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“Private Murphy’s Questions”

To the Editor of “An t-Oglach.”

A Chára,—A fortnight ago you published a contribution from “Liam” under the above heading. Whether Private Murphy is a real character or not I do not know, but I should like to believe that there are many such intelligent men, with as good records and ideals among the rank and file of the Army. Private Murphy certainly asked some very pertinent questions. I agree that it is desirable that soldiers should aim at a higher standard in regard to Irish-Ireland ideals. I agree with his points as to music-hall songs, Irish language, temperance, etc. But there is one point of his on which I wish to make special comment. He asks, or “Liam” asks for him:—

“Whether it is essential that an Irish soldier should smoke English cigarettes, and consistently refuse those made in Ireland.”

Now, the answer to this question is not so simple as it looks. I myself have for years endeavoured, as far as possible, to smoke only Irish cigarettes. There are a large and increasing number of men (including, I know, many soldiers and officers) who do the same; and what is our reward? That the Irish tobacco manufacturer attempts to profiteer at our expense by putting inferior stuff in his cigarettes. When an Irish manufacturer puts a new brand of cigarettes on the market, he generally keeps it up to a certain standard for a while; but when he has established it on the market he trusts to the predilection of many for an Irish-made cigarette and produces an inferior article. No serious effort is made to keep a fixed and permanent standard of well-known brands, as is done in England and elsewhere; and the supporter of Irish manufactures who is a heavy smoker has often to make a considerable sacrifice for his principles.

I am aware that there is a good deal of ignorant prejudice against Irish cigarettes, and persons who would hardly know the difference between Irish and foreign cigarettes, if not told, depreciate the former continually and unfairly; but I think that the facts I have mentioned help to explain this. The average soldier does not give thought to the matter; he smokes to enjoy himself; and after some disappointing experiences gives up all further thought of supporting Irish manufactures as far as cigarettes are concerned. This is, no doubt, wrong, but it is human nature.

There was another question that Private Murphy might well have asked—whether it would not be better if our soldiers did not smoke so many cigarettes (whether Irish or foreign), and particularly did not inhale. A little instruction on the deleterious effects on the health of inhaling and excessive cigarette-smoking might be useful.

Mise,

OIFIGEACH.

A Soldier’s Parting

(Adapted from the German of Heine).

The Guards are leaving the village,
I leave you at duty’s call.
I see you, dear, in the window,
You wave me your hand so small.

You smiled when the lads came here, dear,
You sigh as the lorries start,
How many a lad found a billet
Within your fickle heart!

B.

“Doped Whiskey”

AN IRREGULAR PLOT.

The following facts deserve the attention of all officers and soldiers. In a certain prison in Donegal a bottle of whiskey was found under the pillow of a prisoner and promptly confiscated. How it had reached the prisoner could not be ascertained. The bottle aroused suspicions. It was sent to a public analyst, when it was discovered that the whiskey was drugged with a substance which sent the consumer to sleep, and taken in large quantities might have had fatal effects. It was evidently the intention of the prisoner to offer the bottle to his guards, and, when it had deprived them of consciousness, to effect his escape. It is only necessary to state these facts to impress upon all the necessity of guarding against such dangerous schemes.

INSPIRATION.

There is an inspiration arising from each field of native victory, and a call that is obeyed from each well-told song or story of national honour.—Davis.

WHINING AND WORKING.

’Tis not for us to whine after what has been refused, but to turn all that has been extorted to good account.—Davis.

YOUTH IN WAR.

“You say I am very young; but we age quickly on the battle field.”—GENERAL BONAPARTE.

FREEDOM AND STRENGTH.

“If we attempt to govern ourselves without statesmanship—to be a Nation without a knowledge of the country’s history, and of the propensities to good and ill of the people—or to fight without generalship, we will fail in policy, society and war. These—all these things—we people of Ireland must know if we would be a free, strong Nation.”—DAVIS.

ing, I found Prince Anton of Hohenzollern, who had been hit in the legs by three balls. He was positively beaming, and at the same time touchingly naïve in his disregard for his wounds; he wished me luck, said that he had been with his men in the hottest of the fire, had ordered "schnell feuer," had then been wounded and already been made prisoner, his sword being taken from him notwithstanding his wounds, when our advance again set him free. He lay in a peasant's cottage among dying Austrians, but was immediately carried away in an ambulance wagon.

