

THE NEW PATRIOTISM.

By Arthur Griffith.

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A few years ago I watched the upspringing of the New Patriotism with sympathetic eyes. "At last," thought I, "the Irish Indifferents are beginning to understand that they have a country – that to be an Irishman is better than to be a nondescript; that Irish interests, Irish literature, Irish history, and Irish traditions are their interests, literature, history, and traditions as well as ours, and that they owe a duty to their country as well as we do."

Much brass-trumpeting, much logrolling, much pedantry, and much ignorance surrounded the infancy of the New Patriotism, but much could be forgiven to a fresh enthusiasm. As it grew it babbled of the Gael – of his wit and imagination, his language and literature, his splendid character and his woeful sufferings (some generations back). I heard mysterious hints of his destiny, and when the prattling babe had grown to cocksure childhood – 'twill never live to don the *toga virilis* – it spake of his mission – which it seems, is to instruct the ignorant Anglo-Saxon, to lead him into higher paths, to purify his mind, and, generally, to make a decent fellow of him. Now, I am doubtful about missions, but I do sincerely and firmly believe that if the Gael has a mission, or anything like unto a mission, it is simply to make a man of himself.

For, certes, if he cannot do that he is no fellow to instruct the Saxon. Nor does the Saxon desire his instruction nor will he take it – the solitary thing he will not take from him.

In fact this New Patriotism, instead of strangling serpents in the cradle, only bored its wellwishers with its squalling, and it has tired them since it grew into knickerbockers and dogmatism. Like the courtiers of John Lackland, it plucks our beards and bids us go to. It tells us we are but blind bats, that Nationality is not a thing of rights, arms, freedom, franchises, brotherhood, duties, manliness, and memory, but a thing of loud singing and lute-playing, of mystic prose and thrice-mystic poesy. It talks of elevating the Saxon by pure

thought and high example, and prayers, good child, on the wicked ones who dream of elevating him by murderous steel and villainous salt-petre.

I suspect this New Patriotism is, after all, a relative of Young Degeneracy. Evil I see it strutting about mouthing its shibboleth of “No Politics” – which means in its jargon no reference to the fact that that fine fellow the Gael is famishing to death. His sorrowful eyes lighted up for a space when he heard the New Patriots holloing his name, but the gaudy band of cymbal-clashers marched along the mountain-top and left him agonising in the valley. For his agony was of marketable worth in Babylon, where the sweat and tears of nations, by the art of skilful slaves, can be made a grateful incense to the nostrils of the purple-clad. Now, methinks, the Old Patriots would have gone into the valley and lifted him up, striven to lead him up the mountain from the darkness to the daylight, and if they had fallen by the way, would have shouted out words of cheer to him as they fell.

So, Messieurs the New Patriots, I wish you a speedy extinction. There may be countries where your noble teaching “That patriotism consists in loving your own country, not in hating another,” even though that “other” – how finnikin it is! – kick, cuff, chain, famish, rob, and hunt you – will be heard with reverence; and I doubt not in every place the humanistic philanthropists will feel their sheep-hearts swell and the Miss Mollies rise up and call you blessed. But the Gael, thank God, will continue to fiercely, passionately, blackly hate his tyrant and call that hatred Patriotism and as for you, O New Patriots! he will think, affirm, and title you New Humbugs.

NATIONALIST.