

THE SPARK

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

Edited by Ed. DALTON

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DUBLIN, SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 1916.

PRICE ONE HALFPENNY

WRONG BAIT.

"I want you to join the Engineers and go to work in England."

"How much will I get?"

"Four-and-six a day."

"Will you guarantee that I am not put in the firing line?"

"Yes; you will only be put at the back."

"But will you guarantee that I won't be shot?"

"Well, no; I couldn't guarantee that. There will be an odd bomb or stray bullet even at the back."

"Whatever about the four-and-six a day; I think I'll remain at home at present as long as I can get enough to eat."

"Oh, but you will get on very well in the army, and you won't be long getting promotion and an increase of salary; and then look at the great honour of fighting for your country."

"None of my people were ever in the army. We never looked upon it as an honour. We are not of the breed of soldiers."

"Oh, but times are changed now. You will be fighting for Ireland this time."

"Yes; anybody that would go along the Ballinrobe Road and look at the fine rich lands of the plains of Mayo on one side given over to sheep and bullocks, and then look up at the other side, and see the houses of the people crowded together amidst the rocks and heath of the Partry mountains, would surely say that England had done a lot for Ireland, and that fighting for England is just the same thing as fighting for Ireland."

"Well, I am giving you the preference of a job and I will stand to you and see you all right. There is no use talking about the past,"

"But I am not talking about the past. Look! Are not the bullocks there still, and the people are as poor as ever, and they going away to America every day. What am I going to fight for?"

"You are fighting for Home Rule. The Home Rule Act is passed and signed by the King. It is only hung up till after the war."

"Yes; it is only hung up like Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien. I should like to live to see Home Rule in force just to see how it will work. And if I go to the war I may be killed, and then I will never know what it is like to have Home Rule."

"I was always a great friend of your father; he often worked under me, and I thought a lot about him."

"And because you thought a lot about my father you are going to give me the chance of getting myself shot. That is a great preference surely. Give us Home Rule for a few years, and let us see all the grass lands divided up amongst the people, and then, perhaps, when the next big war comes along you will have a better chance of coming to a son of mine and telling him how much you thought of his father, and that you were the means of settling him on a nice farm, and giving him something to occupy his mind, while he was forgetting the past."

But surely you don't want the Germans to come over here? They will destroy the churches in Ireland like they did in Belgium."

"The Germans cannot get over here. Isn't the British Navy mistress of the sea? How can they get over here as long as their fleet is bottled up in the Kiel Canal? Surely you don't think

"Yes; but are you going to hide in safety behind the British Navy without doing anything to help it? Isn't that a cowardly thing to do?"

"It would, if it was for the sake of Ireland the British Navy held the sea. It is not for the sake of Ireland, but for the sake of England. If the British Navy was beaten the Germans could starve England in a few months, and then the war would be over, and there would be no necessity for the Germans to come in and destroy our churches in Ireland."

"But would not the Germans come over then and take all the rich lands in Ireland for themselves?"

"If the Germans win they will have all the big, rich Colonies of England at their disposal, and they will not have people enough to go everywhere. A lot of Germans have been killed in this war, and they will require all the Germans they have to keep their factories busy for a long time to come. They will have the trade of the world at their disposal. All the Germans that can be spared will go down to look after their trade in Turkey and Egypt, and all the other countries of Asia and Africa that will be opened up to them by the war in the Balkins. Even if a few thousand Germans could be spared to come and settle in Ireland, they would find it the best of their play to make friends with the Irish. It is a long way from here to Germany. Even England, big a savage as she is in Ireland, has treated all the far parts of her Empire well. Ireland, if it was a part of the German Empire, would be one of the far parts, and Germany would have to treat us well. She would have enough to do building jails and packing juries to keep the English down. She would be very glad to make friends of the Irish."

"Oh, I see you are a Sinn Feiner."

"Well, maybe I am. I didn't know what kind of a man a Sinn Feiner was. But if it is a man that does not swallow everything that an Englishman says to him, then I suppose I am a Sinn Feiner." (Curtain).

REV. MICHAEL O'FLANAGAN.

The Dublin "National Festival Committee" have again secured the Rotunda Rink for St. Patrick's Night, and I think, we may trust them to organize a celebration worthy of the Festival. I make this preliminary announcement that the event may be borne in mind by the various societies when making their arrangements for the National Holiday.

DUBLIN STREET BALLADS

Alderman Thomas Kelly will give an address on the above at 6 Harcourt Street, on Wednesday, January 26th, at 8 30.

THE FLAG GIRL.

I knew she was there without looking. When I raised my eyes they met the vision. Just a pair of merry eyes and two yellow plaits of hair, a British battleship. It was the smile that captivated me; it was such an all-embracing smile. It pervaded and illuminated the office. It annoyed me because I could not share in it. For I knew her object—to sell flags for the sake of certain befooled Irish soldiers fighting for England.

