

O'CONNELL.

In the presence of the national collection for the fund of the O'Connell Centenary, it may not be uninteresting to the public to have brought before them the leading facts in the career of Ireland's most illustrious son. We reproduce with that object from the Freeman's Journal of Monday, August 8th, 1864, the following condensed biography:—

It was about this period that the extraordinary powers and prudence of O'Connell were called into requisition. He found that, so to speak, he should encounter the Government within the limits of the Constitution. This he resolved to do, and the character of the policy he adopted is an eloquent epitome in his oft-repeated injunction:—'He who commits crime gives strength to the enemy.' The result was a legal warfare—a constitutional campaign. This policy he developed in a masterly manner, and within its circumscribed limits he established a powerful organization, which, in a brief time, embraced the entire country. The Catholic Association rapidly became a great power in the land: To conduct such an organization as he had got afloat in safety through the quicksands and shoals by which it was encompassed required the continual exercise of great mental and physical powers; for, besides having to encounter and avoid the treacherous intricacies of the law and the jealous vigilance and active hostility of the Government, O'Connell had also to guard against the imprudence of some of his associates, as, in after life, he was frequently thwarted by inexperience and by rash counsels and the safety of the movement jeopardised by misdirected enthusiasm or presuming vanity or imbecility: But he was equal to all emergencies, and, though for a time he may have been perplexed and actually seemed to have been baffled, he was never defeated or so embarrassed as to be unable to devise a remedy. O'Connell was the very soul—the fearless yet cautious ruler of the Association—encouraging the wavering and timid—stimulating the apathetic—restraining the enthusiastic—devising, counselling, and inspiring. He frequently spoke seven or eight times in the one day. Every petition, resolution, address, and appeal was written by him. It was now that he exhibited the varied resources of his matchless eloquence—an eloquence untrammelled by mere conventional rules, ascending to the sublime and descending to the grotesque with marvellous facility—an eloquence spontaneous, multiplied, and varied, touching every chord in the human heart—exciting, at his pleasure, the laughter or the tears of his hearers—inflaming their passions—exciting hopes and calming storms—sometimes burning and picturesque, but always animated with that spirit of inspiration which was drawn from the love of his country and his hatred of oppression. His resources as well as his energy, seemed almost inexhaustible.

The year 1826 was a momentous one in the history of Catholic Emancipation. To encounter the Derfords on their own territory was a bold undertaking. But O'Connell felt the time had arrived for the Catholic body to show its strength, and the return of Stuart for Waterford by the Catholic influence was the precursor of the Victory of Clare. The three years that intervened between the Waterford election and the year '29 were well used—so well that the Catholics felt that they should invade St. Stephen's. An opportunity soon offered. Vesey Fitzgerald, having been appointed a Cabinet Minister, had to seek re-election at the hands of the electors of Clare. The crisis had arrived. The Catholic Association, after much consultation and deliberation, resolved that O'Connell should be put forward to oppose the new Minister. For this purpose a sum of £20,000 was subscribed in a few days. All the resources and influences of both sides—the Catholics and the Cabinet—were put into active motion. On the appearance of O'Connell's address the excitement became intense. Hope and fear battled for supremacy in the public mind. The occasion was pregnant with vast consequences—Emancipation or degradation. As the day of election approached the excitement throughout the country reached a pitch never before known. Every preparation and precaution that forethought could suggest was adopted, and 'He who commits a crime gives strength to the enemy' was preached from every altar. The nomination took place on the 30th of June, 1828. O'Connell was proposed by The O'Gorman Mahon and seconded by Tom Steele. The Hon. William Vesey Fitzgerald was proposed by Sir Edward O'Brien, the father of the late Wm. Smith O'Brien, and seconded by Sir Augustus Fitzgerald. The show of hands was declared to be in favour of the Minister, and The O'Gorman Mahon demanded a poll for O'Connell. The voting commenced on Friday, the 1st of July, and, after six days' polling, O'Connell was declared 'duly elected' by a majority of one thousand and ninety-one! In the same year, 1828, the House of Lords had contemptuously rejected the Catholic petition, and with this and a partial discussion of the bill for the extinction of the Catholic Association the session was brought to a close. The King, in his coronation oath, had sworn to maintain the Constitution as he had received it, and refused peremptorily to yield. Wellington had declared that he would risk a civil war rather than concede Emancipation, and the opinions of Peel were equally strong and hostile. The Clare election, however, showed that the country was united and resolved, and on the opening of the session, 1829, the Royal Speech recommended the consideration of the position of and laws affecting the Catholics, and W. L. King, in the Lords, and Mr. Secretary Peel, in the Commons, brought in bills on the subject. After long and frequently adjourned debates the Catholic Relief Bill was carried in the Lords in May by a majority of 105, the numbers having been—contents 217; non-contents, 112. In the Commons the majority was 348 to 100, and the Relief was accordingly yielded. The metropolis blazed with illuminations to celebrate the event and the country was bright with hope and joy. At length the Catholic millions of Ireland were admitted to civil rights, and on their native soil they stood 'redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled' by the irresistible power of Public Opinion, as created, developed, and guided by Daniel O'Connell.

