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THE SOCIAL DUTIES OF IRISHMEN IN AMERICA.

BY THOMAS DARCY M'GEE,

(From the New York Daily Times, April 27.)

On Monday evening, Mr. M'Gee, the Editor of the *Buffalo Celt*, delivered a lecture in the Tabernacle upon "The Social duties of Irishmen in America." The attendance was very large, and among the audience were several Catholic Clergymen. Mr. M'Gee upon being introduced to the audience, was warmly received. The applause was quite enthusiastic. He said that he did not propose, in speaking of the duties of Irishmen in this country, to say anything in regard to their religious duties; he would confine his observations to Irishmen's social duties, as between man and man, and man and the State, of which he formed a part. Their duties were peculiar because of the peculiarity of the antecedents of their emigration, and of the circumstances in which they found themselves placed upon their arrival in this country. The largeness of the Irish emigration which had been taking place, especially for the last seven years, was entitled by reason of its influence upon posterity, to a more attentive consideration than it had heretofore received. He did not by any means suppose that the moral and intellectual characteristics of their nation would be buried in the graves of the first generation of Irish emigrants to this land. He was of opinion that the future of this people would largely depend upon how far the elements contained in this emigration entered into the constitution of the character of their children. He, however, did not think that posterity in the United States would be marked by any distinctive Irish nationality, nor French, nor English, nationality: it would rather be a mixture of all. Hereafter the emigration from Ireland, owing to the decrease of the population there, and other causes would necessarily cease; therefore, whatever mission the Irish had to accomplish in this country should be effected during the last half of this century. The first difficulty which the Irish in America experienced as a whole, was that there existed in the United States a false estimate of their character, arising partly from the inheritance of a British literature and English ideas; partly from stage representations, and partly from the eccentric conduct of some of the emigrants themselves. This false estimate of their character was a great obstacle in the way of the true Irish character working out its logical consequences for good. The stage Irishman was dressed in very old-fashioned, battered garments, had a pipe stuck in his hat-band, held a short stick in his hand, and cursed a little bad blasphemy. Well-dressed people—better dressed outside than inside—applauded such extravagancies, and went home confident that they had seen a veritable representation of "real animal." He would take that opportunity of also stating that the farcical was by no means the preponderating trait in the Irish character. On the contrary, he considered that the fundamental character of his countrymen, covered up as they were by the rubbish, superimposed by centuries of oppression, to be, strong affection and passion (applause.) The other obstructions in the way of the Irish in America, were the fop and the so-called liberal Irishman. The latter answered well to Grantan's description of the Marquis of Rockingham's Administration: "It stood with one face to the Treasury and another to the nation." It was the duty of the emigrant to study the characteristics of the country in which he took up his abode. He should calculate the social meridian, and in order that society should have respect for him, he must commence by respecting the usages of the society which he came amongst.

More detrimental to the advancement of a just appreciation of the Irish character, was that rare specimen of the emigrant—the open and complete apostate, both from name and nation, religion and race. Such an one, when he got here, usually began by tinkering with his name—Frenchifying it by the addition of a final "i," or knocking off some good old prefix, "Mac," or "O," like a most accomplished tinsmith (laughter and applause.) For instance, Patrick Murphy dropped all of his Christian name but the P., then took a middle name, and came out P. Alexander Murphy, as the case might be (applause.) Did such suppose that true Irishmen envied the success accomplished by such means? No—for when they did not pity him, they could not help despising him. Having spoken of those three personages, he would now remark, in regard to the great mass of Irish emigration, that it had one fault, and, like Goldsmith's Attorney, it was a "thumper," but not of the same sort. The Attorney's fault was want of honesty—the Irish emigrant's fault was, that they were a little apt to forget all about Father Mathew (applause.) They spent too much of their hard earnings upon one luxury—they had to work their way up from the condition of a broken down people, politically. They should look at all the circum-

