

pm

The Rights and Wrongs of Ireland

An address delivered at Central Music Hall, Chicago, on
Saturday evening, November 23, 1895, on the anniversary
of the execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien

TRANSFERRED TO
U OF W LIBRARY

BY CLARENCE S. DARROW

CHICAGO
Charles H. Kerr & Company, Publishers, 56 Fifth Avenue

1726
D25

THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF IRELAND.

On the 23rd day of November, 1867, three Irishmen—Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, were hanged in Manchester, England. These men were not the first or the last Irishmen executed on English soil, and yet from that day until this, the anniversary of their death has been regularly observed in every land where Irishmen are found.

But a small fraction of the thousands who assemble each year to recall the names and memory of the dead could tell the reason why these men were martyrs, and why their names should be singled out from the countless millions whose lives have been taken through the form and sanction of the law. To the ordinary Irishmen, these men were engaged in what is vaguely called the "Irish Movement"—and for their connection with this cause they were put to death.

100'42

Shw This view is partly right and partly wrong. To understand the motives and attitude of these so-called martyrs, it is necessary briefly to review the causes that led up to the deed for which they suffered death.

Almost from the time Ireland became a portion of the British Empire, there has been an open feud between the English and the Celt. Warfare, revolution, conspiracy, oppression and coercion are the common terms that history constantly employs to describe the political misfit, called the union of these naturally in-

dependent states. It is impossible and unnecessary on this occasion to determine the proper place to lay the blame for the hereditary difference between these lands. No doubt, as in most cases of unfit unions, the reason was largely due to natural causes, which have ever been, and which will ever be, far more potent than the power of man. For generations the ablest and best men of Ireland have demanded a greater or less degree of political independence, and during all these years England has constantly insisted that the two islands should be one. Most of the Irish race have regarded this political union as unnatural, forced and unjust, and have ever believed that love for their country meant devotion to the cause of Irish independence.

Revolution after revolution proved unsuccessful. An appeal to arms was ever followed by defeat. True, that fervent lover of liberty and justice, that matchless orator—*Daniel O'Connell*, succeeded in adding vastly to the independence and dignity of his country, but when his voice was hushed, Ireland commenced slowly to sink backward once again.

After years of almost fruitless effort the so-called Fenian movement was born. This organization was mainly composed of young Irish commoners, who had hitherto not been especially prominent in the various movements looking towards the independence of their country. The society held its meetings in secrecy, and all its movements and plans were hid from the light of day. A secret political organization has always been regarded with disfavor by open-minded men, but most of these forget that secret associations are not the creations of their members, but are the work of the ruling class. Time and time again the British government

had uprooted Irish organizations by the prosecution and conviction of their members and the suppression of their press. This could have but one result—to transfer these meetings and organizations into closed rooms, instead of leaving them in the light of day.

The governments of all the world have been very slow to learn that conspiracy is the child of tyranny, and that its cure is liberty instead of greater despotism. In their method of dealing with Irish societies and organs, the English government did only as Russia, Germany, France and all other governments have ever done, and most likely will ever do; they made discovery criminal, and then believed that the disease was cured because they no longer saw the sore. New York, New Jersey and Chicago have often followed in the footsteps and precedents of the past. If Thomas Jefferson could return to earth I have no doubt that many of our police inspectors would arrest him for using incendiary language—should he be caught in the act of reading the Declaration of Independence.

The Fenian movement, too, was greatly augmented by our Civil War. The close of that great struggle left in America tens of thousands of Irish soldiers, north and south, all of whom hated England and would have gladly welcomed a trial of strength between the United States and the mother-land. More than that, the ordinary American felt hostile to England. The North believed that she had constantly sympathized, if not assisted the enemies of the Union, and the South felt that had she given something more than sympathy, their independence would have been won. The activity of the Irish-American soldier and agitator had its effect across the sea, and many believed that the day

of Ireland's independence was about to dawn. Societies of Fenians were organized throughout Great Britain—their purpose being to strike for Irish independence, and obtain it by revolution and through force of arms when the auspicious time should come. Among the prominent leaders of these revolutionists were Colonel Thomas J. Kelly and Captain Deasy, who were engaged in forming organizations and otherwise promoting the common cause.

On the 12th day of September, 1867, these two men were apprehended in Manchester, England, and charged with vagrancy. Day after day they were carried back and forth from the city prison to the office of the examining magistrate, in the expectation that some evidence would be forthcoming on which to base a more serious charge. Between the prison and the court was a stretch of lonely road, about two miles in length, and this was traveled each day by a van containing cells in which the prisoners were locked, together with an officer who kept the keys. The friends of Kelly and Deasy, believing that they would be charged with treason, and well knowing what would be the result of a trial of Irishmen for treason against England by an English jury, determined that these men should not die.

The result of such a trial there would have been exactly the same as in Russia, Germany or the United States, certain death. An accusation of treason has always been a dangerous charge. This crime has generally chosen for its victims, the wisest, the best and the most humane people of the earth. It has probably given more martyrs to the dungeon, rack and scaffold, than any other crime, except, perhaps, those two heinous offenses—witchcraft and heresy. There never yet was

a government that could distinguish between treason to the state and disloyalty to the rulers of the state. The highest patriotism often calls for disloyalty to political rulers; but, of course, this will not be understood for many centuries to come.

