

GRACE  
SIFORD

# THE SPARK

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



Edited by ED. DALTON.

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## RED MURDER (?) IN DUBLIN

THE Recorder of Dublin on Wednesday last, again complimented the jury at the City Sessions on the decrease of crime in Dublin. No one can take exception to that. But I very much fear that if there has been a marked decrease in certain classes of crime during the past six months, there has, in other directions, been a dangerous increase, and the increase has passed unnoticed by the Press of Dublin. I will give two instances.

I have before me a sketch drawn by a respectable Dublin citizen of a scene he witnessed on Friday morning, March 5th, on the Canal Bank opposite Wellington Barracks. The sketch shows the half-naked body of a girl between the ages of fifteen and sixteen years, which had just been lifted from the canal at that spot. There was no mention of this in any Dublin paper, nor was any public inquest held.

On Sunday last, the body of a woman was recovered from the Liffey above Capel Street Bridge. This case, too, was unreported by the Dublin papers. Why?

I want to know (1) were this girl and this woman the victims of foul play? (2) why no public inquests were held, or (3) if held why not reported, and if this girl and this woman were murdered (4) what steps have been taken to apprehend their murderer or murderers?

I am not a vindictive man, I abhor capital punishment; it is unnecessary as a deterrent to this class of crime, but if only as a deterrent to others

with murderous instincts, in Dublin at present, the persons responsible for these crimes should be placed in the dock and adequate punishment administered to them.

This is a matter which concerns the safety of the realm, of life and property. We have become all too squeamish in Dublin if to gain a fictitious reputation for its crimelessness, we permit murder as foul as was ever charged against "Jack the Ripper" perpetrated in the darkness of night in our capital, to be glossed over and unrecorded by the Dublin Press.

So silent has been the Dublin Press on this matter, that one would be almost justified in concluding that the criminal or criminals were Press-men themselves.

And where is this matter to end? If the streets of Dublin are no longer safe to women after night-fall, what precautions are being taken to warn them, or to cope with the danger? And is it woman life only that is in peril?

These questions naturally arise to one's mind on learning the peculiar circumstances surrounding the discovery of the dead bodies, and I am informed that these are only two out of many similar cases. I hope that future decrease in crime in Dublin will be attained not by newspaper suppression, but by the speedy arrest and condign punishment of the prowling midnight assassins *whoever and whatever they may be.*

ED. DALTON.



## DUTY—AND THE WOMAN.

Again—and this time in a little Southern town of whose existence you would scarcely dream so remote is it from beaten paths, sheltered amongst the kindly hills from the whirr and roar of the very wise world outside—I came across our old friend the manifesto to my countrywomen to shun me as a plague unless I discarded my comfortable baggy tweeds and arrayed myself in Khaki. Oh! these interminable appeals and exhortations! To where shall I beget myself and escape them? In Omdurman days we spoke in horrified tones of Kitchener's Pigstickers, now we are pursued almost as mercilessly by his Billstickers. And yet this literature fascinates me. Every time I come across a fresh notice I must immediately halt to read it. I had already hurriedly read this appeal or whatever it is, to the women, but must needs devour it now again.

Half an hour previously I had been resting a few moments after dinner, reading a book of poems by Louis H. Victory, and I had been musing on these as I struck up against the notice outside the one-horse Post Office. A sentence which had previously escaped me now stood out, as it were, from all the remaining letterpress, in its daring, audacious truth, here it is—

"If your young man neglects his duty to Ireland the time may come when he will *neglect you*."

I was stunned, momentarily. I had laughed at Victory's affectation, as I fancied, in styling one of his poems "Truth in Hell;" but now I took little interest in him, he had suddenly become out-of-date, a back number in sensationalism. The authorities, whom we had hitherto looked upon as the enemies of our nation's progress, had enlisted the services of the common billsticker to proclaim throughout the length and breadth of Ireland that the first duty of an Irishman is to Ireland, and exhorted all young Irishwomen to make this the supreme test of an Irishman's worth in the future—Is he doing his duty by Ireland?

