

WHY ARE IRISHMEN GENERALLY DEMOCRATS?

(New York *Freeman's Journal*.)

WE are frequently asked this question by men who wish to be fair. One such, lately, and a man of intelligence on other subjects, expressed surprise tinged with incredulity when we pointed to the well known facts proving that from the division of politicians into Federalists and Democrats—(then called Republicans)—the former were most unjust towards Irishmen, while the latter, in the general run of their public conduct, have been the maintainers of the rights of all adopted citizens. We think the present a very good time to reproduce an article from a man who, as a scholar and a generous lover of this country, and of its institutions, is deserving of great regard. We refer to the celebrated Matthew Carey, of Philadelphia, the personal friend of nearly all the great public men of America at the beginning of this Century. The extract we give is the fifty-eighth chapter of Mr. Carey's famous "Olive Branch, or Faults on Both Sides." We copy from the eighth edition, published in 1817.

"Thou shalt not vex the stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."—Exodus, xxii. 21.

ILLIBERALITY OF PREJUDICES AGAINST FOREIGNERS—UNGRATEFUL ON THE PART OF AMERICA—IRISHMEN AND FRENCHMEN PECULIAR OBJECTS OF DISLIKE—PENNSYLVANIA LINE—EXTREME SUFFERING—TEMPTING ALLUREMENTS—UNSHAKEN VIRTUE AND HEROISM—ARNOLD—SILAS DEANE—REFUGEES.

"The real cause of the war must be traced to . . . the influence of worthless foreigners over the press, and the deliberations of the Government in all its branches." Reply of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts to the Speech of Governor Strong, June, 1814.

I have long desired a fair opportunity of handling this topic. I have long felt indignant at the indiscriminate abuse hurled on foreigners in general—and more particularly on the Irish, on whose devoted heads are incessantly poured out the vials of wrath.

There is no country that owes more to—there is no country has more need of—foreigners. There is perhaps no country in which they are more the objects of invective, of reproaches, of envy and jealousy.

A jealousy of foreigners prevails in England. But it is confined to the canaille, who trundling their barrows—sweeping the streets—or pursuing their genteel offices of chimney sweeps and night men—hate and despise the *bag and tail parleyous—the blundering Irishman—the simple sarney Scotchman—the leak-eating Welchman*. In fact, every man who wears a coat different from his own, or who displays any indication that proves him not to be a "true-born Englishman," is an object of contempt to an English scavenger.

But it is not thus in high life in that country. A foreigner of genteel manners—decent address—and good character, is treated with the attention and politeness he deserves.

With a degree of magnanimity, deserving of praise, and worthy of being copied, England, which possesses abundance of artists of high standing, and sterling merits, appointed the American West, as president of her royal academy. France, with a constellation of native talents never exceeded, entrusted her armies to a Berwick, to a Saxe, to a Miranda, to a Kellerman. At a more recent period, a Swiss banker presided over her financial concerns. Russia has frequently placed over her fleets Scotch naval heroes. In fact, explore Christendom, and you will find there is no country so savage, so uncultivated, or so highly polished and refined, which does not cheerfully avail itself of the proffered talents of the foreigner who makes his permanent domicile there.

But in this "most enlightened" of all the enlightened nations of the earth, party spirit has excited a peculiar degree of malevolence against the Irish and the French—and for the same reason; because England is hostile to both. The urbanity, the mildness, the equanimity, the refinement and the politeness of the Frenchman, avail him nothing. He is an object of jealousy and ill-will, in spite of all his own good and endearing qualities, and in spite too of the services his nation "in the fiery hour of trial," rendered the United States. The poor, persecuted, proscribed, and oppressed Irishman, hunted out of his own country, and knowing the value of liberty here, from the privation of it there—finds the antipathies of his lords and masters transferred to many of those whose fellow citizen he intends to become. To some of these narrow, infatuated, bigotted and illiberal men, a Hottentot, or a Caffrarian, or a Japanese would be more acceptable than an Irishman.

One circumstance—were there no other record—ought to endear to Americans, the name, the country of an Irishman. It has a high claim, not cancelled, on the pen of the historian. It has not yet had justice done it. Let me grace my book with the narrative.

During the American revolution, a band of Irishmen were embodied to avenge, in the country of their adoption, the injuries of the country of their birth. They formed the major part of the celebrated Pennsylvania line. They bravely fought and bled for the United States. Many of them sealed their attachment with their lives. Their adopted country was shamefully ungrateful. The wealthy, the independent, and the luxurious, for whom they fought, were rioting in the superfluities of life, while their defenders were literally half starved and half naked. Their shoeless feet marked with blood their tracks on the highway. They long bore their grievances patiently. They at length murmured. They remonstrated. They implored a supply of the necessities of life; but in vain. A deaf ear was turned to their complaints. They felt indignant at the cold neglect—at the ingratitude—of that country for which so many of their companions in arms had expired on the crimson field of battle. They held arms in their hands. They had reached the boundary line, beyond which forbearance and submission become meanness and pusillanimity. As all appeals to the gratitude, the justice, the generosity of the country, had proved unavailing, they determined to try another course. They appealed to her fears. They mutinied. They demanded with energy

that redress for which they had before supplicated. It was a noble deed. I hope in all similar cases, similar measures will be pursued.

