

rob it of its safeguards, you will not return to the days of wildcat money, you will not lessen the savings of prudent labor or the accumulations of the rich. Time makes all things even. Let us give to the executive authorities ample means to meet the appropriations you have made, but let us strengthen rather than weaken our monetary system, which lies at the foundation of our prosperity and progress.

THOMAS F. MEAGHER

THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER, Irish American soldier, orator, and revolutionist, was born at Waterford, Ireland, Aug. 3, 1823, and was drowned near Fort Benton, Montana, July 1, 1867. After obtaining an education at the Jesuit College of Stonyhurst, Lancashire, he proceeded to Dublin in 1844 with the intention of studying law, but speedily relinquished it for politics. As a Nationalist, he espoused the cause of Ireland with enthusiasm, and in a fiery speech once deprecated the idea that the use of arms was immoral, and declared the sword to be a sacred weapon. For this he was styled by the novelist Thackeray, "Meagher of the Sword." About this time he was greatly influenced by the oratory of Daniel O'Connell, and was sent to Paris bearing an address to the provisional government of France (in 1848), from the Irish Confederation, and on his return he made a fiery, seditious speech while presenting the citizens of Dublin with an Irish tri-color. In the same year, he made a vehement harangue before a meeting of the Irish Confederation, asserting that Irishmen were justified in saying to the government, "If you do not give us a parliament in which to state our grievances, we shall state them by arms and force." He was arrested for sedition a few days later and tried at Dublin, but no verdict was returned. Undeterred by this warning, Meagher travelled about Ireland in the following summer exciting revolution, and was again arrested. In October he was brought to trial at Clonmel, and was adjudged guilty of high treason and sentenced to be hanged. His sentence being commuted to penal servitude for life, he was banished to Tasmania, where considerable liberty appears to have been allowed him. In 1852, he escaped to the United States, where for two years he came frequently before the public as a lecturer, his fiery eloquence and fine personal appearance making considerable impression upon his hearers. He took up the study of law again and was admitted to the New York Bar in 1855, but at the opening of the Civil War promptly abandoned his professional duties, and, organizing a company of Zouave volunteers, known as the "Irish brigade," served at their head in the Federal army. In 1862, he was appointed brigadier-general and distinguished himself by bravery at Antietam and on other battle-fields. He was also present at the two battles of Bull Run, in the seven days' fighting before Richmond, as well as in the battles at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. Meagher was twice wounded and had his horse shot under him, while at Chancellorsville his brigade was almost decimated. He resigned from the army in 1863, and in 1866, was appointed provisional Governor of Montana, and while occupying this office was accidentally drowned in the Missouri River. Meagher was an extremely impulsive, courageous character, whose oratory was fiery to a degree. His writings include "Speeches on the Legislative Independence of Ireland" (1853); "Recollections of Ireland and the Irish"; "Last Days of the Sixty-Ninth in Virginia" (1861).

"SWORD SPEECH"

DELIVERED IN CONCILIATION HALL, DUBLIN, JULY 20, 1846

MY LORD MAYOR,—I will commence as Mr. Mitchell concluded, by an allusion to the Whigs.

I fully concur with my friend, that the most comprehensive measures which the Whig minister may propose will fail to lift this country up to that position which she has the right to occupy and the power to maintain. A Whig minister, I admit, may improve the province—he will not restore the nation. Franchises, tenant-compensation bills, liberal appointments, may ameliorate—they will not exalt. They may meet the necessities—they will not call forth the abilities of the country. The errors of the past may be repaired—the hopes of the future will not be fulfilled. With a vote in one pocket, a lease in the other, and full "justice" before him at the petty sessions—in the shape of a "restored magistrate"—the humblest peasant may be told that he is free; but, my lord, he will not have the character of a freeman—his spirit to dare, his energy to act. From the stateliest mansion, down to the poorest cottage in the land, the inactivity, the meanness, the debasement, which provincialism engenders, will be perceptible.

These are not the crude sentiments of youth, though the mere commercial politician, who has deduced his ideas of self-government from the table of imports and exports, may satirize them as such. Age has uttered them, my lord, and the experience of eighty years has preached them to the people. A few weeks since, and there stood in the court of queen's bench an old and venerable man, to teach the coun-

try the lessons he had learned, in this youth, beneath the portico of the Irish Senate House, and which, during a long life, he had treasured in his heart as the costliest legacy a true citizen could bequeath the land that gave him birth.