General then moved that 'a new writ do issue for Clare.' The second election took place on the 30th July, 1829, and O'Connell was returned without opposition. On the 3rd of February, 1830, having been introduced by Sir Francis Burdett and M. A. Taylor, he took the oath as prescribed under the Relief Act. He was the first Catholic who sat in Parliament for a period of one hundred and fifty years, and he tells us himself that he was the first Irish Catholic who, either in England or Ireland, was elected to a seat in the British Senate.

Having emancipated his co-religionists, The Liberator, as he now was called, immediately applied his energies and his ability to the national regeneration of the country. Several associations were formed in succession to meet the exigency of the moment, and in 1834 he inaugurated the Repeal agitation. The movement met great opposition and received great support, and, finally, the Minister and the Sovereign having solemnly pledged themselves that justice would be done to Ireland—Repeal was placed in abeyance. The royal promise was broken—the redress was not granted, and the Liberal-National Repeal Association was established. The history of that body is too recent to require detailed notice. The public support granted to it was prodigious—the monster meetings of '43 at once proclaimed its strength and O'Connell's power. The indiscreet proclamation of a cavalry procession at Clontarf in effect handed the Repeal Association over to the Government. The military style of that famous document attracted the attention of the Government who at once saw that they held the agitation in the hollow of their hands. The intended meeting was prohibited and the Repeal processions followed. The State Trials resulted in the imprisonment, on the 30th May, 1844, of the Liberator, his son John, Tom Steele, B. Barrett, the Rev. Mr. Tierney, the Rev. Mr. Turrell, the Hon. Charles Gavan Duffy, late Minister of Crown Lands in Australia, Dr. Gray, and Mr. T. M. Bay, Secretary to the Association. Of the nine the three latter are the only survivors. The sentence of the Irish court was reversed, on an appeal to the House of Lords, the then Chief Justice of England declaring that the trial of O'Connell by a jury, which was packed in the most approved fashion under the Tory régime, was 'a mockery, a delusion, and a snare,' and after one hundred days' captivity the 'Repeal Martyrs' were released and received by a grand triumphal procession. During this imprisonment was laid the basis of that malady which cut short the life of O'Connell. The Young Ireland party was organized at this period. The controversy between them and O'Connell on the godless colleges began while O'Connell was yet a prisoner in Richmond. O'Connell wrote articles in the Freeman's Journal on the Education Question. These were replied to in the organs of the Young Ireland party, and then, step by step, was induced that breach which, when the 'sword' policy came to be openly avowed by Meagher, ended in the secession—the great schism—the fruits of which have since left the country a void and a waste.

