to Mass with Fr. Pat¹ to Baile na Carraige, a little village church about five miles out of Dunmanway. Went then to a rehearsal in the Town Hall of 'Íosagán'² and other plays for to-morrow's Gaelic League performance. I will act as stage prompter. After a fine New Year's Day dinner of turkey and plum-pudding, went again to rehearsal with Tim Leary. The little fellows taking part in 'Íosagán' were charming. Was invited by Reggie Milnar, an old collegian, to his house, where I was regaled with raspberry wine and instructed on the Uilleann Pipes. Retired very much the worse for wear, having read half 'The Vicar of Wakefield'.

January 1927

Sunday 2

Drove to the little village of Togler with Fr. Pat for Mass and Benediction. After had breakfast in a little room over the sacristy. Fr. Pat got a few sick calls on the way home, and we passed through the bleakest and stoniest mountain roads. Then drove with Denis, Fr. Pat's acting chauffeur, to Cork, a distance of over 40 miles. I took the wheel from Bandon to Cork. Called for Mám,³ had dinner, then picked up Mrs. Stockley, Sophia⁴ and her friend

¹ Father Patrick MacSwiney, M.A. (1885-1940), one of the Fleischmanns' closest friends. He was a man of much learning with a great love of music, also a man of action who set up social and cultural organisations in the parishes in which he served. He was at this time chaplain to a convent in Dunmanway, having been removed from Cork after a public controversy with the bishop during the civil war. He was to be transferred to Kinsale later in 1927.

² 'Íosagán' [Little Jesus], a short story in Irish for children by Patrick Pearse, was published by the Gaelic League in 1907; Pearse rewrote it as a drama in 1910.

³ Mám: Aloys' mother, the pianist and teacher Tilly Fleischmann née Swertz (1882-1967), born in Cork to German parents; her father had come to Cork in 1879 from Dachau; he was organist and choirmaster at the cathedral from 1890-1906, when he left for Philadelphia. Tilly studied at the Royal Academy of Music in Munich from 1901-05 under two pupils of Franz Liszt. In the first part of the diary of 1926 Aloys refers to her as 'Mammie'.

⁴ Marie Germaine Stockley née Kolb (1868-1949) was born in Munich, came to Cork in 1908 having married William F. P. Stockley, professor of English at University College Cork. She was a gifted singer who had studied with a pupil of Brahms; she taught in the Cork School of Music. She had one daughter, Sophie.

Miss Mac Leod of Dublin (niece of editor of 'An Phoblacht'⁵) and we turned about for Dunmanway. I chaffed Sophia *en route*. Arrived at hotel, and after tea, we all left for Hall and Gaelic League Concert. First there was a charming performance of 'Red Riding Hood' in Irish, then 'Íosagán' by a band of fresh young fellows, then followed a play 'Paid in his own Coin', Anglo-Irish, but exceedingly witty and excellently acted. Between were traditional dancing, singing and violin-playing. The huge audience of country folk were most enthusiastic, and for a Gaelic League concert it was highly successful. I acted as stage-prompter.

January 1927

Monday 3

Early in the morning, much to my delight, Fr. Pat decided to take me to Glengarriff, so having called for the Stockleys and Mám, off we bowled. Poor Fr. Pat, owing to his late hard exertions, was a bit extreme and fidgety, but nevertheless we enjoyed the trip immensely. Approaching Glengarriff, the country became glorious, Sugar Loaf and Hungry Hill mountains towering over the bay. Had a fine lunch at Roche's hotel, having gone down to the sea and seen a beautiful cascade. At 4 we started back for Cork, I drove from Inchigeela into the city. The Pass of Céim an Fhéidh was glorious. It is the strategic key to West Cork and was held by many an army. Miss Mac Leod was enchanted with the scenery. She sang us some sweet and plaintive Highland airs, reminding me of 'The Solitary Reaper' [poem by Wordsworth]. Home at 8.30 read 'Vicar of Wakefield' in comfort.

January 1927

Tuesday 4

Having finished school-work, decided on doing Hadow's 'Music' for History Exam. and began it. Read a wonderful article on the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, the perfection of its symmetry in regard to mathematics and astronomy, and the manner in which the positions and length of its passages has been shown to represent the past history of the world, and to prophecy the future. The whole purpose of the article is to show that this pyramid is the sign and witness of God and that its building was inspired by him. Fr. Pat is very sceptical about the whole thing. Finished 'The Vicar of Wakefield'. It is a simple yet charming tale; it is summed up in Goldsmith's introduction.

⁵ *An Phoblacht* [The Republic] founded in 1906, the newspaper of the Irish republican movement.

Fr. Pat left to-day – he was really kind to me. Went to Horgans',⁶ but found that Ivor and Joe are in Macroom. Did duty of helping Aunt Elsa⁷ for Thursday's ball, the Lord secure us! Went with Madge,⁸ as Mám was too tired to come, to the 'Sea-Wolf'. It was alright. I enjoyed the sea bits, and Madge's content[ment] at the comic [parts] more.

January 1927

Wednesday 5

Bought a fine new over-coat, and a long trousers for school-wear for myself. Had lunch at Neesons',⁹ who are occupying Miss O'Brien's¹⁰ house in her absence. Went to Betty to compromise about Monday's invitation, which clashes with Prof. Sullivan's.¹¹ Read 'Tam o' Shanter' there, a killing poem of Burns, wonderfully illustrated by Cruikshank. The book must be very valuable. Read in 'Lands and Peoples' of Sicily and Morocco.

January 1927

Thursday 6

Spent day in usual manner, studying, reading and shopping for myself. At 7.30, when I was just beginning to dress for Arthur's party, Sophie and Betty arrived in the taxi to call for me, so I had to fly through my toilet. There were over 60 there, but the place was not as crowded as I thought. On the whole, it was a great success, and everyone enjoyed it. The

⁶ John J. Horgan (1881-1967), a solicitor and city coroner – his most famous case being that of the *Lusitania*, torpedoed off Kinsale by a German submarine in 1915. He was on the boards of the Cork Harbour Commission and Opera House, was author of several books, among them *Parnell to Pearse*. John J.'s father had been Parnell's Cork election agent; his wife Mary was the daughter of UCC President Sir Bertram Windle; she studied the piano with Tilly Fleischmann. His sons Ivor and Joe and daughter Madoline were the children of his first marriage, David and Joan those of his marriage with the second Mary Horgan. The latter was to study music at UCC in the 1940s. It was thanks to John J. Horgan that Aloys Fleischmann senior was not interned for the first two years of the first world war: he was a family friend from 1906.

⁷ Elsa O'Malley Williams née Swertz (1883-1959), Tilly Fleischmann's sister, the third of the nine Swertz children. Her children Arthur (1910-1975), Frieda (1917-1982) and Pat (1918-2008) were friends of Aloys.

⁸ Madge was the Fleischmann's housekeeper for many years.

⁹ Geraldine Neeson née O'Sullivan (1895-1980), pianist (who had studied with Tilly Fleischmann), actress, singing teacher, music critic; her husband Seán Neeson (1891-1964) a singer who was born in Belfast; he was interned after the rising of 1916 and again during the civil war by the Free State government. He acted as secretary to Carl Hardebeck, was director of the short-lived Cork radio station and succeeded Dr Annie Patterson as lecturer in Irish music at University College Cork.

¹⁰ Jane (Jennie) O'Brien, or Sinéid Ní Bhríain (1895-1979), daughter of Cork wool millers, had been a talented pupil of Tilly Fleischmann's who gave recitals and broadcasts. She was one of the Fleischmanns' best friends. In the 1920s she trained in Manchester as a nursery nurse, graduating from the Princess Christian College there. She studied music in University College Cork under Aloys Fleischmann, graduating in 1943. She then taught in Drishane, and in Scoil Ite, the school founded by Terence MacSwiney's sisters in 1916, having all her life been a close family friend of theirs.

¹¹ Elizabeth M. O'Sullivan, professor of Education at University College Cork 1910-1935

supper was magnificent, and you may bet that I did it full justice. I was kept going the whole time dancing until my feet were quite sore, but it was a pity that they hadn't some games. Home 1.30!!!

January 1927

Friday 7

4th Friday¹² Read Kipling's 'Stalky & Co'. It is a typically English school-boy story, but exceedingly humorous and witty, and told in a florid imaginative style. Walked to Douglas to get my history note-book from John Cottrell, who had it since June. – Began Hunt's 'Summary of Musical History', and am learning 12 Irish melodies, to be dissected by a chapter of MacPherson's on form in music, binary and ternary.

