



AN t-ÓGLACH

REGISTERED]

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[NEWSPAPER.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

"Private Murphy's Questions"

To the Editor of "An t-Oglach."

A Chara,—In your last issue appears a letter signed "Oifigeach," in which, I think, a wholly unfair attack is made on Irish cigarettes and Irish tobacco manufacturers. "Oifigeach" merely repeats the cheap depreciations to which I have been listening for many a long day—ever since I made up my mind to support Irish manufacture. I have heard the same kind of talk about other articles besides cigarettes; but apropos of the latter I am tempted to tell a story for the benefit of "Oifigeach."

In the mess in our barracks only Irish-made cigarettes are supplied, and this has occasioned much grumbling on the part of certain officers. One of them, speaking much in the strain of "Oifigeach," but much more strongly, distinguished himself by his denunciation of our native-made cigarettes. Every time an Irish cigarette was offered he took the occasion, in refusing it, to utter some words of contempt or depreciation.

Determined to give him no further opportunity of depreciation, I one day produced in the mess a large box of Player's cigarettes and passed them round. The enemies of the Irish cigarettes seized on them with avidity, while my friend, the denouncer, congratulated me on my improved taste, as he sucked a cigarette with gusto.

"Do you really mean to say," I asked, "that you notice any difference?"

"Of course I can," he declared emphatically. "I could tell them from each other blindfolded. One whiff would be enough."

"But where exactly does the difference come in?" I asked. "How would you define it?"

"Well," he said, "it is difficult to explain to a man who has no natural taste in the matter, but this cigarette I am smoking has a flavour which no Irish cigarette possesses."

"Are you sure you are not deceiving yourself in the matter?" I asked modestly. "Imagination, based on prejudice, sometimes plays strange tricks on one."

"Deceiving myself?" he cried, contemptuously. "Ah! Talk sense, man. Here, give me another Player."

I extended the box and he helped himself again and lit it with an air of satisfaction. By this time some of the others had discovered the trick that I was playing. The cigarettes were Irish-made, but enclosed in a Player's box. A laugh went round, and our friend, the judge of cigarettes, shamed and made ridiculous, has never quite forgiven me for the trick.

Yes, as "Oifigeach" says, there is a great deal of ignorant prejudice in the matter.—Mise,

A.J.K.

AN ORDER.

"Do not fire until the enemy comes to the edge of the ditch; then defend yourselves to the last drop of your blood."—ORDER OF CHARLES XII. OF SWEDEN AT THE DEFENCE OF PENAMONDER.

Foreboding

(Adapted from the German of Heine.)

On a Sunday near Rathfarnham,
Is the evening sweet and shining,
As I walk beside my colleen
With my arms about her twining.

And the air is fresh and fragrant
And the sky is of the clearest,
And my heart awhile is hopeful
As I gaze upon my dearest.

But I hear a boding murmur
Through the pines come sobbing, sighing,
And a mist comes down the mountain
And I feel my bright hopes dying.

"Ah! my colleen, fate may part us.
They are sending me to Kerry,
And on Sunday near Rathfarnham
Shall we ever more make merry?"

B.

The Bird

I was crossing a big square in Portobello Barracks on the first day of the year 1923, ploughing my way through puddles and layers of mud churned up by the constant transit of heavy lorries. Rain was coming down heavily. It was nearly five o'clock in the evening and dusk was falling. Near me bare trees raised their desolate branches against a leaden sky; beneath them was a wilderness of mud. Altogether the prospect was as dreary and depressing a one as the most devoted disciple of what is called "realism" would wish to depict.

Suddenly to my amazement I heard a bird singing ever so sweetly from one of the bare trees. I am not a naturalist but I believe it is a most unusual phenomenon for a wild bird to sing amid rain and twilight on the first of January. But this bird amid all the ugliness, gloom and desolation sounded a note of joy and hope. He seemed to me to prophesy the coming spring; his song brought before me visions of green buds and April skies and blessed baths of sunshine.

