

Kilkenny People June 10<sup>th</sup> 1916.

**HOW COLBERT DIED  
LIPS MOVING IN PRAYER.  
PRIEST TELLS PATHETIC STORY.**

- The following letter appeared in the "Evening Herald" on Thursday, June 1

Dublin, June 1 1916.

Dear Sir—In last evening's issue of your paper, towards the end of the second news column of the front page, under the heading, "Last Moments of Volunteer Leader, it is stated that Mr. Cornelius Colbert " died joking the men who were preparing him for death." It is also asserted that when one of the soldiers was fixing the white cloth on his breast, to indicate his heart, he told them "his heart was far away at the moment."

This version is quite inaccurate and fanciful, and I owe it to his memory to give the true one.

There was no joking, not even the semblance of it. Poor Colbert was far too beautiful and too reverent a character to joke with anyone in such a solemn hour. I know very well where his heart was then. It was very near to God and to the friends he loved. What really happened was this. While my left arm linked the prisoner's right, and while I was whispering something in his ear, a soldier approached to fix a bit of paper on his breast. While this was being done he looked down, and addressing the soldier in a perfectly cool and natural way said: "Wouldn't it be better to pin it up higher —nearer the heart?" The soldier said something in reply, and then added: — "Give me your hand now." The Prisoner seemed confused and extended [his left hand.] "Not that" said the soldier, "but the right." The right was accordingly extended, and, having shaken it warmly, the kindly human-hearted soldier proceeded to gently bind the prisoner's hands behind his back, and afterwards blindfolded him.

Some minutes later, my arm still linked in his, and accompanied by another priest, we entered the dark corridor leading to the yard and, his lips moving in prayer, the brave lad went forth to die.

F. A.

*Con Colbert, Michael Mallin, Eamonn Ceannt and Sean Heuston were all executed on the morning of May 8<sup>th</sup> 1916. The above letter is by Father Augustine who along with Father Albert attended the prisoners that morning.*