Thus ends the last entry of my daily diary. For Páp¹³ told me to-day that the latter is all waste of time and energy and that I should start a weekly diary. So I will do, writing it on Sunday. I think it is all *in melius* [for the better]. I attempted to convey properly an account of my ordinary life, but once this account was scribbled in 5 minutes, it could not become too classical, and would neither be interesting to myself nor anyone else in later years. Accordingly I surrender, but custom dies hard, and I will [miss] these 5 mins. of scribbling very much. Adieu!

January 1927

Sunday 16

[Written by mistake under Sunday 23]

The first of the proscription lists! Finished up the hols with a pleasant 'grub-and-wireless' party at Prof. Sullivan's and a riotous night at the second part of 'Les Misérables' – The Barricades – with Ivor and Joe in which we took part in a first-class practical joke on Joe O'Flynn, a modern Beau Nash. It is fine, all the same, to be back at school.¹⁴ I have

¹² Aloys had decided to go to mass every first Friday of the month for nine months, following a set of Catholic devotions in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus advocated by the French mystic St Margaret Mary Alacoque, who was canonised in 1920.

¹³ Páp: Aloys' father, Aloys Fleischmann senior (1880-1964), born in Dachau in Bavaria, composer, choirmaster and organist in the Cathedral of St Mary and St Anne since 1906. In the early part of the 1926 diary, Aloys refers to him as 'Pappie'.

¹⁴ Aloys now attended St Finbarr's College, Farranferris, where his father was music teacher. It was the diocesan seminary, a boarding school for boys. Students did not have to undertake a commitment to study for the priesthood; boys living in the city could attend as day students. It closed in 2006. His first school was the MacSwiney sisters' Scoil Ite from September 1916; later he was sent to the Christian Brothers' College.

plunged with great enjoyment into serious work. Got a terrible fright to learn that my piano exam. is in March !!! I expected it to be in June. So I must instantly begin all my work again, doing 3 hours on Sunday and Wednesdays. – Fr. Dalton is giving us fine notes on the old miracle plays and Renaissance. – Went to Hilsers’¹⁵ party. They are charming but I could only alleviate my despair and hopelessness this morning by doing 6 hours heavy work. Had a private play at Betty’s to-day, with some exciting hide-and-seek.

There is an extraordinary mystery about Miss O’Brien’s visit to France. Our letters are reaching her but are sent back anon.

January 1927

Sunday 23

[*Written by mistake under Sunday 16*]

Had flu on Monday, and had to experience the squalid distress of remaining at home and trying to work hard and play hard but doing neither. Have plunged headlong into my exam. work for music. Last year’s papers are very tough, but when the practical and oral exam. is over in March, I will give up piano altogether and grind at harmony, counterpoint and history. This evening we went to ‘Othello’ performed by Fr. O’Flynn’s company in the Michael [Collins] Barracks. We got a special invitation from Col. Lynch. Lieutenant Duff, bandmaster to the Army Band, conducted some pieces of Coleridge-Taylor’s very finely. The play itself, though an amateur performance, and a cast drawn from very rough material, was excellent, Iago and Amelia being especially good. At all events, it was an education for me. Poor Father O’Flynn is certainly doing good, though wayward, work for Shakespeare.

January 1927

Sunday 30

There was terrible misery again because I had to stay at home two days from school owing to ‘flu, which is now spread all over Europe in the form of a mild plague. My distress in passing the day without routine work shows what a reactionary¹⁶ character I am. My music exam. work is improving, both practical and theoretical. Stamps are forsaken

¹⁵ The Hilsers were German jewellers who settled in Cork. The father was interned in Oldcastle with Aloys Fleischmann senior. Two of the girls, Mary and Elsie Hilser, were among Tilly Fleischmann’s best piano students.

¹⁶ ‘Reactionary’ is used here, as later in the text, in the sense of reacting over-sensitively to changed circumstances.

completely. Only 'Lands and Peoples' and Oman's 'Seven Statesmen of Rome' prescribed from school occupy a few mins. a week.

The position in China is critical. Anti-British feeling is massing the different factions together, and troops are leaving England in haste to defend Shanghai. America and Japan seem to be negotiating with China on their own, so that Britain is feeling 'shaky'. Let's hope they get what they are looking for, but that the 'yellow menace' is not starting.

Mum has got a fine new bed, and I am deported to the top of the house. The first great break with 'die Jugend' [Youth].

February 1927

Sunday 6

Went to 'The Last Days of Pompeii' during the week, a fine, spectacular picture with wonderful scenery and Roman buildings, but having a cast by no means as artistic or classical as that in 'Helen of Troy'.

We have just finished Horace's Sermonum II 6 [*Satires*] containing the famous parable about the mice which I consider the most charming and appealing bit of all the Latin poetry we have read. Especially the line '*purpurea porrectum in veste locavit*' [reclining on purple covers] in reference to the '*mus agrestis*' [field mouse]¹⁷ is killing.

We were invited to Blackrock convent for Fr. O'Flynn's company's presentation of 'Hamlet'.¹⁸ It was not as well done as 'Othello', but the King, Ophelia, and one or two others could compare themselves with any Shakespearian actors. I learnt a lot, at any rate, from hearing the play from start to finish, having studied it jerkily at school.

Am looking forward most mightily to the summer hols, for which wonderful plans are proposed, but I know that *ex reactione* [by way of reaction] when the time comes, I will be

¹⁷ *Mus agrestis*: the field mouse, in Horace's fable a Country Mouse visiting his sophisticated Town Mouse cousin, being seated on splendid purple covers, and given a royal feast till dogs come and rout them

¹⁸ Father James Christopher O'Flynn (1881-1962), curate in Cork's North Cathedral, founded the Cork Shakespearian Company in 1926, which from 1927 performed regularly at the Opera House and produced a series of renowned actors. Fr. O'Flynn developed a very effective method of curing stammering. He taught elocution in Farranferris; in 1946 he became parish priest in Passage West where he founded a children's choir that broadcast on Radio Éireann. His mother had sung in Hans Conrad Swertz's Cathedral choir; he studied the piano with Tilly Fleischmann for a while, argued with her husband over the merits of classical against traditional music, but was the first to visit him in the internment camp in Oldcastle in 1916. A BBC documentary film was made of him in 1961: *It happened to me*

so disgusted at having nothing to do as if a world of worries were gnawing at my brain. *Sed sperare persequerere!* [But to hope is to persevere]

February 1927

Sunday 13

We are taking Geography for our exam. and Dr. Scannell¹⁹ has typed for us an exceedingly interesting account of the four geological eras. But we have a 2-year course to do in a ¼ year! – I am working hard at music, but that is all I shall say. It will be sufficient to speak after my exam. – I am beginning to realise that even those who think they have found the true secret of happiness, namely prayer, hard work, and energetic play cannot enjoy themselves once they have found it is so. That monster, reaction, is there to rob them of the fruit of their toil. – Mám is booked for broadcasting in Dublin May 14th! She is in Cappoquin now, studying with the Neesons for their recital next Thursday week etc. and will be home to-morrow.

Pepys' diary was read to us in school. He must have been a Horace with little genius. I should have framed my diary from his.

February 1927

Sunday 20

Important events took place in school during the week. Dr. Scannell found his senior pass class intolerable, though indeed they are doing their best, and gave them a terrible time of it. To protest, they held revolutionary meetings in the class halls, invested Hunt and Butler with dictatorial powers, and vowed to seize and fortify the gym. An armistice was, however, settled upon and four ambassadors interviewed Dr. Scannell. A treaty was signed, the Doctor promising to adopt a 'conciliatory policy' towards the 'gang'. But he has forgotten all these state troubles in the purchase of a motor, and he is more in the best of spirits as a result.

Mám is to broadcast in Horse Show week, the most important week in Dublin of the year.

¹⁹ Dr. Joseph Augustine Scannell (18??-1961) was born in Cork, studied in Louvain and Rome, was ordained in Rome in 1904. He was chaplain to the Irish Guards 1914-18, and was decorated for his bravery. He was president of Farranferris 1923-1938, when he became parish priest of Bandon. In 1946 he was made Dean of the Cork diocese. He was Aloys' esteemed teacher for English, History, Geography and German at Farranferris. He was decorated by the French government for his work for French culture.

