

John's Column.

JOHN MITCHEL.

BY JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

Dead, with his harness on him;
Rigid and cold and white,
Marking the place of the vanguard
Still in the ancient fight.

The climber dead on the hillside.
Before the height is won;
The workman dead on the building,
Before the work is done!

O, for a tongue to speak the words
Of his worth, that should be said—
The worth that was silver, living,
That is gold and jasper, dead!

Dead! but though death was fitting:
His life, to the latest breath,
Was poured like wax on the Chart of Right,
And is sealed by the stamp of death!

Dead! but the end was fitting:
First in the ranks he led;
And he marks the height of his nation's gain,
As he lies in the harness—dead!

Weep for him, Ireland—mother lonely;
Weep for the son who died for thee.
Wayward he was, but he loved thee only,
Loyal and fearless as son could be.
Weep for him Ireland—faithful nation—
Faithful to all who are true to thee:
Never a son in thy desolation
Was truer to thee and thy cause than he.

Sons of the Old Land, mark the story—
Mother and son in the final test:
Weeping she sits in her darkened glory,
Holding her dead to her stricken breast.
Only the dead on her knees are lying—
Ah, poor mother beneath the Cross;
Strength is won by the constant trying,
Crowns are gemmed by the tears of loss.

Sons of the Old Land, mark the story—
Mother and son to each other true:
She called, and he answered, old and hoary
And gave her his life as a man should do.
She may weep—but for us no weeping:
Tears are vain till the work is done.
Tears for her—but for us the keeping,
Our hearts as true as her faithful son.

—Pilot.

O'CONNELL.

"On Monday, the 25th of January, 1847, O'Connell took part, for the last time, in the proceedings in 'Conciliation Hall.' The period was, as we have already mentioned, momentous in the history of the country. The appalling destitution which was then rapidly enveloping the entire island, combined with the lamentable political differences which distracted the once powerful Repeal party, naturally occupied the attention of that meeting. In the course of the observations he addressed to that assembly—his last public speech in Ireland—the Liberator said: 'I would have been in Parliament to-night, but for the tempestuous state of the weather. I cannot abide storms as I used. I go to Parliament to call for food for the people. I began my campaign by calling for food—food—food! In my letters it was my cry—food for the Irish people. Food at once is what I want. Disease and death will be found in every quarter if the Government will not act promptly.' Referring to a letter that had been published by 'Young Mr. Meagher,' dilating on some features in the Belgian Revolution, the Liberator observed:

"Oh, are there not some of you old enough to remember 1798? Such of you as have not witnessed it must have heard your fathers tell of it. The innocent and the guilty suffered. The prisons were full. The scaffold reeked with human gore. Terror reigned throughout the land. I heard the shrieks of horrible suffering reach through the Royal Exchange. Cries of agony and despair were heard in every quarter. Human blood was shed like water. Every crime was committed, and the yeomanry were frantic with bloodshed and slaughter. Oh! those who would inculcate such doctrines, or who would in the slightest degree favour them, are the worst enemies of Ireland. I am going from you for a short time. If I find that in England I cannot do something beneficial for Ireland, I will come back immediately, and see what can be done in the country."

"On the following Thursday evening he left Ireland to attend to his Parliamentary duties," as the papers of the next morning announced. On that journey, the last he made from Ireland, he was accompanied by Mr. John O'Connell, Mr. Daniel O'Connell, junior, who had just been returned for Dundalk, and Alderman Timothy O'Brien, then the representative of 'Cashel of the Kings.' On Monday, the 8th of February, the Liberator was in his place in the House of Commons. There he reiterated the demand for 'food,'

