A LECTURE

BY

WILLIAM H. [illegible]

Mayor of New York.

AT BOSTON THEATRE,

February 21, 1860.

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THE IRISH IN AMERICA.

I DO not purpose to speak to you to-night of what has been accomplished in the pursuits of commerce or of war, in literature or in art, in science or in statesmanship by our countrymen or the descendants of our countrymen whose names have been identified with the growth and development of America. Nor shall I describe the hardships and the triumphs of the early settlers, who, to escape religious persecution at home, or to mend fortunes shattered by the harshness of a discriminating and oppressive English policy, sought new opportunities in a new world. In the one case the roll is long and brilliant; in the other the impress, though largely impersonal is definitely traceable in the history of prosperous municipalities and States; while in both might be found ample opportunity of drawing inspiring lessons from the lives of brave and successful men. There is, however, a phase of the much discussed problem of the Irish in America which is of even more interest to the Irish here, as Irishmen, than the biographies of distinguished compatriots. The American Irish are and have been an important factor in the political history of this and the mother country. They have created and modified public opinion in its relation to themselves and to their kinfolk across the sea, and have influenced and even determined State policy. Active, aggressive, and at the same time loyal to a principle,

their very community of race feeling has given them a facility of organization which, while it may sometimes leave them a prey to unscrupulous politicians, has, in connection with the characteristics named, a permanent political value. They themselves understand this, and have, as a race, made more of it than any of the distinctly foreign elements which compose so large a portion of the population of this country. Thus they have to an extent, though not always in a manner distinctly traceable, contrived to impress themselves upon national conduct, and have in a large measure successfully met and overcome those prejudices against their race and religion with which from the earliest times they have been forced to contend. How bitter those prejudices have been we all know. "The Irish are the spendthrift sister of the Aryan race," says Mr. Froude, the most brilliant as he is the least trustworthy of all anti-Irish historians. And in this sentence he seems to have summarized the judgment which those who have not been brought directly in contact with them have formed. There need only be added to the alleged attribute of improvidence, those of weakness of purpose and of rashness of temper, to complete a picture which to many minds is hardly relieved by that personal loyalty and reckless generosity which even Mr. Froude grudgingly admits to be strong national characteristics.

But the benefits of the moral victory have not accrued to the victors alone. I am firmly convinced that the conduct of the Irish in America has been strongly influential in winning for those at home that moral support which comes from the sympathy of strangers to the blood, and which is in itself almost as valuable as the material assistance which has been so lavishly bestowed.

So, too, the lesson as to the practical value of organization as a weapon of political warfare has not been lost, and coupled with the organized effort of her people here, has enabled Ireland to carry forward a land agitation which, in its beginnings seemed based upon a forlorn hope, but which now, in the light of recent events, seems certain to be crowned with an abiding success. Indeed, the fruits of a struggle renewed again and again during the eighty-five years that have elapsed since the union, are almost within reach, and the land agitation which at first was only a phase of the irrepressible conflict, is likely to prove the key which is at last to solve the problem of a home government for Ireland. Of this result the American Irish may well feel hopeful, and without them it is not too much to say its realization would have been indefinitely postponed.

Hence it is in a double sense that the story of the progress of the Irish in America is of interest. They have shown powers of adaptability to new conditions which have secured to them full recognition, while at the same time, they have preserved their race individuality to such an extent as to have profoundly influenced the course of English politics in relation to the home country. In this twofold aspect, therefore, I desire to consider the subject upon which I have been asked to address you this evening. In the first place, to consider the course of events in the political history of the United States, which has most nearly affected the Irish race in America, and in that connection to describe its industrial condition at the present time. In the second, to sketch its relation to the English politics from the earliest organization of that movement in this country, which has already had so marked an effect upon the fortunes of

Ireland, and briefly to suggest the attitude which it is desirable for it to maintain at the present time, when the fruition of its hopes seems so near at hand.