While my looks were surly, my heart was moved. It is hard to resist the appeal of young girlhood gaily decked out and all unconscious of the proximity of a hostile force. She caught somebody's eye, and raised her flag-boxes above the counter. Then I had time to admire the pillar-like neck supporting the round young face, and the eyes and cap and yellow plaits. Just then the smile became more pronounced, revealing white teeth well cared for. It was that thought jabbed me again and prevented kinder feelings prevailing. Here was this lassie, thought I, full of joyous life, gently nurtured, pretty, and quite innocent, selling flags for soldiers, while many of her countrywomen—for she was obviously Irish—were losing the bloom on their cheeks in the service of Ireland.

"Will you buy a flag?" was what she said, as she raised the boxes in her neatly-gloved hands.

A neutral replied quite politely that she was late: other ladies had been there before her and gathered the harvest of loose coin. Whereat her smile collapsed into a laugh, a contralto laugh, the most fascinating of all girlish laughter. Reluctantly she lowered her boxes, still smiling, and with another laugh and a "thank you" had gone before I knew the door had opened to let her go.

Only when she had really disappeared—cap, eyes, yellow hair, and all—did I feel the sense of loss. While in her actual presence my national feelings had restrained my natural admiration for the joy of life, of which she was such a pretty—though substantial—embodiment.

No sooner had she vanished, than I developed a strong and uncurbed desire to have her back again: to look her straight and pleasantly in the eye: to ask her did she really know nothing of the Nation that was hers and the people whom she should love. And under the influence of my kind and pleasant leading, I fancied her becoming interested in this old country and its fine manly men—like myself—eager and anxious to make such pretty cailini as she and her like the citoyennes of a Free and Independent Ireland. Somehow the office faded, and the background that they could send a big army over in submarines."

was the yellow furze-clad side of the Dublin hills overlooking the city lying in a mist below. And I remember asking her, out there on the windy hill, if that was not a land worth fighting for? And, confidentially, I told her that I personally was engaged in an enterprise which might have for Ireland a great and glorious outcome.

"But what about yourself?" she asked in a tone of concern. I never felt bigger or taller or more commanding than when I told her that I was prepared to take the risk. And that down in that city, which to me was Baile Atha Cliath, a young woman would lie awake at nights for many a weary night and cry her fill.

"But she will be proud of you—I would be proud of you," she said, as if to herself.

It must have been the door banging that brought me back again with a great start from serious blue eyes on a yellow hill to the drab and neutral tints of the office.

SUN YAT.

AIDS TO RECRUITING.

A number of letters incriminating them with certain "outrages" in the States have been "found" in possession of German officials on their arrival at Falmouth. The nature of the disclosures contained in those letters is quite in keeping with those "found" in letters on the persons of dead German officers. England's enemies are always such stupid beings that they never take the precaution of destroying evidence of their guilt. You never find Englishmen neglecting such precaution.

I am really surprised that more letters haven't been "found." I suggest that it is high time a letter was found on the person of a dead German disclosing the secret ambition of the Kaiser to depose the Pope and to occupy the Papal chair himself. This "find" would be a great stimulus to recruiting in the South, the East, and the West of Ireland. The "discovery" in the Autumn of 1914 of a German plan to poison the water at Roundwood reservoir was responsible for a number of accessions to the khaki flag. I am quite surprised it wasn't discovered that the children's toys exported from Germany to the United States this winter were coated with a deadly poisonous paint, with the object of destroying American children. I am also surprised that up to the present a "bomb," bearing the legend "Made in Germany," has not been discovered under a seat in our Pro-Cathedral, or convenient to the Archbishop's Palace at Drumcondra. It is also within the range of practical recruiting methods to "discover" a plot to blow up the Lakes of Killarney. This would put a dash of manhood into the music-hall-Irish-patriots, who grow so maudlin when they hear a Cockney howler "honouring" the Irish capital by singing an "Irish" song.

Then, again, it is surely possible to arrange for the bombardment of an Irish seaport town, in the dead of night, by the "Germans," of course, out of pure destructiveness. This also would stimulate recruiting. I need hardly say how admirably an Zeppelin raid would promote recruiting, and now that Ireland is getting "her share" of munition-work, we have an all sufficient motive to account for such raid. All the bombs dropped would, of course, be labelled "Made in Germany."

MATT THE GNAT.

Indignant, yes, but no Irish Nationalist can feel surprised at the raid made by the British Treasury on the grants for Irish Education, a raid instigated by you, Matthew Nathan, that Treasury's representative in Ireland. When one considers the settled policy of spoliation adopted by England towards Ireland, this latest attack is a mere natural development. The plundering of Ireland is a continuity. But I did not expect that a slim Hebrew official like you would be so clumsy as to send practically all Ireland into, what some timid people call, the "extreme" camp. But the crime is so audacious and brutal that there is no other course open to any Irishman of spirit. Since the war Irish taxation has been increased by eight million pounds per annum, although in the pre-war debates on the Home Rule Bill, and on the robbing Budgets which preceded it, we were told Ireland could not pay its way then! In addition small grants for agricultural training, for the poor musicians of the Royal Irish Academy (whose profession has been hit badly enough by the war) have been stopped, and now you propose to stop the petty sum of £5,000 per annum for science teaching. Unfortunately for your little game this has brought you up against the Gaelic League. You see, although it was not contemplated at all that these grants should help the Irish language, it turned out that the Gaelic League was able to avail of them to finance its colleges to some extent. We are a little slim also! So the Gaelic League is out to save that money for the Irish language, and all the educational forces in the country are backing the League, as they see its fight is their fight a'so, a most annoying result, as your proper policy, from your masters' point of view, should be to keep those two great forces apart.

