

THE MEN OF "FORTY-EIGHT."

LECTURE BY FATHER SHERREY.

ANOTHER, and only one—of all that immortal coterie which genius gave in that splendid hour to mark an epoch in our awakened story, might here be named, if courtesy did not forbid comparison—in rivalry of imperial gifts, in the companionship of love, and gratitude, and fame of Thomas Davis, his compeer fittingly in every splendid and brilliant combination of gifts and qualities that immortalise and endear. I know, my friends, that the affections of your souls have already imaged whom I mean. (A voice—"John Mitchell;" and loud cheers.) Yes I am glad that your affections, anticipating my utterance, have pronounced that honored name before I uttered it; because, my friends, it is an evidence that John Mitchell has stamped his image upon the Irish heart and the Irish intellect for evermore. (Loud cheers.) Give that name homage in no vulgar fashion. I speak no words of unmeaning praise where there is question of this great strong intellect. Rhetoric—*ad captandum* talk—had grown to be the curse of Ireland when John Mitchell appeared and lectured upon "the pike." Stately as a pillar, this grand figure loomed up before the nation. He broached grand principles and startling maxims—startling because truthful, plain, and direct. He soon occupied the thoughtful minds within the island. Despising mere eloquence—the trick of words—he apostrophised the nation in the inimitable and truer eloquence of thought, and the more striking eloquence of action. (Cheers.) His hope for Ireland he soon made known to be in regiments, not in rhetoric; and, "invoking the God of battles," he cried anathema upon peace and blarney. Never had a nation a more fearless advocate. Never has there been a greater lover of his country. Never has there been an abler or a bolder man to defy the one and defend the other. (Cheers.) Conceiving that the reliable part of every nation lies in the individual character of the masses; conscious, if a radical reform came, that health and life, and inspiration and renewal must come from the bulk of the people, and not from the favored classes; conscious that, in Ireland, the upper surface of society was ulcerous all over: John Mitchell saw the necessity of a deep and universal subsoiling. And he called before him the masses of the people, and preached to them revolution. (Cheers.) England he summoned to the bar of final judgment; her Viceroy he arraigned as an armed criminal against law and justice; and loudly—with vehemence and defiance—he told the world what was his solemn vow, to place his race once more in combat with that power, and endeavour, with wielded pike, to dig to the heart of England for justice and redress. (Cheers.) I need not pause to tell how a packed jury sent John Mitchell into exile. No more need I tell you—what your know—how he went rejoicing—another victim of failure, another gift-offering at the national shrine—another hero and martyr to the imperishable principles of Irish liberty. (Cheers.) Men and women of Ireland, never has Ireland had a truer lover, and never has tyranny had a more inexorable foe. To Ireland he has clung fast, through weal and through woe; to her he has given all his toil, all his thoughts, and all his labours—and they were labours of love;—to Ireland he has given all his joys, but none of his sorrows; to her he has given the inspiration of his courage, the strength and splendour of his genius, all his iron nature, with all his iron virtues, all his splendid gifts—richest treasures—all his heroisms and devotion—all the shining glories of his intellect—all these in prodigal profusion he has given, to live unrequited, yet unrepining.

Well now, my friends, there are three others of this coterie that I intended to speak on to-night. One of these was he whose name is known to Ireland and dear to America. His sun rose in the splendor of its rising, away somewhere on the eastern slope of the hills that girdle the "Urbs Intacta;" and there is no Irishman at home or abroad to-night, who will forget the name of Thomas Francis Meagher. (Loud cheers.) Yes, that boy-genius, as I may call him, appeared on a platform that held, perhaps, the first orators of Europe; and we know that in one leap he came to the front. We know with what a spell he held the nation in the charm of his wondrous oratory. He was but a boy in Ireland, and it is not fair to compare him with Grattan or O'Connell, nor with Demosthenes, because their greatest efforts were conceived and spoken in the full zenith of the power of their mental faculties. Meagher was but a boy, and he gave to Ireland the richest jewel of oratory; and those who know say, that when the cause which he immortalised went down in gloom, the intellect of Meagher never more kissed the sunlight. When the immortal cause seemed for a time to perish, the inspiration of Meagher's intellect perished with it, and never was rekindled, except, perhaps, once. When over here in America, there is a flash of arms—like the returning vision of an early dream, that meteor spirit became again radiant, that divine germ, so to speak, became brilliant once more, and the sword which he apostrophised in youth he drew in the name of human liberty and human right, and caught on its blade, on the heights of Fredericksburg, that glory which he had immortalised in words that shall live as long as the English language, and shall have an echo in every breast—caught the enthusiastic light of battle which he once exulted in the hope to fling from that redeeming weapon on the battle-fields of conquering Ireland. (Loud cheers.)

Now, my friends, I would ask you to summon up before your minds all that brilliant galaxy of talent, of devotion, and of heroism, which is known to the age as the men of '48. (Cheers.) Did it not seem as if the light of heaven, so to speak, had burst upon our land once more? Everywhere over Europe there were gifted men, no longer dreaming, talking, or thinking of liberty, but, as befitted those who were resolved, working firmly in its just and sacred cause. The Continent was one vast battle-field in '48; every nation—Belgium, Switzerland, France, Germany, and Italy—were theatres of the people's triumphs; and while the sun of liberty glauced fiercely on the despots of Europe, no wonder that its rays poured hotly upon Ireland; and how could her sons remain inactive with each free message of despot's doom, of purchased nationality, and the people's triumphs who but yesterday bent their naked necks under the heel

of despotism? (Loud cheering.) And why not, they thought, free our country from the worst and most ancient despotism that ever cursed the world by crime against justice, against pity, and against mercy? (Cheers.) Yes, my friends, where was the cause more holy? Where a despotism marked by such a trail of blood? Where the flame of surging battle so needful to purify and restore? How could they parley longer with their impatient and bitter memories? (Cheers.) In the ecstasy of their souls they exulted in the grand vision of the raging tide of battle which, like a rising and irresistible sea, would bear them on its angry breast over the desolated ruins of usurpation to an enfranchised Ireland. (Cheers.) To know that the heart of the nation would throbb when their names were mentioned—to know that they had the affections of countless thousands of their race and blood—to know that, long after they had passed away, their names, unforgetton in the glorious heritage of ransomed liberty, would survive, was a rapturous thought to those whose exultant hope was to pour the hot, red tide by which the priceless boon of liberty was to be gained.