and cautioned the Government that unless it acted promptly and vigorously, 'one quarter of the population would succumb to the famine,' which then afflicted the people. This was the last speech he spoke within the chamber of St. Stephen's. The papers the following morning stated 'the honourable member was scarcely audible in the reporters' gallery.' Under date of the 13th of the same month he wrote the last letter he addressed to the Repeal Association. It was dated from the British Hotel, Jermyn Street, London, and it announced that he intended to support Lord George Bentinck's motion for lending £16,000,000 for the construction of the earthworks of railways in Ireland. Several long and important debates on this proposal took place, but in none of them was O'Connell able to take part. His absence from the house on so important an occasion caused painful anxiety among the people. O'Connell's health was in fact gone. For a time his strength fluctuated, and, though various rumours were afloat, none seemed to realize the true extent of the danger. However, on Saturday, the 18th of February, we published a communication from our London correspondent which, we believe, was the first to give an authentic statement as to the serious dangers that were apprehended. The writer informed us that it was too true that for the previous few weeks O'Connell had been 'totally unable' to attend to his accustomed duties. He seemed to suffer, remarked our correspondent, from general prostration, and his physicians looked to 'rest, abstinence from business, and a strict attention to regimen,' rather than to medicine, for his recovery. On the 6th of March it was stated that he was then on the point of departure for Hastings, 'to seek benefit in change of air.' After a few weeks' sojourn in that place he left for Folkestone, and a letter from Mr. V. P. Fitzpatrick, written at two o'clock on the 22nd of March, says: 'Within the last fifteen minutes the *Prince Earnest* steamer, bearing the Liberator, Dr. Miley, and Young Dan to the shores of France, quitted this harbour. Bodily debility and mental depression continue to constitute his principal malady.' Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Fitzsimons, who had accompanied him from London, having taken farewell of the great man, returned to Ireland. The distinguished invalid and his companions reached Bologne after a passage of a few hours, which it was thought had a beneficial effect. On the 27th of March they arrived in the French capital, and the 'Univers' of that date announced that 'The hero of Ireland alighted at the Windsor Hotel at half-past four o'clock to-day.' The 'Univers' added to this announcement that 'the first physicians of Paris will be called together to-morrow, and, after the consultation, we hope to be able to make such statement as will reassure the friends of the glorious Emancipator of Ireland who may be anxious to salute him on his journey to Rome.' During his stay in Paris he was waited upon by the principal English and Irish residents of the capital, and the then British Minister, the late Marquis of Normanby, was particular in his courteous attention. On the 29th he left Paris for Orleans, but before leaving he was waited on and presented with an address, full of generous expressions for his recovery, from the Electoral Committee. In his brief reply he assured the deputation that 'illness and emotion closed his lips.' The journey was then continued by easy stages, reaching Genoa on the morning of the 6th of May.

"The time, the place, and the occasion are each suggestive. 'Ireland's greatest citizen' is ill—sick unto death. It is too much to imagine that, as he lay on his couch in the Hotel Fider, his acute and sensitive mind could hear, above the wail and lamentations of famine, his services questioned, his motives debated, his policy denied, and his very honour sought to be insinuated away? But, should those phantoms have ripped the calm of his last moments, let us hope that he recollected that misrepresentation, calumny, and aspersion are the penalties which men have to submit to 'for being great.' No gleam of hope brightened the sad scene or encouraged the sorrow-stricken watchers. The symptoms grew more distinct—more marked. It was now clear that the crisis was not far off, and that the days of O'Connell were numbered. For a day or so he endured great pain. Then utter and complete prostration supervened, which baffled the most skilful treatment and the most unremitting attention. He now never spoke, and that voice on which mellifluous accents thousands—nay, millions—of his countrymen had hung in the ecstasies of rapture is hushed. And those lips from which had issued an eloquence soft and seductive as woman's love—an eloquence winged like a canticle, melancholy like a psalm, and varied like a drama—are closed and mute. And there in Genoa of glorious historic reminiscences, rising amphitheatre-like, as a thing of beauty, from the blue Mediterranean, with its stradas of white marble palaces, its promenades, and its terraces, interlaced with parterres of beautiful and sweet-smelling flowers—with its innumerable and magnificent churches, each the memorial of some great event—with the bare summits of the Apennines and the ice-capped tops of the Alps, towering, sentinel-like, above—with its surrounding citron and orange groves, and its gardens of mulberries, and pomegranates, and olives, intertwining their beauties and commingling their sweetness—here it was that the spirit of the Great Man of Ireland—a soul once stalwart but now broken and fretted—fled from the body and went heavenward—

"The last Great Champion of the rights of Man,
The last Great Tribune of the world, is dead!"

"Grief—unutterable, inconsolable—permeated the land when, on the morning of the 25th of May, we announced 'The Death of the Liberator.' The first intelligence of the deplorable event was conveyed to Ireland by a special courier from our London correspondent. It is unnecessary to describe the extent and intensity of the sorrow experienced by all classes, but more especially by that class which, through good and evil report, had continued unwaveringly faithful to the Liberator, and whose allegiance to his principles never wavered. A complete widowhood seemed to have fallen on the land, and mourning covered it like a pall. The Association held a special meeting, and adopted an address informing the people, in brief terms, of their loss. The Corporation, which had been summoned for that day, met, and at once adjourned for three