



Edited by ED. DALTON.

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PRICE ONE HALFPENNY

# REVENGE OR PERVERSION ?

I HAVE stood by a grave within the past few days—the grave of a man of my own clan, who fought in '98 for Ireland's freedom and fell with an English bullet in his heart. I have gone there, to his grave, that in the presence of his clay I might examine my own conscience. A good many years ago I recollect tracing out his name on the worn headstone, and finding that I myself bore that name, I made many enquiries concerning him, and how he came by his death. I learned that he died in vain, that he was a *failure*, that the object he died for was unattained. And the question formed itself in my child-mind—would he have fought and would he have faced death if he thought there was the chance that he would fail. Did he value freedom for Ireland in an intimate personal sense, that he might experience it himself and benefit by it, or did he fight for it from an unselfish and wholly unpersonal motive because it was the right thing for an Irishman to do. And I was satisfied and proud to bear his name because of it, that he entered the fight regardless of personal consequences, because it was his duty to fight as long as a vestige of foreign domination remained in Ireland. And in those early days of mine I mentally resolved that as I bore his name so would I bear his spirit, and I too would fight, by whatever means God sent to my hand, until this Irish land was freed from foreign control, and until the Irish name was freed from the brand of slavery which voluntary submission to alien rule would impose on it.

And during the years which have elapsed since

then this thought has not at any time been wholly absent from my mind.

Why should the people of this nation be subject to outside interference? To, say, English interference. Are we an inferior people, and did the Almighty make a mistake in giving us a country of our own? And if not, then we should never bend the knee to the foreigner, and we should show our gratitude to God who gave us this land by fighting the usurping infidel who holds it by force, however and whenever we can.

What do we care about the character of foreign government in Ireland, what is it to us whether it is benevolent or whether it is vicious and despotic, our chief concern is that it is foreign, and in accepting it, we brand ourselves with the mark of inferiority, the brand of the liar. We are not inferior to the English, and whether they came here in 1172, or whether their coming coincided with the German entry into Belgium in 1914, they have no damned *right* here, and that is, and will be our case to the end.

Right is right even if it hasn't a rag on its back, and wrong is wrong even if backed by the greatest fleet of Dreadnaughts in the worlds' 700 years' usage will not convert wrong into right, nor can we plead respect for its old age, when we seek an excuse to evade the duty of fighting it. Wrong can employ many disguises. It has appeared to our weak-kneed leaders in the role of a Santa Claus with a sack laden with £400 packets, but be its disguise what it may, the Angel of Peace, the



Defender of Small Nationalities, the smirking Britannia or the howling Lion, we shall pierce its disguise and decline its worship and offer it combat as time and circumstance may permit.

This grave-side introspection has been forced on me because again of Mr. John Dillon's haunting eloquence. Not that I am very seriously affected personally by anything Mr. Dillon could say, but because in his blundering, stupid way he voiced an ignorant and widely cherished conception of the Nationalist position when he declared in Mayo that those opposed to him and his fellow-perverts advocated nothing but a policy which consisted wholly in the passion for revenge and in the consuming desire to pay England back for all the wrong she had inflicted on Ireland.

For my own part, and I think the feeling is universal, I have not the remotest desire for revenge on the English because of the deeds of their ancestors, and as to paying England back for her misdeeds in Ireland—that to my mind is too tall an order for the resources of this world. But I do think that Mr. Dillon might bring his gombeen experience to bear on the financial settlement with England which his party affect to be able to accomplish and let us know what is the amount of the rebate due to Ireland on the findings of the Financial Relations Commission. Having been knocked down, kicked, and robbed, it scarcely fits the case to describe Ireland's demand for compensation or indemnity as an all-consuming passion for revenge. If this is the new definition of revenge, I presume it will hold in Mr. Dillon's business relations in Ballaghaderin as it does in his political relations outside it.

ED. DALTON.

## BEER AND BRITANNIA.

"Heroic" is the word the English papers use to describe their King's example in deciding to refrain from the use of alcoholic drink during the period of the war. I would only employ this word in such a connection myself when it indicated some great act of will power or display of intense moral strength on the part of a particularly hardened drunkard, but I suppose the English know their own language better than I do. If I had a leader I would be very exacting in my demands on his morality, and an action such as this of King George is just such a one as would keep me a loyal subject to him. I shall watch with interest the effect

which their King's example will have on the habits of the drunken English.

