

# THE SPARK

KEEP THE FIRES OF THE NATION BURNING

(G. S. PARNELL)

Edited by Ed. DALTON

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## SPIES AND STAGS

Last week THE SPARK drew the curtain of anonymity from Sir John Irwin, who disguised as "Citizen" advocated in the daily papers of Dublin coercion of their employes by the Dublin drapery and other firms. The letters of this character now appearing in the Dublin Daily Press, said the writer of the article, emanated from the one source although they were not all written by the one hand. We can supplement the information this week. The letters in advocacy of Famine—and Forcible Recruiting signed "Citizen," "Observer," "Irishman," "Irish Nationalist," "Thaliarchus," etc., emanate from the Central Recruiting Committee, and are produced under the supervision of "Thaliarchus," who has also a couple of other disguises.

"Thaliarchus"—which the Editor of the "Daily Independent" is credited with believing to be "the name of an ancient Greek," is a word familiar to readers of Horace who uses it to signify the chairman of a drunkard's symposium. There is something, however, in the signature as it probably implies the user's opinion of the Recruiting Committee which employ him. Readers of the "Independent" have had "Thaliarchus's" hired opinions on Sinn Féin, "Shirkers," "Slackers," etc., set before them for some time past as those of a private and independent citizen. This is one of the tricks of our Reptile Press. His latest—and after this article appears his last—contribution, in this guise, tells the humbugged "Independent" readers that what we want to get at is (sic) the slackers—"strong and vigorous men without a particle of

responsibility on their shoulders," and "Thaliarchus" "therefore makes a suggestion." This is it:—

"A form might be issued by the Department to anyone who applies, for the purpose of gaining information about eligible men. This information would, of course, be confidential, and care would have to be exercised so as to keep the document free from abuse.

"Take the case of a married man with a family. He is naturally incensed, seeing so many healthy young fellows straggling about. It is up to him to do what he can to make these men realise their position. By the means I suggest, the Department would be placed in possession of the information they would have if the National Registration had been compulsory in Ireland."

This proposal it will be seen is one to make every man a spy upon his neighbour. A.B., of Clontarf, say, applies to the Castle for a form to fill up "Confidentially"—like Bill Bailey of the Land Commission—with information about his neighbour and his neighbour's sons; and A.B. guaranteed secrecy by the Castle; can go on professing to be a decent man and a good neighbour to the people whom he spies upon, and who do not suspect his real character.

Certainly the newspapers which publish this proposal have little sense of shame left. But most people knew that long ago, and they will be legitimately interested in the source of the suggestion, Mr. Harold R. Waite, late of the Dublin "Evening Mail," and at present engaged by the Recruiting people at a salary of some £360 to £400 a year.

There are many ways of earning a living. Several



are dirty ways, but there are none so dirty that all hesitate to follow them. "Thaliarchus" enthroned at the head of the Convivial Board may hold up his gold pieces, and ask, like the Roman Emperor, "Do they smell?" and be comforted by his fallacy. The questions that really concern the public are two:—

(1) That under the guise of "Letters to the Editor" the Dublin daily papers are inserting under a dozen different *noms-de-guerre* attacks on Irish Nationalists and suggestions for coercion and espionage upon Irish civilians generally—these "letters" being to the knowledge of the Editors of all the Dublin dailies, written by men hired by the Recruiting Committee for the purpose.

(2) That public funds, raised out of Irish taxation, are being lavishly paid to this species of people.

Last week, in the English House of Commons, a question elicited the information that members of the English Parliament aiding recruiting are paid "expenses" in addition to their £400 salary. A report of the question was suppressed in the daily papers of Dublin. Under the heading of "expenses" how much public money is being paid to the people who appear on platforms in Dublin and throughout Ireland to urge Irishmen to join the English Army? That the scale of calculation is a liberal one may be inferred from the salary paid to Mr. Harold White. Meanwhile the Irish people, who are compelled to bear the cost of this extravagance and corruption, are told by the English Government, with its tongue in its cheek, to "economise" and to read the pamphlet of the audacious imposture which styles itself as "The Irish War Savings Committee."

