

great a digression from the limits of our present subject to present to you any adequate sketch of his great conversational powers or his sallies of wit, I cannot, in passing, resist the desire to mention one or two of Curran's flashes. On one occasion a high tide in the Liffey made its way into the cellars and subterraneous rooms of the Court, and the wigs and gowns were floating about. Curran, for whom a case was waiting, seized the first wig and gown drifting within reach, and rushed into court dripping like a river-god. "Well, Mr Curran," asked one of the judges, "how did you leave your friends coming on below?" "Swimmingly, my lord," was the reply. On another occasion, in defending an attorney's bill or costs before Lord Clare, "Here now," said Lord Clare, "is a monstrous imposition. How can you defend this item, Mr Curran: 'To writing innumerable letters, £100?'" "Why, my lord," said Curran, "nothing can be more reasonable; it is not a penny a letter." And Curran's reply to Judge Robinson is exquisite: "I'll commit you sir," said the Judge. "I hope your lordship will never commit a worse thing," retorted Curran. O'Connell tells us himself the love romance of his life, and if we can believe him, he never proposed marriage to any woman but one, his cousin Mary. "I said to her, 'Are you engaged, Miss O'Connell?'" She answered "I am not." I said "then will you engage yourself to me." "I will," was the reply. Though his uncle and other relatives were opposed to the match, O'Connell was married in June, 1802, and the 34 years of domestic Home Rule fully justified his choice and determination. Having an unendowed bride, his vast energies and talents, like Curran's in early poverty, were aroused to achieve fame and success and place her in the position she deserved. I have already referred to the rebellion of 1793, and cannot dwell on the iniquitous acts of the Government and their accomplices, and the wantonly brutal treatment of the Irish Catholic people. In vain did Grattan lift his voice to demand equal privileges to his Majesty's subjects, without distinction; in vain did Curran ask to prove to the House of Commons that 1,400 families had been driven from their homes to wander like miserable outcasts—some butchered or burned in their cabins, others dying of famine and fatigue. No wonder the United Irishmen organised the insurrection, but no wonder that owing to divided alliances, which are always the curse in the success of what should plainly be a common national cause, it was a failure, and resulted so disastrously in the destruction of the brave lives of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Wolfe Tone, and John and Henry Sheares, all men of the highest honour, intellect, gallant courage, and unselfish patriotism. The trial of the Sheares is now universally regarded as a judicial murder. They were convicted on the evidence of one witness, and that an informer, and though ably defended by the illustrious Curran, who, worn out after fifteen hours' trial, was forced to commence his address to the jury at midnight, but without effect, and they were executed next morning. Such barbarous administration of justice appals us now-a-days; but should it not awaken national sentiment, and a resentment and resistance in principle to all forms of oppression?

We drink the memory of the dead,
The faithful and the few,
Some lie far off beyond the wave,
Some sleep in Ireland too;
All—all are gone—but still lives on,
The fame of those who died,
All true men, like you, men,
Remember them with pride.

Having destroyed temporarily the revolutionary spirit of Ireland, the Government now resolved on the distribution of her Parliament. This was accomplished by unblushing bribery, corruption, the lavish distribution of money, place, office, and honours (save the mark). "The ruin of the Irish Parliament," writes Justin McCarthy, "is one of the most shameful stories of corruption and treachery of which history holds witness." One single vote alone cost £8,000, and the total monetary amount of the corruption was between two and three millions. Grattan, who had sat by the cradle of Ireland's Independence, had to follow her hearse. The circumstances of his last effort against the Union are too touching to omit. It was solemn mid-night, in the height of feverish debate and excitement, an atmosphere of eloquence inspired by the death throes of an expiring nation, when all hushed as by magic, Grattan (that morning elected for Wicklow) who had risen from a bed of sickness, tottered to his place supported by friends. At such a moment Isaac Corry rashly ventured in a speech of bitterness to crush Grattan. Too feeble to stand, he spoke sitting—his voice weak. It is described as a truly sublime and touching spectacle. As he warmed to his mighty subject, his former young spirit revived. I cannot withhold a portion of his answer, thus:—"My guilt or innocence has little to do with the question before us. I rose with the rising fortunes of my country. I am willing to die with her expiring liberties. To the voice of the people I will bow; but never shall I submit to the caprices of an individual hired to betray them, and slander me. The indisposition of my body has left me, perhaps, no means but that of lying down with fallen Ireland, and recording upon her tomb my dying testimony against the flagrant corruption that has murdered her independence. . . . The right honourable gentleman has suggested examples which I would have shunned, and examples which I should have followed. I