A plan was formed for the rescue of Kelly and Deasy while the van was making one of its journeys between the prison and the court. A body of armed men overpowered the van, shot the horses, called on the policeman, Sergeant Brett, to unlock the door and let the prisoners out. This he refused to do; thereupon a shot was fired through the keyhole to break the lock, but poor Brett was at that time looking out through the hole and received a mortal wound.

A prisoner inside took the keys from his pocket, unlocked the door, and Kelly and Deasy escaped and were never seen again on English soil. Five men were indicted, tried and convicted of murder for the killing of Sergeant Brett. Three—Michael Larkin, William Philip Allen and Michael O'Brien, were hanged on the 23rd of November. Through the intervention of Charles Francis Adams, the sentence of Edward Condon was commuted to imprisonment for life. Maguire, during the whole trial, protested that his arrest was a mistake; that he was not near the spot at the time; that he was a marine of the English army and in no way connected with the affair. His statements made such a deep impression on the newspaper reporters that they united in a petition to the government. His case was carefully investigated, and it was found that his story was true, and he was unconditionally pardoned. There is no doubt that the trial was unfair. The fact that the government admitted that an innocent man had been

convicted is proof of this. But then it must be said, that in America they would have hanged the man first and then proven him innocent afterwards.

This trial cannot be charged up as especially disgraceful to England. It was such a trial as would have been had in any country when reason gives way to passion, and popular clamor calls for blood.

Allen, Larkin and O'Brien each protested to the last that they had not fired the fatal shot, but whether they did or not was a matter of no consequence in the case. They were doubtless all engaged in an effort to liberate the prisoners, and Sergeant Brett was killed in that attempt. In the eye of the British law, as well as of that of America, each fellow-conspirator is responsible for the acts of every other, which are done in carrying out the general plan. Under the law it was not necessary that these men should contemplate murder—the intent to commit the comparatively small offense of rescuing a prisoner carried with it an intent to do any act resulting from the conspiracy. Thus these men were held guilty of murder, although it was well known that they had no design to take life, but simply sought to rescue a comrade from the hands of the law. This is not the only instance where the moral law and the laws of man have been in conflict. Many a one before and since has been put to death, not because of his guilty purpose, but because of a legal quibble—hanged as it were in a fine web spun from a judge's brain.

It cannot then be rightfully claimed that these men were not guilty of murder under the law of England, or would not have been guilty under the law of any English-speaking land,—their right to martyrdom must rest upon a broader ground.

The observance of this day means more than a protest against the conduct of their trial and the injustice of their "taking off." It means something besides a condemnation of the English government for the relentless enforcement of a verdict rendered in heat and malice, and influenced by the fierce clamor of the day. It means that thousands of their countrymen believe, and ever will believe, that although branded by the law, although suffering the most ignominious death; although convicted, executed, and buried in the most approved and legal form,—still Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, in the light of their conscience, and judged by that higher law which makes account alike of the deeds and motives of men, and which is the court of last resort that finally passes upon laws and institutions and customs, as well as men,—that in the light of their conscience and before this law, these men were not only guiltless of crime, but were patriots, moved by the highest motives that ever gave martyrs the strength to lay down their lives for the cause they loved.

Often in these days we are told that the highest duty is obedience to the law, and yet no one is so ignorant of history as not to know that the greatest and best and noblest of the race,—those men who stand forth along the pathway of the ages as the beacon lights that mark the progress of humanity, those men who have made the world wiser and better and holier, were ever battling with the laws and customs and institutions of the world. Ever beckoning the race from the mists and chains and darkness of the past to the freedom and justice and sunlight of a better day. And these men have been ever condemned to-day and worshiped to-morrow. Criminals in one generation, saints in the next. Crowned

in one age with thorns, and in another with laurel wreaths. For the world always loves security and peace—even the calm of death is better than the storm of life and thought.

We may condemn the past, protest against the evils of foreign lands, laud the saints and martyrs of the ancient world, but woe to him who proclaims against the things that be. If his cries are loud enough, his voice must be hushed, and another generation left to vindicate his name. This has been the universal history of the world,—the consistent judgment of kings and emperors, of courts and juries. The universal verdict from the day that Socrates drank the cup of hemlock, until Debs was locked in the Woodstock jail. All men admit these facts when broadly stated, yet only a few can ever apply them to the present time and place. All know that the verdicts of the past have been unjust—that the wisest judges have sent thousands, nay millions, to death for heresy, witchcraft and magic,—crimes which men never could commit. Thousands have been put to death for crimes and conspiracies against the state, most of whom sought to help their fellow men. We know that this is true of all the past, but like all the generations gone before, we believe that our age has suddenly grown so wise and good that future generations will approve and not condemn the judgments of to-day.