'We do not desire to discuss the details of that event, the feuds it produced, or the sad consequences that followed. The broadest line of demarcation was drawn by O'Connell between the contending principles. In the controversy that ensued, each party, perhaps, went too far in assailing the other. Outsiders were disposed to listen to the abuse of both, and the country witnessed the sad spectacle of having two 'National' political organizations professing to seek for the legislative independence of the country, but whose principal function seemed to be to meet weekly, respectively to reply to the accusations of the other. O'Connell's health began to fail shortly after this event; anxious as to the results of the doctrines then promulgated, his sagacious judgment foresaw much of what followed. The potato famine came looming in the distance, and, depressed by the prospects, his energies seemed to sink before the combined pressure of physical disease and mental anxiety.

On Monday, the 25th of January, 1847, O'Connell took part, for the last time, in the proceedings of 'Conciliation Hall.' The period was, as we have already mentioned, momentous in the history of the country. The appalling devastation which was then rapidly enveloping the entire island, combined with the lamentable political differences which distracted the one powerful Repeal party, naturally occupied the attention of that meeting. In the course of the observations he addressed to that assembly—his last public speech in Ireland—the Liberator said:—'I would have been in Parliament to-night, but for the tempestuous state of the weather. I cannot abide storms as I used. I go to parliament to call for food for the people. I began my campaign by calling for food—food—food! In my letters it was my cry—food for the Irish people. Food at once is what I want. Disease and death will be found in every quarter if the Government will not act promptly.' Referring to a letter that had been published by Young Mr. Meagher, dilating on some features in the Belgian Revolution, the Liberator observed:—'Oh, are there not some of you old enough to remember 1798? Such of you as have not witnessed it must have heard your fathers tell of it. The innocent and the guilty suffered. The prisons were full. The scaffold wreaked with human gore—Terror reigned throughout the land. I heard the shrieks of horrible suffering re-echo through the Royal Exchange. Cries of agony and despair were heard in every quarter. Human blood was shed like water. Every crime was committed, and the yeomanry were frantic with bloodshed and slaughter. Oh, those who would inculcate such doctrines, or who would in the slightest degree favor them, are the worst enemies of Ireland. I am going from you, for a short time. If I find that in England I cannot do something beneficial for Ireland, I will come back immediately, and see what can be done in the country.'

'On the following Thursday evening he left Ireland to attend to his Parliamentary duties,' as the papers of the next morning announced. On that journey, the last he made from Ireland, he was accompanied by Mr. John O'Connell, Mr. Daniel O'Connell, junior who had just been returned for Dundalk, and Alderman Timothy O'Brien, then the representative of Cashel of the Kings'. On Monday, the 6th of February, the Liberator was in his place in the House of Commons. There he reiterated the demand for 'food,' and cautioned the Government that unless it acted promptly and vigorously, 'one quarter of the population would succumb to the famine,' which then afflicted the people. This was the last speech he spoke within the chamber of St. Stephen's. The papers the following morning stated 'the hon. member was scarcely audible in the reporters' gallery.' Under date the 13th of the same month he wrote the last letter he addressed the Repeal Association. It was dated from the British Hotel, Jermyn-street, London, and it announced that he intended to support Lord George Bentinck's motion in lending £16,000,000 for the construction of the earthworks of railways in Ireland. Several long and important debates on this proposal took place, but in none of them was O'Connell able to take part. His absence from the house so important, an occasion caused painful anxiety among the people. O'Connell's health was in fact gone. For a time his strength fluctuated, and, though various rumours were afloat, none seemed to realize the true extent of the danger. However, on Saturday, the 13th of February, he published a communication from our London correspondent which, we believe, was the first to give an authentic statement as to the serious danger that were apprehended. The writer informed us that it was too true that, for the previous few weeks, O'Connell had been 'totally unable' to attend to his accustomed duties. He seemed to suffer, remarked our correspondent, from general prostration, and his

