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KHAKITE ORATORY

ON last Saturday night I was passing down College Green with a friend, when a crowd in Foster Place attracted our attention. Suddenly I remembered that a recruiting meeting had been announced to take place there, and asked my companion to come down and listen for a while to the "Death or Glory" orators. He was not unwilling; and in a few minutes we were part and parcel of the crowd of listeners, who on the whole did not seem to be particularly enthusiastic in taking up the rather trite and worn arguments addressed to them. But they seemed to settle down for some mild amusement when the "treading on air" elocutionist, Professor Edmund Burke, B.A., was announced. The Professor, who is fat and elderly, belongs to the elocutionary era of our grandfathers, when the mouthing of words, accompanied by appropriate marionette gestures was regarded as our acme of "fine speaking." I should imagine that the Professor is the sole survivor of this school, and as a curio, a remnant of a long past period, he, perhaps, possesses a certain antiquarian interest. But his place after all is in a museum; and when I say that the matter of his speeches is thoroughly in keeping with his manner, you will have some idea of the value of his oratory.

His great argument, for example, that Ireland is vitally concerned in the present war he adduced from the fact that "Tipperary" was the marching song of the British troops. And then he proceeded to praise gallant little Belgium, and said that he never met a Belgian refugee in the streets without taking off his hat to him whereupon a "voice" in the crowd was heard asking why those gallant Belgians

"were not at the front." To which pertinent query the Professor wittily and resourcefully responded by asking why the "voice" was not at the front. To which, by the way, no answer was vouchsafed, and the last of his school sat down.

He was succeeded by Lieutenant Maurice Healy, who belongs to the new school of elocution, but to an old bad school of polemics in which weakness of logic is sought to be atoned for by violence of language. His uncle Tim belongs to this school also, only it must be admitted that he has a logical mind when it suits him to exercise it. Lieutenant Maurice having spoken about a dozen sentences calling on all eligible Irishmen to at once join the colours, proceeded to deal with Professor Burke's interrupter, whom he eloquently characterised as "a fellow who was probably living in a house of ill-fame on the proceeds of his wife's infamy!" Goodness only knows what other vilenesses would have been attributed to the unknown owner of the voice but for the fact that the tide of vituperation was suddenly and dramatically checked by the stentorian cry, "You lie, Mr. Maurice Healy!" There then was a moment's tense silence, during which the gallant officer in his khaki uniform stood silent, as a statue at the edge of the platform towards which a tall figure was seen pushing its way through the crowd, while the Lieutenant, still silent, looked down to see who it was who had the temerity to thus rudely take him to task. I also strained my eyes from the edge of the crowd, and when the figure came right under the platform saw that the "fellow" was none other than Mr. O'Leary Curtis. To say that young Healy looked

astonished would be a very inadequate description of the expression of his countenance; and as soon as he recovered his self-possession, he addressed the crowd saying "I know this gentleman very well—he is a gentleman of very strong opinions and is never afraid to express them. I give him credit for being the first to come forward publicly at one of these meetings to express his views, which at the same time I must warn you are fundamentally wrong."

I could not help observing that Mr. O'Leary Curtis quite ignored the Lieutenant's shameful reference, and immediately proceeded to ask why it was that Belgians of military age were living safely in Ireland, while young Irishmen were expected to shed their blood and lose their lives in Flanders and the Dardanelles, to which Lieutenant Healy replied that he would not discuss that matter. England, he said, was in this war for the liberation of small nationalities and for human freedom.

"Human freedom!" scornfully cried out Mr. O'Leary Curtis, "What about the men who are at present lying in jail for Ireland without a vestige of trial or inquiry of any sort?"—"I will not discuss that either," replied the Lieutenant. "I regret these men are in jail." He then sat down, and Sir Maurice Dockrell having mumbled some announcements, the meeting came to an abrupt end. I had a few minutes' conversation with Mr. O'Leary Curtis after the meeting, and learned from him that he and Lieutenant Healy had been acquainted for some years. He seemed very much astonished at Lieutenant Healy's virulent method of responding to a quiet legitimate query which had not been addressed to him personally, and was really made as a commentary upon Professor Burke's extravagant laudation of Belgian refugees. "Of course," concluded Mr. Curtis, "the shocking reference was not made to me personally, as Maurice Healy knows well the circumstances under which I live; but that he should hurl such a vile accusation recklessly at an unknown opponent is to me almost incomprehensible."

"Incomprehensible" indeed! But this war has torn off many masks; and made some startling revelations.

VULCAN JUNIOR.

Drawing for Suit-Length Irish Tweed (Irish Volunteers, Inchicore.)

The above has been won by Volunteer John McBrien, "C" Company, 1st Battalion. No. 352.