Prior to the American Revolution, though there had been a steady tide of emigration from Ireland to this country, it had not assumed anything like the proportions which this century has witnessed. At different times during the latter half of the seventeenth century there were causes in operation which induced extensive emigration to the various Catholic countries of the Old World, and a few ship-loads of emigrants arrived at Barbadoes. Under the Cromwellian government, ship-loads of Irish men, women, and children had been dispatched to the Colonies, including New England and to the West Indies, under conditions which left them little better than slaves. But with the restoration of the Stuarts there came a suspension, not only of religious persecution, but of the Navigation Laws, which formed a leading feature of a policy for the repression of Irish industries theretofore enforced by England. The expulsion of James II., and the accession of William and Mary to the throne was accompanied by a revival of discrimination against Irish manufactures, and a flood of emigration to all parts of Christendom followed. Protestants and Catholics were alike affected by these laws, and for several years after 1688 several thousand a year found their way to the British Colonies. These emigrants were widely scattered and leave no definite trace behind them until we come to the settlement founded at Logan, in Pennsylvania, which at that time (1699) was a colony that afforded much greater freedom of religious thought than others under British control. From this time, until the close of the eighteenth century, there

was a continuous stream of emigration, which, though steady, was not large. No definite or trustworthy knowledge as to their numbers is, so far as I am aware, obtainable, there being nothing better than contemporary estimates for isolated years, which, however, justify the conclusion that probably not less than five thousand Irish settlers arrived here per annum. Pennsylvania continued to be a favorite point of destination, though various settlements were made in Maryland and Virginia, and even in North and South Carolina, and in Kentucky. In New England strong prejudices existed against the Irish, which found hidden expression in laws governing the alienation of land, and open expression in the courts through proceedings for ejectment. Settlers were, however, not deterred from attempting to gain a foothold, and besides adding largely to the population of Boston, succeeded in establishing a settlement at Concord, Mass. The opposition which they were thus forced to overcome sprang largely from race hostility, and was directed against those of Irish birth without distinction of creed. Puritan New England afforded a limited toleration to Catholics of all nationalities, though as a class, it denied to them political privileges. The Irish, nevertheless, favored either by a success attendant upon combined effort, or by a gradual dying out of hostility, demonstrated their fitness to survive, and flourishing settlements were soon founded throughout all the territory of New England.

It will thus be seen that the Irish effected at a comparatively early date, a definite and considerable occupation of most of the colonies. They were not localized, save in one or two instances, as in Pennsylvania and in Massachusetts, and did not, therefore, as a people, in any

sense take that distinctive part in colonization which was taken by the English, the Dutch, the French or the Spanish. Neither were religious questions the only actuating motives of emigration. Protestants and Catholics alike had to encounter race prejudice, while Catholics had, in addition, to meet religious opposition which affixed political disabilities, and that even in Catholic Maryland. It was at this time (1774) that the emancipation of the Catholics in the United States first began. It was a movement which had its origin in the desire of the English government to strengthen its own hands against the colonies, and its action forced the Continental Congress to a similar policy. The murmurs of discontent which had gone forth from our colonial possessions, led England to establish and extend the Province of Canada for the purpose of checking any attempt at independence. England did not keep her promise to establish a representative assembly, but by the Quebec Act, the Crown was expressly authorized to confer "posts of honor and of business upon Catholics." As Catholics had previously been disfranchised, and as there were grounds for believing that the reasons which suggested the Act would furnish a motive for a liberal exercise of the powers thus ceded to the Crown, the French Canadians and Irish Catholics accepted this concession as vastly more advantageous to them than a representative Assembly would have been. This move the Continental Congress of that day endeavored to meet. Its members were not entirely emancipated from the spirit of hostility to Catholicism, in which, as Protestants, they had been bred, but considerations of expediency helped them to smother their scruples. They sent an address to the French Canadians, in which they eloquently dep-

recated the existence of religious jealousies, and urged a union in the name of liberty. Mr. Bancroft truthfully expresses the importance of this step: "Whether the invitation should be accepted or repelled," says he, "the old feud between the nations which adhered to the Roman Catholic Church, and the free governments which had sprung from Protestantism was fast coming to an end." The justice of this statement was soon made manifest. Between 1775 and 1783 the great principle of religious freedom found organized expression in the constitutions adopted by eight of the newborn States. Its complete realization by all was not to be long delayed. The Articles of Confederation were silent on this subject, for it was a matter whose decision the States jealously arrogated to themselves; but when it was determined to create a general government with powers commensurate with its importance, a clause in the Constitution, brief but broad, furnished a guarantee of religious as well as of civil freedom, which has ever since secured immunity to all.