Horrors of War.

It is a shocking thing to ride over a battle-field, and it is impossible to describe the hideous mutilations which present themselves. War is really something frightful, and those who create it with a stroke of the pen, sitting at a green cloth table, little dream what horrors they are conjuring up.

Immediately afterwards I met wounded of the 51st Infantry Regiment, including Captain Hiebe, of the 11th Foot, formerly my subordinate, who was shot in the foot. A severely wounded grenadier of the 2nd Guards, called out to me, "Ach, lieber Herr Kronprinz, do have me carried away!" Major von Eckart, of the 2nd Guards, wounded hopelessly, it is said, was driven past us in an ambulance wagon. He was only able to reply in a weak voice to my inquiries. I then met the Kolberg Grenadier Regiment and the Blücher Hussars of my Pomeranian Army Corps, an unexpected pleasure to see them just here.

An Honour.

I also met uncle Charles and William Mecklenburg. The latter is said to have received a blow with the flat of a sabre in a cavalry engagement. At last, after long search and many inquiries, we found the King. I reported to him the presence of my army on the field of battle, and kissed his hand, upon which he embraced me. Neither of us was able to speak for a time. He was the first to find words, and then told me he was pleased that I had been successful, and had proved my capacity for command. He had awarded me, he said, the order "pour le mérite" for my previous victories, as I doubtless learnt from his telegram. That message, however, I had not received, and so my father and King handed me our highest military decoration on the field of battle where I had helped to win the victory. I was deeply affected by this, and the bystanders seemed also moved. The evening had turned out very beautiful, and just at the moment of our meeting the sun went down in all his glory. Bismarck, together with all the officers of the King's headquarters, as well as my entire staff were present. I saw Schweinitz and Reuss VIII. here again.

I now had a long conversation with the King, in which I commended to his particular favour Generals Blumenthal and von Steinmetz, these two distinguished officers having borne a most important share in all my dispositions. His majesty granted my request to award General von Steinmetz the Order of the Black Eagle for his services, and complied with my suggestion to give the battle the name of "Königgrätz." We now rode back by Chlum, to try and find quarters for the night in Horenoves, but the baggage which had been left behind in Königinhof could not come up before to-morrow early. After much devious wandering, during which all the horrors of the battle-field followed us into the darkness, we reached the above-named place, where 3,000 Austrian prisoners had already been lodged.

After the Battle.

The troops bivouacked on all parts of the battle-field, but only a few had heart to sing. There is often but one step from the serious to the ridiculous, and this was the case here. Some foot soldiers were pursuing a domestic pig in order to prepare a toothsome "roast" at the bivouac fire. The hunt took various directions, until at last the revolver was brought into requisition; and close to this scene lay in heaps the corpses of the troopers who had fallen in the hot engagement that had taken place in the afternoon at the foot of Chlum, and in which the two regiments of

An Geilleadh

29 ABRAN, 1916.

(Continued).

Do rug Eamonn ar uilinn orm agus do threorúigh leis isteach i seomra na nárdóifigeach mé. Cheapas go raibh rud éigin aige le rádh liom ach níor dhein sé ach suidhe ag an mbórd agus an t-órdú éachtach úd do leogadh os a chomhair amach.

"Táim tar éis mo chhlaidheamh do thabhairt uaim," ar seisean, agus annson do chrom sé ar ghol.

Im thaobh-sa dhe d'fhanas im sheasamh gan hóm ná hám asam, mar a bheadh balbhán. Ní fheudfainn an sgeul a thuigsint i n-aon chor. Cad do bhí tar éis titim am ach? Raibh buaite glan orainn i mBaile Ath Cliath? Agus cad mar gheall ar an gcuid eile dhen tír? Rabhthas ag troid i gCiarraidhe? Ar tháinig na Gearmáinigh? Nó an amhlaidh nár chuir na hOgláigh cor díobh i n-éan bhall taobh amuigh de Bhaile Ath Cliath? Raibh amadain deunta dhinn ag ár lucht ceannais? Agus cad do thioctadh as an obair go léir? An raghadh sé i dtairbhthe d'Éirinn? Nó an amhla loitfidh sé an sgeul ar lucht lorg neamh-spleádchuis na h-Éireann?

