

British people owe anything to Cobden for having lifted the bread tax from the loaves of Great Britain, he learned his lesson at the feet of the great Irish orator.

And another thing that still further emphasizes his claim to represent this element is the question—Who did the most with the least means? Measuring what he had in his hands with the result he produced, he is the most noticeable of all men that ever appealed to this element. And in this measurement few men even stand near him.

Every laurel woven to-day over the brow of Gladstone in his treatment of the Irish—and which must be his largest claim to the gratitude of Great Britain and the admiration of the English-speaking races—every laurel that is woven for his brow might be fairly said to be borrowed from the fame and worth of the great Irish champion.

And it is by no means true that O'Connell confined himself to the simple remedy of repeal or Catholic emancipation. Education and the remodelling of the tenure of land, and the disestablishment of the Church, the removal of that chronic oppression, arising from the comparative weakness and strength of the two religious establishments of Ireland. All these three questions O'Connell laid down in his speeches in defiance of the public sentiment of that hour—which ridiculed, despised and hated the very suggestions that, carried into proper support by the experience of half a century and the official influence of the British Premier, are the claim of Great Britain to-day to the sympathy of the civilized world.

I have another interest in the career of O'Connell. Some men wonder why the English scholar, who has just left you, should have brought to America a question of apparently so little interest as the relations of Ireland, but it would be only the superficial thinker that would be let into that mistake. I do not wonder. The relations of Ireland are the greatest and important feature of English political life. Every thoughtful Englishman knows that England to-day is occupying but a second rate place on the chessboard of Europe; that she has gradually sunk from the position of a first class power. Eight years ago I was biased in Cooper Institute for having said that England was now a second rate power on the chess board of Europe, but to-day her journalists have ceased to deny the fact, and are searching around for an explanation of its necessity. Of the two great causes which have made her fall from her position as a first class power in Europe, the first is the oppression of her own masses, and the second the seven centuries of unadulterated and infamous oppression of Ireland. Mr. Froude told us with an epigrammatic force the great truth that the wickedness of nations is always punished. No matter how long Providence waits, in the end the wickedness of a race is answered by the wickedness of their descendants. England has held for seven centuries to the lips of her sister Ireland a poisoned chalice. Its ingredients were the deepest contempt and the most unmeasured oppression; injustice such as the world hardly ever saw before. And, as Mr. Froude said, Providence is holding back that same cup to the lips of the mother country. The occasions have been frequent within the last few years when England longed to draw the sword, when the England of Lord Chatham would have flung herself madly into the great military struggles of the Continent. When Germany brought under its heel in contempt the little kingdom of Denmark, that gave Great Britain the Princess of Wales, England longed to draw the sword. When within a few years Bismarck struck her flatly in the face, ostensibly in the face of all England—"snubbed" her is the only word that describes that act—Great Britain longed to draw the sword; but she knew right well that the first cannon shot she ventured to fire against a first-class power in Europe Ireland would stab her in the back. Checkmated, she could not move on the chess board of the great powers. One of the great causes of this sudden crippling of her power has been the Irish question. I don't wonder at all that a thoughtful Englishman should long to explain to the world, if he can, that the steps by which his country has been brought to this sad state have been inevitable. If Mr. Froude could make out that proposition and convince the world, through the American people, that England accepted the inevitable fate which the geographical proximity of Ireland had entailed upon her, he would have gone far to rub out the eclipse of his country's shame. I don't wonder that he should make the attempt. But I believe that, instead of *England's having conquered Ireland*, that in the true statement of the case, as it stands to-day, *Ireland has conquered England*. She has summoned her before the power of the civilized world to judge of the justice of her legislation. She has checkmated her as a power on the chess-board of Europe. She has monopolized the attention of her statesmen. She has made her own island the pivot upon which the destiny of England turns. And her last great statesman, the present Prime Minister, Gladstone, owes whatever fame he has to the supposition that he has devised a way by which he can conciliate Ireland and save his own country.

Harriet Martineau, who has found something to explain and something to excuse in every equivocal act of every British statesman; who, however, great her prejudices, has never run along the whole history of a representative Englishman without usually finding half-a-dozen occasions to praise him—in her whole history of O'Connell has never failed to find constant reason to blame him either for a bad act, or, if compelled to acknowledge the act was good, she is sure to search and find a bad motive. He is the only man in the whole gallery of the thirty years' peace of which this can be said, and yet in closing the roll which bears the name of O'Connell, she is obliged to confess that there is no British subject who has ever risen, in our day, to such a level of influence and authority by the sole power of intellect and purpose as Daniel O'Connell.

Having given a summary of Ireland's history of seven centuries, and a vivid picture of the oppressed state of Ireland when O'Connell entered upon public life, he proceeded:—

O'Connell began his career by notifying the public that if nine men could meet him in a certain room in a Dublin Hotel at three o'clock on a certain day, he would commence agitation for the repeal of Catholic disabilities. When the hour came only seven men were in the room. O'Connell waited until four, but no more joined them. Going down to the street, he caught two young priests by the shoulder, asked them

into the room, and locked the doors on these nine men. You will think very naturally it was impossible to happen that those ten men met in an upper room of a Dublin hotel—two of them prisoners—reduced the strongest Government in Europe, with the Duke of Wellington at its head, to surrender within twenty years.

