

The Hero of Ulster.

Sir Edward Carson, a Masterful Man of the World Viewed as a Passionate Crusader.

BLOODY insurrection is preached in Ulster against Home Rule by that greatest of all figures at the Irish Bar, Sir Edward Carson. For the moment he eclipses John Redmond himself as the most conspicuous of living Irishmen. He is hailed as the hero of Ulster. He has deliberately placed himself outside the pale of the law itself in his passionate crusade for an Ulster separate and distinct from the rest of Ireland where Home Rule is concerned. He has pledged thousands of Orangemen to resist, if necessary, by force of arms, all application of the Home Rule Bill to the province of which he is champion. There will be, he avers loudly, civil war, armed insurrection. The Prime Minister has felt bound to remind Sir Edward Carson of the statute against treason. The leading lawyer of Ireland is technically at least liable to imprisonment for crime, says a writer in an American weekly. Sir Edward Carson retorts with a ringing defiance. He will take refuge in Ulster itself if he must, and defy the forces of the Crown to touch him. Nor is the man who thus defies the law outside the pale of it. He has long been a pillar of the Tory party, long a conspicuous figure in the House of Commons, long the most successful practising barrister in England and in Ireland. "He leads the Ulstermen," says the London "World," "because he is the embodiment of the Ulster temperament." It is a fighting temperament, even a naturally violent temperament. Sir Edward Carson has caught its spirit. In a literal sense, this great lawyer is "out for blood," and he has all Ulster behind him.

No head around which an aureole would look more ridiculous is conceivable to that able journalist, A.G.G., who studies the man of Ulster at length in the London "News." Sir Edward, we read, is the very perfect knight, not of the Round Table, but of the bar mess—"learned in the crooked ways of men, cynical, abounding in animal spirits, loving equally a joke or a row, with something of the gay swagger as well as the brogue of the squibber of the west." Sir Edward, we are assured, is a man of the type who takes his meat red and his wine without water. "An ideal would rather in his presence." Even Joseph Surface, the man of sentiment in Sheridan's play, would not have tried a "sentiment" upon Sir Edward Carson. A poet before him would be dumb—"hypnotised like a rabbit before a python." For there is something in the mere presence of the man that is shattering and masterful. The retreating forehead, with the black, well-oiled hair brushed close to the crown, the long-hatched face, the heavy-lidded eyes, at once dreamy and merciless, the droop of the mouth, the challenging thrust of the underlip, the heavy jaw—these combine, it seems, to proclaim the man capable of anything—and then some.

There is in the noble savagery of Sir Edward Carson, as regards his manner no less than his aspect, a suggestion of the Sioux chief who had left his scalps at home. Or one might take him for the part of actor with lungs of brass who plays the bold, bad baron. He is, to our authority, the most formidable blunder-buss to be found in the Temple practising. The attention is intelligible because Carleton has defined a barrister as a loud-voiced blunder-buss. "If you hire it, you blow out the other man's brains. If he hires it, he blows out yours." Sir Edward Carson, therefore, always finds his cases easy. "With a weak man on the bench, he simply walks over the course." It is so much easier for a judge to agree with him than to differ. In these circumstances, a startling change comes over Sir Edward Carson. The great advocate becomes graciousness itself. "He is sweet and kindly even to the poor plaintiff who sees all his hopes vanishing before some magic solvent." Vainly his counsel wrestles with this intangible influence. He advances his most powerful line of attack. Sir Edward gently drums his fingers on the table, murmuring, "My lord, I must object." The judge writes at once—if he be weak.

If the judge be of sterner stuff, the note of Sir Edward Carson can be mod-

fied to suit. He must blow the plaintiff to pieces himself. He must overawe the jury himself. "Then who so ruthless as he, who so artless in playing upon the political string, who so subtle in suggesting hidden motives?" The heavy, vibrant voice fills the court, the blows fall with a ruthless crash, all the resources of his dominating personality are brought into play to stampede the men in the box. For Sir Edward has the gaiety of high animal spirits and the rough wit of the streets. "Ar-re ye a lay-totalter?" he roars in his rich brogue, seeing that the man in the witness box is bottle-nosed. No answer. "Ar-re ye a moderate drinker?" "That's my business," replies the bottle-nosed mortal. "Any other business?" The question comes swiftly—the knock-out blow of the sparrer. We read, who plays lightly with a poor antagonist and sends him spinning with

speeches of Sir Edward Carson in vain for a noble thought or for a flash of genial humour. It is all hard and grinding. "But in that is the true note of Ulster." Not that this man of Ulster is a native there. He is an adopted child, and but for him Ulster now might be dumb.

Yet with all the defects of Sir Edward Carson, defects pointed out continually by the Liberal London dailies, all agree that he possesses one supreme quality for a leader. He is a first-class fighting man. "He would be magnificent at Donnybrook Fair, and the blackthorn, presented to him by admiring men of Ulster, is the perfect symbol of their spokesman." He is always, apparently, for the blackthorn argument. When a certain constitutional measure rent the Tory party in twain he was the most daring of "die hards" and gave his leader of to-day, Lord Londonderry, no quarter. "We are told that if we run away to-day," he said, "we will fight hereafter. I prefer to fight to-day and to-morrow and the day after." That, says the London "News," is the man. "His blackthorn is never idle." Nevertheless—such is the perversity of popularity—he is the most popular of men—with even the men at whom he roars his loudest. It is an open question whether he is not to-day the most popular figure in the whole House of Commons. It takes kindly to the man who has no reserves, no affectations and who rushes

been built up gloriously upon this foundation almost from the hour of his birth nearly sixty years ago in Dublin. Trinity College confirmed him as an Orangeman in spirit. He "took silk," as they say over there, at the Irish Bar with the Orange atmosphere in his nostrils. He thrived at the English Bar upon the strength of the ascendancy of his caste in Ireland. He was a creature of the same ascendancy when he became Solicitor-General for Ireland. During the twenty years he has sat in the Commons as a member for Dublin University, he has acted like an Orangeman of the Oranges, thinking their thoughts and fighting their cause. Without him, avers our contemporary, the cause of Ulster would seem contemptible. With him it is almost formidable. "His figure emerges from the battle with a certain sinister distinction and loneliness. He is fighting for a bad cause that is in full flight but he is fighting as men fight who count nothing of the cost." He will not yield.

