

GRACE
SPOFFORD

THE SPARK

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

Edited by ED. DALTON.

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PRICE ONE HALFPENNY

JOHN DILLON'S GLAD EYE

I WONDER is John Dillon really as great a political amadan as his speeches would warrant one in assuming. This being the Lenten season I imposed an additional penance on myself and read his three columns of blatherskite in Saturday's *Freeman*. Mr. Dillon commenced his important speech by complimenting the writer of the address of welcome on—his handwriting. He then presented himself with a few metaphorical bouquets, and proceeded to give a characteristically Dillonesque version of the criticisms which have been hurled, of course, at the Perverted Party. I wish Dillon would employ some other word than this one "hurled;" for a prospective Minister of Education it indicates a slipshod choice of words which in conjunction with a few other drawbacks make me seriously dubious of his qualifications for the post. Another ill-chosen word was the designation "soreheads" applied to those who do not consider Mr. Dillon an infallible politician. If Mr. Dillon hasn't got a sore head I should say that judging by his unpleasant expression of countenance some portion of his anatomy is irritated, and it is really fighting outside the rules of honourable political warfare to hurl this epithet at us when he knows that respect for the laws of decency prohibit our replying in like measure:

As usual, Mr. Dillon was retrospective. The array of his achievements always win expressions of satisfaction from him. One almost doubts if there were any real merit at all in the cause for which he was spokesman, and if the achievements have not been won in spite of the untenable case entrusted

to him, solely by virtue of his ability, self-sacrifice, and devotion, and "in the teeth of the malignant hostility of cranks (disgruntled) and sore heads."

I am little disposed to deny credit to Mr. Dillon for his achievements, I am as a matter of fact more disposed to *accuse* him of them. Before proceeding, however, to catalogue some of the more important of these I would like first of all to take off some of the gilt paint with which Mr. Dillon has generously allowed himself to be covered. One of my earliest recollections as a small boy is of standing on a chair cheering for "Dillon and O'Brien." If there are any two men on earth who should understand each other, as far as it is humanly possible for two men to do, these two are John Dillon and William O'Brien. In view, then, of the opinions of each other which they have mutually expressed, I, as an unprejudiced third party, beholden to neither, and judging them solely as politicians, deliberately denounce them for as great a brace of imposters as ever bamboozled a credulous people. Some of Dillon's dupes refer to his "sufferings" and his "sacrifices." I hope that as an Irishman, and consequently a unit of the Irish nation, I shall never be guilty of ingratitude to any man who has really suffered for Ireland, but if I live to John Dillon's age and have eaten as many square meals as he has done, I shall not consider that I have been much of a martyr or that any great suffering has been exacted from me. I shall have the decency to thank God for having blessed me with years to serve my country; I shall not ask to be my own judge, and I

shall not appeal to my own carefully selected and packed jury for a verdict on my conduct, but I shall submit myself to be judged by the unerring tribunal of facts and figures, and abide by the verdict which they award.

I respectfully suggest to earnest men and women who cannot understand why certain individuals in Ireland, my humble self included, are opposed to Parliamentaryism, apart altogether from its more recent Perversion, that the following facts and figures are open to only one interpretation, and that is, that judged by its results Parliamentaryism is about the rottenest policy that any nation could pursue.

Parliamentarianism originated in 1871. In that year the population of Ireland was 5,412,377. In 1907, the latest year for which I have the figures, it was 4,375,000, showing in 36 years of Dillonism a decrease of 1,037,377. I ask John Dillon where are those men, women, and children gone to? In a recent speech, his nominal leader, John Redmond, referred to the "sweeping victories" which he and his party had achieved. Well, where have they swept those million and thirty seven thousand souls to? And if this was merely "surplus" population well rid of in order to make competition less keen, and life easier for the survivors, how does it come to pass, that taxation per head in Ireland in 1871 was £1 7s 10d, whilst in 1907 it had risen to £2 3s 3d? How is it that in 1871 the amount of land under tillage in Ireland was 5,621,437 acres whilst in 1904 it had fallen to 4,632,833, and how is it that the number of people in receipt of outdoor relief in 1871 in Ireland was 69,791, whilst in 1904 it had increased to 102,000?

This, my unbought countrymen, is the test of the efficiency of any policy. Bills "on the Statute Book" and columns of rameis in the doddering reeking old *Freeman* notwithstanding, I declare to you that the policy of the Irish Parliamentary Party (even before the perversion era) has plundered and desolated this island. It has scattered its population to the ends of the earth; it has weighted it down with unjust taxation, and by the destruction of its industries and the reduction of its tillage, it has handed Ireland over to economic damnation.