Forty years ago in the United States, there lived and died a man of iron will, of matchless courage and of that strong conviction of which martyrs are always bred. This man looked at the great crime of African slavery, and although he found the institution supported and protected by the law, and by the church; guarded

by legislators, courts and governors,—he yet believed that above all these, higher than any man-made statutes and precedents, written by the hand of the great Infinite upon the conscience of every human being, was a higher law, which denied the right of man to buy and sell his fellow man. John Brown organized a little army of fanatics like himself. He purchased guns and ammunition,—he boldly entered the stronghold of slavery and appealed to the consciences and hearts of men. He gave firearms to the blacks, he levied war against the country whose laws and precedents declared that the color of the skin could make merchandise of men. John Brown was captured, charged with treason and murder, was tried and executed for his crime. No one doubts but that he was guilty in the eyes of man and by the laws of that country which he defied. But wherever liberty is known, John Brown is loved.

A generation has passed away since then, and the famous raid of that brave warrior is on the other side of that great sea of human blood which divides the old and new. We look back across the eventful years to the Virginia tragedy, which marked the beginning of the end,—the first blood in that great river which alone could wash away the stains that slavery left upon the minds and hearts of men; we look back to-day and forget his call to arms, forget the blood he shed, forget the resistance to the law; but the image of a strong, heroic man standing calmly on the scaffold waiting for the end and freely giving up his life for the cause he loved, grows clearer as the years go by.

John Brown was a revolutionist; history and the logic of events have justified the revolution he began. These have shown that however terrible the means,

however great the horror and crime of war, still in the great sweep of time, in the slow progress of the world, in the mighty resistless march of events, war and revolution have ever played important parts. Although John Brown disturbed a nation's peace, although he died an ignominious death, although his body lies mouldering in the grave, still his soul is marching on.

The right of the state of Virginia to try, condemn and execute this revolutionist has nothing to do with the judgment that history and humanity will pass upon the man, who from a noble cause and from devotion to a strong conviction dared the world. History will judge both Virginia and Brown from their own standpoint, and this judgment will forgive Virginia and canonize Brown as one of the bravest martyrs who ever sacrificed his life in humanity's great cause.

It is as revolutionists that Allen, Larkin and O'Brien are not only justified, but entitled to a martyr's crown; and to say this, it need not follow that the revolution was right, but only that these men out of a pure patriotism, a high devotion to duty, an earnest love of their fellow man, and without hope of personal gain or selfish reward, risked their lives in their country's cause.

To deny the right of revolution is to deny the right of the present to remove the restrictions of the past. Pretty much all that the world has ever gained has come through revolution,—generally with the sword. The history of England is a history of conquests and revolutions, marking every step of her growth and progress from the rude savage up (or down) to the titled nobleman of to-day. Without the revolutions and conquests of England, her people would to-day dwell in huts and caves, and clothe themselves in skins. Ex-

cept for revolutions against the things that were, the commerce, literature, art and science of England would never have been born. If revolution has been right for England, it was right for Ireland too. Ages since, nature, by the force of the restless waves and her resistless convulsions, separated Ireland from the rest of Britain. It is not strange that the people of this island should have longed to follow the example nature set, and be independent too.

Everywhere the great laws of the universe, the same eternal, resistless laws that affect earth and sun and air; the same overpowering laws that make the sunshine, the rain and the various seasons of the year—these great natural laws are constantly changing and moulding man. Below human nature, beneath all our forms and customs and institutions; ever persisting, ever controlling, are these natural laws, which after all influence and move the conduct and minds of men. However strong the chains that bound Ireland to England; however wise and just the laws imposed by the strong upon the weak; however impossible the prospect of separation; still the Irish people will ever strive for independence, so long as nature leaves the sea between these two bright green lands.

The relation between Ireland and England is not unlike that which once existed between America and the mother-land. The basis of the American Revolution was not unequal laws, it was not tyrannical exactions; the same laws prevailed here as across the sea. Tax burdens and church establishment were no heavier or more galling in America than in England, but the wide Atlantic rolled between these lands; and the spirit of independence, personal liberty and local self-govern-

ment—stronger than the laws of man, more powerful than the fleets of England—incited a handful of poor struggling colonies to rebel against the greatest nation of the earth, sustained and upheld then through the long, dark struggle for independence, and finally broke the unnatural bonds that sought to unite those lands which nature had placed apart.

From the time Ireland by force of arms was made a portion of Britain until to-day, the union of these two lands has been unnatural and strained, and sustained alone by the bayonet and sword. The people of these two islands, differing in natural characteristics, in religion and customs, never have, and never can dwell together as one country in harmony and peace. Man is a small part of all nature; he is ruled by the same laws and forces that control inanimate clay; the laws of attraction and repulsion are as constant and persistent in the affairs of men, as in the cruder and blinder forms of matter. It is as impossible to blend and mix antagonistic peoples and nations, as it is any other substances that the laws of nature have divorced.

