

EMMETT'S SPEECH FROM THE DOCK.

No doubt there are but few of our readers who have not read the tragic story of Robert Emmett's fate. From a volume edited by the proprietor of the 'Nation,' we publish his eloquent and soul-stirring address to the notorious Lord Norbury, by whom he was condemned to death. To many of our readers we feel certain it will not be new, but the noble, patriotic, and independent spirit which breathes through every sentence, will be our apology for introducing it into our columns:—

"MY LORDS—I am asked what have I to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced on me, according to law. I have nothing to say that can alter your predetermination, nor that it will become me to say, with any view to the mitigation of that sentence which you are to pronounce, and I must abide by. But I have that to say which interests me more than life, and which you have labored to destroy. I have much to say why my reputation should be rescued from the load of false accusation and calumny which has been cast upon it. I do not imagine that, seated where you are, your mind can be so free from prejudice as to receive the least impression from what I am going to utter. I have no hope that I can anchor my character in the breast of a court constituted and trammelled as this is. I only wish, and that is the utmost I can expect, that your lordships may suffer it to float down your memories untainted by the foul breath of prejudice, until it finds some more hospitable harbor to shelter it from the storms by which it is buffeted. Was I only to suffer death, after being adjudged guilty by your tribunal, I should bow in silence, and meet the fate that awaits me without a murmur; but the sentence of the law which delivers my body to the executioner will, through the ministry of the law, labor in its own vindication, to consign my character to obloquy; for there must be guilt somewhere, whether in the sentence of the Court, or in the catastrophe, time must determine. A man in my situation has not only to encounter the difficulties of fortune, and the force of power over minds which it has corrupted and subjugated, but the difficulties of established prejudice. The man dies, but his memory lives. That mine may not perish, that it may live in the respect of my countrymen, I seize upon this opportunity to vindicate myself from some of the charges alleged against me. When my spirit shall be wafted to a more friendly port—when my shade shall have joined the bands of those martyr heroes who have shed their blood on the scaffold, and in the field, and in the defence of their country and of virtue, this is my hope—I wish that my memory and my name may animate those who survive me, while I look down with complacency on the destruction of that perfidious government which upholds its domination by blasphemy of the most high—which displays its power over man, as over the beasts of the forest—which sets man upon his brother, and lifts his hand, in the name of God, against the throat of his fellow who believes or doubts a little more or a little less than the government standard—a government which is steered to barbarity by the cries of the orphans, and the tears of the widows it has made."

[Here Lord Norbury interrupted Mr Emmet, saying—"that the mean and wicked enthusiasts who felt as he did, were not equal to the accomplishment of their wild designs."]

"I appeal to the immaculate God—I swear by the Throne of Heaven, before which I must shortly appear—by the blood of the murdered patriots who have gone before me—that my conduct has been, through all this peril, and through all my purposes, governed only by the conviction which I have uttered, and by no other view than that of the emancipation of my country from the superhuman oppression under which she has so long and too patiently travailed; and I confidently hope that, wild and chimerical as it may appear, there is still union and strength in Ireland to accomplish this noblest of enterprises. Of this I speak with confidence, of intimate knowledge, and with the consolation that appertains to that confidence. Think not, my lords, that I say this for the petty gratification of giving you a transitory uneasiness. A man who never yet raised his voice to assert a lie, will not hazard his character with posterity, by asserting a falsehood on a subject so important to his country, and on an occasion like this. Yes, my lords, a man who does not wish to have his epitaph written until his country is liberated, will not leave a weapon in the power of envy, or a pretence to impeach the probity which he means to preserve, even in the grave, to which tyranny consigns him."

[Here he was again interrupted by the court.]

"Again I say, that what I have spoken was not intended for your lordship, whose situation I commiserate rather than envy—my expressions were for my countrymen. If there is a true Irishman present, let my last words cheer him in the hour of his affliction."

[Here he was again interrupted. Lord Norbury said he did not sit there to hear treason.]

"I have always understood it to be the duty of a judge, when a prisoner has been convicted, to pronounce the sentence of the law: I have also understood that judges sometimes think it their duty to hear with patience, and to speak with humanity; to exhort the victim of the laws, and to offer, with tender benignity, their opinions of the motives by which he was actuated in the crime of which he was adjudged guilty. That a judge has thought it his duty so to have done, I have no doubt; but where is the boasted freedom of your institutions—where is the vaunted impartiality, clemency, and mildness of your courts of justice if an unfortunate prisoner, whom your policy, and not justice, is about to deliver into the hands of the executioner, is not suffered to explain his motives sincerely and truly, and to vindicate the principles by which he was actuated? My lords, it may be a part of a system of angry justice to bow a man's mind by humiliation to the purposed ignominy of the scaffold; but worse than the purposed shame, or the scaffold's terrors, would be the shame of such foul and unfounded imputations as have been laid against me in this court. You, my lord, are a judge; I am the supposed culprit. I am a man; you are a man also. By a revolution of power we might change places, though we never could change characters. If I stand

at the bar of this court, and dare not vindicate my character, what a farce is your justice! If I stand at this bar and dare not vindicate my character, how dare you calumniate it. Does the sentence of death, which your unhallowed policy inflicts upon my body, condemn my tongue to silence, or my reputation to reproach? Your executioner may abridge the period of my existence; but while I exist I shall not forbear to vindicate my character and motives from your aspersions; and, as a man, to whom fame is dearer than life, I will make the last use of that life in doing justice to that reputation which is to live after me, and which is the only legacy I can leave to those I honor and love, and for whom I am proud to perish. As men, my lords, we must appear on the great day at one common tribunal; and it will then remain for the Searcher of all hearts to show a collective universe, who was engaged in the most virtuous actions, or swayed by the purest motives—my country's oppressor, or"—