"Here," thought I, "is a good omen for the New Year. This infant year is born amid gloom and desolation; but the bird sings amid the gloom, feeling instinctively that spring is coming. Yes, the spring of nature is coming and Ireland's spring is coming. The gloom and desolation will pass away and the sun of peace and freedom will shine again on the land. It was appropriate that that message should come to us here in a barracks of the Army of Ireland whose work it is to conquer the forces of darkness and desolation and bring back spring and sunshine to the land."

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na hÉireann
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

An t-Oglach

JANUARY 6, 1923.

Success

The success of the National Army in restoring peace, law and order in a country torn by anarchy has been such a gradual process that many people fail to realise what immense progress has been made. To estimate our success to the full it is necessary to turn our minds back and compare the state of the country to-day with that of six months ago, of three months ago, even of six weeks ago. A careful study of the files of daily newspapers will be found very instructive.

When the Dail met at the beginning of September, anything approximating to a war was definitely over; but crime, outrage and turbulence were rife throughout the country. The papers teemed with tales of lawless violence, robbery, murder, and sniping at soldiers. The first big improvement in the situation was noticed when the Government proclamation with regard to the setting up of military courts came into force on October 15th. Immediately the danger of court-martials and executions came into existence, there was a very marked lull in Irregular activities. This improved situation continued for nearly three weeks. Then the Government's seeming reluctance to enforce the extreme penalty apparently revived the drooping spirits of the gunmen, and there was a certain recrudescence of crime and outrage. Then, on November 16th, came the first executions. The sudden and dramatic improvement in the situation as regards law and order immediately after these executions is particularly striking to him who scans the newspaper files. Never since then has there been anything approaching the amount of crime and violence which was rife previously. Furthermore, there has been a steady and continued progression towards peace and settled conditions ever since. A month ago the Irregular leader, Liam Lynch, in a document captured by our troops, deplored the growing inactivity of his gunmen, and complained that what he called "enemy activity has increased during the same period." He ordered his leaders to "increase activities and extend the scope of their operations." This "order" does not seem to have had much effect. The past three weeks have been by far and away the most peaceful in Ireland since the capture of the Four Courts in June.

The Army is carrying out its task well, cheerfully, and bravely, and advancing steadily to final success and that complete peace which all lovers of Ireland long for.

THE SOLDIERLY SPIRIT.

The real soldierly spirit is one of altruism and chivalry. It expresses itself in supreme patriotism. The ideal with which it inspires a man is that of willing self-sacrifice for the welfare of the State and for the good of his fellow-citizens. To this ideal, should occasion arise, the soldier must be faithful unto death. The work of making a good soldier results in the making of a good citizen.

VALUE OF MILITARY TRAINING.

Military training teaches the soldier to use his own judgment, to think, make up his mind and act quickly, and when necessary to act on his own initiative. It teaches him to retain presence of mind and to act with determination under the stress of danger. It teaches him to be thoroughly self-reliant and resourceful in emergencies.

A DIEHARD LADY.

There was a plain elderly Miss
Whom nobody wanted to kiss,
So she went round for spite
Painting walls in the night
With nonsense more silly than this.

"Stop and Think"

Whoever is responsible for Irregular propaganda is apparently devoid of a sense of humour. He has drafted a leaflet which the Irregulars are endeavouring to circulate among our troops, headed:

"Stop and think!
National Soldier"

in which the following gem occurs:—

"Stop and Think—To-Day

Before you arrest boys carrying arms.

If they are shot their blood will be upon
your shoulders.

You will be guilty of murder."

Stop and Think!

Now this is very dangerous dope for its distributors. The whole danger to the Irregular is that the soldier will "stop and think," and, being a plain common-sense man, may think along these lines (following the wording of the Irregular leaflet):

Why are those boys carrying arms?

TO SHOOT ME and my pals!!!

If they shoot me MY blood will be on THEIR
shoulders.

They will be guilty of murder.

Murderers should be shot.

I'd rather they were shot than be shot myself.

It is really a rich joke to expect a National soldier to swallow the doctrine that it's no harm to shoot him, but shooting the man who wants to shoot him is murder.

Of course, the "boys with arms" may not be out to shoot soldiers. It is growing an unpopular pastime with the Irregulars. They may be only out to murder an unarmed civilian like Séamus O'Dwyer.

"FIGHT FAIR."