### REDMOND, V.C.

Making a speech last Sunday at Maryborough Mr. Joseph Devlin declared—these party men always "declare"—that "in face of difficulties and the array of entrenched wealth and power, the Party formed by Parnell and Davitt, and led to-day by John Redmond, had stormed positions of centuries-old privileges and class domination, changing a land of serfs into a land of freemen." He did not think it necessary to add that the "freemen" produced by the Irish Party's activities in the way of job-getting and patronage are adequately served in the Press by that unique organ, the "Freeman's Journal." In view of the intrigue within the Party itself to oust Redmond, the reference to the leader of to-

day is significant—it hints at the possibility of another leader to-morrow, or next day, or next week, or at any rate in the near future. And if Redmond is fired out, it will not be an hour too soon. He has arrogated to himself all the functions of a Dictator who refuses to consider the wishes or the feelings of those to whom he attempts to dictate. He wants no mandate from the Irish people—he takes orders only from Asquith; he has no sympathy with Irish peasants who do not want to give England military service—they are only "fellows from the West of Ireland" who represent nobody but themselves; that he has put himself out of touch with the people of Ireland worries him not—just now. One could not help being forcibly struck last Sunday by the man's hopeless failure. Here he is boosted up by a powerful Press as the "leader of the Irish race at home and abroad"; he is alleged to have helped to turn a land of serfs into a land of freemen; he has got Home Rule put so fast on the Statute Book that it looks like never coming off; he has offered 250,000 Irishmen to England; he has stretched his legs under Lord Wimborne's mahogany; he has gone to France and Flanders to stand on a chair and make speeches to hollow squares; he has fired a big gun, and expressed the pious hope that the shell he let loose hit somebody or something, even if only the bare ground; he has told the English House of Commons that the Irish people are not kept informed of the "glorious" deeds of the Irish regiments fighting for England, and he has told the same Irish regiments that the whole Irish nation are watching with breathless interest the doings of every single Irishman at present helping to kill Germans or Turks; he has poured out his sympathy for the sufferings of every small nationality on earth, except the one that produced him; he has taken his stand with the only enemy Ireland ever had; he has proved his loyalty to England in the greatest crisis of her history. All these things has he done, and yet the man is a hopeless failure. Last Sunday saw in Dublin what the "Irish Independent," which cannot be suspected of any leanings towards Irish nationalism, describes as one of the largest and most impressive demonstrations of its kind for many years in commemoration of the Manchester Martyrs. The dignity, the order, the impressiveness and the strength of the procession, the quiet, serious demeanour of the people who lined the route, the number of commemoration flags displayed, all showed that the Three Bodies that swung forty-eight years ago from the gibbet outside Salford Jail meant more to the people of Ireland to-day than the blatherskite and treachery

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of Redmond, the fulminations and humbug of John Dillon, the word spinning of Joe Devlin, and, to borrow from the Bishop of Limerick, the Imperialism of T. P. O'Connor and the rest of the New Brigade. The 23rd of November, 1867, saw Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien die for Ireland, amidst the howls of an English mob; how Redmond honours their memory in 1915 is shown by the following "Item of War" taken from an English newspaper: "Mr. John Redmond, who is visiting the Irish regiments at the front, will on his return deliver his first recruiting speech in London. The meeting is to be held on Tuesday evening, the 23rd instant, at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor will also speak on behalf of the London Irish Rifles . . . ."

He made his speech—according to the "Freeman's Journal" placard, a stirring speech. He declared that the British army at the front was a collection of what Mr. Kipling would call plaster saints; that the English Lord St. Davids was a liar; that the King of Belgium was very well, thanks, and very grateful to Ireland, with a keen sense of the favours to come; and that Ireland would be disgraced for ever if, having sent so many to the front, she did not send more to take their place; and that those who "did their duty" could (if they survived) hand down to their children the proud recollection of courage and determination. He said no word of the Martyred Three who had handed to our generations and the generations that will come after us the proud recollection of their courage and determination. Let us be grateful for the small mercy of his silence on this particular matter: let us take it as a sign that Redmond realises there are depths to which even he may not sink; let us hope his conscience will awaken fully and remorse will drive him into the oblivion he should have entered years ago—there is something to pray for.

## COURAGE UNDER CONTROL

It has been objected, if not in clear terms, that the Irish Volunteers have no business in "celebrating" this and that by speech, song, or procession. It has been insinuated, if not actually asserted, that honour and duty call them to "demonstrate" by attacking the powers that be. The doctrine is promulgated that they should return blow for blow. No sooner is an organiser struck than the jail must be raided and the tricolour hoisted. Pursuing this reasoning to its logical conclusion, we find ourselves surrendering to the enemy every advantage which careful organisation and hard work have given us. It may be assumed that the enemy will strike when

it suits him best. When he deports an organiser or hauls down a sign at Liberty Hall, he does so with a definite immediate object. That object is to test the forces behind. To test the discipline of the rank and file. To test the leadership. To test public opinion.

If on the first occasion when such an incident occurred the armed Nationalists had struck back, they would have struck in vain. Public opinion was dead against them. England had not reached the dire pass in which she at present finds herself. Arms were scarcer than they are to-day. Training, organisation, and discipline were not as forward as they now are.

The enemy's blow was struck in vain. Instead of wild panic ensuing, a sane policy was pursued. Captain Monteith left Dublin. He did so after careful consideration. In Limerick he pursued his training of the Irish Volunteers with such added ardour as has made them one of the finest brigades in Ireland.

