

# The True Witness



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## O'CONNELL, THE LIBERATOR

### Splendid Portrayal of Great Man's Life and Character

#### IMMENSE AUDIENCE; CHOICE PROGRAMME

The vast crowd which packed Stanley Hall on Thursday evening last testified to the interest which had been awakened in the subject—"Daniel O'Connell," dealt with in so masterly a style by the Rev. Thomas Harty, B.D., Killarney, Ireland. The lecturer held his hearers' attention for more than an hour, his mellow voice and rich brogue lending charm to an exceedingly interesting discussion on the "liberator." A glance around convinced one that all were in sympathy with the speaker, that hearts were throbbing faster and the blood surging with more than its wonted vigor as the eloquent panegyric flowed from the tongue of the young priest, direct from the Isle of Saints; and in their visionary way they drank in a breath from the soft carpeted hills, listened again to the singing of the birds, and lived once more the days in the dear old land to which hardly one would return, but who ever retained the largest spot in their great hearts for the dear little island, who, while persecuted, had withstood all in defence of the faith, and which by God's loving grace, will take her place among the nations. The Rev. gentleman spoke as follows:

Bordering on the town of Cahireen, at a place called Caher, stands an old ivy-covered ruin under the shadow of the Kerry hills, that possesses for the sympathetic student of Irish history an interest all-absorbing and unique. It was here that Daniel O'Connell, whom the Irish people have styled the "Liberator," and whom the late Mr. Gladstone has regarded as the greatest popular agitator the world has ever seen, was born on the 6th of August, 1775. His father, a descendant of a once powerful clan, carried on farming somewhat extensively and was engaged in mercantile pursuits. As was the custom in the case of children of the Irish gentry, young O'Connell was put out to fosterage to the wife of his father's herd, and when he returned home early in his fourth year, he knew no other language than the Gaelic of the Kerry hills. This was O'Connell, unlike many other Irish leaders, pre-eminently a child of the people, twenty miles farther south, where the Kenmare river joins the Atlantic, stands the Derrymore abbey, the real home of the O'Connell family. Here Maurice O'Connell, the boy's uncle, ruled for many years as chief of the O'Connell sept, and was the inheritor of whatever escaped the confiscating tides of the O'Connell patrimony. Maurice having no family, brought thither young Daniel at an early age and adopted him as his heir. Thus were the future "Liberator's" early days during the formative period of his career, when the mind is plastic and impressionable, spent amidst romantic and inspiring surroundings. Here amidst the Alpine scenery of his native Kerry he spent his boyhood. Here he saw Mother Nature in all her beauty, majesty and grandeur. He trod the soft meadow lands and climbed the craggy heath-covered hills that cast their shadow over his home. He saw the mighty Atlantic in all her moods—now lashing the cliffs with briny foam and awakening the distant echoes; anon gazed on the same Atlantic, gentle as a mother's smile, rippling on the beach. Sometimes as he tells us he used to wander through the ruins of an old Abbey and monastery near by and dream of the sanctity and learning of the Ireland of the past. At 13 years of age he was sent to study classics at Redington, near the Dove of Cork, to a school kept by a Father Harrington, the first of its kind to be opened after the rigor of the penal days. There being no schools of higher learning available for Catholics in Ireland, young O'Connell was sent at the age of 15 years to the

friendly schools of the Continent at St. Omer's and Douai, France. But the French Revolution soon interrupted his studies and on the very day that Louis XVI. was guillotined in Paris he quitted France. The horrors of the French Revolution so influenced his mind that ever afterwards he had an unmitigated hatred for bloodshed and revolution (applause). Returning to his native Kerry, he took advantage of the Relief Bill of 1793, which admitted Catholics to the Bar. He studied at Lincoln's Inn in London, and was called to the Irish Bar in 1798—the memorable year of the Irish Revolution. And in 1800 he made his first political speech.