Cycled round the harbour with beautiful scenery, the ‘breath of heaven fresh-flowing pure and sweet’, my aching head was much relieved. [Francis Bacon, quoting Apollonius of Tyana]

Heard wireless at Mr. Corkery’s.²⁰ English programmes seem to be deteriorating.

February 1927

Sunday 27

Had to leave school on Thursday owing to neuralgia and headache. The pain was unbearable, went to dentist who said that two grinders were at war in my jaw. So he pulled one. Had a lot of pain, but went nevertheless to Mr. and Mrs. Neeson’s concert at the Clarence Hall. It was most enjoyable. Mrs. Neeson played Debussy’s ‘Children’s Corner’ (which I heard Cortot play in Dublin) Mussorgsky’s ‘Pictures at an Exhibition’, and Schumann’s ‘Twelve Symphonic Poems’. Thought the first two are strikingly modern, one can delight in a new fantastic atmosphere which they create. Mr. Neeson sang, amongst others, Mussorgsky’s ‘To the Dnieper’ and ‘Field-Marshal Death’, two wonderfully powerful songs. Got the ‘flu and had to stay in bed on Friday. Such a catastrophe, just when my music exam. is approaching. Stayed inside and could do no work on Saturday.

On Sunday Páp gave me an account of his life in the camp.²¹ It was appalling. And then people were saying here that they wished they were in his boots, and could get free from the cares of war-time life by 5 years quiet seclusion! Páp’s one prayer was that he should not go mad, and become like the poor lunatics who sat at mess and actually lived with the other prisoners! 350 men were partitioned in each court, having plank beds, wearing rags, and getting loathsome food which they tried to swallow in gulps to prevent nausea. A few times he was nearly strangled by madmen. *Grafts* [counts] and beggars, priests and lunatics were all mixed together. During the hols. I must get him to give a more detailed account, and take

²⁰ Daniel Corkery (1878-1964), writer, painter, teacher. He became a primary schoolteacher and learnt Irish in the Gaelic League. Among his pupils were Frank O’Connor, Seán O’Faolain and Seán Ó Tuama. He founded the Cork Dramatic Society in 1908 with Terence MacSwiney, writing several plays for it, which were later performed in the Abbey Theatre. He published short stories, a novel and influential works on cultural history such as *The Hidden Ireland* of 1924. He became professor of English at UCC in 1930. He loved classical music and Aloys had a standing invitation to visit him to listen to records – expensive luxuries in those days: Aloys’ parents owned a radio but never had a record player.

²¹ Aloys Fleischmann senior was taken into custody on 4 Jan 1916 and interned in Oldcastle Co. Meath with hundreds of other German civilians who had been living in Ireland when the first world war began. All were transferred to camps on the Isle of Man in May 1918. Fleischmann was deported from there to Germany in Oct 1919 and not allowed back to Ireland until Sep 1920. The account given to his son probably refers to the camp on the Isle of Man camp rather than to that of Oldcastle.

notes. His diary he had to burn or it would have been taken by the authorities when he was freed. It must have been a wonderful possession, better than the 'Jail Journal' [by John Mitchel] because more real and startling.

[*Newspaper cutting inserted:*]

Hindenburg's Challenge to the World.

President von Hindenburg has launched an appeal of the German nation to the world to open the archives of all countries to establish the full truth of the origin of the world war. 'We have published the secret documents of our past to establish the truth of the causes and beginning of the war. We expect an open answer from the whole world to this, our testimony,' said the President in his appeal.

March 1927

Sunday 6

Got over my 'flu providentially, and came to school only to find Dr. Scannell and 40 of the boys laid up with it. So work was deplorably slack during the week. Unfortunately the scare is over and everything is normal again. Got notice that music exam. is March 22nd in Rochelle School. *Me miserum!* [Woe is me] But I must 'screw my courage to the sticking point'²². Am training like a professional boxer. How I delight in thinking of the summer hols. when I will be exam-free and care-free! Went to Horgans' for dinner to-day. The house is full of interest, rich in books and pictures and things of art. Enjoyed a quiet rummage. Everything is lonely without Ivor and Joe. Mr. Horgan is a relic of the volunteer-days, and though an up-to-date business-man, he has got a good deal of old-world culture about him. He is one of the best-read men in Cork. Got 'Bartlett's Quotations' off him. It will be useful to the highest degree for comps [compositions].

March 1927

Sunday 13

Worked hard all the week. Am growing more nervous as the *dies fatalis* [fateful day] is approaching.

We were beaten again in a hurling-match. We are now so used to defeat that we took it quite stoically. But on the whole sporting of this kind is most demoralising. When our fellows are getting the upper hand we cheer and rejoice most exultantly, but when we are getting beaten we look on with black hatred in our hearts. Talk about the good moral effect

²² Lady Macbeth: 'But screw your courage to the sticking-place and we'll not fail' *Macbeth* Act 1, Sc. 7

of taking defeat with good grace is all rot. The 'grace' is only outward. Inwardly we always burn with fury. It is our nature.

For once my comp. on 'Nature Study' pleased Fr. Dalton. I brought into it a lot of Keats. I am resolved to go through a fine study course of reading during the summer hols., Ruskin, Carlyle, Keats and every good book I can lay hands on.

Played for Fr. Pat. He was delighted. Am growing more self-confident.

Am cursed with a furious blush which comes on whenever I grow in the least self-conscious. Nervousness, I suppose, but it is both awkward and disgusting.

Poor Joe Mangan came for tea. He was sent home a week ago by Col. Brase,²³ who did not seem to think him suitable for an army band. Joe had first thought to be a Doctor of Music and to practise here, but went to Dublin some months ago to train for bandmaster. Now he is stranded without Matric. and is taking to office-work. He told us that Brase is a tyrant, both feared and loved. He is starting a glorious symphony orchestra, possessing, besides the No. 1 Band, something like 60 violins etc.

Read in 'Seven Roman Statesmen' the doings of Crassus. He was what we would call here 'a hardy boy'. His amateur fire-brigade, his slave school, his knowledge of the citizens' names by which he gained popularity through his salutations, his public, hypocritical embrace of Pompey, all these make most interesting and to me amusing reading.

March 1927

Sunday 20

As the band was unable to attend, St Patrick's day service was performed with organ alone. The choir was singing gloriously when suddenly the organ stopped dead. Such a calamity. And that it should occur on that day of all days! Still the choir kept on and Mám accompanied²⁴ on second manual, foot-blown by man stationed outside. 'Jubilate deo'

²³ Colonel Fritz Brase (1875-1940), German bandmaster and composer in the service of the Kaiser, after the first world war music director of the Berlin police, in 1923 accepted the post of director of the newly founded Irish Army School of Music. He had a decisive influence on the musical life of Dublin. He established four military bands, and took the No. 1 Band on tours throughout Ireland. He organised schools concerts, founded the Dublin Symphony Orchestra, the Dublin Philharmonic Society, organised and conducted symphony concerts in Dublin, did extensive broadcasting. He became a Nazi sympathiser but as an Irish army officer, was not permitted to become involved in politics.

²⁴ Tilly Fleischmann had graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in Munich with organ as one of her two main subjects; she often played during major ceremonies at the cathedral, which allowed her husband to

created a real sensation, being a motet for many parts whose brilliance would appeal to everyone.

All the week got sudden attacks of nervousness on thinking of the exam. It is a mighty burden which oppresses me, and I seem to feel that I will never shake it off. If I get through it at all passably, I can imagine how radiant will be the days immediately after!

March 1927

Monday 21

Having worked all yesterday and the morning, went down to try piano at Rochelle School to-day. I was horribly nervous. Being shown into the room I started off and for Esposito studies the piano seemed alright. But for Field, Beethoven and Schumann it was almost impossible. It rattled like a tin can, and the base was almost dumb. In addition, to add to my embarrassment, troops of girls were pouring in every minute to look at some unfortunate caged bird. Went home in despair, which, however, finally died 'in his own too-much' [*Hamlet* I,7] and an incurable optimism set in. Worked especially at 'Irish Airs'.