PAYING THE PIPER

Tuesday night's stop-press "Herald" poster announced boldly "you must all pay up"; Wednesday's "Independent" assured me that if I were a bachelor I should be mulcted because of the fact, the London "Daily Mail" displayed across the top of its chief news page "More Taxes for Everybody." You and I, dear reader, are included in that "everybody," even though we rank at other times as mere Irish, and it is well that we see how hard we are hit by the proposed new taxation.

We are hit and hit badly by the taxes on food. There is a 50 per cent. increase in the taxes on tea, coffee, chicory, cocoa, and currants. The tea will be 4d. a pound dearer, roasted coffee 1d. a pound more, cocoa $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound more—not including any increases the merchants may see fit to put on. The tax on sugar bears a very heavy increase, but owing to the fact that the Government has at present large stocks of sugar in hand which they are to dispose of to the public at a reduced price, the sugar will be only about $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound dearer—"only" $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound. Tobacco and cigarettes, which have passed from being luxuries to being almost necessities, have to bear another $1\frac{3}{4}$ d. and $2\frac{1}{8}$ d. an ounce respectively. All this means a huge increase in the cost of living. It means that those whose income at present is barely able to keep things going will not be able for the additional strain. It means that where the housekeeper had 30 shillings a week to manage on, she must now get 36 shillings at least, probably a good deal more. Where is the extra money to come from? Your employer will tell you that his profits are so seriously affected by the increased income tax and increased cost of materials that a rise in wages is out of the question. The shopkeeper cannot allow accounts to run any longer—no more credit dealing. You cannot go across to America and try to negotiate a billion dollar loan (which apparently is not to be got in any case). You have to stay at home, and skimp and save and cheesepare—all in the interest of Small Nationalities, Truth, Liberty, and Civilisation. You have to "practise economy," which means shutting other poor devils out of their job; others will also have to "practise economy" which may mean shutting you out of your job. The children have to be deprived of their Sunday pennies, because pennies are not lightly to be parted with nowadays. When the winter comes—and it is not far off—they also must be careful; they must not play about as usual, for play is hard on boots and boots are dear to repair, and dearer to replace. We

won't be able to buy them new overcoats, and they have grown out of what is left of last year's—so that if we cannot see our way to leave them hungry at least we can leave them cold, for the good of the cause. We cannot afford to bring them for tram-drives now, and they must rest satisfied with the fragrance of Anna Liffey. It is only a mere coincidence that the morning we read all about the new taxes is the morning that ushered in "Serbia's Flag Day" in England, and that Serbia brought the war.

NEUTRALITY AND MILITARISM.

It is little more than a century since Europe was last in a chaos comparable with that now blood-weltering around us. Our sister isle, or, more accurately, sister half-isle, was then spasmodically defending a small nation, Prussia, against a mad war lord of Italian origin. A peaceful policy of "Business as usual" was being conducted in the "Motherland"; sweated parish-apprentices were helping to equip armies, even, at times, those of the mad tyrant; and a disturbed Continent was always glad to buy goods, perhaps at fancy prices, from that land whose liberal government had some years before received such a harsh return from the American sons of Empire.

Now and then Expeditionary Forces, composed of Irish, Scotch, and even English soldiers, were dispatched to safeguard a neutrality menaced by an iron militarism. The ravaged neutrals occasionally misinterpreted the good feelings of their defenders. For instance, the Spanish had strong, obscurantist views on the sanctity of Church property and of the persons of ecclesiastics, especially of those of the weaker sex, and when the neutrality defenders, in their actions, showed an ignorance of native prejudices, matters became so complicated that the forces of the sister half-isle were often in more danger from those whom they were endeavouring to befriend than from the legions of the ruthless war lord. We have seen a somewhat similar difficulty of late in Ballycastle (Ulster), but in this case the natives, and not the neutrality defenders, were the sufferers.

Things were not going well here, although in some respects the position of the country was stronger than it is at present. Emigration had not become a necessary part of our domestic life, and we grew enough to feed and clothe us. A little earlier, a show of force had exacted measures of

self-government from the Hanoverian establishment on the other side, and for twenty years we had prospered; but there was danger. Our prosperity was a menace, and measures had to be taken to weaken a potential competitor. Rebellion was preparing, and the Northern Dissenters were like to prove as formidable as the Catholics. Knowing these things, the neutrality defender loosed on the peasantry a licentious street-scum, dressed as soldiers, and the rebellion was provoked prematurely. The result was that some of the country was thrown back to a condition analogous with that of the middle eighteenth century, but even this fact only partially secured the interests of the great Motherland, and the Union was rushed into being to secure, as far as possible, an industrial supremacy for the precious stone set in the silver sea. Still, the disintegration of our commercial life was as yet embryonic.