stances of their hard lot in the face, and not blink at any of them; by so doing they would be enabled to surmount all the obstacles which stood in the way of their success. The sooner then they abandoned that luxury, which was as manacles on their limbs, the more advantageous it will be to their progress. The particular duties of Irishmen in this country, arose from the fact, that they were to be in the order of Providence the last of their particular blood and descent, because each of them who died, and was buried in the United States, closed a leaf in the great Celtic record which commenced before the Christian era, and was continued in the ancient stationary agricultural condition of their ancestors, from that time to the present. So they would turn open a leaf in the American record for their children born in this land, who were to succeed them in point of prosperity, but not of nationality and feeling. Their duties also arose in this way; that coming here they found already in possession a race whose ancestors had been their hereditary rivals, and oppressors of their Celtic forefathers. They were to struggle with them for the garlands of social success; and they, as foreign parents, who have the lot to see their children growing up around them with feelings different from what they had when of a similar age. He conceived it was the duty of the emigrant in America to undo, as far as it was possible in one life time (and it was not possible to accomplish this task in one), the artificial, exceptional wrong twists, kinks, imperfections and blots, which a long series of foreign oppressions had made in the Irish character. He believed that the emigrant should vindicate, by the propriety of his conduct, the character of the country of his birth, which, had it been better governed, and had the people had a reasonable share of liberty in the direction of their own destiny, would have been a blooming garden instead of being, as it was, a Golgotha. If the emigrant did not vindicate his manhood then all the constitutions in the world though they declared him free, left him still but a slave in disguise. One of the first duties of Irish emigrants should be to acquire property—to own a homestead. In their native land the Irish were trampled upon and degraded by an irresponsible landlordism, therefore in this free land, they by all means should, within a reasonable period of labor for that purpose, possess a home of their own. He had no hope nor desire to see an Irish nationality perpetuated in the United States—that would be illegal, and he might say it would be impossible. But they could perpetuate by their example and inculcation, the essentially good parts of the Irish character, and those parts, in his opinion, were of more importance to the future of the United States, than a Pacific Railroad or any other route across the Isthmus, that had yet been surveyed or advocated by our public men (applause.) He would instance but one such element, and that was the reverence of and obedience to lawful authority. The next duty after securing a home and adopting the Government of the country was the duty due to their children. In this connection he might say there had been much said of late on the subject of education. He could assure them that the matter would be discussed through all its moods and tenses. He had looked over everything that had been said on the subject, and he would candidly say that in his opinion the amount of good sense and sound argument was so far, upon the Catholic side of the question. If there were an argument, complete in all its parts, and appealing to reason and good judgment, on the other side of the question, it had escaped his attention. He did not see that anything transpired on that side to compare with the arguments of the Bishop of Pittsburgh and the Archbishop of New York (loud applause.) If such arguments had not appeared on the other side, it was to be hoped that they would, for there could be no more important, and there had been no more important question raised than this one of education since the adoption of the Federal Constitution and the convention of Annapolis, in 1799.

The question now raised, was, how should the future Americans of this Continent be educated? It was therefore with great deference he came to the consideration of this part of what he conceived to be the duty of the Irish in America; for naturally the Irish-Catholic parents were thrust in the very front of this controversy, because they were Catholics, and because they had children, and a good many of them. [Laughter.] And, also, because they had been for centuries familiar with the efforts of proselytising Charter, Blue-Coat Hospital and Kildare street Schools, spread all over Ireland. For his part he considered the question might be discussed in the most perfect temper, and the better the temper, the better the prospect that the right would succeed.—The duty of the Irishman in America was a greater one than that which he owed to Ireland, with whom he would soon have to close all accounts, and it was greater than the duty he owed to himself. It was

his duty to give the first generation coming after him the right twist, because if he did not, they could only obtain it—which was improbable—but by some peculiar interposition. Standing in the relation in which he did to his posterity, it was the duty of the Irishman to see that his children were educated according to those principles which he in his time considered sound and virtuous. Since the beginning of all emigration, the education of those colonizing had ever been deemed a consideration of paramount importance. Moses in giving the law to his people prescribed the form in which the Israelites should educate their children in after generations. According to the King philosopher, Solomon, the child should be trained in the particular way in which it was desired he should go. It was, therefore, a question of education; so if they trained the child in the way, it was the verdict of the wise man that he would grow up in it accordingly. There were many theories of education in the world: there was the Pagan and the Christian theory, and there was the secular or worldly theory. If they wanted their children to grow up in any of those three modes of opinion, then train them according to the principles of those theories of education. As he (Mr. M'Gee) understood the question, it was this: at the bottom of the Christian theory of education was this principle—that marriage was a sacrament—a sacred, an immutable and a Divine institution. The family formed under that sacrament, so far as they lived up to it, was a sacred institution, and, therefore, the parents were bound morally and spiritually, here and hereafter, for the souls of those children committed to their care. Secular education he understood to be this: that marriage was a mere social contract, dissoluble, under certain circumstances, by legal intervention; and that the children resulting from it were to be considered as mere seeds, to be transplanted into the political nursery of the State as soon as possible. Then they—Irishmen in the United States—had to choose between the two systems. The question with them was practically this—did the present educational system tend to make good Christians? If it did not, though it give every one of their children the knowledge of the philosophers' stone, to be able to turn all things into gold, then it was a failure so far as they were concerned in the eye of Christianity. It was a miserable French Jacobinical idea that there were such things as children of the State. Such might hold in Sparta where they all lived in common. No, their children were their own, and it therefore was the prominent duty that their children be educated in Christianity, if they hoped, or expected them to live as Christians. (Loud applause.) It might take years, and it probably would, and it was better that it should take time than be done suddenly, even if possible—before they could get this question fully understood. But it was the duty of Irishmen in America, as parents of a posterity, to understand this question clearly, and to struggle for the day when it would be generally admitted throughout the United States. On that ground they took their stand: on the ground of the Christian doctrine, that the child belonged to the parent—that its education was the duty of the parent—that the State had no right to interfere; and from that position no obstacles—no *balinage* nor calumny, should drive them. (Loud applause.) In conclusion the lecturer dwelt on the propriety of young Irishmen studying the use of arms, and the necessity for all his countrymen to encourage Irish literature, music, and the artistic productions of the Irish genius, for the same reasons advanced in support of some of his other propositions. Mr. M'Gee was warmly applauded at the close of his lengthened remarks.