The biggest joke in the leaflet referred to above is its concluding phrase, "Fight Fair." To mingle with a crowd in civilian attire, throw a bomb, or shoot a soldier and run away among the crowd is "fighting fair"—if you are an Irregular. The National soldier's duty is to go around in uniform and provide target practice for the budding young gunmen. It seems, now that **arrest is dangerous** to the gunman, that it is not "fighting fair" to **arrest the gunman who is out to kill you**. In the days when a gunman could secure his safety by throwing up his arms (after doing all the damage he could), the Irregulars were only too anxious for the **privilege of being arrested**. Now, however, arresting men who go out to kill has become **unfair!!**

Wanted—A Marching Song

To the Editor of "An t-Oglach."

SIR,—As you are good enough to open your columns to correspondents who desire to discuss matters of Army interest, I would like to call your attention and the attention of your readers to the need there is for a really good **new** marching song for the National Army. We want something new, something appropriate to the occasion, something inspiring, something that the men can whistle and sing when on the march. Surely so great an occasion in our country's history will inspire somebody to express in words what is in the hearts and minds of us all, and surely some musician will give us a good rousing martial air to suit the words. As to the words, we want nothing high-falutin'—our Army is not an Army of highbrows, but just plain men of the people—and we want a plain song in the plain language of the people—which, unfortunately, in the greater part of the country is not now Irish. All the same, I would like an Irish version of whatever is composed. Would it not be a good idea for the Army authorities to offer a substantial prize for the best air and words of a rousing marching song suitable to the present time—such a plain song of the people as those that inspired the soldiers of the American Civil War to deeds of valour. I hope my appeal will have some effect.—

Yours, etc.,

PADDY.

The Black-and-Tan

A CHRISTMAS GHOST STORY.

On Christmas night I was sitting alone in my new quarters in a barracks that had formerly been occupied by British Auxiliaries. It was a weird and lonely experience. No other quarters in this particular block were occupied. The wind blew down the chimney and round the building with an eerie sound and a door upstairs continually banged, making me start. It seemed to me that I heard mysterious creakings and footfalls on the stairs. I sat by the dying fire, trying to read a Christmas magazine, with my thoughts turning often ruefully to my distant home, my mother, brothers and sisters. It was my first Christmas from home.

The magazine gave me no solace. It was full of creepy ghost stories that set one's imagination busy. What, I thought, if these my new quarters were haunted by the ghost of some former occupant of the time of the British occupation?

Then midnight chimed and suddenly I felt a cold shiver run through me. Then I heard the handle of my door turn and the door swung slowly open. I felt my flesh creep.

A pale and ghostly form entered and stood before me. It wore the costume of an Auxiliary officer. There were marks of bullet wounds and blood-stains on the tunic. The features were pale and sad-looking; if such a thing were possible, I should say without a pun, that the ghost looked bored to death.

For a moment I sat quaking in abject fear, but the sight of the once hated uniform revived me. I felt that an Irish soldier should never quail before a Black-and-Tan alive or dead. Pulling myself together I sprang to my feet.

"Excuse me, sir," I said politely, but firmly. "You have no business here. This is *my* room.

"It used to be mine," said the phantom in a hollow and melancholy voice.

"That makes no difference," I declared emphatically. "You are a long time out of the world and so I can excuse your ignorance; but I must tell you that your presence here is a violation of the Treaty between England and Ireland, by which your Government undertakes to withdraw its armed forces from every military post in the Free State. Furthermore, you have no *locus standi* of any sort. You've no right to that uniform. There *are* no Auxis; you're disbanded."

"But I'm a ghost," he said plaintively. "Dash it all a ghost *must* wear the costume he was killed in; it's the rule. I was killed by one of your fellows too."

"I didn't kill you, so far as I know," I remarked.

"Oh! I don't say you did," he answered. "I'm hanged if I know who killed me—or care. He was a good shot, whoever he was. But if I want to haunt some place, surely the place where I lived last is the right place."

"Not under the Treaty," I said firmly. "I cannot as a loyal officer of the Free State tolerate the presence of a Black-and-Tan in this barracks, alive or dead."