From the foregoing brief and necessarily imperfect sketch it may yet be seen that the Irish element was highly important in the struggle then to ensue between the Colonies and the Crown. Probably its whole importance has never been fully realized, but it did not pass without recognition a that time. The Congress of '75 confidently counted on anti-British feeling in its appeal to Irish Americans and for the purpose of alienating their sympathies from the royal cause, promptly issued an address in which it drew a marked distinction between the English and Irish Parliaments. Thus, in the passage quoted by D'Arcy McGee, Congress said: "Your (the Irish) parliament has done us no

wrong. In defense of our persons and properties under actual invasion we have taken up arms. When that violence shall be removed and hostilities cease on the part of the aggressors they shall cease on our part also;" and they concluded by a skillfully expressed hope that the course of the Colonies might have a wholesome effect upon the policy of England toward the mother country. Franklin himself had, as early as '71, foreseen the importance of Irish sympathy to America in the event of war, and during his visit to Ireland had been at pains to acquaint himself with the drift of Irish sentiment. The result was a letter to the people of Ireland, following closely upon the address of Congress, in which he argued the justice of America's cause and warmly pleaded for the moral support of Ireland's sympathy. The Irish in America responded generously to these appeals, and probably one-third of the officers and a large proportion of the army were of Irish birth or parentage. The Irish at home may well be supposed to have had the success of the Colonies at heart, yet it is curious to note the advantage which their Parliament wrested from England's extremity. It began with a warm protestation of devotion to the sacred person of the king, and declared that it heard of the American Rebellion with abhorrence. Lord North seized the opportunity which this astonishing burst of loyalty presented, to send to America a contingent of four thousand troops taken from the Irish Army, which, at that time, mustered only nine thousand men, and Ireland was thus left practically defenseless. The opportunity thereby presented was not lost, and an offer of a militia organized and controlled by the government having been unwisely refused by North, the Irish set about the for-

mation of armed bands of volunteers, which became a source of great strength to them in the demands about to be made upon the English Parliament. When the time came the example of the Colonies had in the meanwhile had its effect, and Grattan successfully voiced the demands of a now thoroughly aroused and defiant consciousness of nationality. Lord North hesitated, wavered, finally yielded in the fear of an army of fifty thousand volunteers, and the Irish Parliament secured freedom of trade with England, immunity from new taxes, and a shortening of the period for which the ordinary supplies had been theretofore voted.

But this change of policy on England's part had come too late to be of much service to any but the Irish people. Had it preceded by some years the outbreak of the Revolutionary War it might have partially stemmed the outgoing tide which carried with it thousands who revenged themselves by enlisting in the armies of Washington. As it was, the hostile policy of the Anglo-Irish Church forced large numbers of Irish Presbytyrians from their homes. To it Presbyterians were fully as objectionable as the Catholics themselves. The Established Church knew them as bitter opponents of episcopacy, and the government could not but understand that they were skeptical as to the divine right of kings and had a pronounced sympathy with republicanism. Thus they became strong supporters of the American cause, and were by no means the least important factor in bringing about the success with which that cause was finally crowned.

After the conclusion of the war, however, and after the practical demonstration of the weakness of the Articles of Confederation which the four succeeding

years furnished, came the Constitutional Convention. There were several Irishmen among the thirty-six delegates who cannot, however, be said to have represented any ideas of policy with which the Irish in America, as Irish, were concerned. The power to naturalize was felt by all to be an essential power to an efficient central government, and thus its reservation was secured almost by common consent. The wisdom of conferring powers of naturalization upon the new government was, therefore, not questioned, and the power itself and the extent to which it should be exercised became a matter of the first importance to those who desired to become its citizens by adoption.

