

HOMAGE TO A PHILOSOPHER

AS regards his more public self he was, as all agree, principally a logician and his skill, he being a critic in the rear-guard of the old order going pace by pace with the first scouts of the new, lay in *dividendo*: *componenda*, the correlative task of reason, he left to the young men walking with him in the valleys. When he opened his mouth the universe, split by the tip of his tongue, fell in two pieces crushing multitudes. And this splitting of worlds would continue all the while he spoke until there remained not one hair of his head that was not cracked in the centre; and the atom was nothing to him. For all his skill in striking out divisions, he retained a sheaf of principles, of simple, indivisible things which he held with an unshakable but tender tenacity wherever his steps might lead him. It was these he exhibited to the intransigent eyes of the young, these which in part explained his following; for many walked with him, their eyes lifted to the same impalpable horizons. Here, clear of the mists that tinge the boundary of sky and land, you may see him, the sharp point of his shaven chin like a wedge in the cleft between constellations, the broader forehead and wispy hair thrusting apart the two poles of a dichotomy.

Nevertheless, and here agreement again in general, the man was greater than his teaching. It was not for his logic that men followed him, or not chiefly, for better logicians have evoked less ardour and caused less heartburning; neither was it, as malice has suggested, for the faults of his logic though these were sufficiently attractive. But he was a lover of wisdom whose mind was such that he could deliver in one breath the most blind of *a priori* judgments together with the keenest of real intuitions. It was a matter of observation with him that where there is a great flogging of dead horses there is also a living hart that bears the brunt of the blows. To the pain of many he had applied this judgment to the flogging of liberalism by the Catholic press. And it was to him that they turned, the wounded deer from the valleys, to receive healing from the keen salt of his tears. For they knew him, the young ones, more truly than they knew his teaching, for an old stag of the eternal hills.

BERNARD KELLY.