Now, to form an accurate idea of the life of any public man we must study him in the light of his surroundings. We must view his acts as forming part of the contemporary chapter of history and we must review the causes that influenced that chapter. O'Connell labored in an Ireland in which the rigor of the penal days was somewhat softened; but in which the degradation of that accursed code existed in all its intensity. Political differences between England and Ireland had grown at the time of the Reformation into religious differences and bigotry and had given birth to a system of laws which for the dual purpose of pauperizing and degrading a people has never yet been surpassed. To quote the words of Edmund Burke: "The ingenuity of the human intellect never succeeded in the invention of an instrument to disgrace a kingdom and destroy a race more perfect than this."

In the economy of law there was no place for the existence of the Catholic, or if indeed he were to exist it was only as a mere serf. A Catholic could not vote laws could not sit in Parliament nor serve in a civil or military capacity. He enjoyed the privilege of serving the King as a common soldier; but he could not even become an ensign in a marching regiment. A Catholic could not vote, nor possess freehold property. He could not travel a mile without a permit from the Justice of the Peace nor quit his own home between the hours of sunset and sunrise. The avenues of social intercourse were closed and the happy gatherings by the winter fireside, where fairy tales were told and Irish songs were sung and merry feet danced to native music were ended for a mirth-loving and light-hearted people.

"Yet meet him in his cabin rude Or dancing with his dark-haired Mary. You'd swear they knew no other mood Than mirth and love in Tipperary." (Applause.)

A Catholic under the penal laws could not own a horse, or if he did any Protestant neighbor could seize upon it by paying the paltry sum of \$25, no matter how valuable the animal might be. If a tax of \$1 were imposed on the Protestant it meant ipso facto \$2 on the Catholic. Any son on becoming a Protestant inherited thereby his father's property. Then a Catholic was bound to support a religion which he considered false and a clergy which to say the least he did not love. He could not be a doctor, lawyer—and of course it goes without saying he could not become a priest— but above all he was denied education. If you take from a man his worldly goods and leave him art and letters he has still imperishable treasures. But close to him the avenues of thought and knowledge and deprive him of the culture of the intellect and you leave him poor indeed. Now I am not going to preach a panegyric on the Irish race. I confess we have our faults because

on the police (laughter). O'Connell replied that he had no influence with the Government. "Wishes, then," replied his friend, "if I was to kill some persecutor of the people like a tithing proctor or a landlord, it's you that would save me from the galleys let alone getting me into the police." To illustrate the use O'Connell made of his humor at the Bar, I shall cite a case in point: A journalist in Cork named Foyle had frequently attacked the corporation; but so guarded were his words that he escaped legal punishment. On one occasion, however, as the sheriff was leaving a Cork theatre, two of his ribs were broken, and Boyle, who was the immediate cause of the injury, was prosecuted. O'Connell was counsel for the defense. The jury was hostile to Boyle and sympathized with the corporation. O'Connell began his defence in this way: "Gentlemen of the jury, as I have received a brief and its accompaniment a fee, and as I am in no humor to make a speech, I will tell you a story. I was once present at the Clonmel assizes where a man was tried for murder. Two neighbors between whom existed an old feud had met at a fair and quarrelled. They met in the evening and quarrelled again, and one left for home vowing vengeance against the other. The following morning this other was found murdered by the wayside and his murderer was charged with the murder. It seemed to be a clear case of circumstantial evidence. But just before the jury retired a witness was brought into court and it was no other than the murdered man. (Laughter.) It seems that another and entirely different person had been murdered. The jury, however, retired and soon the foreman returned with a verdict of guilty. "Well," said the judge, "of what is he guilty? Surely not of murder?" "No, my lord," said the foreman, "but if he did not murder the man, he stole me gray mare three years ago."

The Cork jury laughed loud and long, and then O'Connell proceeded: "Now, gentlemen of the jury, if Mr. Boyle did not assault the sheriff at least he libeled the corporation. Find him guilty by all means." It is scarcely necessary to add that Boyle escaped the well merited punishment. O'Connell's success at the Bar was phenomenal. Toward the end of his legal career he was earning steadily \$40,000 a year. But he gave it all up to serve his country. On one occasion when he was taunted with being what is known in this country as a professional politician, he replied that he was entirely a disinterested servant of Ireland.