shall never follow his, and I have ever avoided it. I shall never be ambitious to purchase public service by private infamy; the lighter characters of the model have as little chance of weaning me from the habits of a life spent in the cause of my native land. Am I to renounce these habits now forever? And at the back of whom? I should rather say of what? Half minister, half monkey—a 'prentice politician, and a master coxcomb. He has told you what he has said of me here he would say anywhere. I believe he would say them anywhere he thought himself safe in saying so—nothing can limit his calumnies but his fears. In Parliament he has calumniated me to-night; in the King's Court he would calumniate me to-morrow; but had he said or dared to insinuate one half as much elsewhere, the indignant spirit of an honest man would have answered the vile and venal slanderer with a blow." A duel instantly followed, and Grattan wounded Corry in the arm. In all this sad and wretched perfidy and crime of the Union, there is some balm in the memory that there in that base assembly 100 men stood faithfully by the side of their agonised country. Amongst them one who was known as the "Incorruptible," the ancestor of the late and nationally lamented Mr Parnell. In striking contrast was the patriotic career of Charles Stewart Parnell, with the insignificance of the descendant of the Great Liberator, who, the other day during the recent elections, degraded his name by openly denouncing Home Rule, which was in effect the fond hope and day dream in the life of his illustrious ancestor. The national feeling of anger consequent upon the Union still ranked in the hearts and minds of the Irish people, and the gifted and brave young Robert Emmet designed a rising of the people to seize the Castle. The project was of course a failure, and though he might have escaped, Emmet was too fondly attached to Sarah, Curran's daughter, whom he idolized. Emmet was hurriedly tried and convicted late at night, and, like the two Sheares, was hanged next morning, leaving a sorrowing country and a lost and broken-hearted love whose grief and fate are embalmed in Moore's beautifully pathetic melody, "She is far from the land. Emmet's speech from the dock is known to you all, and is an immortal model of Irish patriotism and eloquence. Of course, O'Connell never countenanced any action in the nature of physical force, and passed many strictures on the men of '98 and Emmet's abortive rising. It possibly had, however, this good effect that the minds of the people were turned from insurrection, and prepared the way for the new gospel of moral force of which O'Connell was destined to be the apostle. At the period immediately following the Union, O'Connell applied himself with assiduity to his profession, and rapidly acquired the highest skill and reputation as an advocate; and in the midst of his busy avocations we find him projecting and constantly fostering the great cause of Catholic emancipation. It required the great physical strength which he possessed to supply his vast energies and the strain of his varied duties and responsibilities. His frame was tall, expanded, and muscular, such as befitted a leader of the people. "Among ten thousand," says Lady Wilde, "a stranger's eye would have fixed on him as the true king." His commanding gait and gestures force upon you the national sentiment, "Ireland her own or the world in a blaze." So much were the rights of the people ever present in his thoughts. O'Connell made his first political speech in 1800, on the Catholic claims, and felt proud of it ever afterwards, because, as he said, "it contained all the principles of my subsequent political life." I call one extract to show that, while he was always personally a steadfast Catholic, he politically held as firmly broad and absolutely unsectarian views, and that the chief principle is—that the Irish people setting aside all sectarian and party prejudices and differences, should combine for the good of their common country. "Let us show," he said, "to Ireland that we have nothing in view but her good, nothing in our hearts but a desire of mutual forgiveness, toleration, and mutual affection; in fine, let every man who feels with me proclaim, that if the alternative were offered him of the Union or the re-enactment of the Penal Code in all its pristine horrors, he would prefer, without hesitation, the latter, as the lesser and more sufferable evil; that he would rather confide in the justice of his brethren, the Protestants of Ireland, who have already liberated him, than lay his country at the feet of foreigners." Ten years later (1810), what was called an Aggregate Meeting was held in Dublin, and it is a pleasing contrast of events at this present period, and at this distance of time, to note that the Orange Corporation of that great city then were the movers in the patriotic attempt to repeal the Union. I should also like to point out, in justice to the memory of O'Connell, in relation to the question of self-government of Ireland and the many claimants to the honour of originating the question of Home Rule (among them some colonial statesmen), that, since the Union, to O'Connell himself is due the honour of first place, for I find that his biographers record that during the repeal agitation he often exclaimed, "Are not we able to manage our own affairs? Would any sensible man entrust his affairs to others who was perfectly capable of managing them himself? Here is, in a nutshell, the whole gospel of Home Rule as preached under that title for nearly twenty years.

(Concluded in our next.)