March 1927

Tuesday 22

Dies fatalis! [the fateful day] Just because I was caring for my form I soon was the possessor of a hearty headache which tram-drives and a walk in the park did not dispel. Was not very nervous but expected the panic to come in reality when the time came. Was kindly driven by Fr. Pat, who came to-day and who actually offered up Mass for me, to Rochelle, and in I went to the torture-house. There was only one violinist entered for exam. as well as myself, and he had a fine noisy tittering audience outside while he was playing. They were gone, thank goodness, when I was called in. A Mr. Weaving of Dublin was examiner, a really courteous affable gentleman, who made everything very easy. Starting off with the Studies I laughed at myself at how cool I was. Evidently my nervousness was so exhausted by its constant use the week before that there was none of it left when the time came. Played Beethoven Sonata, Field Nocturne, Chopin Mazurka and Schumann Novelette, or bits of them, tolerably well, as I thought, despite the disadvantages of piano etc. Having read a piece at sight and played a few scales fairly well, I got a few lines to sing at sight. Then I

concentrate on the choir. During his internment and subsequent deportation to Germany (Jan 1916-Sep 1920) she officiated in his stead.

took down an air he played on the piano, which he evidently thought stiff, quite correctly, guessed cadences occurring in passages which he played (in which I cheated by watching his hands from behind) and wrote down rhythm of bits of poetry which he read aloud. Then came a disappointment, for having studied 'Irish Airs' until my head ached, transposing them to keys of 7 flats and sharps, and carefully learning the structures, he told me to write down any air I liked in the key I studied, and having written about two bars he said that that was sufficient. Forthwith, having opened the door for His Majesty, shown him the way out, and having done some egregious 'scraping', he was gone and it was all over! To think that it was for this I had been working for months, had been panic-stricken for weeks, and had made as much fuss both at home, in the ears of my friends and in my diary, it seemed incredible. Went home elevated that indeed I had come through passing well, and retold the great occurrences to family, Fr. Pat and Dr. Frend, who were for tea. Now I can eat my meals in peace and sleep without the affliction of the terrible dreams that shake me nightly. For truly it was a great battle against my lack of self-confidence and my imagination and I have come out quite victorious, whether by chance or not is another question.

Pupils' recital was at 8, and down we drove. The playing was simply glorious, especially Mary Hilser, who played a late and romantic sonata of Beethoven's and some Liszt, and Elsie Hilser who played a Ballade of Chopin's. It is extraordinary that such wonderful work should be received with indifference, comparatively speaking, and taken quite for granted. Drove Fr. Pat to Dunmanway, where I stayed till 5 as Fr. Pat was busy all day with a host of priests come for funeral of curate, Fr. O'Mahony, and to my shame I forgot my fare home, and hated asking for it. Had a strange experience on return, for an ex-Anglican minister, who now voyages around evidently a travelling comedian, and who is blind and deaf, and who, I am afraid, drinks and is a bit mad in addition, was unfortunately in my carriage, and by terrorising me with his awful appearance he made me learn by heart a speech I was to prepare for Dr. Scannell on the morrow, its purpose being that he should be invited again to Farran Ferris for a show. He then presented me with a prayer-book and fountain-pen, which, however he took back again saying he would post them to me. (They never did arrive). He then actually brought me home on a side-car, though I was of a mind to duck when he brought the jarvey into a public-house for a drink on the way. One could pity the poor fellow for his kind-heartedness and disreputableness.

March 1927

Sunday 27

Am '*ar mo cúilín teamhrach*' [in the clover], as we would say in Irish now that I have the weight of that infernal exam. off my mind. To-day chanced to pass a funeral on my way to cousin Arthur's, and was amazed to see that over 40 small sleek black-haired sallow oval-eyed Japs were following it. Their captain, the only tall one amongst them, stalked in front in black in a tall hat. Evidently they were the crew of a ship just come to port who had lost one of their number. The poor fellow was accidentally suffocated and they were interring him in Cork. Followed with great interest, and could not take my eyes off the little orientals. Expected that he would be buried with Buddhist or Shinto rites, but it was a Protestant clergyman officiated. There was an immense throng witnessed the affair, which was conducted with all the courtesy of the east, the members of the crew bowing sedately towards the coffin before they left, looking mournfully and silently on the remains of their comrade. How sad that he should be buried in a strange land so far from home!

March 1927

Monday 28

Went to St. Ita's²⁵ plays in Fr. Matthew Hall. 'Cinderella' in Irish was the first item, and I never saw such sweet fresh children who acted with grace and refinement. There were two little toddlers, barely five years old who, coming out, finding the situation very funny, burst out laughing and hid themselves behind huge baskets of daffodils scarcely less radiant than their own dimpled faces. The great Sophia distinguished herself really well as Macbeth. One could be surprised at the splendid figure she made and the atmosphere she created. Then followed French nursery songs, and these illustrated by the children from the tiniest to the tallest at first with lanterns in monks' garb, then as dainty little housewives made a picture which I will not easily forget. It was a veritable feast of charm and quaintness. Surely if the MacSwineys concentrated on their school and gave up politics, the latter [former] would be unparalleled for refinement and culture.

²⁵ St Ita's was the school founded by Mary and Annie MacSwiney, which opened in September 1916 after Mary had lost her job in St. Angela's school, having been arrested in class. Mary had taught the Swertz girls in the 1890s there, and remained friendly with the family. Aloys was sent to the school when it opened; his three daughters were pupils when it closed in 1954.

April 1927

Sunday 3

Am working at harmony for 1½ hours daily instead of piano, which I practise only on Sundays and Wednesdays. The Beethoven Variations in A flat give me great joy. Though, of course, constituting a quite different atmosphere, their strength and beauty remind me always of the freshness of Keats' Prologue to 'Endymion'.

One of the advantages of reaction is, I think, that it causes a whole variety of atmospheres. I know that I can colour different scenes in all sorts of ways, making them interested [interesting?] and exalted.

Mám's pupils repeated their recital of a few days ago at Horgans' this evening. They played splendidly, but their reception was cold. Evidently they were not fit objects for the hospitality of Mrs. Horgan's snobbery.²⁶ Mr. Horgan was really kind and enjoyed it immensely. Grayton Adams, a charming fellow lately come from India and a pupil of Mám's, and I had great sport, ambushing and bedecking a group of the artists on their way home with a deluge of leaves. Had interesting talk with Pope Mahony,²⁷ a brilliantly loquacious good-for-nothing of the University. He told me that Arthur Young visited the Mitchelstown caves, and scratched his name on one of the rocks there. I did not see it.

April 1927

Tuesday 12

On Tuesday swotted at History, Latin and English till my head ached, and till I was like Browning's Grammarian with 'eyes like lead, accents uncertain.' Then sat and shivered on Wed. for Latin 9-12. Comp. was easy, but trans. at sight stiff and history fierce, all about literature and the empire. With buzzing head scribbled my history paper 1.00-3.30 doing questions with note on restriction on Irish trade, their nature and repeal; naval power struggle between England and Bourbon powers 1715-1805; Napoleon's organisation of

²⁶ Aloys seems at times to have felt unwelcome in the Horgan house. Mrs. Horgan could have believed it was he who animated her two step-sons Ivor and Joe to escapades which may have led to complaints from the victims. He was certainly, to judge by his own accounts, at least a very willing partner in their rather wild activities. There will hardly have been any animosity against the family: John J. was extremely kind to Aloys senior after 1914, doing all he could to prevent his being interned. Both Mary Horgans were students of Tilly's and the second Mary Horgan did a B.Mus. in Cork with Aloys as her professor, graduating in 1944.

²⁷ Eoin ['Pope'] O'Mahony (1904-1970), a Cork barrister also called to the English Bar. He was a member of the Irish Georgian Society, Military History Society and the Knights of Malta. He was an enthusiastic genealogist; with a popular radio programme 'Meet the Clans'.

France; Prussia's transformation after Jena and Congress of Vienna. English Thursday 9-12. Wrote fair comp. on 'My favourite poet' taking Keats, but could have done much better. Questions on literature were fair, except one which required placing of passages; Irish and maths. followed. Papers were set outside, but on the whole were fair and interesting. And now a happiness! HOLS !!!

Will read Carlyle, Goldsmith and Johnson for English comp.

April 1927

Wednesday 13

Yesterday was the last [day] I could call myself 16. So ends a happy industrious year, happy in that I was always busy, and one of the happiest, I am sure, that I shall ever have. To-day I am 17; I hate to be getting so old. This next year will be an important one, and I must indeed work hard. But the summer hols. will be sweet in compensation. Celebrated with a fine tea but postponed general spread to Sunday on account of Lent. Got a fine racket from Mám and Páp, and a cake and book of Carlyle, 'Extracts', from Stockleys. Well contented! Well contented! Well contented!