Bhí m'aighe chomh suaithte sin agesna ceisteanna úd, agus gan éin bhreith agam ar iad do réiteach ná fiú buille fé thuairim a thabhairt ortha, gur "fágadh mo cheann na bhlogán-béice." Bhí trua agam d'Eamonn, ach ní fheudfainn éinni a rádh chun mo smaointe chur i n-umhail do.

Ba gheárr gur bhrúigh sé an racht guil fé agus do phreab na sheasamh arís. Do shiubhlamair amach ón seomra beag go dtí an halla mór, mar a raibh mórán desna hOgláigh.

Annson do thit rud áiféiseach amach—rud do bhainfadh gáire asam mara mbeadh an chráiteacht a bhí ar m'aighe. Bhí Próinsias Ó Fathaigh agus Eamonn Ó Dúgáin ag dul timcheall, dá innsint dosna fearaibh go raibh ortha a ngunnaí thabhairt uatha. Tháinig fear fé dhéin Phróinséis agus gunna aige.

"An gcaithfam géilleadh?" ar seisean.

"Caithfam," arsa Próinsias.

D'fheuch sé ar a chaptaen go truamhéileach. "Seadh!" ar seisean. "Tá post breágh oibre cailte agam! Ní ghlaclar thar n-ais me."

Cúis ghéire le linn sochraide!

Bhí euid desna hOgláigh ar buile. Do dhearbhuigh-eadar na tabharfaidís a n-airm uatha ar éan chúinse. Ortha súd a bhí oifigeach óg a bhí ana-mhór leis an

Dragoon Guards, the 2nd Brandenburg Uhlans, and also the Zieten Hussars, had participated.

It was admirable to see how quickly our men managed to carry off their fallen comrades, so that the corpses of Prussian soldiers were much rarer than those of the Austrians. The stretcher-bearers also did excellent service.

Commissariat.

We put up in an entirely empty house with only straw and so forth, and after having subsisted the entire day through on only bread and cognac, made a supper off a rations loaf which we had managed to buy; "à la guerre comme à la guerre!" We ourselves had been in the saddle from eight in the morning until half-past nine at night, and therefore slept soundly, notwithstanding our very scant accommodation, and so far as the excitement of such an eventful day would allow of rest.

We were unable either to water or feed our poor horses, but on coming across baggage wagons I had pulled out a wisp of hay and given it with my own hand to my faithful chestnut Cairngorm, who had again behaved admirably.

I felt that this had been a most important day for Prussia, and prayed God to enlighten the King with his wisdom so that the right results might in future accrue for the weal of Prussia and Germany. In the night I dreamt vividly of my wife and children.

nDálach. Do sheasamh sé i lár an halla agus piostal mór na láimh aige. Bhí a dhreifíúir ag truaiginteacht air, ach níorbh éan chabhair di bheith leis. D'órduigh Próinsias Ó Fathaigh dó géilleadh, ach chuir sé i n-ainm an diabhail é.

"Ní tusa m'oifigeach feasta," ar seisean le Próinsias agus é ag suatha a phiostail. Bhí cuid eile desna hoifigigh ag gabháil páirte leis agus ba dhóibair go mbeadh droch-obair ann.

Annon do shiubhail an Dálach fé na dhéin agus d'fheuch idir an dá shúil air.

"A leithéid seo," ar seisean go daingean. "Má chaitheann tú urchar as an bpiostal son beidh ort é chaitheamh liomsa. Tá an t-órdú fachta agam ón gCeann Urraidh géilleadh. Táim tar éis mo chlaidheamh agus m'fhocal a thabhairt don oifigeach Gallda ar bhur son go léir, agus ní raghaidh éinne siar air."

Níor mhór don oifigeach óg stríoca.

"Bíodh sé mar sin!" ar seisean. "Ach ní thabharfad m'arm dosna saighdiúirí Gallda," agus do chrom sé ar a phiostal do bhuala i geoinnibh an úrláir d'fhonn é bhrise. Dhein na hoifigigh eile aithris air.

Le na linn sin tháinig an sagart fé nár ndéin.