My interest in this drinking question, however, is antecedent to the war, and centres on the moral, the national, and the economic aspect of it. Moral strength has been always demanded of servitors in the "Free Ireland" movement. Earnest participation in that movement has entailed on us a certain measure of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Not that we were consciously seeking to lead a higher moral life than our countrymen outside our ranks, but because to us, morality and Nationalism are synonymous. There are possibly Nationalists who will deny that definite statement. They cannot deny, however, that the perfect Nationalist cannot be an immoral man, nor will they deny that the wholly immoral man could be an effective Nationalist. These habits of self-denial and self-sacrifice were little burthensome, if I may put it so, because they were essential to our equipment as Nationalists, and in voluntarily adopting them we but acted, so to speak, as the athlete in training for some great feat of strength or endurance; we discarded all encumbrances as a natural course, knowing that it was necessary if we meant to win. This it is that distinguishes the progressive political movement in Ireland from the retrograde and demoralising policies of the various parliamentary factions. It imposes duties and obligations on its adherents other than shouting or marching in processions, and the novelty of being asked to make a sacrifice for political principles is too great an innovation for a political school whose adherents are interested only to the extent of the personal gain they can derive from following its teaching.

Temperate habits in relation to the use of alcoholic drink are essential to men and women who seriously endeavour to forward the "Free Ireland" propaganda. Strict abstinence is not demanded, but it is wholly unthinkable that the movement could tolerate within its ranks anyone who exceeded the line of discretion in this aspect. The movement in the first place demands that its adherents should have the use of and control over their senses and this, of course, is palpably impossible to the drink victims. That, to my mind, was the real virtue of the Sinn Féin movement. Its development was promoted or retarded just as its members by their own actions decided. It had no political Mikado to keep it within the bounds of orthodoxy. Its object—the independence of Ireland—was to be attained through National self-development by the sovereign will of the people. That is a trifle high-sounding, but to reduce it to a



commonplace term, it might be said, that a nation is no worse and no better than its people, and that the people can make the nation as they choose. That, of course, is political heresy to a Parliamentarian, or as our Soldier-Professor once put it "Political Christian Science." These people think that legislation is necessary even to put them to bed at night, but to men of character, to men with will power, and to men to whom the Ten Commandments are something real and vital in life, the legislation of an alien parliament plays but a very minor influence, under existing conditions, in the National life of a people.

Excessive drinking in Ireland is due to Parliamentarianism—that is the policy of shirking personal responsibility towards the nation. It is a political paganism which claims god-like powers for its devotees. They can perform all that is really good and necessary for the nation. Anything which doesn't originate by and from them is either evil, or is unessential. Leave everything to them, and everything has been, dumbly and unquestioningly, left in the hands of 80 rather commonplace men whilst the people of the nation own no responsibility now beyond posing for the cinematograph and passing votes of implicit confidence in their masters.

So long as men and women are left under the delusion that their National salvation can be accomplished by proxy, just so long will they continue to regard their individual actions as having no bearing on the fate of the nation, but the policy which brings home to them their individual responsibility, that their every thought and their every act, is the thought and the act of a unit of the nation, is the only one which can really exercise an influence capable of being seen and felt by the remaining few millions of our population who aren't paid £400 each per annum for extolling the legislative spooks of the British Parliament.

## TAKING THE CAKE

I am really a modest man, if I were otherwise it would be my undoing. Were I to accept, as deserved, the estimate which many good-natured readers have formed of me, I should need a larger size hat each week. Of course, I am more than pleased at the kind things that readers have said to me in their letters, but these are more an indication of the goodness of their own hearts than of any real merit in what I have written in THE SPARK.