"I throw away my profession, I cast its vast emoluments to the winds, I shut out the vistas of its dignities and its honors, to embrace the cause of my country. And come weal, or come woe, I have made a choice of which I never or shall ever repent."

O'Connell, as we have seen, made his first political speech in 1800 and it was in opposition to the Union. And from this time onward he may be said to have been the leader of the Catholic forces in Ireland. In 1823 he succeeded after innumerable difficulties in founding the Catholic Association. His task was indeed a hard one. The people were apathetic. The clergy were timid. The tears shed for '98 were not yet dry. However, he appealed to the masses of his countrymen to take heart and unite in a common brotherhood to obtain redress of their grievances. He brought the priests into the movement and made them the captains of the Association. He did not believe merely in a league of the upper classes. The clamoring of eight millions for freedom would be irresistible. Grattan had met with short-lived success by appealing to the sympathy of liberal Protestants. But O'Connell would infuse new life and new inspiration into the masses of his oppressed Catholic countrymen (applause). Many thought his plans were too premature. But his trumpet voice aroused the slumbering populace. He never wearied of quoting the dictum of Byron, "Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not, who would be free, himself must strike the blow."

Words like these could not fail to produce effect. O'Connell welded the people together at such a time and

in such a way as no one but an O'Connell could have done. By his dogged perseverance, by his matchless eloquence he succeeded in appealing to the instincts of freedom which were languishing. He knew how to touch every chord of the Irish heart. Never did a skilful musician touch the various strings of his instrument with greater success than O'Connell touched the Irish heart-strings. Now it was a light note of drollery or satire that vanquished some enemy. Again it was the deep note of pathos as he rehearsed the wrongs of Ireland.

The Catholic Association had resolved to oppose the return to Parliament of every supporter of the ministry of Wellington and Peel. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, M.P. for Clare, was appointed to the presidency of the Board of Trade and so had to seek re-election. The Catholic Association resolved to stand by the resolution and invited Major McNamara, who lives in history as O'Connell's second in the fatal duel with D'Esterre. But he refused. Then it was proposed that some Catholic should stand and show the world the intolerance of the British Parliament by being denied admittance. But who was to accept the proposition? There was but one man in Ireland equal to the occasion and that was O'Connell. One evening he set aside his lawyer's gown and started off on the historic journey to Clare. Now came the day of trial and the hour of martyrdom. Would the electors of Clare (tenants at will) rise up and cast off the shackles of serfdom? You must remember that the votes of the tenants at this time were regarded as as much the property of the landlord as the rent. (Laughter.) To the undying glory of the electors of Clare they rose up and cast off their bonds. And O'Connell was elected. (Applause.) The whole country heaved and vibrated. The current of a new life passed over the land. The very soldiers themselves cheered for O'Connell. The tide was running high. Old King George was in tears lest the Papists should burst their bonds. Wellington dreaded a civil war. A measure was rushed through Parliament and the old King gave it a grudging signature, then dashed the pen that wrote it upon the ground. The Irish Catholics stood forth emancipated. O'Connell became the liberator of his people. O'Connell being in London, applied to the Bar of the House of Commons for admission to Parliament and the old oath was handed to him. This declared that the King of England was the head of the Church and that veneration of the Virgin Mary and the sacrifice of the Mass were impious and idolatrous. The Commons was thronged for the occasion. Every voice was hushed and every eye was centred upon the giant proportions of the Irish Tribune. O'Connell took the card containing the oath, read the text carefully, and then in a loud voice exclaimed: "I see in this oath an assertion as a matter of opinion which I know to be false; I see on it another assertion as a matter of fact which I believe to be untrue. I therefore refuse to take the oath." (Applause.)

