

THE SPARK

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

Edited by Ed. DALTON

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PRICE ONE HALFPENNY

PERTINENT QUERIES

MR. MATTHEW KEATING, M.P., is the nominee of the Irish Provincial Party who represents South Kilkenny in Westminster. In accordance with the instructions of the Party officers, he, in common with other Four-Hundred-Pounders, has been utilising his spare time from the work of saying *Disso* to the Coalition Cabinet and Sir Edward Carson in trying to get "a move" on the Party machine in the constituencies. In remarkable contrast to the pre-war methods of the Party, all such attempts are now made behind closed doors. Were the work done in the light of day before all the people, some inquisitive "Sorehead and Crank" might insist on asking awkward questions about the sanctity of the Home Rule "treaty of peace between the two nations" which our Liberal Government found it too inconvenient to honour. So, according to the "Kilkenny People" of October 3rd, Matthew addressed his constituents behind the closed doors of the Hibernian Hall in Kilmacow on the previous Sunday night. But he reckoned without his chairman, Very Rev. Canon Costigan, P.P. If I am to judge by the "People" report, the Very Reverend Gentleman must be a Sinn Feiner, a Pro-German, a Stabber-in-the-Back of Mr. Redmond, and altogether a kind of person whom "Dear Mr. Brayden" or Mr. "Birch" Gaynor should privately point out to Major-General Friend. The chairman evinced a most reprehensible curiosity. He said "he wished to ask Mr. Keating a straight question, namely—Was it a fact that there was a secret understanding between the War Office authorities and the heads of the Ulster Division, that the

units of the Ulster forces should not be sent to the front, while Catholic and Nationalist Irishmen were pouring out their life-blood in Flanders and Gallipoli? Mr. Keating answered to the effect that he believed *there was a secret understanding* in the manner suggested by Canon Costigan, and that he (Mr. Keating) would raise the question in the House of Commons at the earliest possible date."

A member of Redmond's Party now openly admits his belief in what has been common rumour for some time past. From his position it is to be presumed he occasionally gets a little inside information, and, if there were any likelihood of Carson's men going to the front, Keating would not deny it, at all events in these days of the "Party truce". I have little belief in the effect of a question in the "House", even if emanating from the member for South Kilkenny. I can imagine the contemptuous way in which Tennant, Asquith's near relation, would treat any such action on the part of one of the Irish jackals. Whether Keating raises the matter or not the Ulster division are not likely to smell powder on the Continent; that is an experience reserved for the "mere Irish" recruits in Kitchener's army.

Matthew also said in Kilmacow that should conscription be passed they (the Party) "would come back to Ireland and oppose it by every means in their power". Just at present "the Party" are using every means in their power to prevent the country from making plain its opposition to conscription. We all know how the Party machine set to work to prevent the adoption of the Dublin

anti-conscription resolution by the provincial public boards, and the "Freeman" at present has subordinated its anti-conscription campaign to its felon-setting activities in regard to the "Defence of Ireland" Fund. From what I know of some of the young men of Ireland I am convinced they will resist conscription, passively at first and actively when necessary. They consider it better to die in Ireland than on the Continent. In such an event will Mr. Keating come back to Kilmacow and lead the young men of that place in the fight against conscription? Will he help them to resist with violence the Constabulary and any detachments of the Ulster division which the War Office will be able to spare for the congenial task of emulating the deeds of their forefathers in '98? Or will Matthew agree with John Dillon that "an overwhelming case has been made out for conscription", and placidly continue to draw his £400 per year in Westminster?

Patsy Patrick on Conscription.

"Ther on for conscription," remarked Terry.

"They'll want it," replied Patsy. "In the interests o' what a Resident Magistrate id call law an' order the more min ye have in camp or barricks the better, iv yer to uphold the existin' law an' order o' things. Wouldn't it be a nice how de ye do after all sides say they've enough iv it, an' the Imperors shake hands, an' the ginerals go home to the champagne and cigars, to have the common people gatherin' in crowds here an' there, askin' to know who started the row. Wouldn't it be a grand thing to have the low-down common people kickin' up a row 'bout all the heroes ye read iv in the roll iv honour. Wouldn't it be a nice state of affairs to have goboy's hintin' that they'd like a change o' Government an' that Imperors an' Kings an' nobles an' munition millionares had reached the settin' sun o' ther day. Thin's the time, Terry, whin ye want yer min in Khaki. Thin's the time whin ye want an armed military machine to form fours, about turn, from the right four paces extind, load, ready, presint, fire! an' sind plenty o' lead into the lads askin' awkward questions. Just a little touch o' Bachelor's Walk at the start an' law an' order, which manes Imperors, an' Kings, an' other millionares, keep the hould o' the reins, they retain the wheel an' the helm o' the Ship o' State. Yes, me son, I'm thinkin' ye will have conscription. Ye must rope in the lads iv yer to save yer rulers the result iv a revolution. I don't say it id be wise to