No one who does not understand the temperament of Sir Edward, therefore, can understand the Irish crisis in its present form. Yet few Englishmen understand him. He is dismissed, we are told, under one of two categories. In one he is simply an Old Bailey lawyer with a brief. In the other he is a patriot ready to die in the last ditch for his country. He is neither. His sincerity is that of the fanatic. But his passion is not that of the Liberal dailies at any rate—the passion of the patriot, for he has no country. He has only a caste. He fights not for Ireland, not even for Ulster, but for a kind of Manchu dynasty. Not that he should be deemed mercenary. He is the aristocrat to the finger-tips, aniling defiance at the oncoming mob. He is the Bourbon in every drop of his blood. He showed that temper when he swept through Ireland as prosecutor for the Crown, imprisoning a score or more of Irish Home Rulers for daring to address their constituents. Despite all this it is not true, we are invited to believe, that he adopted the cause of Ulster as a matter of expediency. Ulster is the breath of his nostrils, the fire in his blood. It makes him shed tears—real tears—on the platform. It makes him talk treason, set up a provisional government and utter wild threats about marching from Belfast to Cork. It makes him put himself deliberately out of the running for the highest offices in the State to which he might have aspired. It is not expediency which works this miracle of God, laments the British daily, but the ultimate passion in his soul roused and transfiguring him. But let us take leave of the man in the kindlier glow diffused over his personality by that most sympathetic of all his interpreters, the London "World":—

"He comes to the Table a severe and somewhat prim figure. He makes play with his glasses in professional fashion. His lectures. His arguments are marvellous as though for a mathematical demonstration. The class is by no means tranquil, but he takes no notice of its noise. He is there to demonstrate certain truths, and demonstrate them he will. As you listen to him his forceful personality gradually asserts itself, and when he sits down he leaves two clear ideas in your mind. The first is that there is no Irish question—a question is a thing with two sides to it. Sir Edward Carson shows that there is only one side to Irish affairs. His premises appear irrefutable; the conclusions follow syllogistically. It all seems so obvious, so inevitable, that you wonder whether it was really worth saying. The second impression he leaves is that if there be an Irish question it is a purely intellectual question, to be argued without passion after the style of a Platonic dialogue. It is all a matter of the adjustment of theory to ascertainable, though decidedly complex, facts, and calls for nothing but a clear head and much sound sense—the very faculties which make a good barrister.

"No, too, with his method. The Ulsterman hates the appeal to sentiment. All this talk of nationality is so much humbug to him. In his heart of hearts he knows that it contradicts facts. But how can he prove it? How can he rebut the charge that when he speaks of Home Rule he is himself a pryor to one of those very prejudices which he is denouncing? How can he put his case strongly without suggesting that it is over-coloured? There is no golden rule by which these results can be achieved. But there is a temperamental which achieves them, and that temperament finds perfect expression in Sir Edward Carson."

Through this temperament, Sir Edward Carson looks at Ireland and the Home Rule question only to find them scarlet instead of green.



THE RIGHT HON. SIR EDWARD HENRY CARSON, K.C., LL.D., M.P.

a scornful flick of the finger. But when at grips with a more formidable foe, the methods of Sir Edward Carson become coarser.

No one in the whole domain of contemporary British politics, it seems, has a rougher tongue than Sir Edward Carson or uses it more recklessly. "I am not paid five thousand pounds a year for spitting out dirt," he says, referring to the literary and genial Augustine Birrell, who has "spat out less dirt," our authority avers, "in a lifetime than is contained in that one jar." To a calm statement of fact, Sir Edward Carson says: "I have taken the opportunity of congratulating Sir John Bessie that Ananias is still flourishing." And he says elsewhere: "There is nothing but a large going on at the House of Commons. It is called 'The Gambler's, or some, and get nine pence for four pence.' Come, and see Lloyd George, the wag-tail. He must be inspired, you know, for he preaches in tabernacles." Now, all this, agrees our British contemporary, is grand stuff. But it "goes." The men of Ulster pour their delight at it. You will search the

pell-mell, madly, unthinkingly, into the smoke of battle—often, it is true, to be laughed at.

What is the motive that converts this masterful man of the world into the passionate crusader? The question is asked again and again by the Liberal London organ. Why does he shed tears, it inquires, in the presence of his vast audiences? It is not, we are told, for the sake of expediency. It is not patriotism, nor love of the political union in one Parliament for its own dear sake. The motive of Sir Edward Carson, we read, is the ascendancy of his own caste, established and maintained by the Union. For a century and more the Orangemen have had Ireland under their heels. With the castle of Sir Lord-Lieutenant at their back, men of the breed of Sir Edward Carson have had Ireland as if it were a conquered province. They have planted their men in every fat office. They have controlled the administration. The police have been instruments in their hands. The law has been of their fashioning. The judges have been of their making. The career of Sir Edward Carson has