He immediately withdrew and was elected under the new Emancipation Bill for Clare. O'Connell entered Parliament in 1830, and it was predicted by many that he would be a Parliamentary failure. Circumscribed as he was by Parliamentary procedure and rules of order, he was likened to a huge palm under a glass case. He was accustomed to addressing hundreds of thousands of his countrymen on an Irish hillside. Yet he became one of the most effective orators and astute debaters in the House. Macaulay referring to O'Connell, remarked: "We never take count of time when the Hon. gentleman is talking," and Dickens used to relate that on one occasion when it fell to him to take notes of a speech by O'Connell, he was compelled to lay down his pencil, so moved was he by the orator's description of a widow seeking her only son among the peasants killed by the military, and of a young girl shot while leading her blind grandfather. During all this time O'Connell was to quote his own words, the best abused man in Europe. He came to loggerheads with several of the min-

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## HIS GRACE AS ARBITRATOR.

### Gives his decision in Shoe Operatives Dispute.

Announcement has been made that Archbishop Bruchesi, who had been appointed third arbitrator in the dispute between the leather cutters and the Ames Holden Company, had given his decision.

A difficulty arose some time ago between the leather cutters of the Ames Holden Company and the members of the firm over a question of wages. Two arbitrators were appointed to settle the matter; Mr. Kirvan for the firm, and Mr. Myette for the cutters. Being unable to agree, they asked Archbishop Bruchesi to act as third arbitrator, whose decision should be final. He had long interviews with the other arbitrators, in which each set forth the claims and arguments of the parties to the dispute, and he then drew up the following judgment:

"We consider it a sacred principle that the workman has a right to a fair salary.

"The minimum salary asked in the present case, \$12 per week, strikes us as presenting serious inconvenience. Evidently it is not demanded in an absolute manner without any regard to the quantity of work furnished by the employe. The employers will therefore have to fix that quantity of work, and they must necessarily take as a basis the list of prices in force for piece work. But supposing the cutter cannot furnish such quantity of work? The Union meets the objection and replies: 'If the company is not satisfied with the degree of skill of its men, all it has to do is to put others in their place, and we will undertake to find work for those discharged.' That system seems to us detrimental to both the workmen and their employers. It is calculated to give rise to many discussions and discontents.

"The most rational and equitable system to remunerate those workmen as they should, consists, in our opinion, in paying them so much a piece, according to a scale of prices accepted by both parties. Such a scale may be discussed and made the subject of an arbitration; but once it is adopted, all difficulties disappear and all future conflict is avoided.

"The cutters who with their employers chose us as arbitrators are in no way opposed to that system. On the contrary, they approve it and like it as well as an engagement by the day with a minimum salary. "The men raise the objection, however, that the work in the Ames-Holden Company is more difficult than in other factories and takes more time. This has been recognized by the firm, who have written to say that they would pay an additional 20 cents per case of sixty pairs in connection with special or combination work.

"Under the circumstances, we do not believe a better arrangement than that can be arrived at. Consequently, in order to put an end to the dispute, considering the objections to which the minimum salary gives rise and the difficulties that it would bring on, and wishing to render justice to the workmen as perfectly as possible, we rule that the method of paying the leather cutters adopted by the firm of Ames-Holden shall be maintained, but with certain modifications as regards the prices, given, namely: The schedule according to which the weekly salary will be fixed must be the schedule in force to-day in other shoe factories of Montreal for goods of the same grade as those of said factories, with twenty cents additional per sixty pairs of shoes for extra and special work, such as that above described and well known to men in the trade.

## Terrible Disaster in French Mine.

The most terrible of recent mining disasters is that of Saturday, at Pas-de-Calais, in the Courrières district. It is said that of the 1200 men who were in the mine, almost the entire number have perished, and in all about six thousand families are affected.

President Fallieres has given two thousand dollars to aid in the relief measures. The Ministry added a further sum to this, and the Chamber of Deputies has been asked to vote \$100,000 for the purpose of alleviating distress.