call it 'Conscription.' As a matter o' fact ye've a lot o' ladin' min pledged agin 'conscription' who might agree to 'Compulsory National Service.' I mane the Lord Mayor Tobacco Twist's 'National Service.' The Party resolutely again 'conscription,' but to keep ther record for the consistincy o' ther inconsistency, they must oppose 'conscription.' Inconsistency is the only thing the Irish Party have iver been consistent in, an' as it can't be 'conscription' it must be Compulsory National Service, be the Ballot Act or some other way. O' course, Mr. John Dillon has said he's open to conviction, an' the present time he's med a Colorado o' North Great George's Street. He's don another six months the same as he did when he came back from Boulogne wid brother William to see whither the cat id jump on Parnell or on Healy. All the laiders are doin' the same. They want to be sure iv Ireland. That's why they sint Ould Pierce Mahony into the Harbour Division in Khaki."

"Dublin's dead agin' 'im," said Terry.

"Dublin's great," replied Patsy, "an' iv Ireland's saved the bloodshed that id follow an attempt at conscription, to Dublin goes the thanks. But, as I was sayin', John Dillon is open to change his mind iv Kitchener says the word. I needn't tell ye John Redmond has an open mind on it. John's mind is open on most things, an' was so, long afore Max Green slipped into the family an' had to be provided for be his father-in-law. It's whatever Kitchener says. Now Asquith tells us that personally he's dead agin' conscription, but o' course, iv Kitchener says it must come, it must, an' that's an' ind iv it. Ivery mornin' an' night, God forgive me, I'm disturbed at me prayers thinkin' o' Kitchener——"

"How the devil's that?" interrupted Terry.

"It's when I'm sayin' the Lord's Prayer," replied Patsy. "It's when I come to 'Thy will be done.' I think o' all the super-hypocrits like Asquith an' Lloyed George, an' Redmond, Dillon, an' Devlin, an' their back-door device — o' course, iv Kitchener says it must, it must—Kitchener, the son o' the evictin' Kerry landlord, Kitchener o' the Madhi's tomb, is the livin' altar iv expediency on which these super-fiends id sacrifice what they please to call principle."

"I thought they wor fightin' Militarism," said Terry.

"You shouldn't think at all," replied Patsy. "It's this thing called thought that's forcin' on conscription. Why man, iv thought was allowed ye couldn't stop a revolution. O' course we're fightin' Militarism. Martin Murphy tells me that Jarmany is

fightin' "Navalism" and that England is fightin' Militarism, an' Martin's a long-headed fellow.

"What the divil's Ireland fightin' for?" asked Terry.

"The separation allowance," replied Patsy, "an' o' course Civilisation, the Small Nationalities, Religion, an' what Martin Murphy calls Navalism. Thes are fine things, but the first is enough to go on wid. Some are fightin' to get rid o' the 'sack', an' some, like Tommy Kettle, join to keep the 'tack', but ther 'll be no mistake about the reason for fightin' for conscription. That 'll be a fight for liberty, an' when it comes off ther 'll be no use in John Redmond sayin' to Kitchener 'Thy will be done'".

"How should Ireland face conscription?" asked Terry.

"By jinin' the Irish Volunteers or the Citizen Army," replied Patsy.

TAMING ABORIGINES.

Many curious oddities are at large in this island of ours—some harmless, many dangerous. Recently a learned Irish bishop drew attention to an oddity dangerous in the extreme, and unique of its kind in Europe—the Intermediate Education of Ireland. This system is paid for out of Irish money, but was devised, and is controlled by an ancient institution—Dublin Castle. Most Irish children of the middle class spend many years victims of this system. They are then released and bid earn their bread, but no effort is spared, by the proper and competent authorities, to deter each individual child from that training necessary to hold a useful, honourable, position in the community.

So far as can be seen, the central idea underlying the Intermediate system of Education is to produce an abundant supply of minor Government officials. In other countries it is quite common to see, in business, men who have been at the books until well into their twenties; but here, owing to the destruction of our trade and industries, there is practically no opening for the educated young man, except that of the official. The cleverer the boy, the more successful his school career, the less his opportunity of any means of livelihood, except that which has been so astutely forced on him.

From the secondary school the raw country lad is shot into a grinder's academy. Here he learns to make thick "down-strokes" and thin "up-strokes" when writing; he is also taught to "index" and "précis" innumerable official documents, dealing with matters as divergent as the partition of Persia, and the in-

crease of lunacy among taxi-drivers. A course in mathematics is also followed, as the candidate will, most assuredly, have to face a practical problem dealing with a lawn, surrounded by a shingle path, which it is desired to cover with ice to a depth of two feet; to stimulate competition, the examiners assume that all the water in the vicinity of the lawn is contained in cylinders graduated on the metric system. The examiners deem it an advantage if the question reads as ambiguously as the foregoing sentence.