What said this aged orator?

"National independence does not necessarily lead to national virtue and happiness; but reason and experience demonstrate that public spirit and general happiness are looked for in vain under the withering influence of provincial subjection. The very consciousness of being dependent on another power, for advancement in the scale of national being, weighs down the spirit of a people, manacles the efforts of genius, depresses the energies of virtue, blunts the sense of common glory and common good, and produces an insulated selfishness of character, the surest mark of debasement in the individual, and mortality in the State."

My lord, it was once said by an eminent citizen of Rome, the elder Pliny, that "we owe our youth and manhood to our country, but our declining age to ourselves." This may have been the maxim of the Roman—it is not the maxim of the Irish patriot. One might have thought that the anxieties, the labors, the vicissitudes of a long career, had dimmed the fire which burned in the heart of the illustrious old man whose words I have cited; but now, almost from the shadow of death, he comes forth with the vigor of youth and the authority of age, to serve the country—in the defence of which he once bore arms—by an example, my lord, that must shame the coward, rouse the sluggard, and stimulate the bold.

These sentiments have sunk deep into the public mind. They are recited as the national creed. Whilst these sentiments inspire the people, I have no fear for the national cause—I do not dread the venal influence of the Whigs. Inspired by such sentiments, the people of this country will

look beyond the mere redress of existing wrongs, and strive for the attainment of future power.

A good government may, indeed, redress the grievances of an injured people; but a strong people can alone build up a great nation. To be strong, a people must be self-reliant, self-ruled, self-sustained. The dependence of one people upon another, even for the benefits of legislation, is the deepest source of national weakness.

By an unnatural law it exempts a people from their just duties,—their just responsibilities. When you exempt a people from these duties, from these responsibilities, you generate in them a distrust in their own powers. Thus you enervate, if you do not utterly destroy, that spirit which a sense of these responsibilities is sure to inspire, and which the fulfilment of these duties never fails to invigorate. Where this spirit does not actuate, the country may be tranquil — it will not be prosperous. It may exist — it will not thrive. It may hold together — it will not advance. Peace it may enjoy — for peace and serfdom are compatible. But, my lord, it will neither accumulate wealth, nor win a character. It will neither benefit mankind by the enterprise of its merchants, nor instruct mankind by the examples of its statesmen. I make these observations, for it is the custom of some moderate politicians to say, that when the Whigs have accomplished the “pacification” of the country, there will be little or no necessity for Repeal.

My lord, there is something else, there is everything else, to be done when the work of “pacification” has been accomplished — and here it is hardly necessary to observe, that the prosperity of a country is, perhaps, the sole guarantee for its tranquillity, and that the more universal the prosperity, the more permanent will be the repose.

But the Whigs will enrich as well as pacify! Grant it, my lord. Then do I conceive that the necessity for Repeal will augment. Great interests demand great safeguards. The prosperity of a nation requires the protection of a senate. Hereafter a national senate may require the protection of a national army.

So much for the extraordinary affluence with which we are threatened; and which, it is said by gentlemen on the opposite shore of the Irish Sea, will crush this association, and clamor for Irish nationality, in a sepulchre of gold. This prediction, however, is feebly sustained by the ministerial programme that has lately appeared. On the evening of the sixteenth the Whig premier, in answer to a question that was put to him by the member for Finsbury, Mr. Duncombe, is reported to have made this consolatory announcement:—

“We consider that the social grievances of Ireland are those which are most prominent — and to which it is most likely to be in our power to afford, not a complete and immediate remedy, but some remedy, some kind of improvement, so that some kind of hope may be entertained that, some ten or twelve years hence, the country will, by the measures we undertake, be in a far better state with respect to the frightful destitution and misery which now prevails in that country. We have that practical object in view.”

After that most consolatory announcement, my lord, let those who have the patience of Job and the poverty of Lazarus, continue in good faith “to wait on Providence and the Whigs” — continue to entertain “some kind of hope” that if not “a complete and immediate remedy,” at least “some remedy,” “some improvement” will place this country in “a far better state” than it is at present, “some ten or twelve years hence.” After that, let those who prefer the

periodical boons of a Whig government to that which would be the abiding blessing of an Irish Parliament — let those who deny to Ireland what they assert for Poland — let those who would inflict, as Henry Grattan said, an eternal disability upon this country, to which Providence has assigned the largest facilities for power — let those who would ratify the “base swap,” as Mr. Shiel once stigmatized the Act of Union, and would stamp perfection upon that deed of perfidy — let such men

—— “Plod on in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to sire, from age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature.”