Is he doing all within his power to make this Irish land what the great God ordained it to be, the motherland, and the home of a God-loving, God-fearing, happy people? If he isn't, then he neglects his duty to Ireland. The Almighty did not design this fair island to be the prison-home of demoralized half-starved slaves. Who, I ask, has thwarted the Divine intention in Ireland? Who has manacled our land, dwarfed and stunted her

intellect in the schools, arrested her physical development in industry and agriculture? Who is the self-confessed robber who has reduced the nation to bankruptcy by overtaxation? Who is it that, having tried and failed to buy the soul of this nation, thought and tried to cow her spirit by unloosing throughout the land an armed garrison beside which the militarism of Germany appears by contrast as peace-intentioned as a children's tea-party? Who has done those things, ye canting knaves who see the woes of other lands, but cannot see the open sores of your own? Off with the blinkers, you idiots, and *look and think and see*? See your duty and do your duty: Yes; the man who neglects his duty to this nation is unworthy of the interest and esteem of any Irishman. The claims which it makes on the loyalty, the love, and the service of its young manhood cannot be surpassed by any earthly cause, and the man who fails to respond to those claims is not to be entrusted with even the most infinitesimal responsibility, much less the honour and happiness of any Irishwoman.

Irishwomen, the man who fails his country, who shirks his duty to that cause which has been sanctified by the best blood of Ireland in every generation, is worthy only of your scorn and contempt! See that he gets them whatever he wears.

## WORK AND PLAY.

Someone has kindly sent me the admirable syllabus of the Worker's Carnival to be held at Croydon Park, on Saturday, June 12th and Sunday, June 13th. There are to be competition in singing, dancing, reciting, and whistling. The songs specified for the competitions indicate that the organisers are alive to the influences of song on the lives and characters of the people, they are militantly National; and in the competition for the singing of two Irish street-ballads the syllabus wisely declares that "music hall songs" are debarred. I am glad to notice also a competition for a flute solo, and for this I hope there will be many entries, as it is an instrument which might more frequently be heard at our concerts, and should also be availed of by volunteer companies on the march. The industrial competitions are really practical and include baking, knitting, and toy-mayking. Baking, as far as I can learn, has become almost an extinct art in Dublin, and if the promoters of the Carnival succeed in interesting the girl workers in the art of



making a plain cake they shall have little difficulty in interesting the male workers in the equally interesting art of eating it. I shall be glad to enter for this, myself.

A number of athletic competitors go to complete a programme which should have a stimulating effect on the mental and physical activities of Dublin workers.

So for the Empire we'll stay here,  
And when the war is over O,  
We'll load a train with British beer  
And meet the boys at Dover O,

CHORUS :

Ugan na Vanban.

## THE WAR IN IRELAND

### A Nail in the Kaiser's Coffin

[Here is an interesting brewery advertisement from the West of England :—"Brewery Tax—Order a pint of beer and drive a nail into the Kaiser's coffin. If you can't manage a pint, order half-a-pint, and drive a tin tack. Drink the national beverage and help your country by paying your share of the War Tax."]

Air—"Green grow the Rushes O."

Rinse your throats, my boys, and cheer,  
Every day we're wiser O.  
By drinking floods of British beer  
We'll surely swamp the Kaiser O.

CHORUS :

Fill the tankards often O,  
The Hearts of Oak to soften O,  
We'll drink our ale, and drive a nail  
In the bloomin' Kaiser's coffin O !

Let fools go out to fight in France—  
Or in the land of Heligo,  
We'll stay at home and sing and dance  
And drink a health to Jellicoe.

CHORUS :

It's only those who want to fight  
That ought to face the battle O,  
It's twice as cosy here to-night  
As where the cannons rattle O.

CHORUS :

We'll sing "Britannia Rules the Waves,"  
And drink of tankards twenty full,  
For Britons never shall be slaves  
As long as beer is plentiful.

CHORUS :

It's fine to win a Royal Cross,  
And be a swanking Johnny O,  
It's fine to be an army boss,  
But drinking beer is bonny O.

CHORUS :