The Tory stoutly declares that the land system of Ireland is exactly the same as the land system of England. This is about the worst indictment that could be brought against it. Nothing could be added except to say that it is like our own. Under the land system of England a few hundred noblemen and privileged aristocrats own half the soil of the island, and the millions of poor have nothing left except to make terms with those whose right to the earth was settled hundreds of years before either the landlord or tenant saw the light of day. In the heart of the great city of London, two titled nobodies own and hold each about a mile square of land;

one of these estates was confiscated from a convent five hundred years ago by the good King Hal. It was bestowed upon an ancestor of the present proprietor in return for some trifling service done the king. The character of Henry VIII. is a sufficient guarantee that the service must have been of a high and lofty kind. What the ancestor of the other duke did to draw his prize is equally uncertain, but one thing is sure, for five hundred years each of these titled vagrants has been living from British toil. For these long years all the fools in England have been paying these families for the privilege of living on the earth—the earth which nature made for the use of man thousands of ages before kings and knights and nobles, and other vultures began to live and prey. The fleeced, defrauded, half-starved working people of London and England contribute each year to each of these nobles about five hundred thousand pounds. Nobles are expensive luxuries. This sort of blood comes high. England is a small island at the best, and on this little spot live some forty million souls. Most of them, like the vast majority of all who dwell upon the earth, live and die in penury and want. Two-thirds of this great population is crowded into cities, largely for lack of room, and yet more than half the island is held by worthless, idle lords—converted into shooting parks and great estates and held for the pleasure of a profligate and idle crew.

In Ireland the situation is even worse. One half of the real and personal property of the island is owned away from home. Three powerful lords own 500,000 acres of her soil, while seven hundred men own one half of all the land. In 1840 her population was 8,000,000 souls, and amongst these were 10,000 paupers. In

1880, forty years later, her population had fallen to 5,000,000, and 500,000 of these were paupers. In these forty years after O'Connell's death and during the decline of her political power and independence her population had shrunk one half, and at the same time her paupers had increased fifty-fold. In the ten years from 1848 to 1858 her people suffered 500,000 evictions, and during all this time her land was constantly passing into fewer hands, until to-day there are only a little more than half as many land-holders as there were fifty years ago. In 1879 \$6,000,000 were spent for policing Ireland, while her schools received \$500,000, or one dollar for twelve. The Irish may be a very noisy, quarrelsome race, but most people will believe that if the appropriation for schools was made greater the amount spent for police could be made less. In the presence of these facts it is impossible to deny the responsibility of the government for such wholesale woe. If the facts of English life are as bad it only increases the sins of the ruling class.

In the proper meaning of the word, the Irish have no native land, for the great mass of the people have no right of property in the soil; but then the same is true of England, and the people of most other lands as well. We in America are following in the footsteps of the older nations of the world. One man owns 50,000 acres of land in Illinois; the same man owns 200,000 more in Kansas and Nebraska. The great city of New York is practically controlled by a few families who had the foresight to send their ancestors to take possession of the spot long before they and the present generations came upon the earth. The great estates of Chicago are growing rapidly. By a table published a few

weeks ago in the *Inter Ocean*, I see that the number of property-owners in the business district north of Twelfth Street is only about half what it was twenty years ago. How long will it be at this rate until a few estates will have it all? Many of our so-called statesmen, half feeling the danger of this great centralization so rapidly going on, and half recognizing the right of all the people to control the earth, have restricted the right of aliens to hold land. This may be good so far as it goes, but whether a landlord lives in England or America makes no difference with the tenant or to the general good. Unless we are wise enough and strong enough to restrict the private control of land in America, it will be but a few years until our condition is the same as that of Ireland and the balance of the world.

If the United States was a colony of Great Britain and our people should see the control of the land rapidly passing to the few; if on the farm, in the town and in the city, they found the tenant class rapidly increasing, as is the case to-day, they would justly blame the law; they would point to this as an example of the wisdom of British rule, and as they pointed to these facts they would loudly clamor for the right to shape their laws and institutions for themselves. If we were told that the same laws and conditions prevailed at home, we would not consider our objection answered; this we would take as added proof of the inability of the government to serve the general good.

For centuries England has had an established church. Every person, whatever his faith, has been compelled to support this church. Protestant and Catholic, Jew and gentile, agnostic and atheist, have been obliged to pay taxes to the English clergy and the English

church. The British government thought itself truly just and impartial when it compelled the Irish to support this established church; the fact that four-fifths of the Irish people were Catholics in no way altered the aspect of the case; it required centuries for England to see the injustice of compelling Catholic Ireland to pay tithes to the English church. It will doubtless require many more centuries for her to see the injustice of compelling any man to support any church.

With a ragged, starving people; with a landed aristocracy, largely alien to the island; with rack-rented tenants, such as tenants ever are—for no man has ever yet shown the justice of making one person pay another for the privilege of living on a piece of land which neither made—with the living injustice of being taxed to support a faith they did not hold; with the fact that all laws were made in another island, and enforced by almost another, if not a hostile, race; it is easy to understand why Ireland looked upon England as her enemy, and longed and conspired and fought to be independent of the British crown.

Perhaps a land system, such as the Irish would have chosen for themselves, would have been no better than the one under which England and the balance of the world have suffered for centuries; but it is easier to bear the ills of our own infliction, than those forced upon us by some one else; at least we are not as apt to complain of the consequence of our own blunders and crimes, as we are of the evils that befall us from the conduct of other men.