The argument that national honour demands an appeal to arms whenever England strikes an individual, does not hold water. There is here an assumption that Ireland a Nation is at peace with England. Suddenly England strikes. National honour here clearly demands the counter blow.

But England and Ireland are not at peace, have not been at peace these hundred years. There is a constant war. As a writer recently said, Ireland is like a frontier along which fighting may develop any moment. It is necessary for those who guard the frontier to be always watchful, waiting for the moment to strike, watching for an enemy blow. One of the outpost sentries is shot. Must the Commander-in-Chief thereupon order a general advance, or mobilise his forces at the point where the skirmish took place? Common-sense says no. Military training, even of an elementary nature, proclaims the folly of being "drawn" by such a simple device.

The policy of appeal to rank and file sentiment against the superior information and sound thinking of the leaders is suicidal. The rank and file can know little either of the resources, the plans, or the difficulties of their elected leaders. Their duty, their plain and obvious duty is to obey. By constant attention to drill, by discipline, obedience and punctuality, they will give that support and confidence to their leaders without which concerted action either to-morrow or a year hence will be equally impossible or unavailing.

No rash act must precipitate a conflict. The duty of Ireland is to preserve its neutrality inviolate. The act of the Martyred Three and their comrades has been held up as the true model for militant Irishmen at all times and in all places. It has no such lesson. The military lesson it



teaches is the possibilities of careful organisation. It was no unpremeditated act. It was the fruit of sound planning. It shows what men may do who dare—shows also how men who dare can restrain themselves until the right hour strikes.

There is, however, an inevitable point at which rashness becomes the sanest common-sense. The enforcement of conscription, or the forcible attempt to disarm the Nationalists of Ireland, would immediately mark a point at which a policy of armed neutrality must yield to one of active intervention. An attempt to seize the Volunteer leaders en masse would also, we opine, be regarded as an act of war which could have only one answer. Other sets of circumstances may be easily imagined in which mere passive resistance would be playing the enemy's game. My view is that it is not for the rank and file to decide the larger questions. These must be left for the Council Chamber, and should not be debated in the Market Place. For the rest, firmness and determination must be the keynote of our disposition. To be conscripted, to be disarmed are both unthinkable. To rush on the enemy's guns without cause and without hope may be magnificent, but it is not war. To the leaders we say, patience and boldness! To the rank and file, courage and discipline!

### Yesterday and Conscription

A correspondent sends me the following cutting from a weekly review, entitled "To-Day," which was edited by Jerome K. Jerome. It is dated for 1897. J. K. J. is at present strongly pro-Russian. He is author of, amongst other things, "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow," "Afterthoughts," etc. He is progressing. Shall we have "Passing Pars of a Punctured Prophet" this season?—

"Conscription is the price of our Empire, and until the nation is prepared to pay that, it only holds the Empire on sufferance, until our enemies are prepared to take it from us. It is not a dignified way of running an Empire, and it is not a safe way. It is not the way that, were the case put frankly to them, our manhood would care to run the Empire. Let a statesman come forward bold enough to propose it, and he could carry conscription; but our parties think more of the dangers of losing office than of the danger of losing the Empire. They would risk our whole existence rather than run the risk of losing their precious popularity, and, for fear of the capital that might be made out of the proposal by the other side, shirk their plain duty. If it were known in India, and, still more important, in St. Petersburg, that England could, if necessary, land half a million troops on Indian soil, there would be an end to native risings, and the Russian Secret Service Fund could be

economised to a very considerable extent. In every centre of India, Russia has her agent whose instructions are to watch and report. She is simply biding her time, and the next Indian mutiny that comes along will be supported by Russian troops marching through Afghanistan. Russia has never slackened her hopes of India, and if she is the ally of Abdul Hamid to-day, it is because she thinks that Constantinople can wait, and that India is the more likely apple to fall first. Her dream is the Empire of Asia, from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean. She is prepared with the price. We cannot compete with her on the cheap. It cannot be done."

### SEANCHUS.

To Correspondents—"Honesty," a paper somewhat on the same lines of THE SPARK, is printed by the same Printers, but otherwise the papers are wholly unconnected. The Editor of THE SPARK is not responsible for any articles in "Honesty"

M.O.H.—I shall always be glad to hear from you. The quickest way to reach me is to write the Editor, 4 Findlater Place.

C.O.M.—The Catholic population of Germany was in 1870 about 12,000,000, in 1909 it had increased to over 22,000,000. Severe penalties were inflicted on newspapers in Germany which caused scandal by publishing details of divorce cases such as the Beamish case, so fully reported by the pious "Freeman" and its evening atrocity.

Arran Quay—Are you still there? Rifles not resolutions shall weigh as arguments against conscription. How many "arguments" has Arran Quay?

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