

THE SPARK

KEEP THE FIRES OF THE NATION BURNING
(C. S. PARNELL)

Edited by Ed. DALTON

Vol. II. No. 39.

DUBLIN, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31st, 1915.

PRICE ONE HALFPENNY

OUR OWN FIGHT

SOMETHING paradoxical has happened to me. Within the past few weeks I have found creeping over me a kind of respect ; almost indeed a kind of admiration and envy, for West-Britain. How unlovely and unadmirable an institution it is I have not failed to declare frequently in those columns. West-Britain is that colony of Irish-born persons who accept for this nation the role of vassal-slave to the British Empire, who are content that Ireland shall be lackey to the Empire, shall have no ambition beyond pleasing the Empire, unless indeed Empire shall permit some harmless amusement or dissipation in leisure hours, such as passing resolutions in College Green and banqueting and eulogising ourselves throughout the island. Can you fancy a *well fed* lackey, to say nothing of the poorly nourished West-British one, putting on war cloth and sallying forth to do battle for such a job, the job of lord-high-lackey to the diseased gourmet who distrusts and despises him, and who values only the menial for his ministrations to the gourmet's sensual pleasures. That is what West-Britain has done, and that is why I have come to almost admire and envy it. Not because it has gone to fight for such a mean and lowly thing, but because it has gone in such a noble old-time-chivalarous kind of way. West-Britain has deluded itself into the belief that it is one of the principals in a great war which is in progress. The ideals and the virtues which West-Britain loves to *read* about are imperilled, the rights of small nationalities are menaced. For the first time in its life West-Britain has admitted that small nations have rights as well as have

great empires. The soul of West-Britain has revolted at the thought of a small nation been laid waste, of its being stripped of language, literature, its traditions, and its institutions, and West-Britain has hearkened to the call of the small nationalities beyond the seas and has given its sons, its brothers, and its sweethearts to the fight, and their names are thick on "The Roll of Honour." In our churches those days I see many a sad-faced widow or sister or sweetheart. Who would withhold pity from them? From whom is the thought absent that the grief of the sufferer were mitigated if the lives of their men folk had been given for Ireland? Ireland is a small nationality, and despised by West-Britain. The West-Briton in his relation to Ireland is a moral parricide. I can conceive no crime greater than the poisoning of a child's mind against its parent. The mind of the West-Briton has been poisoned practically from the cradle against Ireland. Nothing good, he has been taught, can come out of Ireland. There is nothing in Ireland that isn't vulgar. But the West-Briton doesn't perceive the subtle influence of Empire in his upbringing, and when he comes to man's estate he feels he despises Ireland and all that is characteristic of Ireland, because he himself is superior to Irish Nationality. But it is in reality because an unnatural operation has been performed on his intellect that he has come to reject and despise the nation and all that is natural to and characteristic of the nation of which by the Grace of the Almighty God he West Briton was born.

Nowadays on hearing or reading some of the

mawkish sentimentalities uttered about Belgium and Serbia one is almost forced to the conclusion that the only small nationality God made a mistake in creating was this Irish nation of ours, a nation whose pedigree goes back to Noah, a nation which has a record for culture and chivalry unsurpassed by any other, big or small, and a nation which though small, has oft helped in the overthrow of empires, and whose warrior sons have often trampled on an empire's grave.

I shall not here argue whether the small nations or the great empires have done the more to create the Kingdom of God on earth; I shall leave that for future consideration. But, altogether apart from such question, there is the question of whether the smaller and physically weaker nations are to be at the mercy of the more powerful ones. The West-Briton said No! and went off to die for Belgium, for Serbia, or for anything at all bar his own legitimate nation, Ireland. The West-Briton doesn't know Ireland; he is a child of Empire, and he has made sacrifices for it. That is why I can think of him with some admiration, even if with pity.

The battle for Irish Nationality proceeds with undiminished reality. It is a spiritual combat. The battle is being fought not in the trenches but in the Gaelic classrooms, in the school, and in the home. The number of lives lost in the fight may be small, but none the less is this fight of Irish Nationalism of vast import. It is a fight of souls, a fight between the Gaelic soul of Ireland and the hybrid soul of West-Britain. Let no man think that Gaelicism is inimical to the growth of the heroic virtues. Let no man think that West Britain has made sacrifices in the war and that Gaelic Ireland has not because the latter has grown effete and decadent. It is not so. Gaelic Ireland has displayed the highest and greatest degree of courage, in that its sons will not be stampeded like sheep to provide a holocaust for British liars.