I have often been asked why it is that most Irishmen are Democrats, and the answer to my mind has always seemed to lie on the surface. Immediately after the adoption of the Constitution there were no parties. The grounds of division had not taken definite shape, and a coherent statement of principles had yet to be made. Of course, the casting of party lines was not to be long delayed, for party organization is vital to the existence of representative government, and in the case of the United States, the direction which these lines should take, might readily have been foretold. With a written constitution, the reason for the existence of parties could only turn upon the nature of the construction to be placed upon the charter which defined the powers of the Government. Questions of policy which came clearly within the limits of federal authority, would indeed become an incident of party life, and at times, even an overshadowing incident. But the permanent, underlying principle to which either party would appeal in justification of its existence could only be, under our

form of government, the looseness or strictness with which the powers of that Government should be regarded. Of the then called Federal party, Hamilton was the acknowledged leader, while of the Republican party, whose mantle has fallen upon the Democratic party of to-day, Jefferson was the guiding spirit. The Federalists insisted upon a liberal construction of the powers ceded to the central government, while the Republicans took the opposite view.

Washington had successfully endeavored to maintain a neutral course which preserved for him that grateful affection, from the most zealous adherents of either party, with which he had even been regarded. But even his personality was not strong enough to repress dissension among the members of his own Cabinet and Hamilton and Jefferson soon became sharply opposed. Thus the policy of the Federalists was stigmatized as anglified. Hamilton had a profound admiration for the English Constitution, which he had studied long and knew well. Jefferson, on the other hand, was deeply imbued with the spirit of the French philosophy of the last century, and bitterly disliked all things British. How far the predilections of their respective leaders influenced the policy of either party, it is not necessary to discuss, but it is true that the Federalists became responsible for measures which bore harshly upon foreigners, and which drove the foreign-born element of the population into the ranks of the opposition. The liberal law passed in 1790, authorizing naturalization upon a residence of two years in the United States, and of one year in the State in which application was made, was in 1792 extended to five years, with a previous declaration of intention after a residence of three years. In 1798 it was again ex-

tended as to require a residence of fourteen years, and a similar previous declaration after five years. In the same year were enacted the famous Alien and Sedition laws, which bore still more heavily upon foreigners; under the former the President was empowered to order out of the country all such foreigners as he considered dangerous, under pain of heavy penalties; these measures were sharply but vainly opposed by the then Republican party, and their enactment led to the adoption of Jefferson's famous Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of '98, based upon a theory which was afterward logically and symmetrically developed by Calhoun into the mischievous doctrine of nullification. The enactment of these measures, and the gradual dying out of the war spirit which the Federalists had succeeded in arousing against France, were accompanied by a revulsion of feeling in favor of the Republicans, and in 1801 Jefferson was inaugurated. The majority of Republicans in the House, which succeeded in electing him over Burr, soon reversed the policy of the Federalists. The obnoxious Alien laws were repealed, and the period of residence required before foreigners could become naturalized, was reduced from fourteen years to five, and the declaration of intention to two. This policy toward foreigners has ever since remained fixed, and more lately has been accompanied by a marked liberality on the part of the newer Western States, which has contributed largely to their noteworthy prosperity. It has made foreigners, and particularly the Irish, the traditional allies of the party whose name, rightly or wrongly, has been identified with the principles most favorable to their prosperity—in a word, it has made them Democrats.

It was not, however, until some time after the period

just discussed, that the effect of this policy in the promotion of emigration became manifest. It may be that the statistics bearing upon emigration which, up to 1819, are meager and for the most part not wholly reliable, do not furnish a fair idea of the total number of foreigners arriving at our shores. Yet there were causes in operation which lead us to believe that they cannot be far out of the way. These causes led up to the War of 1812, and during its existence, commercial relations between England and the United States practically ceased. It was not, therefore, until 1817 that foreigners began to come in any numbers, and from that time on it may be said that they came in a constant stream. Thus, from 1820 until 1850, the minimum emigration from Ireland was two hundred and eighteen thousand, six hundred and twenty-six, in the following proportionate amounts.

From 1820 to 1830, 27,106.
" 1831 to 1840, 29,188.
" 1841 to 1850, 162,332.