physicians looked to 'rest, abstinence from business, and a special attention to regimen,' rather than to medicine for his recovery. On the 6th of March it was stated that he was then on the point of 'departure for Hastings,' to seek benefit in change of air. After a week's sojourn in that place he left for Folkestone and a letter from Mr. P. V. Fitzpatrick, written at Folkestone on the 22nd of March, says:—'Within the last fifteen minutes the Prince Ernest steamer, bearing the Liberator, Dr. Milley, and Young Dan, to the shores of France, quitted this harbour. Bodily debility and mental depression continue to constitute his principal malady.' Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Fitzsimons, who had accompanied him to London, having taken farewell of the great man, returned to Ireland. The distinguished invalid, and his companions reached Boulogne after a passage of a few hours, which it was thought had a beneficial effect. On the 27th of March they arrived in the French capital, and the Liberator of that date announced that 'The hero of Ireland alighted at the Windsor Hotel half past four o'clock to-day.' The Liberator added to this announcement—that the first physicians of Paris will be called together to-morrow, and after the consultation, we hope to be able to make such a statement as will reassure the friends of the glorious Emancipator of Ireland who may be anxious to salute him on his journey to Rome.' During his stay in Paris he was waited upon by the principal English and Irish residents in that capital, and the then British Minister, the late Marquis of Normanby, was particular in his courteous attention. On the 29th he left Paris for Orleans, but before leaving he was waited on and presented with an address, full of generous expressions for his recovery, from the Electoral Committee. In his brief reply he assured the deputation that 'illness and emotion closed his lips.' The journey was then continued by easy stages, reaching Genoa on the morning of the 6th of May.

'The time, the place, and the occasion are each suggestive. Ireland's greatest citizen' is ill—sick unto death. Is it too much to imagine that, as he lay on his couch in the Hotel Fiden, his acute and sensitive mind could hear above the wall and lamentations of famine, his services questioned, his motives debated, his policy denied, and his very honour sought to be insinuated away? But, should those phantoms have rippled the calm of his last moments, let us hope that he recollected that misrepresentation, calumny, and aspersion are the penalties which men have to submit to for being great? No gleam of hope brightened the sad scene or encouraged the sorrow-stricken watchers. The symptoms grew more distinct—more marked. It was now clear that the crisis was not far off and that the days of O'Connell were numbered. For a day or so he endured great pain. Then utter and complete prostration supervened, which baffled the most skilful treatment and the most unremitting attention. He now never spoke, and that voice on whose mellifluous accents thousands—nay, millions—of his countrymen had hung in the ecstasies of rapture is hushed. And those lips from which had issued an eloquence soft and seductive as woman's love—an eloquence winged like a candle, melancholy like a psalm, and varied like a drama—are closed and mute. And there in Genoa of glorious historic reminiscences, rising amphitheatre-like, as a thing of beauty, from the blue Mediterranean, with its stradas of white marble palaces, its promenades, and its terraces, interlaced with parterres of beautiful and sweet-smelling flowers—with its innumerable and magnificent churches, each the memorial of some great event—with the bare summits of the Appennines and the ice-capped tops of the Alps, towering sentinel-like, above—with its surrounding citron and orange groves, and its gardens of mulberries, and pomegranates, and olives, intertwining their beauties and commingling their sweetness—here it was that the spirit of the Great Man of Ireland—a soul once stalwart but now broken and fretted—fled from the body and went Heavenward.

'The last Great Champion of the rights of Man, The last Great Tribune of the world, is dead!' 'Grief—unutterable, inconsolable—permeated the land when, on the morning of the 25th of May, we announced 'The Death of the Liberator.' The first intelligence of the deplorable event was conveyed to Ireland by a special courier from our London Correspondent. It is unnecessary to describe the extent and intensity of the sorrow experienced by all classes, but more especially by that class, which through good and evil report, had continued unwaveringly faithful to the Liberator, and whose allegiance to his principles never wavered. A complete widowhood seemed to have fallen on the land, and mourning covered it like a pall. The Association held a special meeting, and adopted an address informing the people, in brief terms of their loss. The Corporation, which had been summoned for that day, met, and at once adjourned for three weeks. Special religious services were held in the pro-Cathedral, and from a thousand altars, accompanied by the prayers of the emancipated millions, there ascended one universal supplication for the dead one. But this grief and mourning were not confined to his native land—they permeated to the furthest end of the globe.