Gaelic Ireland will give ungrudgingly of its best when the opportunity occurs, the framers of the Arms Proclamation Act are the last to doubt it. In the meantime the duty of every man and every woman of Ireland is to strengthen the nation both morally and physically. That can be done by participation in the Gaelic League and Volunteer movements. Let every man and every woman reader of THE SPARK, help these movements either by personal participation in them or by giving financial support to them. Next week is "Irish" week in Dublin and even the humblest of us and the poorest, can do something to defend our own small nation-

ality against the designs of political and social wolves and their jackal Press.

EMPIRE OR NATION?

Cromwell, by his seizure of Jamaica, founded the first of those permanent oversea dominions since welded into the British Empire. Although Ireland has been in this Empire since the days of Cromwell, Irishmen never seem to have grasped the fact. Irish boys, fresh from the Intermediate school, always feel unmanned when they hear the Dublin Civil Service grinder lecture on "Our Empire." The phrase is new and unreal to them; notwithstanding, Irishmen would do well to know something of this strange Empire.

This Empire is an Empire of many races—Chinese and Welsh, Kaffir and Scotch, Gurkha and Boer, Spanish and Irish, Maltese and Cingalese, Esquimaax and Kru-men. These, and more, are the heterogeneous constituents of the British Empire. Some countries in this assemblage enjoy autonomy, and from their wealth, remoteness from Britain, and strategical position could, if they choose, break away from the Imperial system. Other districts seem rather areas for exploitation where companies employ natives in the manufacture of rubber, palm-oil and such commodities, the relation between the natives of the area and its occupiers being analogous with that between a landlord and his slum-tenants. Other countries in this Empire are occupied, apparently, with a view to repressing their development, either under a native or friendly alien government. England—or, more accurately, the self-elected English oligarchy—exercises a preponderating influence in the government of this so tessellated organism.

It is useful to know something of the Empire. It is still more useful to know something of those English who have taken on themselves the burden of Empire. In religion, the English are officially styled Christian; yet the bulk of the people whom they govern are Buddhist. But official regard for religion in England partakes of the fetish-worshipper's outlook. Many English statesmen are avowedly agnostic; clergymen of the official Church find it no bar to preferment if they deny the divinity of Christ, and the average English Democrat finds in the works of Haeckel that solace which his Puritan ancestor was reputed to seek in the Bible.

Hypocrisy, masked by official religion, has pro-

Green, White, and Orange Celluloid Badges—One Penny each.—WHELAN & SON, 17 Upr. Ormond Quay, Dublin.

duced in England the same effects as it produced in Imperial Rome. The morals of the upper classes are notorious, and are at last forcing themselves into public notice through the medium of the divorce court. Anglican clergymen and Catholic priests denounce the upper middle class in England as immoral, men and women. The artisan class alone seem to have retained any of that pristine purity inseparable from the virility of a race; but even the artisan has not held aloof from those practices which are connected with the words "race suicide". A declining birthrate, and degeneracy in physique so marked as to cause wholesale rejections recently by the army doctors, show that at present England is a moral danger to herself and to her neighbours.

From the moral standpoint alone, Ireland cannot but lose by her proximity, not to speak of her connection, with such a race as exists in England. It is true that Mariane in the house of ill-fame kept her innocence, but it is too much to expect that we shall escape, unscathed, the fierce temptations daily assailing our morals. Already, in our large cities, a growing looseness is noticeable. Advertisements are openly placarded which twenty years back would not have been tolerated, and the insane, suggestive revue is played to crowded houses, in theatres once famed for their cultured, discriminating audiences.

AN ANNIVERSARY.

On the 20th October, 1803, just a month after the execution of Emmet, Thomas Russell was hanged at Downpatrick for high treason against the king of England.

Anniversaries like this should be kept in remembrance by everyone. The name of Thomas Russell is not so famous as it ought to be, because it is overshadowed by the greater names of his contemporaries Tone and Emmet. If Russell had lived at any other period he would be counted one of our greatest national martyrs.

He was born at Kilshanick, Co. Cork, in 1747, entered the British army at sixteen, and left it at twenty-four. He was one of the first members of the first club of United Irishmen formed in 1791, and he was the last martyr of the Society. His friendship with Wolfe Tone dated from 1789, and Tone's journal is full of his praise.

"I think the better of myself," Tone writes, "for being the object of the esteem of such a man as Russell. I love him and I honour him."

Russell made use of his opportunities as librarian

of the Belfast Library to learn the Irish language and to study Irish history. When the United Irishmen became a secret society, and began preparing for a revolution, Russell went deeper than ever into their work. He was appointed to command the United Irishmen of Co. Down, but some of his letters found their way into the hands of the Government, just as some letters do to-day, and in September 1796 he was arrested for high treason. Instead of bringing him to trial, the Government kept him in prison, untried, for six years, first in Dublin, then at Fort George in Scotland. The rebellion of ninety-eight began and was crushed, and Russell remained helpless. But those six years of imprisonment, during which he saw the collapse in blood and ashes of the great struggle for liberty, for whose success he had sacrificed everything, and the death or ruin of almost all his friends, had no power to crush his spirit or make him despair of his country. No sooner was he released in 1802 than he was with Emmet in Paris.