He claimed of his people a new effort. The hierarchy of the church disowned him. They said we have seen every attempt I had always up to the scaffold; we are not willing to risk another effort. The peerage of the island repudiated him. They said, we have struggled and bled for half a dozen centuries; it is better to sit down content. Alone, a young man, without office, without wealth, without renown, he flung himself in front of the people and asked for a new effort. What was the power left him? Simply the people—three or four millions of poverty stricken, broken-hearted peasants, standing on a soil soaked with the blood of their ancestors, cowering under a code of which Brougham said, "that they could not lift their hands without breaking it." What was his constituency? If he had the Press, he could not appeal to them with it, for they could not read; he could not marshal them into a great party, for that was illegal. Co-operation in politics, committees of correspondence, the machinery of agitation, as we have it, was illegal. He began his agitation by making speeches. He said to himself: The hierarchy leave me; the nobles repudiate me, the wealthy scorn me; the educated distrust me. I will lean on the people." He was the first man, as Canning said, "who summoned a race into existence and restored the balance of the world."

So O'Connell was the first man in Great Britain to summon a people into existence and check the advances of the oppression of the upper classes. He taught Cobden his method. In a certain sense he moulded the age. When Lincoln said, "I drift; I seek only to know the wishes of the American people," when Grant went into office, saying, "I have no policy; I stand here to do the will of the American people"—they were both echoes of Daniel O'Connell.

He was the first great subject who taught the crown to look outside the House of Commons for the dictator of its policy. He went round making speeches, but he had no journals—no papers to report his speeches; they would not even report he had a meeting. But, as Lowell says, "Patience is the passion of great souls." So, with infinite patience he went over Ireland dropping the seed.

The Lecturer, after describing O'Connell's wonderful powers as a leader of men, as a politician, and a barrister, concluded with the following eloquent peroration on Poland:—"Now, one word on Froude, if you have patience. You have heard of Poland, the chivalrous nation, the nation of nobles, in whose veins flowed the blue blood that astonished Europe by its heroism. Well, a hundred years ago, Austria and Prussia defeated all its efforts, and crushed it out of sight. Poland rebelled, and rebelled, and rebelled; she was crushed every time. Her language is a forgotten tradition. Her laws are a felony to cite. Her nobles are wanderers on the face of the earth. If you look on the map there is no Poland. A hundred years have done it. Yet where are the lips that would not be blistered if they dared to say a word against Poland? When America wanted to know how to fight they sent us Kosciusko, the Pole. When the bard, the orator, want the finest illustrations of bravery or patriotism they point to Poland. No man ever doubted the capacity of Poland. But a hundred years have annihilated her. There was Ireland, half as large, half as populous, isolated from the Continent by the ocean, tied to England, separated from Europe. For seven hundred years the omnipotent Saxon race have striven to grind it to powder. And yet, after seven hundred years, an Englishman comes here to teach us that that race has neither bravery nor courage! But after those seven hundred years it still stands, with the National flag in one hand and the Crucifix of Catholicity in the other.

Mr Phillips concluded amid loud and reiterated cheering.

BELLEW ON FROUDE.

MR J. M. BELLEW lately gave one of his readings at Steinway Hall, New York, before a crowded house. Preceding the opening piece, the distinguished elocutionist paid a tribute to Irish actors and dramatists, which was called out by some remarks of Mr Froude in his last book. Mr Bellew said:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—Before reading the following scene from the famous comedy of the "Critic," I wish to preface it with a remark which cannot possibly offend any one, but which it is only just and right to make in introducing so great a name as that of Sheridan. In a work just published, and as yet hardly known in this country, written by Mr Froude, and entitled "The English in Ireland," that gentleman, at page 22, takes occasion in referring to Irish art and literature to make the following amazing or amusing assertion:—

"The incompleteness of character is conspicuous in all that they do and have done; in their history, in their practical habits, in their arts and literature. Their lyrical melodies are exquisite; their epic poetry is ridiculous bombast. In the lives of their saints there is a wild and fantastic splendor; but they have no secular history, for, as a nation, they have done nothing which posterity will not be anxious to forget, and if they have never produced a tolerable drama, it is because imagination cannot outstrip reality."

I know I am here to night reading before many of the most intelligent men and women in New York; I know there are among you many skilled men and women, probably as generally conversant with the literature of the English language as Mr Froude, and, let me add, I hope much more so. In hearing such words as I have just read, I cannot resist jocularly asking you, "Would you believe it?" Is this man assuming our ignorance, or is he ventilating his own? Why, next to Shakespeare, every literary man and every dramatic artist will give the place of honor to an Irishman—Richard Brinsley Sheridan? Is not he the author of the two greatest comedies of the last two centuries, "The Rivals," and "The School for Scandal?" And where was he born but in dear old, dirty, and much-beloved Dublin? Who, again, was Oliver Goldsmith? Did not he write "She stoops to conquer," which had a run of four-hundred nights at Drury Lane Theatre, when originally produced, and was