

THE SPARK

"KEEP THE FIRES OF THE NATION BURNING"
(G. S. PARNELL)

Edited by Ed. DALTON

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PRICE ONE HALFPENNY

"PEACE" AND PAGANISM

The thought which recurs to me most regularly at Christmas is to not despise any movement because of its humble origin. If God is only with a cause, and if that cause deserves and continues worthy of His friendship, nothing can conquer or subdue it. And mind you, a cause is no better and no worse than its adherents make it, and the one great and essential condition to success is earnestness on the part of the individual supporters of that cause. The cause of Irish freedom is a cause of God. Ireland's rights as an independent nation have been withheld by force and in violation of God's law. We seek the restoration of those rights, not merely for our economic or political advantage, but for the spiritual welfare of this nation. Ireland cannot realise her own soul whilst handicapped by a legislative connection with England. The English are a semi-pagan people. We are in more danger from contact with them than from contact with out-and-out naked paganism.

Many people say they think the task of beating Englishmen in Ireland is hopeless, that we do not command resources equal to it. That may be so; we can at least aim at that end and organise our resources. That great Movement begun in Bethlehem by the birth of the Saviour lacked in no circumstance of humility, and yet it spread across the world and embraced all mankind without distinction of race or colour.

Some may say that there is little evidence of Christian teachings on the blood-sodden fields of Europe to-day, but do not the principals on either side zealously proclaim that they, and they only, are the champions of Christianity?—and

do not the rank and file on either side respond most eagerly to "the call" when assured that it is a war for Christian ideals? Of course, as far as England is concerned, it is nothing of the kind. Many of the members of the Government in pre-Coalition days were Agnostics, and, for all I know to the contrary, Agnostics may be amongst the present Coalition cabinet. It suits some newly-discovered friends of Catholicism to conveniently forget that the man who prohibited the Eucharistic Procession in London a few years ago was Herbert Asquith, the English Prime Minister. Granted he did so to prevent riot and disorder in the capital city of the Empire, is it not characteristic of the English that now they presume to patronise religion, their lighter literature is to become permeated with legends of the "Angel of Mons," and their theatres and picture-halls are to be utilised to familiarise their frequenters with religious services and emblems, and we are to be edified by stage impersonations of priests and nuns by vulgar cockney actors and actresses. These things are an outrage on propriety, and it is only the sacrilegious, thick-skulled English who could design them.

In the war in progress at present we are supposed to have some interests in common with the English. For the life of me I cannot discern them. On the contrary, I can see that our interests and theirs, both moral and material, seriously conflict, and war or no war I shall urge steady and continuous opposition to Englishism in Ireland in every shape and form. Some gentle-minded people proclaim that we should make peace with England. Well, I for one am

a lover of peace, but not the peace of surrender. The national ideals of Ireland cannot be lowered. Whatever inconvenience they may cause the Empire, those ideals cannot be disparaged or derided, judged by any exalted standard. To "make peace" whilst England is trampling on those ideals would be the veriest baseness on our part, co-equal to surrender to Satan.

There is nothing that I can see in modern England that is lovely and admirable. On the contrary, there is much that is unworthy and despicable. When spiritual guides in England present their congregations with an example of faith and fidelity it is to Ireland they appeal. Who ever heard a preacher of any sect hold up the English as a model? They are a model to be rejected and despised, and until they become chastened and truly "converted" we shall reject and despise them. Afterward, when "the new conditions" have had their trial, we may readjust our attitude towards them, until then—not peace but a sword.

A KHAKI STRIKE.

Are readers aware that there has been great unrest for some time among the Recruiting sergeants operating in Ireland? This came to a head recently in a monster protest meeting in the Antient Concert Rooms, Dublin, at which the "Spark" representative was present, by special request. As the demonstration has been boycotted by our timid Press without exception, we make no apology for finding space to ventilate the undoubted grievances of this patriotic body of men.

Owing to the dangers of summary shooting our representative was requested not to mention the names of any of those who made themselves prominent at the meeting. It may be mentioned, however, that the cream of Irish recruiting talent was present (and charged nothing for their eloquence), while representatives of the Service, both military and civilian, from all parts of the provinces were present. Letters of sympathy and regrets for non-attendance were received from many prominent politicians, whose names we are also pledged to not divulge.