"Well, I suppose you're right," said the ghost. "You have your laws and rules and regulations and I don't want to mess things up. But I suppose there's no harm in my staying here and having a chat with you, as I *have* come, and come from a hell of a distance."

"From where did you say?" I asked cautiously.

"Oh! I don't mean what you mean," said the ghost, looking confused. "It was merely a figure of speech."

"I would prefer plain language to figures of speech of the kind," I said. "I want to be quite clear where you come from."

"Oh! Not from the place you think," he said hastily. "Not quite so bad as that. I wasn't really a bad Black-and-Tan; only middling. That's what I wanted to talk to you about."

"Well, talk away," I said feeling curious.

"What I want to know," said he confidentially, "is why did our Black-and-Tans get such a bad name?"

"Because you deserved it," I said.

"Because you know," he went on in a tone of simple bewilderment, "now that we are cleared out, there is nothing we did that some of your own people are not doing; and they call themselves heroes and patriots."

"You mean the Irregulars?" I asked.

"Yes, I believe you call them that," he said. "You blamed us for burning down houses—but your Irregulars are doing more burning and destruction in a week than we did in a quarter. You blamed us for committing murders, but when did we ever commit as many as those fellows? You blamed us for bullying women and children and trying to strike terror into non-combatants—why it is the daily practice of these fellows. When I went to the other world first I felt a bit depressed at the bad name we had got; but now I'm beginning to be cheerful again."

"And look here," he went on before I could reply, "wasn't there more excuse for us? We weren't Irish. We were told the country was full of murderers and scoundrels who had to be squashed; we were doped with propaganda and 'Weekly Summaries,' we saw our comrades getting killed, we saw the whole population leagued against us. We did it as enemies of Ireland fighting the cause of our own country. We were frankly waging war against the Irish people. But those fellows who are doing the same things as we did to the Irish people, say they are doing it through love of Ireland. It is all very puzzling to a poor English ghost like me who never could understand you Irish."

"Sir," I said, "I do not feel inclined to discuss our internal differences with an Englishman—or English ghost—and least of all with a Black-and-Tan. This is a domestic question (as your Government were once fond of saying) and requires no foreign interference. I do not blame you for your bewilderment. A mere Black-and-Tan like you cannot understand the lofty-souled idealism, the divine enthusiasm which inspired the burning of Emmet MacGarry and the shooting of Seán Hales—"

"Why I tried to shoot him myself," said the Black-and-Tan ghost.

"Very likely," said I, "but not from lofty ideal motives and invoking the blessing of Providence on your patriotic work. And now I must insist on your immediate evacuation—or I'll call the chaplain and have you exorcised."

"Well, I suppose I must go," said the ghost. "Good-bye, old chap. But, honestly, isn't there something in what I said?"

"Go to—the place you came from," I said.

The ghost vanished.

I roused myself in the chair with a start. The fire was out. I was stiff and numbed with cold. I went to bed wondering whether I had been dreaming or not.

TOMAS.

AN IRREGULAR MARTYR.

There was a young man of Kinsale
Mopped up gallons of whiskey and ale,
Then he went out for loot
But, being drunk, couldn't shoot,
And now he's a martyr in jail.

A PENITENT.

There was an Irregular gent
Took a gun out, on murder intent,
Not far did he stroll
When he met a patrol
And now he is sorry he went.

RHYMES OF THE TIMES.

An Irregular hero named Corry,
Thought it fun to throw bombs at a lorry,
He was running like — well
When he stumbled and fell
And now he's decidedly sorry.

