



Edited by ED. DALTON.

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PRICE ONE HALFPENNY

THE WATCH ON THE LIFFEY

At 17 different stations on my way to town on Wednesday I heard whistled "The Watch on the Rhine," and when I arrived in the city it seemed also to enjoy popular favour. Whether this is attributable to its musical merit or to the sentiments of the song I do not know. I do think, however, that the men who are guarding the Rhine are quite capable of giving a fairish account of themselves, and that it is high time for us to devote our thoughts to "The Watch on the Liffey".

We are in for strenuous times in Ireland in the early future. Let ye make your minds up for that. Civil law before many months may be practically nonest. Our policy under the circumstances should be to mind our own business. It isn't "Huns" that we have to fear now or in the future, but Hunger. Keep an eye on the food supplies, and keep the money at home. Buy nothing foreign that you can possibly avoid buying, and remember that only an earthquake can shift the battlefield for Irish liberty out of Ireland.

Men whom you trusted to obtain control of Irish affairs for Irish men and women have failed you. They have succumbed (as Parnell anticipated they would if left at Westminster for any prolonged period) to the seductions of English politicians. The wine and the allurements of London drawingrooms have been too strong for them, and they have named their price. The change from their milk-and-water brand of Irish Nationalism to British Whiggery has been but gradual, and there are some of them whom I will excuse from consciously and willingly

acquiescing in it. But it has come to pass, and we, *serious* students of politics and politicians, see it in all its shameful weakness and meanness. Whilst we may make due allowance for the personal loyalty which many of the older generation of our people feel towards the Perverted Party, we must, at the same time, be unsparing in painting the brutal truth, that that party has gone over body and bones to British Liberalism, and has sought to implicate the Irish people in their warfare.

This country of ours is the only one in Europe which has consistently decayed in population and industries in times of peace. Peaceful British rule has robbed Ireland in one generation of 4,000,000 of her people. Ours is the worst populated nation in the world. We are a fighting race. Who doubts it? certainly not those who issued the arms proclamation act. But it is a libel on our race and on our religion to say that we fight for the mere sake of fighting. We have hearkened to the cry of liberty in every land, and there never yet was a good or a just cause that Irish blood was denied for. And it will be always so. When we see a just cause we will not hesitate, but we are not a race of mercenaries at the beck of the highest bidder, whatever his cause may be.

Thousands of our fellow-countrymen have fallen in the present war. I have no hesitation in *praying* for them. They went out from the highest possible and most generous of motives. They believed that the liberty of small nationalities was assailed, that religion was in danger, that the honour of

womanhood was at stake. These things are sacred to the Irish heart, as the Irish Khaki Press and politicians knew, and their cry achieved its object. But if the liberty of small nationalities was *not* assailed, if religion was *not* in danger, if the honour of womanhood was *not* at stake, if thousands of young Irishmen have been sent to certain and inevitable death on the battlefields of Europe by corrupt and venal Pressmen, trading on the credulity of the Irish character, only in order to save the reputations and to fulfil the selfish personal ambitions of baffled and discredited political charlatans, who, then, will solace the desolate hearts of weeping mothers and wives and sweethearts! Who will comfort fathers and brothers? Who will bring up the orphans? Who will compensate Ireland for this renewed hemorrhage of her life-blood, which we have so earnestly striven for years to arrest? Who will do these things? Surely none but the All-Powerful Deity, Who will visit mercy and vengeance alike with unsparing justice.

If there has been a great game of deceit and falsehood played by Press and politicians, there will surely be a day of reckoning. We shall await "The Day" with composure. The position of a neutral Irish nation is morally and, if we are wise, materially also, unassailable. The reputations of many men and of more than one institution in Ireland are staked on the issue of the great war, but the reputation of the Irish nation depends on nothing external to itself, but solely on the resolute hearts of Irish men and Irish women in Ireland.

ED. DALTON.

KHAKISM IN SONG

Notwithstanding that the war hymn of the British army is "It's a long way to Tipperary," that army is reported to have "established a moral ascendancy over the Germans." The only comment I am able to make on that is, that if it's true the Germans must be a sorry lot from a moral standpoint.