"A buachaillí mh'arann is mh'anama!" ar seisean. "Tá's agam gur deacair libh géilleadh, ach níl leigheas air. Iarraimse ortha é dheunamh ar bhur son féin, ar son bhur muinntire, ar son na hÉireann. Má chaitheann éinne agaibh urchar, marbhófáir sibh go léir. Ní fhágfar mac máthar agaibh na bheathaidh—"

Do chas an Dálach ar a sháil go feargach agus do chuir cose leis.

"Ní beag son, a Athair!" ar seisean. "Is cuma linn san diabhal an méid sin; ach tá órdú fachta againn ón gCeann Urraidh géilleadh, agus deunfam rud air. Ní gádh dhuit a thuille a rádh."

Chuala Próinsias ag caint le hoifigeach Gallda a bhí na príosúnach aige go dtí son.

"Tá geallta agat dom go leigfar na mná abhaile," arsa Próinsias leis.

"Tá m'fhocal agat air," arsa an toifigeach (Lindsay dob ainm dó), "agus ní gnáth liom m'fhocal do bhrise."

Níor thúisce sinn imihe (mar a chuala ní ba dheun-aighe) nuair do dhein an toifigeach úd mionrabb dá "fhocal." Agus do spailp sé éitheach gan chuimse gan náire im choinnibh nuair a bhitheas óm "thriail."

Bhí na hoifigigh Ghallda go hana-bheusach an fhaid is a bhí airm nár lámhaibh aguinn. Tháinig duine aca chughainn agus fothar-aga air.

"A dhaoine uaisle," ar seisean, "ar mhíse libh brostú oraibh. Dubhairt an Ceann Feadhna liom sibh a thabhairt chuige láithreach. Ní hamhla gur mhaith libh an Ceann Feadhna thabhairt anuas ar mhullach mo chinn orm." ("You wouldn't like to get me into a row with the General, would you?")

Is maith is cuimhin liom an oidheche úd agus sinn ag gluaiseacht tré shráideanna Bhaile Atha Cliath, agus na saighdiúirí tímcheall orainn. I n-aice lesna Cheithre Chúirte bhí sgata ban bailihe—mná saighdiúirí—agus iad ag easguini is ag bagairt a ndorn orainn. Do ghoill son orainn ní ba mheasa ná éin nídh eile. Bhí 's againn go maith caidé an sadhas daoine iad—lucht póite is drúise—ach na dhia son is uile, Eireannaigh ab ead iad; agus ní fheacamair éin Eireannaigh eile ach iad. Goill ab eadh na saighdiúirí beaga óga a bhí mar i bhfeidhil. Taobh amuich desna mná úd do luadhas ní fheacamair éinne san taisteal dúinn ach saighdiúirí. Bhí na sráideanna lán díobh. Bhí slua dhíobh ag gach cúinne agus a n-airm i geóir aca. Bhí deallramh chomh greannmhar, chomh neamh-choitianta son ar na sráideanna gur dheacair dom a aithint cá rabhas. Ba gheall le haisling dom é. Bhíos mar a bheadh duine go mbeadh tromluighe ag cur air. B'é mo Bhlá Cliath féin é; ach bhí an doircheacht is an ciúneas ann, agus gan duine de ghnáth-dhaoine na cathrach le feiseint, ach saighdiúirí agus mótoir cogaidh.

Bhíos ag siubhal le cois Eamoinn Uí Dhála i geannus ár mbuidhne. Thaobh thiar díom bhí buachaill an-árd—fear fiadhain, pluid ar a ghuaibh, agus é ag léimrigh as a choiceann nach mór le h-éan chorp

buille is seirihin. Gach re neómait chuireadh sé sgréach as: "Eireochaimid arís! Eireochaimid arís!" Agus nuair a chíodh sé complacht saighdiúirí ag cúinne sráide deireadh sé i n-árd a chinn is a ghutha: "Lámhuighidh sinn! Lámhuighidh sinn! Anamha mheasann sibh go bhfuil eagla orainn romhaibh?"

Do shroiseamair Sráid Uí Chonaill fé dheire agus do stadadh i n-aice le Leacht Pháirnell.

"Cé tá i bhfeidhil na bhfear so?" arsa sean-oifigeach a bhí na sheasamh i lár na sráide.

"Táimse na bhfeidhil," arsa an Dálach, ag siubhal fé na dhéin. "Nó bhíos, ba chóra dhom a rádh."