The intelligence was carried to the British camp. It there spread joy and gladness. Lord Howe hoped that a period had arrived to the "rebellion," as it would have been termed. There was a glorious opportunity of crushing the half-formed embryo of the republic. He counted largely on the indignation, and on the resentment of the natives of "the emerald Isle." He knew the irascibility of their tempers. He calculated on the diminution of the strength of "the rebels," and accession to the numbers of the royal army. Messengers were despatched to the mutineers. They had *carte blanche*. They were to allure the poor Hibernians to return, like prodigal children, from feeding on husks, to the plentiful fold of their royal master. Liberality herself presided over Howe's offers. Abundant supplies of provisions—comfortable clothing, to their heart's desire—all arrears of pay—bounties—and pardon for past offences, were offered. There was, however, no hesitation among these poor, neglected warriors. They refused to renounce poverty, nakedness, suffering, and ingratitude. The splendid temptations were held out in vain. There was no Judas, no Arnold there. They seized the tempters. They trampled on their shining ore. They sent them to their General's tent. The miserable wretches paid their forfeit lives for attempting to seduce a band of ragged, forlorn, and deserted, but illustrious heroes. We prate about Roman, about Grecian patriotism. One-half of it is false. In the other half, there is nothing that excels this noble trait, which is worthy the pencil of a West or a Trumbull.

Let me reverse the scene. Let me introduce some characters of a different stamp. Who is that miscreant yonder—dark, designing, haggard—treachery on his countenance—a dagger in his hand? Is it Arnold? It is. Was he an Irishman? No. He was not of that despised caste, the foreigners. He was an American. Neither Irish nor French blood flowed in his veins.

Behold, there is another. Who is he, that Judas like, is pocketing the wages of corruption, for which he has sold his country? Is he an Irishman? No. He is a native American. His name is Silas Deane.

But surely that numerous band of ruffians, and plunderers, and murderers, who are marauding and robbing—who are shooting down farmers, and their wives, and their children, are "foreigners." It is impossible they can be natives. No native American would perpetrate such barbarities on his unoffending fellow citizens. It is an error. They are refugees and Tories—all native born.

I am an Irishman. With the canaille in superfine cloths and silks, as well as with the canaille in rags and tatters, this is a subject of reproach. For every man, woman, or child, base enough to attach disgrace to any person on account of his country, I feel a most sovereign contempt. Let them move in what sphere they may, whether in coffee-houses, or ball rooms, or palaces—in hovels, or garrets, or cellars—they are groveling, sordid, and contemptible. To express the whole in two words—pity there were not words more forcible—they are mere canaille.

I glory, I feel a pride in the name of an Irishman. There is not, under the canopy of heaven, another nation, which, ground to the earth as Ireland has been, for six hundred years, under so vile a proconsular government—almost every viceregent a Verres—a government, whose fundamental maxim is "divide and destroy"—whose existence depends on fomenting the hostility of the Protestant against the Presbyterian and Catholic, and that of the Catholic against the Protestant and Presbyterian—there is not, I say, another nation, which, under such circumstances, would have preserved the slightest ray of respectability of character.

A book now lies before me, which, in a few lines, with great naïveté develops the horrible system pursued by England in the government of Ireland, of exciting the jealousy of one part of the nation against the other. A schemer, of the name of Wood, had influence enough to procure a patent for supplying Ireland with copper coin in the year 1724, whereby he would have amassed an immense fortune by fleecing the nation of its gold and silver in return for his base copper. Dean Swift exposed the intended fraud with such zeal and ability, that he aroused the public indignation at the attempt, and thus the projector was fairly defeated, and his patent revoked. Primate Boulter, who was at that period Prime Minister of Ireland, in a letter to the Duke of Newcastle, deploras the consequences of this fraudulent attempt, in uniting parties which, till then, had been embittered enemies. This grand dignity of the Church regarded a cessation of discord and hostility among the oppressed Irish as a most alarming event! pregnant with danger to the authority of England! But, reader, I will let him speak for himself:—

"The people of every religion, country, and party here, are alike set against Wood's half pence, and their agreement in this had a very unhappy influence on the affairs of the nation, by bringing on intimacies between Papists and Jacobites, and the whigs who before had no correspondence with them!!!" See Boulter's letters, vol. 1, page 7. Dublin Edition 1770.

Notwithstanding all the grinding, the debasing circumstances that militate against Ireland and Irishmen, there is no country in Christendom, which has not witnessed the heroism, the generosity, the liberality of Irishmen—none where, notwithstanding the atrocious calumnies propagated against them by their oppressors, they have not forced their way through the thorny and briery paths of prejudice and jealousy, to honor, to esteem, to respect.

It has been said that they are in this country turbulent, and refractory, and disorderly, and factious. This charge is as base as those by whom it is advanced. There is more turbulence, more faction, more disaffection in Boston, whose population is only 33,000, and which has as few foreigners as perhaps any town in the world, than there is in the two States of Pennsylvania and New York, with a population of 1,700,000, and which contains probably two-thirds of all the native Irishmen in this country. While native-born citizens, some of whom pride themselves on Indian blood flowing in their veins, and others who boast of a holy descent from those "sainted pilgrims," whom British persecution drove to the howling wilderness, were sacrilegiously and wickedly attempting to destroy the glorious