The songs of an army are no mean asset to it. Well might Fletcher use his often quoted exclamation "Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws." The songs of a nation are a reflex of its people's character. Song-making is practically a lost art in England. If the music hall atrocities which are sent over here to the Royal, the Empire, and the Tivoli and to the C. Y. M. Pantomime are a reflex of the English character, then I wish a permanent blockade of

the Irish Sea were effected. The character that is reflected in such songs as "Who were you with last night," "We all go the same way home," "Hold your hand out naughty boy," "Sister Susie sewing shirts for soldiers" is a character beneath even the contempt of manly, clean-minded manhood.

Of course there are worse music hall songs than these, only I cannot at the moment remember their names. I have been in the Theatre Royal Hippodrome and heard the most revolting and indecent drivel applauded by a crowded house, which would barely tolerate anything in the nature of a decent turn, but applauded with equal zest pictures of John Redmond, Asquith, Lloyd George, and King George, and when I bracket the names of these personages with the "modernism" so prevalent in our social life, I am sometimes accused of being unjust. The fact is as clear to me as daylight that Redmondism, West-Britonism, Hibernianism, vulgarity and immorality are synonymous terms.

By way of contrast to the English music hall songs, I have before me two books of German songs: songs of war, of love, of home, of nature. The patriotic war songs number many score. Every aspect of patriotism is treated. The main test is the test of the sword. The German believes that it is a sweet and proper thing to die for the Fatherland. That very word, Fatherland, is quite German in origin. For the Fatherland all is possible, all is desirable. "Deutschland uber Alles," which the Kaiser's troops have sung on so many victorious fields is a glorification of everything Germanic. German faith, German womanhood, German song, German unity, these are claimed as the heritage of the nation to be exalted and defended before all else in the world. Here is no jingoism, merely the magnifying glass of true patriotism applied to the common possessions of all humanity.

To-day there is a tide in the affairs of Ireland, which, taken at the flood, may lead on to great things. If we cannot fight our way to freedom at least we can sing our way to a proud realization of our rights. The world is at war. Patriotic feeling is appealed to in many lands and in many tongues. Let us, too, make ballads of "The Day." Let us exalt *our* heroes, appeal to *our* glorious past, and rouse *our* courage with a shout of song.

Some of four songs must be in Irish—not the Irish of defunct Munster poets, but simple Irish, speaking plainly and directly to the hearts of our Irish people. In "What is the German Fatherland"—a fine song—the question is asked, "Is it

Swabia? Is it Bohemia? Is it Bavaria?" The answer comes: "O! no, O! no, O! no. Where'er the German tongue resounds, there is the German Fatherland."

Ireland, too, is at war—at war with Anglicisation. Silly and indecent songs, alleged comics, and sickly, mawkish, sentimental twaddle must give way to songs with blood and fire in them. Eire, her heroes and her heroines, must be the burden of our songs and choruses. The glories of our Motherland, the valour of her sons, the virtue and the beauty of her daughters—these are themes for song in resurgent Ireland, and if we may not sing, if the bard be again proscribed, then let us watch—and pray God save Ireland!

WHAT'S DOING!

Four British soldiers went into the Office of a paper called "Scissors and Paste," in Abbey Street, Dublin, on Tuesday last, and took away all back numbers of that paper, and broke a table. They afterwards went to Mahon's Printery, and took away some type and machinery. It is rumoured that they acted under orders of the higher military authorities.

The staff at Headquarters of the Perverted Volunteers is busy preparing for the Revue on Easter Sunday.

Mushrooms will be plentiful between this and Easter.

The bars of the Theatre Royal have been compulsorily closed, and that house suffers from slackness of military patronage in consequence.

A reader of THE SPARK is anxious to secure a file of "The Nationist," edited by Lieut. T. M. Kettle, also a copy of "When we were boys," by Wm. O'Brien.

Cruise O'Brien gave some impersonations of "Prominent Politicians" at a recent social meeting of the I.W.F.L. The St. Patrick's Night Concert Committee should book this item.

There has been a great decrease in crime in Dublin within the past few months. The same

applies to London, and I noticed in an interview which a representative of "The Daily Mail" had with a burglar, that the latter attributes the slackness to the patriotism of the profession. If the inactivity of the Dublin wifebeaters is due to the same cause, it is very creditable to them.

"The dirty drunken Irish" may now be taken off the screen since Lloyd George's speech on the drunken English. Isn't it sad evidence of English decadence that these sots cannot be got to do their week's work, even when the fate of their country depends on it? Fancy these people having a voice in deciding Ireland's claims to self-government!