"Cad do chialluigheann an chainnt sin?" arsa an t-oifigeach, ad iarraidh é dh'aithint, mar bhí an oidheche ana-dhorcha agus bhí deallramh oifigigh Ghallda ar Eamonn. Nuair d'aithin sé gur Oglach a bhí ann, do sgread sé: "Téir thar nais imeasc na bpríosúnach go diair!"

Annon do thugas fé ndeara go raibh slua mór fear ar a dtaobh eile den tsráid agus saighdiúirí tímcheall ortha, fébh mar a bhíodar tímcheall orainn-na.

"An Ogláigh iadsan?" arsa duine taobh thiar díom.

Chuala duine desna hoifigigh Ghallda é. "Seadh," ar seisean go maoidhteach. "Tá sibh go léir idir lámhaibh againn!" (We've bagged the whole lot of you!)

"Mhuise, mo ghráidn chroidhe sibh!" arsa mo chara. "Agus gan agaibh ach dachad i n-aghaidh an duine aguinn. Is éachtach an ghaisce é!"

"Ní le troid a fuairadar greim orainn!" arsa Oglách eile. "Mara a mbeadh an t-órdú fuairamair, ní ghéillfimis go deó."

Bhí na hairm bainte dhinn cheana. B'éigean dúinn annson gach sadhas gléasa nó córach a bhaineann le saighdiúireacht do chaitheamh uainn. Annon do seoladh fé dhéin Sráide Pháirnell sinn, os comhair Osbuidéil an Rotunda.

Bhí oifigeach an-árd, ana-mhór annson, piostal mór na láimh aige. Do rug sé greim ar Eamonn Ó Dála agus do chuir saighdiúirí tímcheall air agus a mbeaignetí buailte na choinnibh nach mór.

"Tarraig amach an bheirt mhéirleach son," ar seisean, ag síne a mhéire chun Eamuinn Uí Dhúgáin agus Eamuinn Uí Mhorcáin. Do cuireadh lucht na mbeaignetí tímcheall ortha son, leis.

"Sgríobhaidh, síos ainm agus seola gach duine desna méirlich úd," ar seisean leis na hoifigigh eile, ag labhairt i n-árd a chinn is a ghutha agus ag suatha a phiostail mar a bheadh fear buile. "Agus," ar seisean go bagarthach lesna hOgláigh, "má thugann sibh ainmneacha breugacha is díbh is measa."

Tháinig oifigeach beag ramhar chughamsa agus tuin ar a chainnt do chuir déistean orm. B'fhuirist fear a chur orm an uair sin agus nuair do chrom sé ar m'ainm agus mó sheóla do scrí, do labhras leis go feargach fíochmhar.

"A chladhaire! Má labhrann tú mar sin liom, buaifad tú," ar seisean, agus do bhagair sé a dhorn orm. Do rith an Bodach Mór chugham san am cheudna agus do bhagair a phiostal orm.

D'fheuchas ar an mbeirt agus do chromas ar gháirí. B'fhuirist duit é dheunamh," arsa mise, "mar níl aon arm agam. Tá an lámhuachtair agaibh anois."

Ní thuigeann tú do chás féin, do réir dheallramh," arsa an Bodach Mór. "Níl ionnat ach príosúnach—agus méirleach na theannta!"

D'fheuchas suas idir an dá shúil air. "Cad dubharta do chuir fearg ort?" arsa mise.

Do staon sé. "Nílim annso chun ceisteanna fhreagairt," ar seisean agus do chas ar a sháil. "Cuir comhartha fé leith le hainm an fhir sin," ar seisean leis an bhfear beag reamhair.

"Deunfad, a dhuine uasail," ar seisean. Dheineas gáire arís. D'iarr duine dem chárde orm i geogar mo bheul d'éisteacht. "Níl uatha ach leathseul," ar seisean. "Ba mhaith leo sinn do ghriosa chun gleo do dheunamh, d'fhonn an slua dhinn do lámhach."

Dheineas rud air. Do treuigheadh sinn isteach ar an bhfaihe beag os comhair Ospuidéil an Rotunda. Do fágadh sínte ar an bhfeur sinn, ar muin maire a chéile, mar a bheadh sgata beithíoch.

Annon iseadh thuigeas i gceart cad ba bhrigh le "géilleadh" agus "príosúnach."