April 1927

Monday 18

Spent each morning at harmony, modulation, musical history (Scholl's), Horace and Roman History, 'Slighe an Eolais' [The Paths of Knowledge], 'Aigne an Ghaedhil'²⁸ [The Proverbs of the Irish] and 'Ceart na Gaedhilge' [Irish Syntax], 'Hamlet', poetry and Joyce's big 'Irish History'. Unfortunately the programme generally dragged out after dinner so that I have read only Oman's 'Seven Roman Statesmen'. I love the spirit and atmosphere of Holy Week. Went to morning services and *tenebrae* each evening and found the choir glorious. The 'Jerusalem' and the 'Miserere' are so solemn, so festive and so reminiscent of the Passion. On Sat. went to Betty, and had a good ride on the pony. But then was pressed to go to the pictures, and though Lent was over at 12, I hated myself for having gone. Easter Sunday was celebrated in the Cathedral with Huber's Mass, assisted by a band. The clear, devotional music is haunting me still. 'Terra tremuit' was also performed, one of Páp's compositions and dedicated to Canon Michael [O'Sullivan]. It is evidently a fine work and

²⁸ The title of the book is actually *Eagna an Ghaedhil*, The Wisdom of the Irish, by Cormac Ó Cadhlaigh. It is a collection of proverbs. Thanks to Liam and Mine MacCóil for this information.

went well, but he did not give himself enough trouble with it. I am really sorry that Holy Week is over. It is the last of my school-days. Will be playing organ myself next year. Probably.

April 1927

Tuesday 19

Went Easter Monday for a glorious picnic to Oysterhaven, near Kinsale, in Father [Pat]'s car. Have taken a charming cottage there for July. It is lonely, has wonderful scenery around and we will have a boat, so I am looking forward to a retired, happy time there.

April 1927

Sunday 24²⁹

Had a fine week, and, what's more important, swotted a lot. Have given up Carlyle as a bad job, and taken to Chesterton, also seems to me to be good for comp. At any rate, he does away with platitudes. On Tues. drove Fr. Pat to Dunmanway, and remained there two days. Was engaged in studying, reading and mountain climbing. There were interesting funerals and auctions. Mám and Páp came down and we drove to Glengarriff, going then by motor boat to Garnish, Mrs Bryce's island. I never saw anything so beautiful. If one had the least bit of culture, there it would have to blossom. Tropical plants grow in abundance in wonderfully planned gardens. There is an Italian pavilion filled with specimens of sculptures etc. with pillars in front, flights of steps, a fountain and square pond. In another portion is a magnificent ascent to a mediaeval tower, a remnant of a fortress which would remind one of Horace *dum Capitoletum scandet* [climbing the Capitol] etc.³⁰ To crown all, the magnificent sea and mountain scenery on all sides! We were in Cork at 12 and Fr. Pat and I left at 6 for Dunmanway. Came home by 1 [o'clock] train, having learnt and enjoyed Shelley's glorious 'Ode to the West Wind'.

Hopes were held out of Mám becoming accompanist to broadcasting station here, but discarded as she is alien.³¹ It would mean £300 extra a year, but nevertheless I am glad she

²⁹ April 24 was Fleischmann senior's 47th birthday – maybe that was the occasion for the outing to Dunmanway.

³⁰ Horace *Odes* Book III, Exegi monumentum aere perennius, line 30.

³¹ Tilly Fleischmann was born in Cork, so was a British subject, though both parents were German. She probably took on her husband's German nationality on her marriage in Dachau in 1906. The Irish broadcasting service opened on Jan 1 1926, known as Dublin 2RN. It could only serve the area around Dublin having but 1 kw; it operated from 7.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m., had a staff of 4 and an 'orchestra' of piano, violin, viola and cello. On 26 April 1927 a station was opened in Cork with 1.5 kw, known as 6CK. Seán Neeson was the director; his

is not getting it, and she is too, as it were. Low for her high classical position. Mr. Neeson, however, as director, will get her engagements all over England soon, so that will be much better.

Miss O'Brien has arrived home suddenly as Fr. O'Brien³² is very ill and she has not come to us or any of her friends. Very strange!

May 1927

Sunday 1

Back again, 'with eyes like lead, accents uncertain.' Got first in History, English, Latin and Maths and second in Irish, but I am not satisfied. It was by too small a margin in each case and in my English comp. I went down hopelessly, getting only 54, while another fellow got 72. Still I pulled up. We have only 6 weeks, and got an enormous amount of work to get through. Saw 'Jean Geste', an excellent picture, devoid of the usual sentimental piffle, though melodramatic still didactic and tragic, and giving a good idea of sandy Morocco and the French Foreign Legions.

Establishment of I.W.S., 'The Illustrious Watercress Society,' J. Lynch as President. Every day three of us break bounds at lunch, gather bunches of watercress in a stream some fields away from school. Then we repair to a secret nook and munch the green stuff with bread we carry with us. It is excellent eating and fun and most poetic. Some of the other fellows are allowed into the secret.

May 1927

Friday 6

8th Friday³³ Actually forgot all about it with Páp's concert in Bantry. Must begin all over again! Nothing like perseverance.

wife Geraldine became station accompanist – the circumstances are described in her autobiography *In My Mind's Eye: The Cork I Knew and Loved*, Dublin 2001, page 111, where she gives an amusing account of the station's activities. It was closed down in 1930 for 'economic reasons'. In 1933 a station with 100 kw opened in the middle of the country, in Athlone.

³² Fr. William O'Brien (1889-1927), Jane O'Brien's brother, was a curate in the Cathedral of St Mary and St Anne in Cork. He was born in Cork, and ordained in the Irish College of Rome in 1912. He was renowned in his parish work for his ability to resolve family strife. (See Cathedral website, section: Priests who served in this parish) His family were Cork wool millers. He died of tuberculosis, aged 38.

³³ The 8th of the 9 First Fridays on which Aloys went to Mass before school.

May 1927

Sunday 8

Sad dissolution of the I.W.S.! At a meeting the two fellows told me that one being a prefect and both seniors their conscience was smiting them at giving bad example. Accordingly I am now President, and will not let the Society down! I have luxurious feasting every day, the while I swot History or English. Solitude and watercress are even more inspiring.

Went to 'Richard II', 'Hamlet' and 'Othello' performances by Cork Shakespearean Society under Fr. O'Flynn. It is really amazing what wonderful work he is doing. I was sceptical, but was astonished at what I saw. The costumes are magnificent, scenery very fine, and court scenes full (so missing in Doran³⁴). These were advantages, but the principal actors themselves were excellent. There's a tall fellow named Stack³⁵ who takes kings' and villains' parts and he is really wonderful in his versatility, his impressive voice and elocution and his realistic mannerisms. I enjoyed these three plays immensely, but am dead tired after them, and distracted from work. In addition our beautiful Madge has run off to England, being pursued by the insurance company, and we have a temporary. But I must get to work!

May 1927

Sunday 15

School, meals, cram. Cram, school, meals. Meals, cram, school.

Mám broadcast last evening from Dublin the Moonlight Sonata, and a Waltz and Scherzo by Chopin. Listened in at Mr. Corkery's. The Moonlight did not come out very distinctly; it was spoiled by annoying atmospherics, but the Chopin was great and very distinct. I was very proud of Mám. She will not be back till Mon. or Tues.

Sprained my little finger, and can barely write. My mind is swot-weary.

³⁴ Charles Doran (1877-1964), a celebrated Shakespearean actor and company director, who began his career in Belfast.

³⁵ James Stack, a bass in the Cathedral choir, leading member of Fr. O'Flynn's Shakespearean Company who later founded his own company. He was a founding member of the Cork Little Theatre Society, and taught speech and drama in the Cork School of Music, putting on productions regularly in the Cork Opera House.

May 1927

Sunday 22

Col. Brase has been in Cork this week, and has done nothing but talk about himself. There's a certain *naiveté* about him, and he can be very charming, despite his Prussian ruthlessness.

To-day a tenor from London, Mr. Collison, who is singing at the Cork station to-night, came for tea. He is a charming fellow, a real Bohemian, with black slouch hat and large green coat, just as though fresh from the Latin quarter in Paris. He sang very beautifully. Had a great time up at the Station, which is the old Women's Gaol, inspecting the different control rooms, watching the bats flying around the cells, and listening in with loud speakers [headphones?]. Then came Páp's choir. They sang 'Tenebrae factae sunt', 'Ave Crux', Allegri's 'Miserere' and 'Jubilate deo' simply gloriously, and it came out splendidly. Everyone was delighted and he got telegrams of congratulations. Home at 12.