But we, my lord, who are assembled in this hall, and in whose hearts the Union has not bred the slave’s disease — we who have not been imperialized — we are here, with the hope to undo that work, which, forty-six years ago, dishonored the ancient peerage, and subjugated the people of our country.

My lord, to assist the people of Ireland to undo that work, I came to this hall. I came to repeal the Act of Union, I came here for nothing else. Upon every other question, I feel myself at perfect liberty to differ from each and every one of you. Upon questions of finance, questions of religious character, questions of an educational character, questions of municipal policy, questions that may arise from the proceedings of the legislature; upon all these questions, I feel myself at perfect liberty to differ from each and every one of you.

Yet more, my lord, I maintain that it is my right to express my opinion upon each of these questions, if necessary. The right of free discussion I have here upheld. In the exercise of that right I have differed, sometimes, from the leader

of this association, and would do so again. That right I will not abandon — I shall maintain it to the last. In doing so, let me not be told that I seek to undermine the influence of the leader of this association and am insensible to his services. My lord, I am grateful for his services, and will uphold his just influence. This is the first time I have spoken in these terms of that illustrious man, in this hall. I did not do so before — I felt it was unnecessary. I hate unnecessary praise — I scorn to receive it, I scorn to bestow it.

No, my lord, I am not ungrateful to the man who struck the fetters off my arms, whilst I was yet a child, and by whose influence, my father — the first Catholic who did so for two hundred years — sat, for the last two years, in the civic chair of an ancient city. But, my lord, the same God who gave to that great man the power to strike down an odious ascendancy in this country, and enable him to institute in this land the glorious law of religious equality; the same God gave to me a mind that is my own — a mind that has not been mortgaged to the opinions of any man or any set of men, a mind that I was to use, and not surrender.

My lord, in the exercise of that right, which I have here endeavored to uphold — a right which this association should preserve inviolate, if it desires not to become a despotism. In the exercise of that right, I have differed from Mr. O’Connell on previous occasions, and differ from him now. I do not agree with him in the opinion he entertains of my friend, Charles Gavan Duffy — that man whom I am proud, indeed, to call my friend — though he is a “convicted conspirator,” and suffered for you in Richmond prison. I do not think he is a “maligner.” I do not think he has lost, or deserves to lose, the public favor. I have no more connection with the “Nation” than I have with the “Times.” I, therefore, feel

no delicacy in appearing here this day in defence of its principles, with which I avow myself identified. My lord, it is to me a source of true delight and honest pride to speak this day in defence of that great journal. I do not fear to assume the position. Exalted though it be, it is easy to maintain it. The character of that journal is above reproach. The ability that sustains it has won a European fame. The genius of which it is the offspring, the truth of which it is the oracle, have been recognized, my lord, by friends and foes.

I care not how it may be assailed—I care not howsoever great may be the talent, howsoever high may be the position, of those who now consider it their duty to impeach its writings—I do think that it has won too splendid a reputation to lose the influence it has acquired. The people, whose enthusiasm has been kindled by the impetuous fire of its verse, and whose sentiments have been ennobled by the earnest purity of its teaching, will not ratify the censure that has been pronounced upon it in this hall.

Truth will have its day of triumph, as well as its day of trial; and I foresee that the fearless patriotism which, in those pages, has braved the prejudices of the day, to enunciate grand truths, will triumph in the end. My lord, such do I believe to be the character, such do I anticipate will be the fate of the principles that are now impeached. This brings me to what may be called the "question of the day." Before I enter upon that question, however, I will allude to one observation which fell from the honorable member for Kilkenny, and which may be said to refer to those who expressed an opinion that has been construed into a declaration of war.

The honorable gentleman said—in reference, I presume, to those who dissented from the resolutions of Monday—that

"those who were loudest in their declarations of war, were usually the most backward in acting up to these declarations."