THE REV. WILLIAM ANDERSON AND THE VERY REV. DR. CAHILL.

(From the Tablet.)

The following correspondence has taken place between the Rev. William Anderson and the Very Rev. Doctor Cahill:—

"TO DR. CAHILL.

"Reverend Sir—You and I must be regarded by one another's friends as wicked deceivers of men to their everlasting ruin. I, for my part, feel not a little pain when I reflect that I should be so regarded by tens of thousands of my fellow-citizens of the communion of the Church of Rome; and you, I should think, cannot be insensible to the odium in which you are held by our Protestant population.

"I therefore propose that you and I appear before as many adherents of both parties as can be conveniently assembled; and by courteous, if not amicable debate, give them an opportunity of having false impressions corrected, and, after a fair hearing of both sides, of reviewing their judgment respecting who is the deceiver.

"Mass, the central evil—as you, I presume, regard it, the central glory of your system—I select for as-

sault, the first three canons of the Council of Trent, which are as follows:—(Not transcribed for the sake of brevity.)

"These canons, Sir, I denounce as violating the authority of God's Word, the glory of the person of our Lord, the prerogative of His Mediatorial Priesthood, the sufficiency and perfection of His sacrifice on the cross, and of the Priestly dignity of all His Saints—yea, as being altogether blasphemous exceedingly.

"And, Sir, I hereby challenge you—the Rev. Dr. Cahill—as you would not be degraded and proclaimed by me and all faithful Protestants in Glasgow, as one who wants faith in the system which he professes, to come forward and give me, who am your peer in office and character, an opportunity of proving on you, by the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, that it is you who in this matter is the deceiver of immortal souls.

"I offer the following as the terms and conditions of our debate:—

"1st—That it be held in my own house of public worship, and be continued for two evenings, from half-past seven o'clock till half-past ten, in alternate speeches of half an hour's length—I opening the proceedings the first evening, and you the second.

"2nd—That you appoint the chairman, to preserve the order both of the meeting and the debate.

"3rd—That I be responsible for the whole of the expense; and that I furnish you with eight hundred tickets of admission for gratuitous distribution among your friends, while I reserve only six hundred for distribution by myself.

"I am open, however, to consider any proposed modification of these series.

"Finally, Sir, if your engagements prevent your waiting over in Glasgow to accept of this challenge, will you inform me when and where I may find you at leisure to meet me in the course of the next six months, in Dublin, Belfast, Limerick, or anywhere within the United Kingdom? Nothing but necessity will prevent me from hastening to the demolition of error and the rescue of the truth.—Yours, Rev. Sir, courteously and respectfully,

"WILLIAM ANDERSON,
"Pastor of the United Presbyterian
"Church, John street, Glasgow.

"April 6th, 1853."

"TO THE REV. WM. ANDERSON, PASTOR OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

"Rev. Sir—There can be no doubt that, in reference to the Holy Scriptures, your teaching and mine are very different indeed. I have learned the creed which I profess from the accredited voice of the Universal Church, from which your predecessors in your Faith have avowedly separated. The history of all Christian antiquity bears testimony, through all nations and peoples, to the existence and the entirety of my belief at the time of your separation.

"There was confessedly but one Church, and that Church was the Roman Catholic, while not even one congregation—perhaps not even a single individual—through all past Christian time, up to the period of what is called 'the Reformation,' can be found professing the religious opinions which you now hold. I regret that you follow these novelties, or that you teach them to others; but most certainly I do not feel any sentiment of 'odium' towards you or your people. On the contrary, I entertain a high respect for you; and in my private intercourse, and in my public professional character, I inculcate this, my own sincere impression, to all those who may be guided by my words or influenced by my example.

"I respectfully beg to assure you that you make a great mistake in supposing that Roman Catholics have any desire—whatever either to hear the tenets of your Church discussed or to examine over again in your Church the motives that direct them in the choice of their Faith. The disciples of the Catholic Church attach very little value (in reference to Divine Faith) either to accomplished declaration or brilliant oratory—they are entirely guided by a living, speaking, infallible authority, which, in their daily reading of the Scriptures, they behold expressed in the clearest, the strongest, the most obvious, the most literal, and the most emphatic clauses of the last Will and Testament of Our Blessed Lord.—No human being of common sense has ever been known to bequeath in the solemn, awful-hour of death metaphysical, or allegorical, or figurative property and power to his beloved children; and the Catholics believe that Our Lord, at His death, has left a real *bona fide*, substantial, loving authority to guide His Church in Faith. Hence they could no more consent to go to your church, to subject to public discussion the tenets inculcated by this authority than they would agree to put to the issue of a public meeting the very existence of Christ, or the value of the all-saving atonement of the cross. In fact, the very decisions of