Now for study. No more outings till after exams.

June 1927

Friday 24

Tandem, tandem libertas! [at last, at last freedom] The last six weeks are a blur of machine-like swotting unceasing, all working up to a great climax. The Sunday before my exams. turned over for Mám at broadcasting station. She played Debussy's 'Jardins sous la pluie' and the 'Liebestraum' and 'St. Francis Preaching to the Birds' very wonderfully indeed. Then swotted two books of notes, 4 Shakespeare plays, all poems we have done, together with copious Latin notes, trans. at sight and Roman history. This was for Tuesday. Had English first; comp.: 'Pride and Prejudice', which I didn't do too badly. The literature, however, was terrible. Could place only one of the 10 bits of poetry. Latin was delightful, though I made some bad slips. History dealt with was Augustus and Horace. All our papers were taken from us. Swotted up all the history we ever did and entered for exam. on Thursday 'with eyes like lead, accents uncertain' and a 'bullabasheen' [whirligig] in my head. Paper was ridiculously easy. I wrote, unintelligibly [illegibly?] almost, reams of foolscap, but rather quantity than quality. Had a great feed after, and relaxed a bit, but started off then for Irish on Monday, and Latin comp. Irish was really nasty, and didn't do very well. Wrote in free Latin comp. on 'Mens sana in corpore sano' [A healthy mind in a

healthy body], which I found very stiff. Then started off for German on Thursday, which was, however, held in Christian [Brothers'] College. It is dramatic irony that I should have ended up all the same in Christians.³⁶ Wrote comp. in German on 'Die Deutschen in der Kultgeschichte' [The Germans in Cultural History]. There were three bits of Goethe for trans. at sight – very easy too. But then there was a summary to be made of a most intricate passage about films and pictures and in this and the grammar I made slips. Lastly wrote on 'Torquato Tasso'. So was 'the great quell' [i.e. torture, slaughter - *Macbeth* 1,7] ended. I felt and feel splendid in spite of all my swotting, though other stronger fellows were bowled over. But then I had thought that these exams were a high mountain and in the sky overhanging it I saw reflected a land of dreamy hazy sunshine, perfect happiness, which would be mine when the great barrier was surmounted. But I forgot Mr. Monster Reaction. And now I feel as though I have achieved something, but have nothing in the wide world to aim at or work for [any] more. Yet I will do a great course of reading and music with God's help during the hols. and I must still do a little for autumn Maths. Matric.

Dr. Scannell entered me for a County Council scholarship for which I filled up divers forms and trembled. After all his exertions, however, he got a letter saying that I was disqualified and it was in the paper about my being so 'owing to the extent of his parents' means.' But still I await the results with trepidation especially as I am daily remembering new mistakes I made.

I forgot to mention Music, my first exam. I had only an hour and a half, and the paper was extremely difficult, especially the melody for analysis. And my detailed period of Bach and Händel was not asked for at all. Still got through somehow.

Had some sport boating with Joe Horgan. Ivor is doing Matric. and has turned out rather a disappointing beau.

We were at Prof. Sullivan's to-day, Sunday, and had nice eating and nice talking, wireless, motor drive, home. I am reading 'Pickwick Papers', writing letters, tidying up my books and completely re-arranging, but that is all. We are going to Oysterhaven on Friday. Until then

AU REVOIR

[Signature:]

Scribble

³⁶ He had been to school at the Christian Brothers' College for some years after leaving St. Ita's.

July 1927

Sunday 3

Feel very weary after the year's cramming. It leaves one hopelessly adrift. I had thought to end my troubles with the exams, but the latter being finished, new and vaguer ones have arisen. Slummed all the week, going to Horgans' and a tennis party at Sullivans', and tidying and arranging all my old books. On Friday we decamped. The lorry, being only three hours late, we were involved in a very slight mess, but everything finally came right. The house is charming. There are wonderful cliffs, headlands, caves all around, complete solitude on the hills. Have at last commenced work, doing Maths. (for Matric.), exercises in Harmony, keeping up Latin with reading Horace's Epodes and 'Noctes Latinae', a collection of short stories, studying a sound book of German compositions and reading an excellent historical-atmospherical novel 'Der junge Beethoven'³⁷ [The Young Beethoven] and finally reading and nearly finishing the good, the old, the true, the never-fading and ever-appealing 'Pickwick Papers'. Have two (with the intention of three) swims a day, and am training like a prize-boxer by doing long runs and going [for] long walks. On the whole it is an ideal place, and we are having an ideal holiday, for 'Es bildet ein Talent sich in dieser Stille, sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt.'³⁸ [Talent is formed in quiet places, character in the current of the world.]

July 1927

Sunday 10

Am having a glorious time, but sadly neglecting studies, English reading especially. We have a boat to ourselves and go fishing every evening passing by the lovely and majestic Sovereign Islands, and the forbidding heights of the Doon. In our walks, too, around the cliffs, where there is no vestige of human life except for the cruel and mocking cormorants and gulls, one wonders how it is that men can live so unconcernedly when great parts of the land around them are so mysteriously awful, giving no hope or shelter or joy, but only a vague fear and dread of what eternity both past and present means. Assuredly this is one of the most sublime places in Ireland. It is very difficult to think anything but big thoughts in the presence of these towering heights, and when big thoughts are not forthcoming, one must be silent.

³⁷ Ludwig Schieder-mair, *Der junge Beethoven*, Leipzig 1925

³⁸ Goethe, *Torquato Tasso*. Aloys writes this in the old Sütterlin German handwriting.

Fr. Pat and Miss Crowley of Bantry are staying with us. We have caught seven pollock in two nights fishing – not bad. Have finished ‘The Pickwick Papers’. It is really a lovable, amiable book, but I am afraid I cannot enjoy Dickens so much as I used to. The characters of Sam Weller and Joe, the fat boy, are intensely amusing but after all, unreal. Of course, the question then arises whether any characters in books are real, for if they were real and ordinary, they might not be interesting.

July 1927

Sunday 17

Had a glorious week. Every evening we all went fishing, for Páp, who formerly inveighed against its cruelty, has turned out a passionate lover of the sport. Each time we went out we saw seals on our way homewards which lifted first their snouts and then their flat, steel-like heads out of the water and continued to gaze at us with indignation mixed with curiosity. They followed us in for a great distance, evidently attracted by the musical row we made. They are weird yet stately animals in the water.

Have at length finished ‘Der junge Beethoven’. I found it wonderfully interesting, giving an insight into the seemingly true atmosphere of the master’s life. It combines the attractions of a novel and a historical biography. Now indeed I will appreciate Beethoven’s music far more, because to know a composer’s life-story must assuredly increase for us the personality of his music. Enough highfallutin’! I am getting fed up of this infernal diary.

July 1927

Sunday 24

Went again to Dunmanway on Sat. evening with Father Pat – to drive and keep house for him. The weather has not been good and has been too stormy to do much fishing. We have explored some of the coast to the east, particularly Reanie’s Glen. The latter is a wonderful place. A ravine passes steeply to the sea, and reaches a dark cove studded with two precipitous islands. Caves and cliffs glower around, and the sight of some seals swimming in the shadow increases the mystery of the place. On the right of the ravine several battlemented walls stretch across the hill, and on top are the ruins of a very old dwelling sadly mortified by the attachment of a very new one. It was here we had a picnic and here we learnt of the far-famed and celebrated Patsy Quin, to whom, like the prince in the fairy tale, the adjoining country seems to belong. He owns 650 acres, and made over £10,000

during the war, but lives, acts, speaks and dresses like the peasant-labourer. It's a sad and frequent story that such men will not educate their children, get them a little out of the rustic rut and establish thus a national gentry.

When we came back [to Oysterhaven] from Dunmanway on Sunday we found the illustrious Horgans awaiting us with their Fiat de Luxe. There were no preliminaries, we simply dived into the boat and dived out and swam. Joe and I then explored the hinterland of the marshy lake near our house. Dinner was most successful. After we all went to the aforementioned Reanie's and on the way home there was an exciting race with vociferous cheering and language not altogether choice between the Fiat and Fr. Pat's Lizzie, I driving the latter and assisted by the goads and remarks caustic of Ivor and Joe. They went and we did too – fishing. We got the luckiest haul of all, three big pollock and a super one about 5 lbs, near the Little Island outside the Doon we got them all. The pull home was terrible owing to a stiff breeze.

