

A GRAND CONCERT.

REV. FATHER O'MEARA'S BRILLIANT ADDRESS

On the "Manchester Martyrs"—The Anniversary of Their Death Celebrated in a Worthy Manner.

On the 20th November, 1892, the first division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the Province of Quebec was formally founded in Montreal. Last Thursday evening this division gave its first annual entertainment in commemoration of the "Manchester Martyrs." The entertainment took place in the Windsor Hall, which was filled from the first to the last row of seats. The first part of the programme consisted of a series of songs and jokes by the Irish National Minstrels, an organization which is deservedly popular among their Irish fellow-citizens. This was followed by an address on the subject of "The Manchester Martyrs, William Philip Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien, hanged November 23, 1867," by Rev. Father W. O'Meara, parish priest of St. Gabriel's.

Before giving the text of the eloquent address, we will mention a few of the names of those present: Rev. Father McCallen, of St. Patrick's, chaplain of division No. 1, A.O.H.; Rev. Fathers Pelletier, Bancart, Godts, O'Donnell, Shea, Donnelly, Lachapelle, and several other prominent clergymen and leading citizens.

Rev. Father O'Meara's Address.

The lecturer spoke as follows:

"It is in answer to your most gracious invitation that I have the pleasure and the honor to be with you to-night to deliver an address. Certainly, it must be great, my desire to render myself agreeable to you since I have found time to prepare a lecture, occupied as I have been in various ways, and as you all know, since I have been named pastor of St. Gabriel's parish, I hope that you shall be as indulgent to me this evening as I have shown good will in accepting your kind invitation. To contribute my mite to the development and prosperity of your association will be the aim of my remarks this evening. To-day is the 23rd of November. This date alone tells you sufficiently of the particular object of to-night's grand celebration, the commemoration of the death of the Manchester Martyrs, the first of its kind in the metropolis of Canada. You wish to glorify the memory of the three brave and valiant young Irishmen, who, on the 23rd of November 1867, have been executed at Manchester, England. Three brave and valiant young Irishmen, I say, who, following in the footsteps of a multitude of their predecessors, died nobly on the gallows to prove to the world their devotedness to the land of their birth. Three brave and valiant young Irishmen, who died victims of the thirst for Irish and Catholic blood that shall be felt in England as long as there remains in the ashes of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth an atom of the poison concealed therein. Let us not lament, however, the noble death on the scaffold of Philip Allen, Michael O'Brien and Michael Larkin. For, when, like them, one dies in the sweet embraces of Christian Joy, being innocent of the crime for which they were sentenced, the scaffold is a mysterious ladder which unites heaven to the earth. At the time that Allen, O'Brien and Larkin were executed, it was question of Fenians in England, Ireland, United States and even in Canada, if I remember well. Being considered to be Fenians, those three young Irishmen were sentenced to die on the scaffold, although, as we shall see later on other accusations were brought against them for which they were tried and sentenced. Having mentioned the word Fenian and those three valiant young Irishmen, being considered as such, a few words of explanation are necessary in order that you may not misinterpret my remarks. Three centuries of long and atrocious sufferings in Ireland under the iron rod of England, and the ardent desire of Erin's children to shake off those chains, gave birth to the Fenian organization. Nothing more legitimate than such a desire, and any son of Erin in whose heart such a desire did not or does not exist, cannot be called a true

Irishman. On the other hand, no matter how praiseworthy and legitimate such a desire may be not every means is allowed to carry it into effect.

SOME MEANS ARE BAD,

others, although not bad in themselves cannot be employed with prudence. Now, then, no matter how praiseworthy and legitimate the aspirations of the Fenians may have been, several of the means employed by them to obtain the object of their desire cannot be nor never were approved of by the Catholic church. Let it be well understood, I do not wish to insinuate that the heroes whose memory we commemorate this evening were ever guilty in that respect. In their ardent patriotism, they may have only taken into consideration, the misfortunes of their beloved Country and may have forgotten any other consideration, as it often happens when a person's mind is perfectly taken up with a certain idea and thus act in good faith. To ameliorate Erin's condition of affairs, they are allowed to agitate and to agitate strenuously for their rights, as did the brave and glorious Daniel O'Connell and the true friends of Ireland of our day why so nobly follow in his footsteps. I think it proper to recall to your minds in a few words the doctrine of the Catholic church with regard to the civil powers divinely ordained. The church tells us that every man is obliged to respect the civil authority of his country and to obey its just prescriptions. If it happens that said prescriptions are unjust, but can be obeyed without sin, the church again tells her children to obey them in order to avoid a greater evil.