Oidhche Cois Locha

Bhí aithne agam, tráth, ar chailín áirithe go raibh dúil thar na beartaibh aici isna enocaibh agus isna gleanntaibh timcheall Bheul Áth an Ghaorthaidh agus i ngach radharc breágh dá mbíonn le feiscint san dúthaigh sin i gcaitheamh an tsamhraidh. Ní scaoileadh sí an samhradh thairsti éin bhliain gan turas a thabhairt ar an áit. Ní bhíodh uaithe ach an lá do chaitheamh, ó mhaidin go hoidhche, amuich féin spéir, ag feuchaint ar na enocaibh is ar na lochaibh is ar na gleanntaibh. Do thuigeas-sa a meón go dianmhaith mar bhí beagán den dúil cheudna agam fhéin. Is móide gean daoine dá chéile dúil a bheith aca isna rudaí ceudna. Ní hiongnadh, dá bhrígh sin, gur éirigheamair ana-mhór le chéile. Ba ghnáth linn dul amach i dteannta a chéile ag feuchaint ar na radharc breághtha taidh-seacha a bhí le feicint ar fuaid na dúthaighe. Is minic a chaitheamair dhá uair an chluig is breis nár suidhe láimh le chéile ar leacain cnuic ag feuchaint ar na enocaibh eile is ar na gleanntaibh mórthimcheall agus gan focal as ceachtar aguinn. Is mó rud greannmhar a dheineannair. Chuamair amach, tar éis an mheadhon oidhche ag siubhal tré Chéim an Fhiadh. Chuamair amach uair eile i n-am marbh na hoidhche ag bádóir-eacht ar an loch i nGúgán Barra. Baineann an sceul so im dhiaidh leis an loch san Ghúgán—agus le Cormac.

Fear anachliste iseadh Cormac. Níor bhuail a shárú dfhear umam riamh ar líomthacht chainnte. Steallann sé an chainnt uaidh chomh breágh binn blasta son nárbh fhada leat logonoidhche ag éisteacht leis agus ag deunamh iongnadh den tarrac ar fhocalaibh atá aige.

Do chuireas Cormac i n-aithne don chailín. Ba léir gur chuir sé a lán spéise innti. Chrom sé ar chainnt léi dhonn a thréithe do nochtadh dhi agus a chur i n-umhaíl di nárbh éan dóichín é. “Cailín tuigsionach iseadh í,” ar seisean i geogair liomsa.

Ba gheárr go bhfuair sé amach an dúil mhór a bhí ag an gcailín i saoghal na tuaithe (san chathair do tógadh í) agus i radharcuibh breághtha na dúthaighe úd. Chrom sé ar an tuath do mholadh thar an geathair, agus níorbh é a dhearmhad gan an dúthaigh i n-a rabhamair do mholadh go seoigh. Bhí eolus maith aige ar an ndúthaigh úd, mar is ann do rugadh agus do tógadh é.

B'é deire an scéil gur thugamair cuireadh dhó teacht i néinfheacht linn go dtí an Gúgán an oidhche úd, mar bhí beartuithe againn sealad do chaitheamh ar an “oileainín beag uaithe” fé sholus na gealaighe.

Chuamair i dtriúr ann istoidhche. Do shíneamair ar an bhfeur ar an oileán ar bhruach an locha taobh thiar den tseipeul nuadh. Bhí an ghealach na suidhe san spéir agus a rian ar an loch. Bhí na hárdechnuic garga fiadhna le feicint i bhfad uainn ar an dtaobh thall den loch agus iad go dúr, gruamdha, bagarthach, mar a bheadh athaigh euchtacha go raibh rúndiamhair éigin ag baint leó. Taobh thiar dinn bhí na crainn agus na fotharacha. Is beag má bhí éan fhuaim le cloisint ach tonnta beaga an locha dá gcaitheamh féin i gcoinnibh na trágha. Bhí an ciúineas agus an bhreághthacht agus an mhórhaidhse ag baint leis an radharc. Chuir sé smaointe ná feudfainna míniú im aigne, agus, de réir dheallrainn, i n-aigne an chailín. Ní raibh uainn ach an ciúineas agus seal chun machtnaimh is chun mothúcháin, dhonn breághthacht agus iongantais an radhaire do shúghadh isteach i n-ár n-inntleacht.

Dfheuch Cormac ar bhreághthacht an radhaire as is amhlaidh do spriocadh chun cainnte é.

“Nach iongantach í an Nádúir!” ar seisean. “Feuch ar na gatha gile úd ón ngealaigh agus iad ag spreucharnaigh agus ag suathadh san aer. Feuch ar na línte bána atá ar uisce an locha agus iad ag rinne go meidhreach, agus tonnta an locha ag crónán amhráin moltha do Dhia. Is annso atá lámh Dé le feicint. Is annso atá an Nádúir—ní hionann is saoghal na catharach!

