

his adversaries determined to rid themselves of him in a summary manner. They induced a noted duellist to espouse their cause, who dogged the footsteps of O'Connell, jeered at him, insulted him, until, from sheer necessity, the Great Chieftain was obliged to arrange a meeting. They met—the Champion of Liberty and the Champion of Oppression — and D'Esterre fell, mortally wounded. Thus was O'Connell, sorely against his will and his conscience, forced to commit an awful crime in the cause of Ireland. The enemies of the Liberator have made much of this act of O'Connell's, and have painted it in the darkest colors. Much, too, has been said and written to justify it, but this is not the place to enter into a discussion of the question. Suffice it to say that however justifiable his action may have been, it sadly grieved the Catholic heart of Daniel O'Connell to have thus violated a commandment of God and of his Church, and that to the moment of his death he rued the hour in which he consented to meet his unfortunate antagonist.

Again O'Connell was alone. The Catholic Board had disappeared. Shiel and his aristocratic friends had deserted him; yet all undaunted he began once more his labors among the people. He travelled, he wrote, he spoke, he neglected the practice of his profession. He cast aside all personal animosity in view of the general good and consented to a reconciliation with Shiel. The immediate result of this repaired friendship was the formation, in 1823, of the Catholic Assembly. In 1826, strengthened by the encouragement received from foreign nations and by the enthusiasm of the people, the Assembly decided to make a bold move and to contest the then vacant seats of Waterford, Louth and Monaghan. In all the constituencies were its candidates successful. Still more emboldened by this triple triumph, the Assembly decreed that no Irish member of Parliament should be supported who would not pledge himself against the Wellington Administration. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald the representative of Clare, despising this pronouncement of the Assembly, ventured to accept office under Wellington, and a new election became necessary. The

Assembly, true to its principles, immediately sought for a suitable candidate to oppose Fitzgerald, but none could be found willing to bear the brunt of the struggle. Then a scheme, almost sublime in its audacity, proposed itself to O'Connell. He himself would contest the seat for Clare. The people stood aghast at the proposal. They called him rash, imprudent, reckless; nay, some did not hesitate to pronounce him mad. But there was a method in his madness. He announced his intention to the electors in an artfully reasoned document, and sent Shiel into the most doubtful portion of the constituency, where this impassioned orator, clothing his eloquence in the fiery Gaelic idiom, turned the tide of affairs against the ascendancy party. On the day of the election the Liberator appeared in person and addressed an immense concourse of his future constituents. He told them of their wrongs, of their despised rights, of their ruined industries, and their deprivation of the benefits of education. He recalled briefly his own services of the past, the injuries he had borne and the dangers he had run for their sakes; then he commanded them to arise in their strength to aid him, promising them, as he had promised before, to remove all their disabilities, civil and religious, to give them liberty of conscience and liberty of legislation if only they would give him their support. When he had finished speaking a mighty cry arose from the multitude: "O'Connell—O'Connell for ever," and marching to the polls, the brave electors of Clare piled up an overwhelming majority for their hero. O'Connell was declared elected, and proceeded at once to London to claim his seat in Parliament. In the meantime, the Government either through fear of another popular uprising, or perhaps through a desire to grant by a seemingly gracious concession what it felt would be inevitably forced from it, introduced a Bill for the removal of the civil disabilities of Catholics, March 5th, 1829. Three times was the Bill presented to the House, and three times did the Commons rally all the forces of bigotry and fanaticism against the measure, but three times, likewise, were they obliged to support the ministry by Wellington's stern, "You must pass