During last week I received a mild reproof for writing that I heard cake-making was a lost art in Dublin. The reproof takes the agreeable form of three "home-made cakes," and I have accepted the reproof and pronounce them very good indeed. I hardly needed this evidence, however, of the fact that there are many efficient makers of home-made bread in the city, nor did I suggest, as one reader accuses me with, that women workers might devote their spare time "to hanging over the kitchen oven instead of being out of doors enjoying fresh air and sunshine which they need as badly as the male sex." What is the use of readers accusing me of expressing such views as these? I have never said that freedom and privilege were a monopoly of one sex, but it would be equally absurd to deny that each had its peculiar talent and scope of activity, and bread-making is a function at which women shine. I am particularly keen on home-made bread myself, but I have never eaten any of my own making yet, nor have I had the courage to ask those who have what they thought of it. I have a male friend who carried his sex prejudice so far on one occasion as to decline to partake of an appetising meal of bacon and eggs and home-made bread, because as I boastfully told him they were cooked by a man. He immediately discovered faults with the meal that before were unobserved, and only I was as hungry as a Volunteer, after a strenuous day on the hills, I might have cried off also.

I attach a good deal of importance to this matter of home-made bread, as it is undeniable that many of our modern physical ills are attributable to the factory-made food, in which so many adulterants are used to improve its appearance and to save expense in using proper materials. Readers needn't think that I am about to start a competition on the lines of the "Daily Mail" Standard Bread row of a few years back, about which we now hear so little, but at the risk of being accused of an ulterior motive for my insistence in the matter, I again direct attention to the home-baking competitions in connection with the Workers' Carnival at Croydon Park on June 12th and 13th. An advertisement for this event appears in this issue. An advertisement has also been sent to me for a new book by Mr. James Connolly, entitled "The Re-Conquest of Ireland." As I have not read this yet, and as I intend to advertise only what I can personally recommend, I am holding up the advertisement for the present. This I am sure is an unusual thing to do, but THE SPARK is an unusual little paper, and there are few examples in the paper world which it cares to follow.



## THE NEW ERA

Home Rule is on the Statute Book, and consequently this is the first year of the New Era. Here are a few of the blessings which it has brought us—Suppression of *Sinn Fein*, *Ireland*, *Sissors and Paste*, *Irish Freedom*, *Fianna Fail* and *Irish Worker*. Irish Nationalists dismissed from their employment without cause and deported from their respective localities. Importation of arms into *Nationalist districts* prohibited, and seizures made on dealers in said districts. The following American and Irish-American papers prevented circulating in Ireland—*Irish World*, *Irish American*, *Gaelic-American*, *Fatherland*, *Catholic Times*, *Butte Independent*, *Leader* (San Francisco), *Irish Review*, *Harlem Argus*, *New York Freeman's Journal*, *Vital Issue* and *The Register*. To compensate for these restrictions on the press, our own *Freeman's Journal* has been adopted by the War Office, and 40,000 copies of the St. Patrick's Day number of the *Weekly Freeman* were officially dispatched to the front.

## The Invasion of Ireland.

### CLONTARF CENTENARY

Now, when the air is ripe with rumours of possible invasion, a peculiar significance attaches to the Clontarf centenary and Brian's triumph over the invaders in 1014. The commemoration will be held on Friday, April 23rd in the Dublin Mansion House, and the oration will be given by Mr. J. J. O'Kelly (Scelig), whose reputation as a speaker and writer are world-wide. A concert of songs, recitations and music of the period will be a great feature of the event, and a historical tableau illustrative of Brian's achievement will also figure in the programme.

## MUSICAL AND ATHLETIC CARNIVAL CROYDON PARK.

SATURDAY and SUNDAY, JUNE 12th and 13th

Competitions in SINGING, DANCING,  
Whistling, Athletics, Industrial Section, etc., etc.

Send for copy of Syllabus to Secretary, Liberty Hall, Beresford Place. Valuable Prizes. Entries close on April 17th.

## Laying the Blame

A respected correspondent writes me that he refrains from voting in the Municipal elections each January because no honest man stands as candidate in his ward. I think my correspondent is wrong, that is if we agree as to the meaning of the term *honest*. Honesty alone is not sufficient qualification for a member of the City Council, and this probably accounts for my correspondents' abstention from voting. I join issue also with him when he declares "It would be impossible to get enough honest men who would be able to devote their time to public work," to enter the Corporation. I have a higher opinion of the morality of Dublin than that. Dublin teems with honest men but they are asleep. That is the problem as it presents itself to me, how shall I apply THE SPARK so as to awaken them? When Dublin really wakes up to the condition of affairs on its public boards things will happen.

## CONCERT & DRAMA

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For I.V. Co. D. Batt 4.

All Leading Artistes and Actors.

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