The Chairman, in a speech of passionate eloquence, enumerated the many grievances under which they were labouring. He compared the former even tenour of their lives with that obtaining during the last six months. "No other body in the community," he said, "were asked to put forth such an effort. Imagine the social revolution which would ensue were a body of tradesmen asked to work continuously from 6 a.m. until 2 o'clock the following morning! Have any of us seen our wives and children for

six months? Is it not public property that our creditors are committing suicide simply because we have not the time to sign cheques for them? Then the work itself! The mere contemplation of it is a nightmare! Where are the men of military age coming from? I verily believe that had we time to think it all over we would go mad! The little sleep we can snatch some nights is troubled with nightmares, and means a prolonging of the agony of our daily activities instead of mental and bodily recuperation. And such activities! Lines upon lines of young Irishmen stretching out in a never-ending perspective, on which our most frantic efforts seem not to have the least effect. They come on and on in waves to be attested, to be examined, rushing to their country's call! But in this fact, gentlemen, lies our salvation. Public sympathy is bound to be with us, for it is open for all eyes to see the immensity of our task. People have only to walk to the end of Grafton Street (there is no such thing as thoroughfare through it) and see the unprecedented scenes being enacted there. They will see how business has been dislocated by this extraordinary rush to the colours. They will see the helplessness of the police in their endeavour to keep order among the dense crowds, where every man fights tooth and nail to get in before the others. I say in all seriousness, gentlemen, we can stand it no longer! Wherein is the remedy? As you are aware, we have little time to do any deep thinking, but after very hurried reflection, I believe the remedy lies in the removal of the causes. We all agree that this rush dates from the Banishing Order and subsequent imprisonment of some Volunteer officers. Is it too much to ask the authorities not to repeat this? Again, the national press all over the country is too idealistic; we want more realism; more of the sickening sights of battle described; more blood-and-brain-splashing written up. A surprise visit of, say, Mr Brayden, to the fire trenches in the thick of a bombardment would, if he survived to tell the tale (and the truth), have a very good effect. But it would need to be a surprise visit. Every one knows that when the politicians pay their calls, the floor is scrubbed and the chimney swept, so to speak, in the rear away out of the limelight. Is it too much to ask the press to comply and thus stop this mad rush to buy little grass-plots in Flanders? (laughter). Another suggestion would be to stop the military bands from playing rebel tunes, as these apparently fire the military ardour, with the results I see all round me to-night, fellow victims of nervous

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collapse! Now, to come to business, I solemnly warn the authorities that we will stand this no longer, and further, that if our working hours be not shortened, if additional assistance be not given us, if proclamation be not made immediately that no more Irish need apply, no other weapon remains to our hands but to call for a complete closing down of recruiting in Ireland! Gentlemen, we will strike!" (Ten minutes' interval for cheering).

Lack of space forbids details of the remaining speeches, which were all in accord with that of the Chairman, and all more or less grammatical. Before "The Saxon Shilling" was sung, the "Spark" representative was asked to convey to Mr. Dalton the warm thanks and appreciation of the meeting for the interest he took in their proceedings.

AN UNDELIVERED SPEECH

Here is the speech I had hoped to give at the Anti-Conscription meeting at the Dublin Mansion House:—

Fellow-countrymen and fellow-country women—It is a pleasant and a stimulating experience to me to participate in this great meeting, and to stand here on this platform in the company of the men who have so worthily upheld the traditions of Irish leadership under very trying and difficult conditions.

I avail of this opportunity to congratulate you on the possession of such leaders, and I may here express the hope that the men who stood in the bearna baogail, the gap of danger, in the hour of Ireland's need, the crucial hour when the false and craven-hearted deserted her, that these men will be implicitly trusted and obeyed. Our movement has passed the debating society stage; our minds are made up, and having chosen our leaders, we owe it to them to obey and "not to question why?"

The object of our meeting to-night is to warn all whom it may concern that there is one thing we in Dublin won't have, and that is Conscription. But I assure each man of you here at this meeting, that even though you made out an unanswerable case from a legal, a logical, a moral and an economic standpoint, against conscription, you are out of court, your opinion isn't worth a cancelled tram ticket, as far as the military authorities are concerned, unless you can maintain it from behind the barrel of a rifle or a revolver. Military men are notoriously averse to debating matters. They have scant respect for logic or for moral scruples, and if you mentioned such things to them they would not understand you. There is one thing which they can understand, and that is the logic of a

bullet. Therefore, I say to you who dare call your soul your own, who dare declare that you are not and will not be hired or conscripted assassins, I say to you who are prepared to swear never to fight against any people save those who interfere with your liberties as Irishmen, that it is your duty, it is your first and most essential precaution to procure a talking machine in the shape of some kind of weapon with which to record your decision in the only tone which the military defenders of this realm have any respect for. But let me impress on each of you who are unattached to any organisation, that you stand a poor chance of living or dying in Ireland whilst "out on your lonely" against conscription. Isolated and one-man protests are only useful to the conscriptionists, as they can be easily quelled, and the country thus be impressed with the futility of resistance. Whereas organised resistance cannot be overcome. Therefore, my friends, join one or other of the Volunteer organisations, and, please God, we'll put the "kybosh" on this menace of conscription within a very brief period.