My lord, I do not find fault with the honorable gentleman for giving expression to a very ordinary saying, but this I will say, that I did not volunteer the opinion he condemns—to the declaration of that opinion I was forced. You left me no alternative—I should compromise my opinion, or avow it. To be honest, I avowed it. I did not do so to brag, as they say. We have had too much of that "bragging" in Ireland. I would be the last to imitate the custom. Well, I dissented from those "peace resolutions" as they are called. Why so? In the first place, my lord, I conceive that there was not the least necessity for them. No member of this association suggested an appeal to arms. No member of this association advised it. No member of this association would be so infatuated as to do so.

In the existing circumstances of the country an excitement to arms would be senseless and wicked because irrational. To talk nowadays of repealing the Act of Union by force of arms would be to rhapsodize. If the attempt were made it would be a decided failure. There might be a riot in the street—there would be no revolution in the country. The secretary, Mr. Crean, will far more effectually promote the cause of repeal, by registering votes in Green street than registering firearms in the head police office. Conciliation Hall on Burg Quay, is more impregnable than a rebel camp on Vinegar Hill. The hustings at Dundalk will be more successfully stormed than the magazine in the park. The registry club, the reading room, the polling booths, these are the only positions in the country we can occupy. Voters' certificates, books, pamphlets, newspapers, these are the only weapons we can employ. Therefore, my lord, I cast my vote

in favor of the peaceful policy of this association. It is the only policy we can adopt. If that policy be pursued with truth, with courage, with fixed determination of purpose, I firmly believe it will succeed.

But, my lord, I dissented from the resolutions before us, for other reasons. I stated the first, I now come to the second. I dissented from them, for I felt, that, by assenting to them, I should have pledged myself to the unqualified repudiation of physical force in all countries, at all times, and under every circumstance. This I could not do. For, my lord, I do not abhor the use of arms in the vindication of national rights. There are times when arms will alone suffice, and when political ameliorations call for a drop of blood, and many thousand drops of blood. Opinion, I admit, will operate against opinion. But, as the honorable member for Kilkenny has observed, force must be used against force. The soldier is proof against an argument, but he is not proof against a bullet. The man that will listen to reason, let him be reasoned with; but it is the weaponed arm of the patriot that can alone prevail against battalioned despotism.

Then, my lord, I do not condemn the use of arms as immoral, nor do I conceive it profane to say, that the King of heaven — the Lord of hosts! the God of battles! bestows his benediction upon those who unsheathe the sword in the hour of a nation's peril.

From that evening on which, in the valley of Bethulia he nerved the arm of the Jewish girl to smite the drunken tyrant in his tent, down to this day, in which he has blessed the insurgent chivalry of the Belgian priest, his Almighty hand hath ever been stretched forth from his throne of light, to consecrate the flag of freedom, to bless the patriot's sword! Be it in the defence, or be it in the assertion of a people's

liberty, I hail the sword as a sacred weapon; and if, my lord, it has sometimes taken the shape of the serpent and reddened the shroud of the oppressor with too deep a dye, like the anointed rod of the high priest, it has at other times, and as often, blossomed into celestial flowers to deck the freeman's brow.

Abhor the sword — stigmatize the sword? No, my lord, for, in the passes of the Tyrol, it cut to pieces the banner of the Bavarian, and, through those cragged passes, struck a path to fame for the peasant insurrectionist of Insprück!

Abhor the sword — stigmatize the sword? No, my lord, for at its blow, a giant nation started from the waters of the Atlantic, and by its redeeming magic, and in the quivering of its crimson light, the crippled colony sprang into the attitude of a proud Republic — prosperous, limitless, and invincible!

Abhor the sword — stigmatize the sword? No, my lord, for it swept the Dutch marauders out of the fine old towns of Belgium, scourged them back to their own phlegmatic swamps, and knocked their flag and sceptre, their laws and bayonets into the sluggish waters of the Scheldt.

My lord, I learned that it was the right of a nation to govern herself, not in this hall, but upon the ramparts of Antwerp. This, the first article of a nation's creed, I learned upon those ramparts, where freedom was justly estimated, and the possession of the precious gift was purchased by the effusion of generous blood.

My lord, I honor the Belgians, I admire the Belgians, I love the Belgians, for their enthusiasm, their courage, their success, and I, for one, will not stigmatize, for I do not abhor, the means by which they obtained a citizen king, a chamber of deputies.