[Here he was interrupted, and told to listen to the sentence of the law.]

"My lords, will a dying man be denied the legal privilege of exculpating himself in the eyes of the community from an undeserved reproach, thrown upon him during his trial, by charging him with ambition, and attempting to cast away for a paltry consideration the liberties of his country? Why did your lordships insult me? Or rather, why insult justice, in demanding of me why sentence of death should not be pronounced against me? I know, my lords, that form prescribes that you should ask the question. The form also presents the right of answering. This, no doubt, may be dispensed with, and so might the whole ceremony of the trial, since sentence was already pronounced at the Castle before the jury were empanelled. Your lordships are but the priests of the oracle, and I insist on the whole of the forms."

[Here Mr Emmet paused, and the court desired him to proceed.]

"I am charged with being an emissary of France! and for what end? It is alleged that I wished to sell the independence of my country; and for what end. Was this the object of my ambition? And is this the mode by which a tribunal of justice reconciles contradiction? No; I am no emissary; and my ambition was to hold a place among the deliverers of my country, not in power nor in profit, but in the glory of the achievement. Sell my country's independence to France! and for what? Was it a change of masters? No, but for my ambition. Oh, my country, was it personal ambition that could influence me? Had it been the soul of my actions, could I not, by my education and fortune, by the rank and consideration of my family, have placed myself amongst the proudest of your oppressors. My Country was my Idol. To it I sacrificed every selfish, every endearing sentiment; and for it I now offer up myself, O God! No, my lords; I acted as an Irishman, determined on delivering my country from the yoke of a foreign and an unrelenting tyranny, and the more galling yoke of a domestic faction, which is its joint partner and perpetrator in the puricide, from the ignominy existing with an exterior of splendor and conscious depravity. It was the wish of my heart to extricate my country from this doubly rivetted despotism—I wished to place her independence beyond the reach of any power on earth. I wished to exalt her to that proud station in the world. Connection with France was, indeed, intended, but only as far as mutual interest would sanction or require. Were the French to assume any authority inconsistent with the purest independence, it would be signal for their destruction. We sought their aid—and we sought as we had assurance we should obtain it—as auxiliaries in war, and allies in peace. Were the French to come as invaders or enemies, uninvited by the wishes of the people, I should oppose them to the utmost of my strength. Yes! my countrymen, I should advise you to meet them upon the beach with a sword in one hand and a torch in the other. I would meet them with all the destructive fury of war. I would animate my country to immolate them in their boats before they had contaminated the soil of my country. If they succeeded in landing, and if forced to retire before superior discipline, I would dispute every inch of ground, burn every blade of grass, and the last entrenchment of liberty should be my grave. What I could not do myself, if I should fall, I should leave as a last charge to my countrymen to accomplish; because I should feel conscious that life, any more than death is unprofitable, when a foreign nation holds my country in subjection. But it was not as an enemy that the succors of France were to land. I looked, indeed, for the assistance of France, but I wished to prove to France and to the world that Irishmen deserved to be assisted—that they were indignant at slavery, and ready to assert the independence and liberty of their country; I wished to procure for my country the guarantee which Washington procured for America—to procure an aid which, by its example, would be important as its valor; disciplined, gallant, pregnant with science and experience; that of a people who would perceive the good, and polish the rough points of our character. They would to us as strangers, and leave us as friends, after sharing in our perils and elevating our destiny. These were my objects; not to receive new taskmasters, but to expel old tyrants. It was for these ends I sought aid from France, because France, even as an enemy, could not be more implacable than the enemy already in the bosom of my country."

I have been charged with that importance in the emancipation of my country as to be considered the keystone of the combination of Irishmen, or, as your Lordship expressed it, 'the life and blood of the conspiracy.' You do honor me over much; you have given to the subaltern all the credit of a superior. There are men engaged in this conspiracy who are not only superior to me, but even to your own conceptions of yourself, my lord,—men before the splendor of whose genius and virtues I should bow with respectful deference, and who would think themselves disgraced by shaking your blood-stained hands. [Here he was interrupted.]

What, my Lord, shall you tell me on my passage to the scaffold (which that tyranny of which you are only the intermediary executioner has erected for my murder) that I am accountable for all the blood that has and will be shed in this struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor,—shall you tell me this, and must I be so very a slave as not to repel it? I do not fear to approach the Omnipotent,