The church wishes us to consider not so much the individual and the private conduct of bad and perverted princes or kings as the functions with which they are invested. For this reason St. Augustin tells us that the power of those who oppress their fellow subjects comes from God. Christ himself obeyed the law, he consolidated it by revealing more clearly and by promulgating to the whole world the divine titles of this power or authority. Although, being exempt, for more than one reason, to obey the powers of this earth, Christ wished to sanctify obedience by his own example. He did not disdain to be born a subject of a particular prince, He paid tribute to Caesar, He acknowledged the authority of Herod and obeyed the authority of Pilate, knowing that it was given him from on High, when Pilate condemned Him to death after having declared Him innocent on several occasions. It is true that when a government forgets its mission and its duties to such an extent as to become a tyrant towards its subjects, the people can rise in arms against it and try to overthrow it, if no other means are at their disposal to defend their rights and liberty. But before having recourse to this extraordinary means, the exigencies of the situation must be seriously examined, and we must be morally certain:

1. That the powers existing do far more evil than good and consequently are not from God.
2. That the evils arising from such a rebellion are notably less than the evils complained of or existing at the time.
3. That there is no other means given to obtain our rights and liberty.
4. That such is the conviction of those most capable of judging the question, especially of those who have received the mission to govern the church of God.

These principles being stated, let us return to speak of

THE THREE YOUNG IRISHMEN

whose hearts were filled with the love of the land of their birth. They saw nothing laudable in the agitation in which they took part, it being for them a public profession of faith and the crown of their devotedness to their country. For true love of country is a sacred love, a love which renders a man capable of any sacrifice. Christ himself loved his ungrateful country even when He was exalted on Cavalry's Mount. The eve of his passion, while ascending the heights of Mount Olivet, He beheld ungrateful Jerusalem, wept over it and exclaimed, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I wished to gather your children under my wings." Knowing this divine action of our blessed Lord, who would dare to accuse the sons of Erin of crime because they shed tears of sorrow when they behold the terrible sufferings of their beloved country. Who, I say, would dare to accuse those noble sons of Ireland

when they beheld their beloved country groaning in chains and its children almost driven to despair, who, I say, would accuse them of crime if they tried to shake off the chains of their oppressor and restore peace and prosperity to their beloved country. They lived with this hope in their hearts; those three noble sons of Ireland, when the police of Manchester arrested Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy. This capture was keenly felt by the Irish of Manchester; to abandon the prisoners helplessly to their fate would be regarded as an act of submission to the laws which rendered patriotism a crime, and as an acceptance of the policy which kept Ireland trampled bleeding and impoverished. There were hot spirits amongst the Irish colony that dwelt in the great industrial capital, impulsive hearts which swelled with a firm resolution to change the triumph of their British adversaries into disappointment and consternation. It was no sooner resolved than done. While Kelly and Deasy, being given in charge of Sergeant Charles Brett, were driven in a van to the borough-gaol, their deliverance was effected. By accident a shot fired into the keyhole of the door of the van for the purpose of blowing the lock to pieces had taken effect in the temple of Sergeant Brett; who died in less than two hours after the fatal shot was fired. When the news of the deliverance had reached the city the excitement was very great. The rescue of Colonel Kelly and the death of Sergeant Brett were described in thousands of conflicting ways. Meanwhile the police, maddened by resentment and agitation, struck out wildly and blindly at the Irish. They might not be able to recapture Kelly and Deasy, but they could load the gaols with their countrymen and co-religionists, they might not be able to apprehend the liberators of Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy, but they could