It may be that if Ireland had never been a portion of the British Empire, her condition would be the same to-day, but the fact remains that through all her years of

trial and misery she has been held to the British throne by force of arms, and the English government is therefore largely responsible for her condition now and through all the dark and bloody past.

Not alone the Irish and their sympathizers have charged this responsibility upon the ruling class, but many of the best and greatest English statesmen have not shrunk from placing the blame where it belonged, and where all blame belongs—upon the ruling power. Those great English commoners whose devotion to liberty and justice wiped the corn laws from the English statutes; those friends of freedom and allies of O'Connell—the immortal Cobden and Bright ever pleaded before the bar of Britain for Irish rights; and that other English statesman and philosopher—the wisest, the gentlest, the purest man of his day, or any other; the man who taught the world that a statesman could have honor, that a philosopher could have sympathy, and a political economist could have a heart; the man whose memory will be ever blessed—John Stuart Mill—ever raised his voice for Ireland, ever charged her political misfortunes where they belonged; and in the midst of contumely, abuse and universal frenzy, stood in the capital of the British empire and pleaded for the lives of the men whose memory we observe to-day.

During most of the years from the day of Ireland's subjugation, her people have lived in a sort of blind stupor, devoid alike of hope or fear. Few persistent efforts have been made to raise her people or unite them in any definite plan to secure greater freedom at home and a higher standing at the British court. In the galaxy of the world's orators and statesmen, the Emerald Island has placed more than her share of the

brightest lights. Sheridan and O'Connell, Phillips and Emmet, Grattan and Curran, will be known and studied wherever the English tongue is heard, while the greatest statesman of England, Edmund Burke—the man who for force and eloquence, for philosophy and integrity, is without a peer in all the history of the world, was an adopted son of England and born on Irish soil.

Little was accomplished to raise Ireland from the slough of despond where the centuries had left her, until Daniel O'Connell undertook her cause. O'Connell found Ireland poor, weak, forlorn and hopeless; endless revolutions had been stabbed to death with English steel; a long list of brave men had hopelessly given their blood to the Irish cause; numberless defeats and failures had blotted the sun from her sky and left her helpless and forsaken. In the strength and vigor of his young manhood, O'Connell dedicated his marvelous powers of oratory, his matchless courage and his boundless heart to his country's service. Through good repute and bad; in the midst of the wildest applause from thousands of his countrymen held captive by his magic eloquence; and in the silence and ignominy of a prison pen, his courage and fidelity shone forth alike. It is not in the midst of public approval and beneath a smiling sky that true greatness can be seen and known. The loudest voice that is raised from the mob and the bravest words that are spoken for a winning cause, fall generally from the lips of cowards and time-serving knaves. It is only beneath the dark clouds of adversity, when the voice of conscience and justice is smothered by the cruel, unthinking clamor of the crowd, that courage and greatness can shine supreme.

O'Connell entered the lists in youth, and for half a

century he never faltered or hesitated, never looked backward, never sought or asked repose. Although his suffering, bleeding country was nearest to his heart, he never separated the cause of Ireland from the cause of all the other oppressed and struggling people of the world. In the midst of the campaign for Irish independence, he found time to join with Cobden and Bright to give cheaper bread to the English poor. It was his voice, as much as theirs, that protested against the unjust protective taxes which British landlords laid on foreign grain, that they might grow rich at the expense of all the poor. And when the forces were finally marshaled, and the death struggle for this species of protective monopoly was on, Daniel O'Connell led every Catholic Irish member of Parliament into a union with the followers of Cobden and Bright, and repealed the old protective laws that had so long fettered British trade and raised the price of British bread.

O'Connell, too, found time to turn to the cause of the poor black slave, and when the cause of abolition in the British colonies was agitating England, his voice was heard pleading for the oppressed of every land. Wendell Phillips relates that in the early years of his Parliamentary career, he was approached by a leading member interested in the West-India slave trade; he was offered many votes for the Irish cause if he would only abandon the abolition agitation. Sorely as he needed these votes, O'Connell replied:

“Gentlemen, God knows I speak for the saddest people the sun sees; but may my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if to save Ireland, even Ireland, I forget the negro one single hour.”

Here is a lesson for our compromising, jockey statesmen—our schemers and legislative hucksters; our political pawnbrokers, who trade any principle for a vote. O'Connell was a statesman, and his name will live forever; these are politicians, and even their infamy will die.