“Do chaitheas tréimhse fada san chathair mhóir, i bhfad ón Nádúir, i lár na smúite is an cheóidh, agus bé bhada liom go bhfeicfinn an tuath arís. Ní thuigim canathaobh go mbíonn dúil ag daoínibh i saoghal na catharach. Is féarr i bhfad an Nádúir!”

Lean sé dhe ar an geuma son ag trácht ar bhreághthacht an radhaire agus ar bhreághthacht na “Nádúire.” Do mhol sé an loch. Do mhol sé na

cnuic. Do mhol sé an t-oileán. Do mhol sé an ghealach. I mbriathraibh briochtshnuigte do dhein sé an moladh. Do chuir sé solus na gealaighe i gcompráid le saigheadaibh airgid dá gcaitheamh linn. Chuir sé an t-oileán i gcompráid le seóid nó clochín buadha do leag Dia i mbróllach an locha dhonn é mhaisiú. Níl cur síos ná innsint scéil ar an méid compráide a dhein sé. Labhair sé go fáthach fileata. Thrácht sé ar chomhacht Dé, ar mhíorbhúiltibh, agus níorbh é a dhearmhad gan tagairt don “Nádúir” chomh minic is dob fhéidir leis. Ní raibh focal as an gcailín ná asansa. Isé mheasfadh éinne orainn, ná, go rabhamair fé dhraoidheacht age líomthacht a chainnte agus binneas a bhriathar.

“Seadh,” arsa mise leis an gcailín nuair do bhuail sí umam maidin lár na mháireach. “Cionnus do thaitn an oidhche aréir leat?”

Do chuir sí osnadh aisti.

“Bhí an oidhche go hálúinn,” ar sise; “ach níor bhaineas puinn aobhnis aisti. Do loit Cormac í le na chuid filíochta is feallsamhnachta. Dá mb áil leis a bheul d'éisteacht agus leigint don ‘Nádúir’ labhairt ar a son féin.”

Cailín tuigsionach ab eadh í.

B.

The Siege of Dunbaoi

Mountjoy spent that spring in Munster with the President, reducing those fortresses which still remained in the hands of the Irish, and fiercely crushing down every vestige of the national war. Richard Tyrrell, however, still kept the field; and O'Sullivan Beare held his strong castle of Dun-buidhe, which he wrested from the Spaniards after Don Juan had stipulated to yield it to the enemy. This castle commanded Bantry Bay, and was one of the most important fortresses in Munster; and therefore Carew determined, at whatever cost, to make himself master of it.

Dun-buidhe was but a square tower, with a courtyard and some out-works, and had but 140 men; yet it was so strongly situated, and so bravely defended, that it held the Lord President and an army of four thousand men, with a great train of artillery and some ships of war, fifteen days before its walls.

After a breach was made, the storming parties were twice driven back to their lines; and even after the great hall of the castle was carried, the garrison, under their indomitable commander, Mac Geoghegan, held their ground in the vaults underneath for a whole day, and at last fairly drove the besiegers out of the hall.

The English cannon then played furiously upon the walls; and the President swore to bury these obstinate Irish under the ruins. Again a desperate sortie was made by forty men—they were all slain; eight of them leaped into the sea to save themselves by swimming; but Carew, anticipating this, had stationed Captain Harvy with three boats to keep the sea, but had the killing of them all; and at last, after Mac Geoghegan was mortally wounded, the remnant of the garrison laid down their arms.

Mac Geoghegan lay, bleeding to death, on the floor of the vault; yet when he saw the besiegers admitted, he raised himself up, snatched a lighted torch, and staggered to an open powder barrel—one moment, and the castle, with all it contained, would have rushed skyward in a pyramid of flame, when suddenly an English soldier seized him in his arms: he was killed on the spot, and all the rest were shortly after executed.

“The whole number of the ward,” says Carew, “consisted of one hundred and forty-three selected men, being the best choice of all their forces, of which not one man escaped, but were either slain, executed, or buried in the ruins; and so obstinate a defence hath not been seen with this kingdom.” Perhaps some will think that the survivors of so brave a band deserved a better fate than hanging.—MITCHEL.

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