Whilst these things were being enacted, a young patrician was taking lectures in Trinity College, Dublin. He was a silent, reserved thinker, unmarked by any outstanding proficiency in those studies so skilfully designed to strangle the reasoning faculty in the British upper middle class. He had heard of Grattan's Volunteers, of their victory, of their diplomatic dispersal. He had seen Fitzgerald, and knew enough about '98 to disbelieve the official blue-book on the atrocities committed under the leadership of the Wexford priests. He now considered Ireland of his day, and realised that material progress was in jeopardy, and more, that the ideal of national existence might be thoughtlessly bartered for a place in an unholy Empire of Godless materialism. In Rome of old, when the frightened mob stood aghast at the chasm in the Forum, an aristocrat had ridden down, scorning the cowards, and with, "The gods want a man, or else the state must fall", dashed into the abyss, which closed in sign of a placated deity. So Emmet knew that a great sacrifice was necessary to save the nation's soul.

He rose; he dared; he *died*, but conquered. And now, after a century, we who are Irish of heart and soul, are Irish *because* of such as he.

He faced one issue—what is the right? Dare to do it. This attitude is foreign to the politician. For him, there is one right, expediency; but right is right in itself, and not one jot or tittle may be abated, if we will do the right. Perhaps it is as well that the crank has stalked the land since the beginning of this "great national crisis" to speak the truth, to enlighten a public whose Press is con-

trolled by alien militarists, and to work up a conception of right.

Emmet's last speech should be familiar to everyone, especially at this moment. Party differences must sink, if men will read and apply his words—words so strangely applicable during the world war when our national existence was endangered, but for a moment only, by the experienced politicians of the new Imperial school.

L.

THE WEST-BRITON.

The shirkers continue to shirk, the slackers to slack. Their adopted king and country may call and call. These gentry are deaf to all appeal. Something must be done to awaken them to a sense of their inconsistency. This playing with pro-Englandism is not what fills graves in the Dardanelles and correspondingly lengthens the Roll of Honour in the "Independent". Grafton Street and Stephen's Green are a long, long way from Achi Baba, and still these young and physically-fit young men refuse to answer the insistent call of their stepmotherland.

There is a reason for all things. There must be no reason why slackers in Ireland still slack. They are not pro-Irish. Dear No! A word of Irish has rarely passed their cigarette-stained teeth. They are not pro-German. If they were they could not enjoy as they do the portrayal of Hun ferocities on pictures, living and dead. They are not pro-English. Few people in Ireland, even the avowed British Garrison, are heartily pro-British. The North of Ireland bigot who curses the Pope and beats defenceless Christian Brothers is no Englishman. He would scorn the epithet. He despises the real Englishman only a little less than he does the native Irishman. Ask your West-Briton why he believes in loyalty to the Empire and he will find a difficulty in replying. At the present moment his difficulty is greater than ever. In the home of Empire men are shirking their plain duty by the million. Miners refuse to supply their Empire's navy with coal unless on their own money conditions. Railwaymen threaten beforehand to down tools should their freely-elected government demand their services to repel the Huns. In England's capital, while feathers are daily and hourly presented to the smiling thick-skinned youths of military age who throng the thoroughfares in which the Zeppelins do such trifling damage. But, like their West-British cousins, they do not enlist.

I have alluded to the West-Briton's difficulty in defining his attitude. Probably his subconscious mental condition is a desire to be on the winning side, which again may throw a light on his hesitancy. The winning side has been England's side as long as the West-British memory extends. The Union Jack has meant supremacy; to hell with the other fellow, up with ourselves. It has floated over him at bazaar, regatta, and band parade. It has been on his boxes of foreign chocolate and on his foreign-made cigarettes and presentation knick-knacks. He has never tried to escape from it. His conscience has rarely pricked him. He is not given to introspection.

But the hour for searching men's hearts arrived. The drum beat and the flag floated, and for a moment his heart fluttered as occasional pals, waking up from drunken sleeps, reappeared before him in khaki. But the heart-flutter ceased, and again he was cold. So Belgium may await to be avenged until Kitchener comes and fetches him.

The slacker cannot excuse himself. He cannot explain himself. But those who have rediscovered Irish Ireland are easily able to diagnose the shirker's complaint. He knows no country. Consequently he acknowledges no claim on him. On the other hand he has not the energy to deny the claim. He stands on shifting sands.

Swaying between principle and expediency, he presents a sorry spectacle. He belongs to No Man's Land. Ireland's story leaves him cold. Prussian methods applied to his fellow-countrymen goad him not into feeling. He is the half-way house, the missing link, the facing-both-ways whom whom all real men contemn. Better be a dog and bay at the moon than such a West-Briton.

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