Doubtless you had your agent at Monday's great protest meeting in the Mansion House; if he were only one of the ordinary thick-headed "G men" who shadow Irish Nationalists, you have got but a very poor impression of the whole

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proceedings. The outstanding feature is that the Gaelic League in this fight does not intend to be bound by any non-political formula. The blame for the whole iniquitous proceedings was laid at your masters' door, and the audience were left under no misunderstanding as to the reason for the robbery. The pretence of economy was contemptuously brushed aside. It was stated in the plainest terms by men, remarkable for the moderation of their views, that economy was only a pretext to prevent the Irish people educating their children and, above all, to injure the Irish language, because the language is the centre and life of our nationality. The meeting was a line-up of every decent citizen of this country on the side of those who have preached that England has aimed, and continues to aim, at the destruction of this small nationality.

Did your agent tell you of Lorcan Sherlock's semi-Sinn Fein speech, in which he declared that, if the Irish Party did not succeed in defeating this attempt to starve Irish education, the people should withdraw them from Westminster? In his speech a week earlier in the Dublin Corporation he declared that, if the robbery were persisted in, he would, wherever there was a public meeting called for recruits for the "war on behalf of small nationalities," address an opposition meeting and tell the people how the English Government was robbing this small nationality of Ireland. Yes, Lorcan Sherlock speaking on an anti-recruiting platform! I, personally, do not believe he will actually do so, but his declaration is an indication that the popular tide is turning Sinn Feinwards. There are few shrewder than he in ascertaining what way popularity is turning, and therein lies the value of his statement.

You must either surrender to the Gaelic League or see all Ireland on the side of the "factionists and soreheads." And if you do yield the situation is no better for your masters. The Irish people will have learned that it is only "extreme" methods, or the threat of such methods, that count. You can, of course, refuse, and try coercion, and therein lies disaster for you, too. You have some glimmering of that fact, otherwise you would have let Friend arrest the Bishop of Limerick, as the gallant soldier was anxious to do. Does it strike you that now, even more than in the days of the Land League, priests and people are united in Ireland's interests? The speeches of Father Fullerton and Father Meehan (should show you that if your agent reported to you fully), and they were followed by the veteran priest, Father Mat Ryan, whom a predecessor of yours thought to tame by sending to jail, but he survived that Defence of the Realm Act, and is now guarding his people against the same robber. Your present-day Coercion Act should have been put in force many years ago, when the Gaelic League began first

to teach Young Ireland nationality, but like other measures of your Government, your new Act is "too late."

“MIKE” O’LEARY’S JAW-BONE.

A recruiting meeting was held, on a recent Sunday at Ardert, County Kerry. Lieut. "Mike" O'Leary spoke thereat, and in worthy company. The Lieutenant, in the course of a characteristically vulgar and ignorant harangue, is reported in the "Evening Mail" as saying "The Sinn Feiners were worse than the Germans because they were traitors to Ireland." Now this man O'Leary, if we take him at the advertising agent's valuation as the slayer of 10 Germans, may be a modern Sampson, but the Sinn Feiners are not modern Philistines, "they won't be slain with the jaw-bone of an Ass."

THE CONSCRIPTION GAME.

In No. 18 of the "Spark" I published, in the form of a dialogue between two Cabinet Ministers, the English official view on Conscription. Readers who refer back to the number in question will find the present situation very accurately forecasted. In the supposed discussion on the introduction of the Conscription proposals in the English Commons the "Labourite," having welcomed Conscription, made the following statement:

If, in the exercise of their duty and power, they would tolerate no shirkers from the ranks, no slacker in the workshop, they would likewise tolerate no withholding of private wealth from the work of bringing the war to a successful issue. Was private wealth more sacred than the sweat of the toiler, than the blood of the soldier?

Readers of the current English papers will see that this question of the conscription of wealth has become one of very practical politics. In last week's "New Age," which is opposed to the conscription of Englishmen, but not to the conscription of money, it is urged that "with money we could buy support in various parts of the world, that all our men will never be able to take by force." Isn't this paper very English after all; if favours the hiring of mercenaries to kill for pay, regardless of all considerations but their own material necessities.

For an Unbeatable Smoke at 7d. try "GAELIC MIXTURE." J. J. WALSH, 26 Blessington St. and 19 Berkeley Street, Dublin

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