After O'Connell's death, Ireland was left without a champion or defender; gradually she drifted back toward the political oblivion where she reposed before. The Fenian movement sought to complete by force the good work that O'Connell accomplished by long years of almost superhuman strength and matchless power. The Fenian movement was literally strangled to death on a hundred scaffolds and smothered in a thousand dungeons; no hope came to Ireland again until the rising of that brilliant star, the dawning of that refulgent sun—Charles Stuart Parnell. Here Ireland had another leader, not gifted with the eloquence of O'Connell, but perhaps with more than O'Connell's capacity to gather and organize all the forces for a long campaign. Parnell found the Irish cause shattered and broken, scattered and impotent as the sands upon the coast; by his great power and devotion, he united these shifting fragments into a phalanx as resistless as the sea. He, like O'Connell, proved his devotion to Ireland by his strength and courage in the darkest hours. Neither flattery, position nor prisons, could swerve him from the cause he loved. Would that Ireland had been as faithful to this great leader, as this great leader was to her. Would that some of the thousands of garlands that his admiring countrymen lay upon his tomb, could have been placed upon his brow while he could live and feel; would that

we might call back from the land of shadows this great chieftain, this devoted champion, this fearless patriot, and in his hands place the banner which should lead the Irish hosts. But Parnell has gone forever, his life and work are left to the judgment of history, and the years to come; and if beyond the earth in the great unseen, this trusted warrior yet lives, and battles for the right, let us hope that he may meet a higher, and juster and more charitable tribunal than the one that judged him here; let us hope that in the land beyond, if such a land exists, that in the final judgment, the good deeds are not forgotten in making up the general balance, which alone can tell where we belong. Parnell is dead, the Irish army is broken and scattered; as of old, the leaders are so busy destroying each other that the common cause is forgotten, and the field abandoned to the victorious hosts. The last election has left Ireland almost unrepresented in Parliament,—her friends stricken down all over the British Empire, and the cause of Home Rule buried beneath the greatest political avalanche that has swept Britain for fifty years. In the midst of this disaster and defeat, her friends, helpless and hopeless, once more look to the sword for liberation. Whether this policy is wise or unwise, I shall not discuss to-night; it was not the policy of O'Connell, but it was the policy of Washington.

Far be it from me to say a word upon this occasion that could savor of the demagogue, speaking for a winning cause. The Irish question is something more than the abuse of England. It is broader than the controversy between those two lands; unless it is a part of the great question of human liberty, of the rights of all the poor and disinherited, both in Europe and

America, it is no concern of mine. In the light of what I know of human nature and history, I cannot think that England has been different from other lands. I cannot think that she is more unjust to the struggling Irishmen than my own country was to the helpless black, or is to-day to the helpless men, women and little children, who toil from day to day for the barest right to live. I am aware that in America the Irish cause is a popular theme; all of our political conventions have for years passed resolutions favoring Irish independence. The cause of Poland is popular here. The cause of Hawaii is popular in America. The cause of Cuba is very dear to us. The cause of all the poor of all the earth, except our own, touches the generous and overflowing Yankee heart. I know that with this audience, and perhaps in this country, Irish independence, either with or without force, is a favorite theme. I know too, that this is not the world, and that Great Britain is very strong. Wiser men than I must counsel such a move, for talking is one thing, fighting quite another. But here let me say, whether I speak of Ireland or Poland or America,—that all history justifies the right of revolution. Much that we enjoy was born of rebellion—of protest against the ruling power, not by resolutions and paper ballots, but with gun and sword. To honor Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and Paine, we must respect the right of revolution for which they so bravely pleaded and fought. Neither will it do for us to say that revolutions were once right, but now are wrong.

The history of the world, like the programs of a theater, presents different names down through the ages, but the part they play in the great drama of life (or the

small one) is the same in every land and age. But revolutions are not made, they are born. All the conspirators and agitators of the world, if left free to speak and act and plan, could not produce a respectable rebellion in the smallest kingdom of the world unless the time was ripe. And all the armies and policemen of the earth could not hold one in check when the time has come. I have little faith in deliberate plans for revolution—as well plan an earthquake or tornado. It must be remembered, too, that they who undertake the cause of rebellion take the chances of their cause; with governments as with men, self-protection is the first law of nature; and right or wrong, he who forcibly undertakes revolution must expect to pay the penalty unless he shall succeed. The high motive of the revolutionists is one side, the right of the government to protect itself is the other.

Nothing so hastens revolution as the despotism and intolerance of political institutions. A powerful French nobleman, just before the revolution, complained because Louis XV. mildly rebuked him for shooting peasants; and the colonies of America would not have struck for freedom in 1776, except for the exaction of an insignificant tax.

Sending disturbers to the scaffold and the jail does not quench the fire of liberty or kill the seeds of revolution. The hanging of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien was not the execution of the Irish cause. When the great negro chief, Toussaint L'Ouverture, was being led to exile for the San Domingo revolution, he said: "You think you have rooted up the tree of liberty, but I am only a branch. I have planted the tree itself so deep that ages will never root it up." And a French

nobleman who joined the revolution, but was condemned to death in one of the wild paroxysms of the times, took his little boy in his arms before going to the guillotine and said: "My son, they will seek to wean you from liberty by telling you that it took the life of your father; do not believe them, but ever remain true to her sacred cause."

The right of revolution is planted in the heart of man; it is born of the dignity that causes him to feel his personality and defend his right to a free and independent life; it is nurtured and aided by the unjust oppression that comes from without. Except for this, it would have no chance to grow. Again, man is a part of the general scheme; his movements are as much the subject of general law, as are the revolutions of the planets in their spheres. A convulsion of society is like any other convulsion of nature; it comes—we may or may not know the reason why. The earth seemed solid underneath Lisbon when the sun rose bright and clear one morning a hundred years ago, but it opened and swallowed her. No doubt the streets of Pompeii were filled with beautiful women and brave men, when nature, one day, determined to drive these promenaders out, and use the thoroughfares for red-hot lava instead. It was some higher power than man's that decreed that France and Europe could not be cleansed, unless for a time, instead of water, the sewers of Paris should be flushed with blood.