These constantly increasing numbers were viewed with wonder which soon changed to alarm. Religious animosities, so long silent, became aroused. Race jealousy again became active. Foreigners came to be looked upon with suspicion and distrust. An early incident, which marked the political struggle then about to begin, was the burning of the Ursuline Convent in 1834, at Charlestown, not two miles from where we are gathered to-night. This, however, was but a flame which jetted out from the smothered fires of religious fanaticism. It was not until a score of years later that these fires finally blazed into the Know-Nothing excitement, for as yet open expression was only given to

the then prevailing discontent at the great influx of foreigners. Such was the basis of the Native-American movement, whose earliest manifestation took the shape of an address from the Louisiana Native-American Association in 1839. The address was couched in the most inflated language, and was shortly followed by another from the American Republicans of Philadelphia, to the native and naturalized citizens of the United States. These manifestoes had their effect throughout the country, and helped to lead to the organization of a party in the city of New York known as the Native-American party, whose avowed object was to wrest the control of the local government from naturalized foreigners who were chiefly Irish. It succeeded in carrying the charter election in the spring of 1844, and in subsequent State elections returned a few members to the Legislature. While the movement itself, as a movement, soon spent its force, it was more than a mere episode in the history of the politics of a State. The Convention of a Democratic party, held at Baltimore in the same year, for the purpose of nominating a Presidential candidate, had at last selected Polk over Van Buren. Clay, who was subsequently nominated by the Whigs, was forced into a policy of wavering indiscretion which helped to secure his defeat. But his defeat was not solely due to his own weakness. Then, as now, New York exerted a powerful influence in the determination of national contests, and the phases of local politics were pronounced factors in the general result. The effect of Native-Americanism had been to divide the Whig party, whose legitimate successor is the Republican party of to-day. It had also been influential in solidifying the ranks of the Democratic party

and in driving into them the foreign element in the city of New York. Thus, such men as Greeley, Weed, and Seward had opposed the Native-American party, though their allegiance was still given to the Whigs in the national struggle; while the Irish, without much regard to creed, felt that their future was dependent upon the success of the Democrats. Native-Americanism was hence a very important element in the Presidential struggle of that year, and, in connection with the lesser Abolition and Anti-rent movements, may be said to have had a strong influence in securing Democratic success.

With the Philadelphia riots of 1844, the movement as a movement subsided, only to develop ten years later under another form. In the interval emigration from Ireland had gone on in an increased ratio, as we have seen, and religious prejudices had become more and more embittered. With 1850 there opened a fruitful decade in the history of the United States, accompanied as it was by the dissolution of the old Whig party, and the agitation of the questions of slavery and States' rights. It is of particular interest to us, moreover, since it is the era in which the Republican party had its birth, "the history of whose formation," as one writer has observed, "resulted very considerably from the recurrence of opinions and prejudices against foreigners and Roman Catholicism." These prejudices assumed political significance in the Know-Nothingism of 1854. The origin of the name as well as the purpose of the movement is familiar, and may be briefly indicated. It started as a secret organization into which none but native-born citizens, born of Protestant parents and themselves Protestant, could be admitted. Its object was to resist "the

insidious policy of the Church of Rome, and other foreign influence against the institutions of our country, by placing in all offices in the gift of the people or by appointment none but native-born Protestant citizens." Of course, every member protested his ignorance of the purposes of the organization which thus became known as the Know-Nothing party. The movement drew its life from the old Free-Soil Abolition and Whig parties, and soon spread throughout the country. But if it had a rapid growth, its decay was no less speedy. There could, of course, be nothing of permanency in an organization founded upon such principles, inimical as they were to a policy to which the United States owed so much of its prosperity, and the agitation going on upon the more vital questions of slavery and of States' rights soon helped to kill it. It had, nevertheless, obtained a considerable success, especially in the Eastern States. It gained the day in the State elections of New Hampshire, Connecticut and Massachusetts, and in this last State succeeded in electing Governor Gardner, who, in 1855, attempted, by proclamation, to disband several militia companies of foreign birth. American-Irish leaders, however, preserved an attitude which was highly creditable. They firmly and justly insisted upon their constitutional rights and availed themselves of legal means to preserve those rights. But what is of more importance to us, it gave them a reason for organization and a determination to labor for the success of that party which, whatever its motives may have been, was committed to the preservation of the privileges granted to them under the Constitution and the laws.

Such were the Native-American and Know-Nothing movements in their relation to the Irish in America.

They were the outbursts of an under-current of feeling which still runs beneath the surface of American thought, but with largely abated force. Every day weakens the tide of prejudice against foreigners. Every day deepens the tendency toward homogeneity of national life and consciousness. And the time is coming when Native Americanism will be looked back to with a curiosity, not unmixed with wonder, that the motives which lay at the bottom of such movements could ever have had a prominent part in the political life of a great people.