The Editor of THE SPARK has striven to avoid ambiguity in anything he has previously written, but notwithstanding this fact he has been misunderstood repeatedly, by readers, some of whom conclude from last week's references to Larkin, that the Editor is a "Larkinite." This is not the case, however, as the Editor has never spoken to Larkin in his life. The fact that he is not a "Larkinite" does not prevent him giving due honour to Larkin for the moral revolution he accomplished amongst the Dublin Workers. Larkin's opponents have had many opportunities for proving their interest in the welfare of the workers, but they take just the same interest in them as in their other cattle, work them whilst they can work, and then "scrap" them.

THE MAN FOR DUBLIN.

The name of Mr. Arthur Griffith has been chosen by a majority of readers of THE SPARK for the second of our silver crosses. What Ireland owes to Griffith, to his patriotism, to his self-sacrifice, and to his ability and earnestness will some day be told. The man's modesty prevents it being known to his contemporaries. I shall send him a cross in due course, and I will ask him to believe that it is but a very small indication of the esteem and affection with which he is regarded by the readers and the Editor of THE SPARK, and practically by all who have any knowledge of the evolution of the National Revival in Ireland.

Other names which secured a large number of votes were Professor Eoin Mac Neil, Alderman Thomas Kelly, Fr. T. Fitzgerald, O.F.M., Fr. Costello, and Mr. P. H. Pearse.

"THE DAY WE CELEBRATE."

I have yielded to the strong persuasion of a very persevering young man in allowing some of my very limited space this week to an advertisement of the St. Patrick's Night Concert in the Rotunda Rink. I am told that I need not give the event a "puff." I hope that a "puff" is unnecessary and that all that is staunch and true in Dublin will foregather at the Rink on March 17th. The proceeds, I am told, will be devoted to the Rooney Memorial Hall, Irish Language Fund, and Irish Volunteer Fund, three worthy objects which merit a "bumper" house.

ARE WE ALL HERE?

With the exception of "An Claidheambh," "Gaelic Athlete," and "The Leader," the Irish-Ireland movement has now no weekly mouthpiece, and when I say that I regret the fact. I in no way wish to reflect on the character and influence of the papers mentioned. It would be undoubted presumption on my part to suggest to the management of these papers improvements which would increase their influence and render them more effective to the cause.

In the absence of the connecting link of a weekly paper, it becomes incumbent on us to find other means of keeping our hand on the pulse of the country, and of letting the country know the condition of Irish-Ireland in the Capital.

The forthcoming Feisanna will afford a splendid opportunity to us of meeting our friends throughout the country. At Whitsuntide we have Feis Loc g-Carmain at Enniscorthy, a month later we have the Carlow Feis at Tullow, and at the end of July we have the Oireachthas at Dundalk.

It will be interesting meeting the workers for Irish-Ireland and comparing impressions, and also to note if we have lost many effective workers through the call of "King and Country."

The ranks of West-Britain have been thinned and it will be useful to review our forces to see, as the pantomime song has it, "Are we all here."

Billiards and Knuts, Etc.

Each succeeding post brings home to me the very amateurish character of my writing in THE SPARK. In some cases I am accused of saying too much and in others of not adequately explaining myself. I have before me two letters dealing with a recent article in which reference was made to the Hibernian "knuts" who knew more about "Billiards, Waltzing and Whist drives" than they did of politics. I am accused of saying that it is a crime to be proficient at these arts. Of course, I never said anything of the kind. What I do say is that politics is a serious science and requires careful study and that political issues such as were raised by Sinn Fein should not be left to the careless mercy of young men who were *politically* ignorant, because the time which they might have devoted to the study of politics was misspent in the music-hall, the billiard-room, the dance hall, and the card-room. A pig might be trained to score a "break of 50" before his breakfast every morning, or even to do the "Gaby Glide" at a Dublin dance club, but although pigs have been known to stray into the domain of politics, I think that a successful political "grunter" is as impossible as it is undesirable. It has been said that politics is a dirty science. It is not. Neither is it a purging bath in which unclean personages become renovated and purified. Unclean men who participate in politics are a factor which exists only because of the apathy and mental sloth of a big percentage of the people.

St. Patrick's Night GREAT NATIONAL CONCERT ROTUNDA RINK

Doors open at 7. Commencing at 8 p.m.

Admission - 3/- 2/- 1/- and 6d.

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