The Lisbon earthquake, the burial of Pompeii, the French Revolution—these are some of the resistless manifestations of the great power which now and then teaches man how weak and futile are all his plans and schemes in the presence of the great Infinite.

The French Revolution was not the work of Rousseau and Voltaire; it did not come from teaching theories and making speeches. Through long weary years, French kings had wasted the substance of an Empire in riotous living and princely indulgence; nobles and favored retainers had grown fat upon the sufferings of the poor; the church and clergy had become corrupt and greedy beyond measure. Beneath all this mass of privilege and vested right the poor peasant vainly struggled and staggered with his load. One day, without premeditation or thought, he arose and shook himself, and thrones and nobles and laws and institutions fell in one smoldering heap.

Victor Hugo, in his immortal work "Les Miserables," sends the kind priest to reason with the old dying revolutionist, who sat on the porch of his hermit's cottage, waiting for night and death, which were coming side by side. The priest upbraids him for the cruelty of the revolution; the old man rouses from his dying stupor and says: "You speak of the revolution—a storm had been gathering for fifteen hundred years; it burst, you blame the thunderbolt."

The American Revolution was not the work of Adams or Henry, or Franklin or Paine; it was neither any of these nor all of these who made the revolution of 1776; it was the cruel, unjust restriction of centuries; it was the strong, constant, ever futile effort of conservatism, oppression and tyranny to hold back the resistless tide of progress; to restrain that great sea which ever alternately ebbs and flows, but which, through all, is ever rising higher and higher and sweeping away thrones and empires and states, laws and customs and institutions, and slowly widening the liberty of man.

So Ireland and all the Irish of the world cannot make a revolution; they may hold conventions and assemblies, they may make speeches and pass resolutions, but if grievances are not real, if oppressions are not intolerable, the conflagration will not come. England, however, can bring revolution around her head. If just grievances go unheard and unrelieved; if complaints and demands are answered by the prison and greater coercion laws; if poverty and misery increase with growing wealth, then the thunderbolt will sometime fall.

The world is changing; laws and systems are being tried as they never were before. The spirit of freedom is abroad to-day upon the earth. Germany is a great military camp, but the tramp of her armed soldiers is lost in the cry of her workmen for the right to live. France is being shaken by a revolution of thought more powerful and logical than that which marked the last century's close. Tyrannical Russia, with all her arbitrary power, and despotic, cruel force, cannot make the life of the Czar safe in his own domain; and the poor, outraged political prisoner in the Siberian mine is greater and better, and more powerful in the world of thought and action than the proudest Cossack, whose iron heel rests on the peasant's neck. England, Italy, Spain, Austria and the Netherlands are struggling with this rising mass of discontent, that demands a portion of the earth and the right to live and breathe.

The century is closing, the old is dying; the new, let us hope, is coming; the great hostile armies of Europe are no longer kept to be turned against alien lands, but to shoot down discontent at home. All Europe and all Asia are anxiously watching for the general carnage to begin; and when it comes, who can foretell the end, or

conjecture the shape of a European map after the war clouds pass away? In this great conflict—if conflict there is to be—will the poor and oppressed join the armies of their kings and fight their brethren of other lands? The workingmen of the world are fast learning the doctrine of the brotherhood of man; they are joining hands regardless of nation and of creed, for the common good; they are looking forward to that universal brotherhood which has been the dream of the poet and the nightmare of the king. In such a cataclysm, the opportunity of the disinherited may come. If these lowering, threatening war clouds burst, as some day they must and will, then Ireland may break the chain that holds her an unwilling captive to the British power.

But these reflections must concern us most as they apply to our own native or adopted land. Most of us, I hope, are patriots; patriots not in the meaning in which that word is chiefly used to-day. The ordinary fair-weather patriot goes out upon the street corners, and in public places, and proclaims his love for American institutions as a cloak for the support of the existing wrongs, which make him rich and great; he uses his patriotism, as he does the other tools with which he plies his trade; patriotism to him does not mean devotion to his country and the people's highest good, but a blind, unthinking worship of the things that are; the constitution and the laws, to him, are to be either enforced or broken as it may profit at the time; his is the patriotism that flies an American flag from the school-house, and sacrifices the most vital and fundamental principles of liberty for gain. This patriotism is the patriotism of the demagogue and time-server, and was voiced by Webster, who, with all his greatness, was too

small to be brave and true. It found expression in the sentiment which was repeated a few nights since by a United States senator-elect in Chicago, and which is only fit to be quoted at the end of a banquet freely interspersed with wine. Webster and the time-serving patriot said: "My country, may she ever be right; but right or wrong, my country." True patriotism, the patriotism of O'Connell, of Jefferson, of Sumner, of Emerson, so loves its country and prizes her name as to condemn evil the sooner when found at home.