In describing the present position of the Irish in its industrial aspect, I can only briefly summarize the facts disclosed by the last national census of 1880. Such facts have relation only to those of Irish birth in this country, and cannot, therefore, be regarded as complete. They, however, point the existence of certain tendencies in Irish immigrants, which I cannot but regard as unfortunate, and which have prevented them, as a class, from achieving as much as, under other circumstances, they might have.

At the last census the total number of the population of Irish birth in all the States and Territories of the Union was 1,854,571. The ten years ending in 1880 show that there were landed at the port of New York alone, a total of 379,368 Irish emigrants. This population is distributed in the following manner: 1,126,367, or nearly two-thirds of the whole, are located in the five States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania; 391,632, or more than one-half of the remainder, are scattered through eight of the Western States, from Michigan to Kansas, more than one-half of this latter amount having settled in Ohio and Illinois. This accounts for five-sixths of the total

native Irish population, the bulk of the remaining one-sixth being located in the other Eastern States, and in the States of Minnesota and California. A glance at these figures shows that the Irish have distributed themselves among the States containing the largest cities, and we are therefore not surprised to find that just about one-half of the whole number is spread among fifty of the principal cities of the United States, the five great cities of New York, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Chicago and Boston absorbing more than one-fourth of the whole. Indeed, more than one-seventh of the entire population of New York is of Irish birth. I cannot but regard this tendency to gravitate to the centres of population as unfortunate in its effect upon the condition of the Irish, and I will ask your indulgence for a moment to a few statistics showing what this effect is. Of the total number of Irish born in this country 978,854 are industrially occupied. Of this number, 140,307 are engaged in agriculture—24,236 being agricultural laborers, and 107,708 being farmers and planters. Of this number, too, 415,854 render personal services, 122,194 being employed as domestic servants, and 225,122 as laborers, the small remainder (68,538) rendering services of a higher grade; 138,518 are engaged in trade and transportation, a large part of this number being clerks and railway employees not clerks; 284,175 are in manufacturing, mechanical and mining industries, the majority being blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, mill operatives and miners. It would be interesting, if time permitted, to make a comparison of these figures with those in reference to other nationalities. I can pause only to note, however, that of the whole number employed only one-ninth are engaged in agriculture, while nearly

one-half render personal services of a not very high grade.

These figures prepare us for facts disclosed by vital statistics as to births, marriages and deaths among the Irish. I shall confine myself to the city of New York, and to the year 1880, referring to statistics of certain European cities only for the purpose of justifying one or two conclusions which I propose to draw which are at variance with those of certain writers who, though favorable to the Irish, have not given them full credit for the improvement which they have made.

The statistics with reference to births and marriages I shall not give, as they are untrustworthy and incomplete.

In New York City the death rate for the entire city was 26.47 per thousand. Among the population of Irish birth it was 28.02 ; of English birth 20.09 ; of German birth 19.96. The fact, therefore, is undoubted that the condition of the Irish in large cities cannot be successfully compared with the Germans, or even with the French or the English. But upon the condition of the Irish in the larger cities in Ireland the mortality statistics given not only show an improvement, but a ratio of improvement which may be favorably compared with the ratio presented by the statistics of the larger cities of other foreign nationalities. Thus the death rate of Dublin is 35.94 ; of Cork, 30.85 ; of Belfast, 28.33 ; that of the Irish in New York being but 28.02 ; that of Liverpool is 27.22 ; of Manchester, 25.29 ; of London, 22.14 , that of the English here being 20.90. That of Berlin is 29.73 ; of Hamburg, 26.14 ; of Dresden, 24.93 ; that of the Germans in New York being 19.96.

If the mortality rate be a safe index to the relative

conditions of various nationalities in New York, it is therefore just to conclude, that while they are worse off than the Germans and the French they are better off than those at home. Thus, while fully recognizing the poverty and wretchedness of most of the tenement Irish in New York it is certain that they have improved their condition by immigrating. How much further they might have improved it, is a wider question and one to which I can only allude. Yet it is true, as has been said, "that the great majority of the Irish emigrants drop like tired migratory birds upon the Eastern shores of the shelter Continent with the impulse of emigration exhausted." Those who by education are well fitted to become farm helpers or agricultural laborers choose rather to be domestic servants or laborers in cities. The choice is not unnatural, if we consider antecedents, but certainly is unwise, and I, myself, am fully convinced that the most fruitful direction that practical philanthropy, having for its object the relief of the Irish in cities and of Irish emigrating, can take, is to be found in colonization projects which avail themselves of the advantages offered by Western States and Territories.