The student is also taught to memorise essays on such subjects as "The Freedom of the Press," "Problems of Empire," "Our Rubber Trade with Putumayo." History and geography are usually presented by the future Civil Servant, and it is not uncommon to find a youth of eighteen years learning, for the first time, that Cromwell was broadminded in religious matters, and that Irish liberties are perpetually safeguarded by the provisions of Magna Charta, and the Habeas Corpus Act.

In the Geography class, the teacher dilates on the commercial possibilities of Khurdistan and Honolulu, subjects of evident interest to Paddy Murphy or Kilmallock. Paddy also learns that Ireland is poor because she has no coal or iron (a lie), but he is never told how Belgium grew rich, although without either of these minerals.

Paddy, successful in his examination, is the recipient of numerous telegrams, from his parents, his old schoolmaster, and possibly, the P.P. A testimonial is then forwarded to the grinder, and Paddy's future is settled; he is a Civil Servant, respectable, and innocuous. He may be sent to London, and there learns to be an Irishman, or become a prig. If he escapes, unscathed, the moral cancer of that Babylon, he should thank his mother's prayers.

Fixed in Dublin, he soon drifts into the humdrum of official life. Normally, he will have, each day, less than a day's work. He becomes lazy, and, in many cases, his moral outlook is not improved by the corrosive influence of his sapping, monotonous existence. Sheer inanity, lack of interest in life, drives many young men of his class into evil courses, but this causes no uneasiness in the mind of those who carry on the system which makes for the ruin of splendid young fellows. It was never intended by the Government that the minor Irish official should be useful. England pays the young Irishman a pittance out of Irish taxation, as a precautionary measure. It is intended that he shall be quietened, prevented from going into trade, prevented from swelling the discontented who have no regular living, and hence, no

abiding love for Empire, and, most important of all, it is intended that he shall not emigrate to some country where he might earn an honest living, and be a menace to that Government which denies him as much at home. Empire does not mind paying over the Irish some Irish money, if thereby the commercial development of Ireland is hindered.

Unhappily for Empire, the Civil Servant in Dublin is refractory. His native intelligence makes him see through the Imperial device, and he becomes disaffected. He sees the higher positions, in his department, portioned out to the political hack, or the imported Freemason—a preceeding in itself sufficient to arouse the intelligence. It is notorious that at present the most Pro-Irish section in Dublin is to be found among the lower-salaried officials. Naturally enough, a wise Empire decides that this section is pro-German.

“MISTER DOOLEY.”

The usual Castle subsidy has safely reached the “Freeman’s” coffers, and, agreeable to orders, the felon-setting campaign on a large scale continues.

The latest effort is a false interview with an alleged Irishman said to have come back from Germany. This hero with the pantomine name of Dooley, gives interesting details of how Sir Roger Casement endeavoured to seduce Irishmen in the English Army from their “allegiance” to England. The English profess to believe that a shilling a day, more or less, is ample compensation for any Irishman’s soul and body here and hereafter. Mister Dooley discloses that Sir Roger and his Hun associates first used persuasion. When that failed they tried by every means in their power to starve the Irishmen. During this period, says the naive and truthful Dooley, every effort was made to get dupes for the Irish Brigade. We give the Huns the palm for bungling. Hear they are endeavouring to enlarge their miserable little army by starving their prospective recruits and then appealing to them to risk all in a final attempt to establish Irish Independence.

The exact relation between this fable and the Castle subsidy is found in a “leaderette” in which Sir Roger is named as the associate of those who founded and still, thank God, control the Irish Volunteers. I do not anticipate that the men who sat around the council board with Sir Roger Case-

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ment will be in a hurry to denounce him for his wild dreams of what he is pleased to call “Irish Independence.” But I can see that the object of the Editor, “Dear Mr. Brayden,” who changed his religion once and his politics many times, is to point out the Irish Volunteer leaders as traitors to England (which is NOT their country) and so procure their arrest and imprisonment. At least the readers of one small paper shall see the various moves in this infamous game.

The members of the Oval Club were entertained at Mooney’s Spa the other evening to a 9.30 “round” and a fund of anecdote by the Arch-member, Mr. P. Meade, of “Evening Telegraph” fame. Those who were there tell me that “Paddy” was in great form, and has perpetrated nothing so funny since he sank the fleets of two Empires in the North Sea one day last year. He kept the whole party in one continuous hiccough—“roar” is too hackneyed and not quite correct—and was just in the middle of a side-splitting yarn about Division 68, A.O.H. (of which he is a light) when the cry of “Time, gentlemen, please,” spread such agitation that the rest of the story was lost. It is not too widely known that the Club’s motto is a quotation from Omar Khayyam:

“Fill me with the old familiar juice;
Methinks I will recover by and bye.”

SPARK.—Vol. 1.

I must again crave the indulgence of my readers for delay in filling orders for above. The second impression has been exhausted, but a third one will be ready early next week.

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