Is this an unjust conclusion to draw from the figures I have quoted? Then draw your own. But bear in mind that what Nationalist Ireland wants is not paper victories in the British Parliament, but full and complete control by Irishmen and Irishwomen of this island's destinies, that it may become what God designed it to be, not a cattle

ranch, or a cabbage garden, nor even a military incubator; but an independent nation of upright fearless citizens, yielding allegiance to none but Almighty God and our Motherland. Choose your flag. Ireland a nation, or Ireland a cabbage garden (with some mushrooms).

ED. DALTON.

ROONEY MEMORIAL HALL.

The Hon. Secretary writes me—"6 Harcourt Street, March 29th. A chara—Many thanks for the kindly interest you have shown in our efforts to erect the Rooney Memorial Hall. We are endeavouring to raise adequate funds for the purpose, and if any of your readers would like to aid us either by selling or buying tickets for our prize-drawing, I shall be only too glad to give them to them on request. The prizes are valuable and include a motor bike, and a "Lucania" bicycle. I may also mention that we have been asked to take charge of the celebration of the Clontarf Centenary, and although this will be a year late, we contemplate doing so. The proceeds will also go to our building fund."

THE DUBLIN SMILE.

It is a great pity that the occasion of the annual Congress of our National Athletic Organization should be allowed to pass without some form of official recognition from the Nationalist citizens in the form of an entertainment to the delegates. Nationalist Dublin should be ever on the alert to assert itself and to prevent the wire-pullers and stage managers misrepresenting it. Many of the delegates will doubtless be deceived into thinking that Dublin takes the mushroom volunteers seriously. As a matter of fact Dublin is only laughing at them. In Dublin the mushrooms are composed in the main of a few hundred animated beer barrels with a leaven of weak-kneed, knock-kneed professional young men, who are thinking only of the bread-van, and which side can bestow the most patronage. Not being conspicuous for their professional abilities, they must disguise themselves as mushrooms that they may get a "leg up."

YOU ARE TO BLAME

"I don't blame the Corporators" I wrote in a recent issue when dealing with the excision of Kuno Meyer's name from the roll of Dublin Freemen. The personnel of the Dublin Municipal Council forbids one to expect anything better from that body. The majority of its members probably represent only the higher Corporation officials who are nominally their servants, but in reality their masters, and a minority of the electors.

Barely half of the qualified electorate troubles to exercise the vote each January at the Municipal elections, with the result that whatever kind of creature, by whatever means he chooses to employ, secures a majority from the votes polled, is duly declared elected to sit, act and vote for a term of years in the Dublin Municipal Council, and has a controlling voice in the Civic Government of Dublin for that period.

I do not blame these men for anything they may do as members of the Dublin Corporation. I blame those, who by their negligence, indifference and apathy, make it possible for such men to be elected. The people responsible for the high rates, bad housing and Municipal jobbery in Dublin are the shirkers, the men and women who are so slavish as to pay rates without seeking representation on the body to which they are paid. These people will sit at home in their arm-chairs and chuckle and nod their sage heads when they read in their *Evening Mail* of some fresh Corporation atrocity, and they'll say to each other, "I told you so, but what could you expect." They never as much as stir a finger to remedy the condition of affairs on Cork Hill, but leave the task to a handful of devoted public-spirited men who neglect their immediate personal concerns to guard the honour of the Irish Capital.

The shirkers are responsible for the presence, on the Municipal Council of this city, of immoral and corrupt men, of thieves, of food adulterators and of child poisoners. "The needless tear of a little child" said Cardinal Manning, "is a blood blot on the earth," and the wails and the high mortality of Dublin child life through alleged milk, and rotten housing, must be laid at the doors of the lazy, smug, self-satisfied Dublin citizens who are too superior to interest themselves actively in the administration of Civic affairs.

They, to be sure, did not seek the vote. No! nor did they seek to be born. But life and the

franchise carry each their responsibilities, and sometime an account shall be demanded. Is it too much to ask of the slackers that they attend to the registration of their votes at the next revision courts, and that having secured the right to vote, they exercise that vote, and, for Heaven's sake, send a few, clean, capable men or women into the Dublin Corporation, to co-operate with the mere handful already there.