The patriotism that is worthy of a place in any human heart takes little account of mountains and rivers and forests or of boundary lines, but makes much of the men and women and children of the earth. It loves that country best where freedom is the broadest and opportunity the greatest. It holds fast to all the old guarantees of liberty and ever strives to break down the walls and restrictions of the past. It looks eagerly forward to the time when forts and garrisons, swords and cannons, militias and standing armies, shall no longer disgrace the earth. It longs for the day when nations and individuals shall learn that peace is more profitable and glorious than war; when the walls and boundaries and restrictions which divide nation from nation, and man from man, shall fade like a cruel dream of the past, and perfect liberty and perfect order shall dwell together on the earth.

America has furnished a bright example of the beneficence of liberty and the wisdom of opportunity. The fathers here established freedom on the broadest plain the world had ever known, and the wide prairies and rich mountains, unfenced and unowned, gave all a chance

to obtain the full reward that should ever come to toil. All the nations of the earth sent her disinherited to find a home, and flowing from liberty and opportunity they builded here a nation that was the wonder of the world. All the greatness of America, all her marvelous wealth, all the wonders that her short national life can show, are a monument to the wisdom of liberty and the power of opportunity. Wealth has been ever owned by the few and produced by the many; but no nation could create it as we once did unless every workman felt the inspiration that can only come through hope.

After all of our building and making, shall we now destroy the vital principle which lies at the basis of all our greatness and our power?

We stand to-day in the presence of the same danger that confronted Rome and France and England and all the nations of the past. Our liberty produced prosperity, and this prosperity to-day looks with doubting eye upon the mother who gave it breath, and threatens to strangle her to death. Oh, you blind, mad power, lay not your hand upon that sacred thing; for liberty, though sometimes wild and mad, is still the most priceless gem of all the earth.

Civilization means something more than producing wealth, something besides inventing new ways to make buildings higher and kill hogs faster. More than all things else it means the cultivation of a broad, charitable, humane spirit that makes man feel a closer kinship to his fellow man. In the light of true civilization, all the wealth of a great city cannot weigh against the barbarism of hanging one lunatic in Chicago or burning one negro in Texas.

In these changing times we have no right to close

our eyes to the dangers and responsibilities of the day. No era of the world has ever witnessed such a rapid concentration of wealth and power as the one in which we live. This is no doubt due to the invention of new machinery for the production and distribution of the world's wealth. But while history furnishes no parallel to the rapid centralization of to-day, it furnishes abundant lessons of the inevitable result that must follow in its path. As liberty produces wealth, and wealth destroys liberty, so power and tyranny have within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. In Rome every function of government was controlled by the rich and strong. After a time the legislature, the courts, the police and finally the army refused to serve this class unless they received a constantly larger contribution from those who had obtained all the empire's wealth. When the levy of blackmail had commenced, the beginning of the end had come.

Injustice, oppression and wrong may always live, but they cannot exist forever in one form or place; and when the evils are great enough, in some way the end will come. With the land and possessions of America rapidly passing into the hands of a favored few; with great corporations taking the place of individual effort; with the small shops going down before the great factories and department stores; with thousands of men and women in idleness and want; with wages constantly tending to a lower level; with the number of women and children rapidly increasing in factory and store; with the sight of thousands of children forced into involuntary slavery at the tender age that should find them at home or in the school; with courts sending men to jail without trial by jury, for daring to refuse to work;

with bribery and corruption openly charged, constantly reiterated by the press, and universally believed; and above all and more than all, with the knowledge that the servants of the people, elected to correct abuses, are bought and sold in legislative halls at the bidding of corporations and individuals; with all of these notorious evils sapping the foundations of popular government and destroying personal liberty, some rude awakening must come. And if it shall come in the lightning and tornado of civil war, the same as forty years ago, when you then look abroad over the ruin and desolation, remember the long years in which the storm was rising, and do not blame the thunderbolt.

To avert these dire calamities, America needs true patriots, men who truly love their country and their fellow men. She needs such heroes as those whose memory we observe to-day, who risked their property and their lives for their devotion to liberty and their native land. For long ago it was written down that "greater love hath no man than this, that he give his life for his fellow man." To-day as we recall these men and all of those who dared all and suffered all, not for personal glory and mean reward, but from devotion to a high purpose and a firm conviction, let us apply the lesson of their brave lives and heroic death to the present hour and the present place. Let us remember the history and traditions that have made us great and strong, and let us above all preserve that liberty which alone gives dignity to man and value to life.

All that we have may be destroyed as by fire. Our cities may sink in disaster and ruin. The wealth of the past may perish in a night, if liberty shall remain. America was once devastated by a four years' civil war;

Chicago was swept away in flame, but the spirit of liberty, strong in the hearts of the people, gave them strength and courage to reclaim and rebuild them better and grander than before. But lay violent hands on that freedom which has been the guiding star of all our progress; destroy that liberty which has been the genius of our institutions and the hope and leaven of the world, and all our wealth and greatness and power will pass away and "leave not a rack behind."