He returned in disguise to Ireland and became Emmet's chief lieutenant. As he was well known in Ulster, Emmet sent him to rouse the north east just before the expected rising in Dublin, but Down and Antrim had no appetite for more fighting. The north east would not rise.

After the failure of Emmet's enterprise, Russell went back to Dublin, and was arrested there. He was tried at Downpatrick on the 19th October for high treason, and sentenced to death.

Just before his trial he wrote a letter to a friend, in which he said:—

"I have only to beg of my countrymen to remember that the cause of liberty is the cause of virtue, which I trust they will never abandon. May God bless and prosper them, and when power comes into their hands, I entreat them to use it with moderation."

In his speech from the dock occurs this passage:—

"I have travelled much, and seen various parts of the world, and I think the Irish are the most

SEACHTMAIN NA SAMNA. IRISH REVIVAL WEEK, NOV. 1st to 6th

MONDAY—Public Meeting in Mansion House.

TUESDAY—Dramatic Performance, Abbey Theatre.

WEDNESDAY—Concert in Abbey Theatre.

THURSDAY—Flag Day.

SATURDAY—Ceilidh in Mansion House.

virtuous nation on the face of the earth. They are a good and brave people, and had I a thousand lives, I would yield them in their service."

Next day he was hanged.

What makes these words seem so powerful? Their intense earnestness and simplicity. They are the words of a man who gave all he had for the sake of an oppressed people, not on impulse or in any sudden glow of patriotism, but through years of struggle and suffering; quietly and as a matter of course, undaunted by failure, never cast down, never dreaming of surrender, accepting death as an honour, and sending with his last words a message of hope and encouragement to his people.

THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM.

That men should fight has come to us as one of the curses of the fall. Fight they will, as individuals, and as races. When races fight, thousands of men must be maintained in arms. To raise these men, various methods are employed in different countries. It is generally admitted that each individual in the state owes the duty of military service in times of stress. In this view, in some countries, France for instance, practically every fit man is called on to subject himself to a period of military training. Should his service be at any time required, he is called on to fight, and if needs be, to die for the country whose language he speaks, and within whose borders he dwells, and rears his family. This system is called Conscription, and Frenchmen cheerfully submit to it, in the belief that they owe to fatherland an allegiance to be sealed, if need be, in blood.

In other countries every individual is forced to bear arms. When the ruler thinks fit each man is driven into the army, and at the bayonet point pushed into the battlefield to die, perhaps, at the pleasure of the despot masters. This system is called Militarism, and prevails in Austria, and other decadent, godless regions.

Some favoured countries succeed in raising armies without resorting either to Conscription or Militarism. In all such, when a national danger has to be faced, employers are required to dispense with employees of military age, and those thus set at liberty answer the call to arms. This system is known as Voluntary Enlistment, and the advantages it presents is that those accustomed to more arduous occupations are enabled to become soldiers, whilst those used to lives of leisure are not asked undertake an occupation, perhaps, beyond their strength.

VOLUNTEER CONVENTION.

In connection with the second annual Convention of Irish Volunteers to be held next Sunday in the Abbey Theatre, there will be a parade and march-past of the Dublin Brigade. The North side battalions will assemble at Parnell Square at 1.30 sharp; the South side battalions at Camden Row at 1.10 sharp. The Brigade will march past the Convention shortly after 2 p.m.

Cumann na mBan.

The Cumann na mBan is organizing a reception on Sunday night for the delegates to the Volunteer Convention. A limited number of tickets will be for sale.

THURSDAY, **Mitchel** : :
Nov. 4th, '15 **Centenary** : :
8 p.m. **Commemoration**

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Chairman, Arthur Griffith
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APPLES Wanted—Advertiser will buy from grower large or small quantity Apples. State price, etc., Fruit, SPARK Office, 4 Findlater Place, Dublin.

CARTOONS—Wanted Old Cartoons and Special Numbers of "Weekly Freeman," "Weekly Independent," "United Ireland," "Shamrock," "Irish Fireside," etc. Give particulars and price to M. J. R., SPARK Office, 4 Findlater Place.

OFFICE STOVE for Sale, cheap. Reply, C. N., SPARK.

Printed for the Proprietor by the Gaelic Press, 30 Upper Liffey Street, and published at 4 Findlater Place Dublin. Trade Union Labour. Irish Paper and Ink