GLUT THEIR FURY

on members of the same nationality, as this they did most effectually. The whole night long the raid upon the Irish quarter in Manchester was continued; houses were broken into and their occupants dragged off to prison, and flung into cells, chained as though they were raging beasts. The yell of vengeance filled the air, the cry for Irish blood arose upon the night air, and before morning broke their fury was somewhat appeased by the knowledge that sixty of the prescribed race—sixty of the hated Irish—were lying chained within the prison cells of Manchester. Fifteen minutes was the time occupied in setting Kelly and Deasy free—only fifteen minutes, but during that small space of time an act was accomplished which shook the whole British Empire to its foundations. Allen, O'Brien and Larkin were captured, and as it was known that they were staunch sympathisers of Kelly and Deasy, it was at once resolved that they should expiate their crime on the scaffold. The occasion was a favorable one. Why Sergeant Brett was accidentally killed and his fatal death could be easily attributed to the heroes of to-night's celebration. Most assuredly so, and by so doing, England would be delivered of three of the hated Irish race. The trial was begun with the outward appearances of justice as much as possible of course. Witnesses were chosen who could swear point blank against the hapless men in the dock, no matter at what cost to truth. A jury and judges prejudiced against the accused were chosen. It was therefore easy to predict the sentence. Condemned to die on the gallows, Allen, O'Brien and Larkin received their sentence, if not joyfully, at least with perfect resignation and noble pride. With eyes fixed on their judges, they seemed to pronounce the following words: "We have never been and we are not wilful murderers, but you are the murderers." Then the voice of the Crown clerk was heard, demanding if the prisoners had anything to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced on them. The first to respond was Allen.

"Your question," said he, "is one that can be easily asked, but requires an answer which I am ignorant of. Abler and more eloquent could not answer it. Where were the men who have stood in the dock—Burke, Emmet and others,—who have stood in the dock in defence of their country? When the question was asked, what was their answer? Their answer was null and void."

Michael Larkin spoke next.

"I have only got a word or two to say concerning Sergeant-Brett. As my friend here said, no one could regret the man's death as much as I do. With regard to the charge of pistols and revolvers, and my using them, I call my God as a witness that I neither used pistols, revolvers, nor any instrument on that day that would deprive the life of a child, let alone a man. Nor did I go there on purpose to take life away. Certainly, my lords, I do not want to deny that I did go to give aid and assistance to those two noble heroes that were confined in that van, Kelly and Deasy. I did go to do as much as lay in my power to extricate them out of their bondage; but I did not go to take life, nor, my lords, did anyone else. It is a misfortune there was life taken; but if it was taken it was not done intentionally, and the man who has taken life we have not got him. I was at the scene of action, when there were over, I dare say, 150 people standing by there when I was. I am very sorry I have to say, my lords, but I thought I had some respects against me; but I am sorry to say as my friend said, I will make no more remarks concerning that. All I have to say, my lords and gentlemen, is that so far as my trial went, and the way it was conducted, I believe I have got a fair trial. So far as my noble counsel went, they have done their utmost in the protection of my life; likewise, my worthy solicitor, Mr. Roberts, has done his best; but I believe that the old saying is a true one, what is decreed a man, in the page of life, he has to fulfil, either on the gallows, drowning, a fair death in bed, or on the battlefield. So I look to the mercy of God. May God forgive all who have sworn my life away. As I am a dying man, I forgive them from the bottom of my heart. God forgive them."

As Larkin ceased speaking, O'Brien addressed the court at some length: Referring to the people of England, he said:—

"They cannot find words to express their horror of the cruelties of the King of Dahomey because he sacrificed 2,000 human beings yearly, but why don't those persons who pretend such virtuous indignation at the misgovernment of other countries look at home, and see that greater crimes than those they charge against other governments are not committed by themselves or by their sanction? Let them look at London, and see the thousands that want bread there, while those aristocrats are rioting in luxuries and crimes. Look to Ireland; see the hundreds of thousands of its people in misery and want. See the virtuous, beautiful, and industrious women who only a few years ago, aye, and yet, are obliged to look at their children dying for want of food. Look at what is called the majesty of the law on one side, and the long deep misery of a noble people on the other. Which are the young men of Ireland to respect, the law that murders or banishes their people or the means to resist relentless tyranny and ending their miseries for ever under a home government? I need not answer that question here. I trust the Irish people will answer it to their satisfaction soon. I am not astonished at my conviction. The government of this country have the power of convicting anyone. They appoint the judge; they choose the jury; and by means of what they call patronage (which is the means of corruption) they have the power of making the laws to suit their purposes. I am confident that my blood will rise a hundred fold against the tyrants who think proper to commit such an outrage. In the first place, I say I was identified improperly, by having chains on my hands and feet at the time of identification, and thus the witnesses who have sworn to my throwing stones and firing a pistol have sworn to what is false, for I was, as those ladies said, at the jail gates. I thank my counsel for their able defence, and also Mr. Roberts, for his attention to my case."

It is useless for me to say anything more in honor of those three martyrs of a noble and holy cause; religion and country. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from reading to you the last solemn messages or declarations of Messrs. Wm. Philip Allen, O'Brien, and Larkin, to the world.

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