'There were distant echoes of that great funeral. Where the Ganges rolls its sacred tide in majesty along; And across the Western waters, as his keel glided on the strand. The sad news made the fisher sad, in far-off Newfoundland. And away where noble cities, by the broad St. Lawrence rise, The Dead one had his tribute from sad hearts and weeping eyes; And still further off to Westward, where is heard sublimely grand The thunder of Niagara, the wonder of the land; And away in mighty forests, which the stalwart woodman clears The Dead One, in the lonely leaf, found sympathy and tears; And away in ether regions, where our starlight does not shine, And the Southern Cross beams nightly on the broad Pacific brine— All the world the meed of homage paid from every shore and clime!

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

On the 29th ult., his Eminence Cardinal Cullen, officiated at the laying of the foundation stone of a new parochial church for Rathfriland. The sacred edifice will occupy a very picturesque site in the immediate vicinity of the demesne of Rathfriland Castle, and on the road to Glencree. Mr. H. Hodgins, J.P., Beaufort House, donated the ground forming the site, which is a portion of his demesne lands nearly opposite a somewhat celebrated wayside establishment known as the 'Yellow House.' The church will be erected by Mr. Michael Meade, after designs by Mr. Ashlin, in the style of architecture of the fourteenth century. The principal material used in the construction will be granite, with Portland stone dressings, and will consist of nave, aisles, chancel, and side chapels. Interiorly its length will be 124 feet, and its breadth 48 feet.

On the 31st ult., two young ladies, Miss Christina Mary Bodkin (in religion, Sister Mary Christine), youngest daughter of Dr. Bodkin, of Eastland House, Tuam, and Miss Della Begley (in religion, Sister Mary Anne), eldest daughter of Mr. James Begley, of Tuam, were received as novices in the Mercy Convent, Tuam. The ceremonies were performed by the Most Rev. Dr. McHale, Archbishop of Tuam.

On the 30th ult., in the Mercy Convent chapel, Clifden, four young ladies were professed, the celebrant being the Very Rev. Dean MacManus, P.P., V.F. The names of the young ladies professed were—Miss Cary, Dublin; Miss Mary Hughes and Miss Ellen Hughes, Castlebar; and Miss King, Lennox.

On the 19th of March, Feast of St. Joseph, the ceremony of the profession of four religious of the Order of St. John of God, and reception of two others took place at the little chapel at Sallyville. The four young ladies who made their solemn vows on this occasion were—Miss Mary Teresa Hynes, in religion Sister Mary Gertrude, youngest daughter of the late Luke Hynes, Esq., Dullylawn, co. Wexford; Miss Anna Stafford, in religion Sister Mary Aidan, daughter of M. Stafford, Esq., Bohon House, co. Wexford; Miss Mary Ellen Connick, in religion Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, eldest daughter of William Connick, Esq., of Wexford; Miss Catherine Agnes Byrne, in religion Sister Mary Teresa, daughter of Mr. Byrne, county Wicklow. Those received were—Miss Mary Anne Pearson, daughter of Charles Henry Pearson, co. Meath; Miss Ellen A. Kavanagh, in religion Sister Mary Evangelist, daughter of the late Patrick Kavanagh, Esq., Templeberry, county Wexford. Very Rev. Canon Roche, P.P., V.F., Wexford, officiated.

The beautiful new church of S.S. Augustine and John, in Thomas Street, Dublin, which has been in course of erection for several years, will be solemnly dedicated next August by his Eminence Cardinal Cullen.

While the tree Of Freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf Even, for Thy tomb a garland let be— The Forum's Champion and the People's Chief.'