A CAP FOR SOMEONE

There is someone in Dublin to whom the following quotation from R. L. Stevenson applies:—

"My companion enjoyed a cheap reputation for wit and insight. He was by habit and repute a satirist. If he did occasionally condemn anything or anybody who richly deserved it, and whose demerits had hitherto escaped, it was simply because he condemned everything and everybody. While I was with him he disposed of St. Paul with an epigram, shook my reverence for Shakespeare in a neat antithesis, and fell foul of the Almighty Himself, on the score of one or two out of the ten commandments. Nothing escaped his blighting censure. At every sentence he overthrew an idol, or lowered my estimation of a friend. I saw everything with my eyes, and could only marvel at my former blindness. How was it possible that I had not before observed A's false hair, B's selfishness, or C's boorish manners? I and my companion, methought, walked the streets like a couple of gods among a swarm of vermin; for everyone we saw seemed to bear openly upon his brow the mark of the apocalyptic beast. I half expected that these miserable beings, like the people of Lystra, would recognise their betters and force us to the altar, in which case, warned by the fate of Paul and Barnabas I do not know that my modesty would have prevailed upon me to decline. But there was no need for such churlish virtue. More blinded than the Lycaonians, the people saw no divinity in our gait, and as our temporary godhead lay more in the way of observing them healing their infirmities, we were content to pass them by in scorn.

I could not leave my companion, not from regard or even from interest, but from a very natural feeling, inseparable from the case. To understand it, let us take a simile. Suppose yourself walking down the street with a man who continues to sprinkle the crowd out of a flask of vitriol. You would be

much diverted with the grimaces and contortions of the victims; and at the same time you would fear to leave his arm until his bottle was empty, knowing, when once among the crowd, you would run a good chance yourself of baptism with his biting liquor. Now my companion's vitriol was inexhaustable.

It was perhaps the consciousness of this, the knowledge that I was being annointed already out of the vials of his wrath, that made me fall to criticising the critic, whenever we had parted."

Cap fit cap wear.

DER TAG—BOW WOW.

The resolution-mongers have withdrawn "at no far distant date" from circulation, and have replaced it by the "Home Rule on the Statute Book" mummery. The Day for which generations of Parliamentarians have sighed, resolved and ranted has at length dawned (hear hear.) Aye, dawned over the hill tops (hear, hear.) This is the first year of the new era, poor old Ireland is at last *free*, the field is fought and *won*. On Easter Sunday morning the Sunburst will shine out over the *Freeman's Journal* Trade Mark, the Bank of Ireland, the Old House on College Green, and if the unfortunate Wolf Dog is missing, it will probably be because he got the pip waiting and died from old age, or because being a consistent dog he couldn't do violence to his traditions by eating meat on Friday, which was practically one of the prices he had to pay for the Home Rule Kennel, and he might have died in consequence of his hunger strike. In any event, I am quite sure that an accomplished wire-puller and stage-manager such as Joe Devlin is, won't be beaten for a substitute to complete the picture, even if he has to borrow "Mulligan's Terrier Dog" from MacGarvey, and if Mac has already given away the pup as a birthday present, there's the alternative of getting someone from the late Young Ireland Branch U.I.L. to "impersonate" a Wolf Dog, as the latter will only have to *look* wise and give an occasional bark, both of which are, or rather were, stock accomplishments of the Yibs. If the "brute" is to assume the traditional pose, the impersonation will be quite a simple matter. But if, on the other hand, the *pose* must follow all other Parliamentary traditions, and the picture must show a dog rampant on a cabbage patch, I suggest that the tail be utilised as a flag staff, and that a large green flag with a small Union Jack in the corner, or a large Jack with a small

green, or whatever the dickens Johnnie Ronayne, the flag specialist, would suggest, be suspended therefrom and might be waved by the bull pup in the intervals of the barking. It should not be overlooked, however, that if this second pose is to be adopted, the impersonator must not be a vegetarian.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. N. Maw—Yes, I know most things as you suggest; but I'm not much at physiognomy. Get a photograph of Kitchener and study his character from that, it will be bit of practise for you, then check your conclusions by reading an account of his achievements.

Mushroom—No, I don't believe the crimes you refer to were perpetrated by any member of the "Telegraph" staff or of the felon setting volunteer committee.

Gertie—Yes, he is a teetotaler anyway. I cannot yet answer your other questions, but will investigate.

Arran Quay—Cannot say yet. In case it comes off, however, rub soap on your feet. The flexibility of your backbone is probably "constitutional," but might be remedied by serious mental effort.

Several Others—I cannot under any circumstances publish anything in the SPARK unless vouched for by the name and address of sender.

"HEROINES AND EVERYDAY PEOPLE."

This is the title of a lecture to be given by Miceal O'Hanrahan under the auspices of Cumann na mBan, Dublin Central Branch, at 25 Parnell Square, on Friday, April 9th, at 9 o'clock. Readers of the SPARK are invited to attend. Admission free.

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