But, it will be said, such devotion in the men of '48 simply meant disaster. Yes; but the disaster lay not with them, or with their principles, which are immortal. (Loud cheers.) Failure, which was the outcome, should certainly not be relative to the most sacred and divine principles of human liberty. Errors, if you insist upon it, they committed; but you and I have committed errors. I will tell what theirs was, my friends; their error sprang, as I understand it, from the over-estimation in which they held the wealth and manhood of the Irish race. They recalled a chapter in their own world's annals, nobly written by the Irish sword; and they thought that, with a similar weapon, they would carve as bright a record, and shape as happy a destiny. (Cheers.) A population of seven or eight millions of people, with a million and a half of stalwart fighting men in Ireland, had nothing to fear. My friends, if there was only one tithe of the spirit in these men of '48 that showed itself in the thoughts and words of Thomas Francis Meagher, John Mitchell, and the rest, the armed hirelings of the foe would have been called upon to acknowledge their manhood. (Cheers.) Speaking in the heat of oratory, you may suppose that I shall say the men of the hour are able to resuscitate their country, and that a new-born Ireland will crown the hopes and vows of centuries. But, my friends, I am not one of the modern school who insist upon an uprising of this kind; for this reason: The science of war has been brought to such perfection, the instruments for the destruction of human life have been brought also to such perfection as a science, that I do not think the Irish race, at the present day, could do what might have been done in '48, and what Wexford alone did in '98. (Cheers.) No, my friends, I will say with every intelligent Irish Nationalist at present, I would preach what O'Connell preached: "Bide your time." Yes, my friends, no matter who talks about English benevolence, I believe, and so does every man and woman, too, who knows the history of our 700 years' connection, that you can never hope to dig from the heart of England justice towards Ireland.

The men of '48 were ahead of our time; and that was the cause of their failure. Their failure is a beacon-light and head-land to us, and to all who will advance to the same work once more. They were guilty of the crime—probably the pardonable one—of being young, and their hearts were at once unchilled and unblighted. The hearts of Meagher, Davis and the rest luxuriated in life's youth, filled with its play, its pride, and its power. They did not break Ireland's chains, but at least they did not break their vows. They did this much—they led, and aroused a wholesome tone of thought. They preached bold and daring truths, they vindicated the right of free opinion in our country; they made "Young Ireland" at least, an intelligent, self-reliant, reflective Ireland. John Mitchell, when he lectured on the pike; Meagher, when he apostrophised the sword; Davis, when he wrote the song for the Irish Militia;—everyone of these gifted '48 men preached to the world boldly, and taught young Ireland to grow intelligent with the belief that there is in truth another gospel of love.

The Dublin 'Nation,' of April 11, speaking of the rescue of the crew of the Europe by the National Line steamship, Greece, says:—The Cork papers report a gallant and daring attempt, happily successful, by the crew of the Greece, of the National line, to rescue the crew and passengers of the French steamer Europe, which vessel was encountered in the Atlantic in a sinking state. With pleasure we notice, as foremost amongst the volunteers to board the doomed vessel, our friend, Dr Constantine Maguire, whose heroism contributed in no small degree to render the Irish Ambulance Corps in France a proud memory for Ireland. Indeed, it will be remembered that, before the Ambulance Corps left the Irish shore, Dr Maguire well inaugurated his career by leaping from the side of the La Fontaine into the river, and rescuing a drowning man. Our friend unites with the skill of the medical profession all the daring courage of a brave soldier.

During the eight years from 1852 to 1860, no less than forty-three Episcopal clergymen in England embraced Catholicity. Among them were Lord C. Thynne and Lord Henry Kerr. The following converts were also made during the same period:—The Countess of Clare, Sir C. D'Albani, Lady C. Towneley, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, Lady Duff Gordon, Sir Vere de Vere, Lady de Vere, Lord Melbourne, Sir J. Talbot, Lady Curtis, Earl of Roscommon, Viscount Fielding (now Lord Denbigh), the Hon. C. Pakenham, Lady Ida Lennox, Lady Foley, Lord Nigel Kennedy, Countess of Arundel, Lady Cavendish, Lord Campden, Baron Weld, Sir John Simeon, M.P., Sir George Bowyer, M.P., Hon. Gilbert Talbot, Lady Campden, Lady C. Peat, Lady Douglas, Lady Simeon, the Duchess of Hamilton, Lady C. Kerr, Lady K. Howard, Lady Gage, Hon Mrs Law, Hon. Miss Law, Hon. F. Cavendish, Lord Huntingtower, Lady Harris, the Countess of Kenmare, the Countess of Clancarde, Lady C. Thynne, Lord John Kerr, Lady H. Kerr, Lady A. Kerr, Lady C. Kerr, the Marchioness of Lothian, Lord E. Kerr, Lord Monteith, Sir E. Crown, Lady Floyd, Lady de Trafford, Hon. J. Chantre, the Earl of Dunraven, the Duchess of Buccleugh, Sir Soucheir Wray, Lord Boyle, Lord Norreys, Lord and Lady Fortarlington.