

he was admitted to the Irish bar. And, although excluded by his religion from the free exercise of his rights, although not allowed the legal gown, yet in a few years he had no equal among Irish lawyers. In examining witnesses none aspired to rival him, being naturally possessed of that tact which characterises the artful interrogator. But, though he rose to great eminence in the legal fraternity, yet it was in the field of Irish politics that O'Connell's real greatness displayed itself.

From the time in which he entered upon this work until his death, probably no man received such extravagant commendation from his friends and such violent denunciation from his enemies. Writers of high standing in that day place before us a man filled with inconsistency and hypocrisy. Simple facts bring to our view a man who sacrificed everything, even his life, for his country's welfare. Looking back toward that period it cannot for a moment be supposed that one became the hero of a nation and influenced such vast concourses of people by a conscious imposture.

Into the conflict, where his great opponent was established custom, he brought powers not often excelled. As an orator he has had few equals. He possessed a commanding stature, a stately presence, and a voice capable of modulation to any extent. It had the iron ring in abuse, and the mild pathos in appeal. When he appeared on the floor of the British House of Commons, before England's representatives, from the speaker to the gallery reporter, all was attention. It was supposed that the manner of address he had acquired in pleading before juries and haranguing mobs, would fail when applied to the unsympathetic ear of the British Parliament. Lord Jeffreys, a professional critic, stated that the other members seemed talking school boy talk when O'Connell sat down. Lord Roebuck says he was the finest speaker he ever heard in the House of Commons. His speech was purely extempore, and he had all the defects of that style, but he attained the peculiar success of those who can speak without preparation. His words came from a nature in deadly earnest, and went right to the hearts of his hearers.

But it was among the native Celts that O'Connell's oratory had its great effect. They looked upon him as one capable of doing what he said he would do. He had borne the leading part in carrying Catholic Emancipation. No doubt this would have come to pass had O'Connell never lived. The influence of wise statesmen and the eloquence of great orators were arrayed in its favor. But the Irish Celts did not make such distinctions. They knew he had demanded Catholic Emancipation and had been refused. They knew he had said he would compel its concession, and in the end it was conceded to him. And whenever his voice was heard they embraced every syllable. O'Connell knew the Celtic nature and framed his speech to suit it. When in his