July 1927

Sunday 31

Went on a wonderful picnic to Reanie's Glen, or rather, Man of War Cove. Again a narrow ravine with an old ruin near the beach and cliffs with some formidable caves on either side. An oil-ship, the 'Elsaro', torpedoed during the war, and driven ashore during a storm, lies right across the entrance to the cove, its plates larded and rived by the waves and portions of it protruding above the water in the form of iron cormorants and seals. There are great numbers of the latter all around the coast, and we had just been watching one of them swimming in front of us when a party arrived from Cork with air-guns, hooks, a collapsible boat and all things necessary for killing and skinning one of these unfortunate creatures. Since their intent was thus murderous and their manners coarse, we left.

Have finished all about Johnson, and found his writing far more pleasant than I had thought, especially 'Rasselas and the Rambler'. Of course his sentences are too obviously balanced and prove wearisome. But it is an education to read him and of him.

Have ended 'Der junge Beethoven' long ago and found it one of the most moving things I ever read. Am now at Chesterton's 'The Everlasting Man' That is the book for anyone who wishes to be armed against atheists and enemies of religion. It brings one into touch with various philosophies, strengthens always one's faith in the church as unique and true

and shows how other creeds, that is those outside the wavering line of Christianity, are more in the nature of civilisations and philosophies than religions.

Had a struggle but finally prevailed on Mám to pay off old debts by inviting Betty for two days. Her ladyship came, her manner cheerful, her ideas negligible, her outlook worst. But I succeeded in entertaining her, and she is gone and it is over. Made a shrimping-net, but never went shrimping. Went to Dunmanway as usual with Fr. Pat.

August 1927

Sunday 7

Went to Kinsale Regatta and saw some yacht racing. Explored the Dún Chionn tSáile, a wonderful fort, probably 300 or 400 years old. It is an immense quadrangle with walls of extraordinary thickness and massive outworks. The interior is disfigured by a town of modern barracks, burnt and ugly, but the outer, older buildings are intact. We got in, though the place is shut and explored some of the dark passages leading to musty cells or roomy halls. A place of mystery and imagination.

On Sunday, while our things were thundering to Cork [in a lorry] we made a pleasant excursion to the Old Head and took photos. Then we motored – home! I could scarcely believe any change had taken place till there I was, dumped amidst the ruins of last year's work and the plans of the next, with the Doon and boating and bathing and fishing things of the past. For I had been living in a careless dream, thinking of the future, and letting present pleasures slip. Now we are at home to work; the summer is gone, the summer which was to be the consummation of the year's freeing glory. However, there is satisfaction in solid work, and perhaps some solid pleasure like swimming.

A telegram awaited us at home – poor old grandfather in Philadelphia is dead. What a life was his, full of self-inflicted rigour and sternness, for he was a man of iron will and commanding presence. And to think, as we were told in a letter, that a few days before his death, when he himself knew his end was a matter of hours, he rose and played in his church for a funeral! How those solemn chords must have vibrated and echoed in his heart; he felt he was presiding at his own burial service. The loneliness and terror of it! Poor Mám and Nannie and all the family were terribly upset.³⁹

³⁹ Aloys had never met his grandfather, Hans Conrad Swertz (1857-1927) who left Cork in 1906 to take up a post as organist in Philadelphia, where he was joined by his sons Franz Xaver (1885-1951) and Ferdinand

And to add to the general depression we heard on Friday of poor Fr. Willie O'Brien's sad death. A young fresh priest, a household word for never ending humour, ever glorying in some new tale of Shandon Street,⁴⁰ beloved by whole Blackpool, and by all who came in contact with him, so irresistible was he. And here he pined away for four long weeks and has suddenly vanished. He was brought into the church Sunday evening, and indeed the procession and whole carrying out was shamefully *schlampig* [sloppy, careless]. But better so; if it had been otherwise the grief would have been too great, too unbearable. To me his person is gone, but his personality lives, untouched in my mind as if he was before me, and the many pleasant hours I spent in his room since childhood and his gaiety I enjoyed so much.

[In large writing at the end, but crossed out:]

THINGS TO LEARN

Criticism is an art by which men grow

[Inserted here is a large newspaper photo captioned: Mr. John McCormack and his 'pals'

On the next page a small cutting with photo and the heading: Oldest ruler in the world dead

Under the photo: King Sisowath of Cambodia, whose death is announced. He was born at Bangkok in August, 1840. Cambodia is part of French Indo-China, south of Siam. King Sisowath represents an ancient line, the Kings of the Khemers, which stretch back to about A.D.500.]

August 1927

Sunday 14

Julia⁴¹ was home from London on hols. so I took her to the pictures. The late Rudolph Valentino, of world-wide renown, was 'starring' in the first show. He is extremely handsome, but that is all. He makes the impression of playing the scornful-heroic-unmoved about nothing. But the comedy 'Behind the Front',⁴² showing the light side of the man, was excellent. I laughed till I ached.

(1887-1933) some years later. They were both with him when he died, and wrote to the family about his passing. Nannie (in German a term similar to 'Granny') is Hans Conrad's wife, Walburga Swertz née Rössler (1854-1945), Aloys' grandmother.

⁴⁰ Shandon Street leads up from the River Lee to the Cathedral, one of the old streets of Cork, housing many of this impoverished, spirited, highly entertaining community, people celebrated by Fr. Christie O'Flynn, another Cathedral parish curate, in his stage impersonations.

⁴¹ Julia Lynch, a former housekeeper, who often wrote to Aloys from London, sending him stamps for his collection.

⁴² Could not find a reference to this film; perhaps he meant 'Beyond the Rocks' of 1922.

Not one of my friends or rather acquaintances (for I haven't one real friend) are here. So I have nothing to do but work all the morning and after tea, while I take a walk into the country oftentimes with my book, scale a tree and there perched read. I have finished 'The Everlasting Man'. It is not a book one can honestly enjoy; it is one which one reads because one knows it is good to read. And it is good; my belief in our religion has been considerably strengthened by Chesterton's brilliant reasoning. His paradoxes and quaint sayings are extremely amusing: 'Important enough to be ignored', 'Undoubtedly the Church has many times gone to the dogs. But in each case it was the dog that died.' The chapter 'The Witness of the Heretics' is fine. I know I have gained in logic and in general knowledge by reading it. Have started Merejovsky's 'The Forerunner' about da Vinci. It promises to be great.

Went to 'Lilac Time' a comedy of Schubert's, a Romance with Schubert's music, having been invited by Betty. It certainly does one good to hear things like that occasionally. It freshened me up and gave me new ideas. It is a charming play but still does not give as quite a good idea of the composer's music as I expected.

August 1927

Sunday 21

Saw with a start in the paper that I got four firsts [in Ireland] in my exams: Latin, History, German, Music. There was a great puff about it in the paper, which I read in the train on our way to Bandon to meet Father Pat. But it transpired that another fellow, before unmentioned, tied with me for first place in history. Then again the next day, Dr. Scannell advertised the schools' success and gave my place as second in Latin.⁴³ So the laurels are rapidly being plucked away – not that they are worth nothing anyhow. For I know well myself what an old fraud first in Ireland is, and that it means only a bit of work. Got several nice letters of congrats. We had a fine picnic at Reanie's Glen with Fr. Pat on before-mentioned day. We saw a dead seal on the beach and gazed with great interest on his flat dog-like head with snout and whiskers, his fat body and smooth fur, his small legs, if they might be called so, and his fan-like flappers.

I simply devoured 'The Forerunner' for the most part of the day. It is entrancing, so rich and full of colour.

⁴³ This student actually came second, but as he did his Latin paper through Irish, he got a 10% bonus, thereby getting ahead of Fleischmann.

Páp came from Horgans' to tell me Ivor was staying alone at Lacaduv and wished me to come to him, so Dr. Scannell, who came accidentally, drove me there very late. Heard some good music on Sunday, Beethoven and Mozart Concertos and No 5 Symphony in C minor. Went home late to find Fr. Frank McCarthy recounting holiday experiences.

August 1927

Sunday 28

Stayed again at Horgans' for a few days. Spent time in playing the pianola, reading on the piano and enjoying the 'Forerunner'. The pianola may be a wonderful invention, but no matter how much it may be improved it will always be mechanical and lifeless. Played a Bach fugue on it and it was hopeless: Jazz suits it best showing thereby that heart is not wanted for jazz. Read the old 'Kinderszenen' [Schumann's 'Scenes from Childhood' for piano] I loved so much, I suppose six years ago now. Old memories! Heard Sir Henry Wood broadcasting a promenade concert, chiefly Wagner. It was very fine. I heard one of the concerts when I was in London about 1922.