"D'ANNUNZIO."

A priest-patriot, a zealous worker for faith and fatherland, whose name is known and revered throughout the whole of Ireland, sends me the following:—

A Cara—Your space is too narrow and too precious to tell all about this libertine, D'Annunzio. But may be you are not aware why this wretch took the name D'Annunzio? It will shock your readers to hear it, I know. This Freemason took the name "Gabriel of the Annunciation" in blasphemous mockery of the Annunciation of Our Lady, and consequently, of course, in mockery and hatred of the Incarnation of Our Lord, Jesus Christ!

The Catholic and National Press of Ireland indeed! Oh, what a Press! May the "Spark" become a flaming fire to consume and cleanse!

P.S.—Oh, if this blasphemous Freemason were a "Hun!"

It will be recalled that the "Evening Telegraph," the Redmondite press atrocity, recently published a eulogy of this man, and acclaimed him as "Italy's national poet" because largely responsible for dragging Italy into the war against Germany and Austria. I make a present of D'Annunzio, and the alcoholic "Telegraph," to the handful of Catholic priests who, by some process of thought unknown to me, have decided that England, France, and Italy, and their menagerie of savages, are fighting in the interests of Catholicism. May God forgive them and teach them sense, or, at very least, in matters political, silence.

John Redmond, Conscriptionist.

At the last meeting of the "Irish Parliamentary Party" Mr. John Redmond declared for Conscription. Dillon opposed it, and the Party were about equally divided on the question. Wait and See.



The "Prodigal" Skeffington.

Here's a welcome to Sheehy Skeffington on his return from the States. We want a whole lot more Skeffingtons in Ireland. I don't agree with even a fraction of the view he propounds, but nevertheless I bear witness to the honesty and sincerity of the man, and these qualities are so admirable, and also, so rare, that it is a stimulating experience to encounter even one man who possesses them.



TO M. F. HEALY (All for Englander)

After listening to his Recruiting Speech in Cork.

I publish the following poem, not in approval of its sentiments, but to show the feelings which Maurice Healy has aroused in many an Irish heart. If Healy burns in the next world it will not be any fault of mine, if he scorches in this I shall be simply satisfied.

O youth with evil venom'd tongue!
Who would from Eire's woe have wrung
Reasons why our remnant race
Should wallow in our land's disgrace:
And seek no longer Ireland's right,
But help the tyrant in his plight.
Hear this, my curse you prostitute!
With talents hired to the Brute:—
May ever wriggle of thy tongue,
May every shout from hired lung;
May every vile thought in your head,
Begetting lies of Ireland's dead
Be heard yet—where they echo well
In the congenial pits of Hell.

TADY BARRY

Cork, 11th Dec., 1915.

Seanchus.

I am sincerely grateful to readers who so kindly remembered to send me cards and messages at Christmas. They must excuse me for failing to acknowledge them individually.

I am rather proud at the success of my Christmas Number. "The Worker's Republic" and "Nationality" had very complimentary references to it. Some of the terms used towards it, in letters I have received, were "The dear 'Spark,'" "the ripping 'Spark,'" "the spanking 'Spark,'" etc. If this continues I shall not run short of advertising head-lines for some time.

Joy Bells.

At the time of writing I am within a few hours hearing the bells ringing out the old year. It has been a year of some consequence to Ireland. It has seen the "suppression" of "Eire," "Scissors and Paste" and "The Irish Worker," and the "deportation" of Messrs. Sean MacDermott, McCulloch, Pim, Mellows and Blythe, and the "conversion" by imprisonment of hundreds of Irishmen under the "Defence of the Realm Act." Well, well, and still Irish Nationalism lives, and not alone lives, but throbs with more intense and earnest hope than it has since '67.

Irish Volunteers—"C" Company 3rd Batt.—Prize Drawing—Result—1st Prize, No. 22553; 2nd Prize, 29410; 3rd Prize, 21113; 4th Prize, 29418; 5th Prize, 4210; 6th Prize, 432. S. O'Donghaile, Secretary.

Irishwomen's Franchise League.

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