While the Allies are advancing by trenches in France, and the cause of small Nationalities is being daily established on a firmer foundation by the "Freeman's Journal," most people forget to note the progress of the War in Ireland. We do not sufficiently take to heart the flaring poster's command to remember Belgium ! That small country with an area one fourth of Ireland's has shown how a small people can fight for a great cause. We do not remember to have seen the Belgians fighting on the soil of Ireland against our ancient enemies, the Saxons, before John Dillon proclaimed his "truce" with England. But when the fight came to his own doors the little Belgian knew how to shoulder his gun, bid good-bye to his home, and do battle for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods. The cry "Remember Belgium" is good—for the Belgians. The cry "Remember Ireland" is sound sense—for Irishmen. The battle for Ireland goes merrily on. John Dillon's "truce"—unhappily suggestive word—is a one-sided affair. The enemy is within our gates. He teaches our children not to remember, but to forget, Ireland. He banishes our language from the schools. The little sons and daughters of Ireland have not the privilege accorded to the little Belgian folk to prattle in their native tongue. Our Post-office refuses to do business in Irish. Our Irish-addressed letters are delayed, opened, and eventually strayed. Our Mike O'Leary's must not remember their ancestors done to death in the penal days for devotion to religion, nationality and honour. A truce has been called. During the truce we can reckon our gains—population decreasing ; birth rate almost stationary ; industries stagnant ; the Irish Language spurned from the public life in Ireland, ignored by the "Law," boycotted in the school ; natural resources undeveloped ; communication with the outer world cut off ; free speech and freedom of the press banished—during the blessed "truce." Truly Irishmen, ye don't sufficiently realise the importance of the war on which we are engaged. Ye do not know whose turn it



may be next to fall. Then, in the language of the man with the ribbons, enlist to-day in one of the gallant regiments which is fighting for the cause we have all at heart. Join the Irish Language Movement, motto: *Ni Eireannach go Gaedhilgeoir*. Join the Irish Volunteers; motto: "Remember Ireland!" Join any branch of Ireland's service. Do not be a shirker. Ireland needs every son. Every department of National endeavour is undermanned and overworked. Take your place in the ranks and help to stop a bullet. There are too many neutrals—too many sailing under false colours. Spread the light. Learn a little bit of Irish history. Try to answer off-hand why Ireland once looked to Belgium for succour. Who drove our clerics to Louvain? Why should you fear to speak of '98, or even Bachelor's Walk? Ask yourself or your friend the present population of Belgium, then that of Ireland. The area of both. How the native language stands in both countries. And so on, and so on. And when you have realised that a country the size of Munster can make world history you will seriously ask why Ireland, the mother of heroes, is the Cinderella of the Nations. And while she is in rags and tatters, without arms, without language, without the right to rule her own household, you will see, that, after all, there is more than meets the thinking Irishman's eye in the adjuration to remember Belgium. In the wake of the thought of that gallant land fighting to preserve herself as a buffer between England and her foes, will flow other thoughts, thoughts of a free Ireland, ruling her own land and her people in her own right. And when next the Khaki picture-soldier halts your eye with his cry "Remember Belgium," you will pass on your way with the soliloquy "Remember Ireland."

## MUSIC HALL MORALITY.

In the "Free Ireland" movement we have persistently condemned what we have been obliged to term "music hall" songs, but it must not be assumed because of this, that our movement is puritanical, or that we are opposed to the music hall as an institution. "Music halls" are not necessarily an evil; they are on the contrary a potent instrument of reform, culture, and progress in town life. They are of secondary importance to only our public libraries, and in the winter months, par-

ticularly, might be made effective agencies for the healthy entertainment of our city population.

But the West British music hall, as we know it, is a blot on civilization. Its atmosphere is that of a British barrack yard or of a Cockney beer tavern. Its "wit" is of the crudest and most laboured type, it radiates around mothers-in-law, and soars to its sublimest height when some red nosed caricature of a male creature, impersonating a drunken man, attempts with sundry hiccoughs to describe his misadventures of the preceding night.

I am not by any means a "mollie coddle." I can appreciate what I call "a man's story" as keenly as most men, but I have no hesitancy in condemning the West British Music Hall performance not only as un-Irish, but as absolutely demoralising and brutalising.

I look forward to the advent of a music hall in Dublin where native inspiration and native talent will dominate, and where relaxation from business cares and worries will not be obtained at the sacrifice of our masculine traits and morals, but in harmony with them and with the ideals we have before us.

This is not the first time that I have discussed this matter, nor will it be the last. You have in Dublin all the potential talent for a native music hall, and I have met many talented entertainers throughout the country who should be known to you in the city, and will be known and appreciated when our native music hall is in being. You have in your midst many song-writers to whose work comparison with the West British twaddle would be insult, and I shall not offend them by it. They possess what the West British people have long since lost—a sense of humour, subtle, refined, and crisp—a deftness in the art of verse making which the West British never possessed, and a playful tenderness in the love-song only attained by men who have a respect and reverence for women which is impossible to the debased West British institution.

Here is scope for the promoters of the Rooney Memorial Hall. No man more clearly realised than Rooney the influence of the music hall on the life of the city; that influence can be fashioned as we please, if we have the courage, as we undoubtedly have the ability to attempt it. What say the builders of the Rooney Hall?

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