Went home on Thurs and shook off feeling of disquiet and vagrancy by working hard. Went after to Murphys' for tennis and a really nice time, having good exercise. There is much refinement about that family, while they are all merry and even modern at the same time.

Mám went off this morning for London via Dublin. She will stay with Uncle Hans⁴⁴ and on Tues. will play at the audition preliminary to getting a broadcasting engagement. But she is always so nervous, one never knows what will happen, though she always pulls through all the same in fine style.

Páp played me a lot of his works. Though I cannot understand many, there are some which I do understand and find really wonderful. 'An die Nacht' seems to me a masterpiece.⁴⁵ I cannot weary of its beauty.

⁴⁴ Uncle Hans: Conrad Anton Swertz (1884-1949). He studied medicine in UCC, graduating in 1907; then worked for five years in Trinidad. When the first world war began in 1914, he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. He suffered gas poisoning during the war but survived. He married in 1919 and practised from then on in London.

⁴⁵ 'An die Nacht', written in March 1910, was one of the three songs published by Augener in 1929. It was inspired by a painting of the Fleischmanns' friend Richard Pfeiffer and sent to Tilly Fleischmann for her name-day when she was in Munich awaiting the birth of her child.

Then he told me the history of the 'Mystery Plays', which he wrote at the age of 25. They were an extraordinary success. Only artists took part in them, and all Munich, together with people from far and wide came to hear them. For three years he gave them, and was then offered by a Berlin firm their production and publication. But he wouldn't have it, and unfortunately left for Ireland. That was the end, but will, please God, not be the end.

Went to Betty and had fairly good evening. But there is nothing in common between us. I must made a breach and drift slowly apart.

September 1927

Sunday 4

On Mám's departure for London, I left for Dunmanway, having the day before been to Horgans' where had an exciting [boating] row with Ivor and Joe. Brought many books to the country but didn't do much. Spent most of the time swimming in the river and rabbiting in the course of which I had some fine chases, running once full 'pelt' in my excitement into a barbed-wire fence.

Made two enjoyable excursions to Castlefreak, a wonderful south west Cork spot of typical English scenery. The imposing castle of the Lords of Carbery we visited, a magnificent mansion deserted, of course, by its owners, a story which is repeated in every part of the country. Also visited the Carbery Cross, Celtic and a very wonderful piece of work.

Also went to Glandore where the mackerel were breaking around me as I swam. Had tea in a mysterious half-decadent half-fashionable hotel run by an old blind lady.

September 1927

Monday 5

Finished 'The Forerunner'. It is certainly the finest book I have read for it has opened to me the whole key of the Renaissance. The mystery of Leonardo is entrancing; his life is a lesson to all, especially to artists, in that it gives an idea, strong though undefined, of the glorious paths to be taken in the search of the beautiful, paths only accessible to genius and labour, and even then full of doubt and mystery. And from that path which he chose and which indeed seemed to him in the end to be an infinite one and unpassable by mortals, there shines the bright light of his calm though wearied spirit on all posterity.

This is a jumble of half-experienced ideas but from the whole book I have had one great lesson: enough of this dallying and postponing, these idle fruitless goings around, but down TO WORK!

September 1927

Tuesday 6

Found Mám at home with great news. Her stay in London was more than successful; she played so well at the audition that she was pleased herself, a very rare occurrence, was not asked to play through programme, but was dismissed with evident manifestations of delight by the auditors. The date of engagement is not yet fixed.

And more great news! Augener have offered to publish Páp's works free! So at last these wonderful things will come to light. But we must wait.

September 1927

Sunday 11

Went to Murphys' again. There's nothing like good healthy exercise with pleasant companions and amid an atmosphere tinged with culture. But Natalie and the tennis season are both departing, so I must look elsewhere for after-dinner recreation. My latest plan is to take a book, walk a few miles into the country and enjoy a read and fresh air. Am studying Ruskin's 'Cézanne' at present. I enjoy every word of it. It is so mellow and has at the same time such a ring of true educated steel.

Went to a picture 'Christus'. I find the theme impossible on the cinematograph. One is shocked to see Our Blessed Lord himself opposite us, portrayed by a fathomable character which we can justly criticise. The whole setting, to be reverential and impressive, should be in distant majestic tone, perhaps in an atmosphere such as that of the old Byzantine painting.

September 1927

Sunday 18

Went up nervously to the University for Matric Maths. and took my seat amidst fellows who, if they be taken to represent the college type, don't augur well for that. There are a few conceited snobs and a lot of 'hardy boys'. The papers were not too stiff. I hope I got through.

Went to Jules Verne's 'Michael Strogoff'. Thought the film excellent if there hadn't been so much love-story and melo-dramatism. The Tartars were fine, and with a mild bit of Oriental music one got a real whiff of the East.

Spent a pleasant and wet day at O'Shaughnessy's historic old castle, that of Dripsey, was told weird stories of the Colthursts, an old Cromwellian family who have lived around there for 300 years. Deaths and apparitions and murders.

September 1927

Monday 26

Went to see 'Metropolis'. Thought it wonderful. Had a fierce argument, with Mám on my side against Fr. Pat and Páp, who said it was unconnected and meaningless. We maintained that without the light and misplaced love-story which they declaimed against, the horror of endless and furious machinery, worked by mechanical and slavish men, would be unbearable. We had the best of the argument.

Had Sophia Stockley on our hands on Sunday, as Páp and [her] mother are still in Foynes [probably adjudicating at a Feis]. It would be hard to say Sophia talks more than anyone in all Venice; it is like seeking a grain of chaff in a bushel of wheat to discover her meaning; and when that is found it is not worth the finding, [paraphrased from *The Merchant of Venice*, I,1] yet there would be some truth in it.

October 1927

Sunday 2

Was sent for by Dr. Scannell to hurriedly get my photo taken and appeared in 'Examiner' some time after with a scholarship-senior, Costigan. It was a hideous likeness, much to my mortification. Then he had the kindness to take us for a day and a half to Bantry in his car. We had a great time, driving and eating for most of the time. Stayed over-night with good old Canon Murphy. Served the Doctor's Mass at the Convent. The first time in my life. Was nervous and made stupid mistakes.

Terrible discussions, doubt, procrastinations and hesitations as to whether I shall go for B.Mus. or B.A. or both, and as to which I shall take my doctor in: N.U.I., Trinity or Oxford. Went to see Prof. O'Rahilly, the Registrar, a friend of Páp's, and after a long talk he decided that it was best for me to go for First Arts at any rate. So went away satisfied, but got afterwards more unconvinced than ever. Mr. Neeson advocated B.A. without B.Mus. in

College at all. Mám for B.Mus. without B.A. at all. So where am I myself? Prof. Lacy⁴⁶ gave best advice of all: B.Mus. alone for 3 years and then take B.A. the year after! That's what I will do if it is possible.

Have begun organ-practice and pedalling. Finished selections from Ruskin. Have profited immensely by the clear sensuous language and reasoning. Began 'As you like it'.

October 1927

Sunday 9

A week of idleness and misery! Suddenly got the idea, one night when I could not sleep, that I was getting St. Vitus dance,⁴⁷ and immediately my unfortunate head began jumping nervously. Got up with aching brains in the morning and was twitching badly. Perspired with the terror of it, but said nothing and took a lonely and nervous walk to Blackrock. As it continued for some days and I was as bad as ever, so went to the Dr. who gave me an excellent sermon on over-work and nervous imagination resulting therefrom. Went home cured and now can rejoice again in the delights of ordinary life and blessed work. But it was a well-timed lesson!

Saw the officials of the Coll[ege] and am taking

Music: Professor Lacy

Arts:

Latin:	Professor Porter
English	Professor Stockley
German	Professor Curran
Logic	Dr. Fitzgibbon

Am very important in new gown and dignity, though dissatisfied in not having yet made even an acquaintance. Am too busy to write diary properly.

⁴⁶ Prof. Frederick St. John Lacy (1852-1935), composer, singer, teacher of singing, lecturer in music at University College Cork 1906-1909, professor 1909-1934. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and was a prolific and successful composer. The music department in Cork was very small, producing but five music graduates during his time. Aloys was the third of these, receiving from Lacy a thorough training in the craft of composition.

⁴⁷ St. Vitus dance, Sydenham's Chorea, can accompany rheumatic fever in children, and involve convulsive movements and behavioural abnormalities.

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