Turning now to the second general branch of the subject, I have to consider, in a very brief manner, the connection of our people here with the land and repeal agitation which is now, and has been, occupying the public mind both in America and in England. How intimate that connection is may be seen from the remark of an English writer who, though evidently animated by a desire to discuss the whole question in a spirit of fairness, is still unable to divest himself of Tory prejudices. "It is now two years," says he, writing in 1882, "since

I first stated my conviction that the roots of the agitations and disturbances which have convulsed Ireland and shaken England, were to be found in America. Although I had always felt that without American-Irish aid and that material assistance which always forms the real sinews of war, as well as of business, the efforts of Mr. Parnell and his party must have been comparatively feeble, I never completely realized the feeling of the Irish in America until I had myself worked among them, and in the cities and the States of the Union appreciated to the full the existence, three thousands of miles away, of a people numerous and influential, animated by a spirit of nationality beyond all belief, and impelled to action by a deep-seated hostility to the English Government."

I do not think that this is in any sense an overstatement. The Irish have, ever since '48, realized the importance of the aid which their countrymen in America might render, and have made overtures to which the response has not been backward. The events of that year in France swung the pendulum of revolution to the furthest point of the arc, and its oscillation manifested itself upon the dial of Irish feeling. Yet the hands were destined to catch. Fenianism, which may be said to have then taken its origin, miscarried; but the seed from which it sprang was not without fruit, and to it the Land League of these days owed no small part of its existence. Stephens may fairly be said to be the precursor of Parnell, who has reaped so much from his labors. The purposes of the two movements have something in common, and yet Parnell has skillfully concealed his ulterior purpose of securing local independence, and has displayed an amount of tact which has won much sympathy

for the methods which he has so persistently advocated. Fenianism itself I shall not discuss further than to again remark the strong relation which it bears to the movement of to-day among the American Irish. It successfully appealed to the sentimental side of Irish character and fanned a flame of patriotism which burns strong in the Irish breast even to the second and third generations of those who have left their native land forever. Thus it showed a source of strength which the present agitators have not been slow to avail themselves of, and hence its value.

I have already said that a land agitation was a phase, and the earliest phase, of the irrepressible conflict during the last three decades. The Irish leaders of '48 were revolutionists in the fullest sense of the word. Their creed meant complete separation, and not merely local independence, or a reform in land tenures. Yet even at that day there was one man who clearly saw, to quote his own words, "That the land question contained, and the legislative question did not contain, the materials from which victory is manufactured." This man was James Fenton Lalor, a contributor to the paper known as the *Irish Felon*, which was started after the suppression of John Mitchell's *United Irishmen*. Lalor was a man possessed of a mind which worked in logical grooves, and was, moreover, gifted with a faculty of concise and lucid exposition. His ideas, however, though capable of practical development, as subsequent events have shown, were not so adapted to facts as to have been of use at the time they were given out. At a later day they were adopted, and whether by design or by a happy coincidence, became the motive of the Land League organization. Stephens had used them in his

paper called the *Irish People* in 1863, as an inducement to popular organization, but to him they furnished a subordinate or collateral aim which fell with the failure of his principal purpose. After that, in 1878, Michael Davitt and John Devoy began an active and stirring appeal to the Irish in America, by laying out a programme which embodied a land agitation as its chief feature. It was upon this basis that they secured the co-operation of the American-Irish papers, and it was in this city that Davitt first outlined his project in a lecture delivered to American Irishmen. As has been said, "the plan laid down was simply to honeycomb the provvinces (of Ireland), with organized bodies of men, the exact counterpart of the Fenian Brotherhood, but with none of its secresy." It embraced the establishment of a supreme virgilance committee, having under its control a large number of small land centres. Its ultimate object was the depreciation of land values by processes strictly constitutional. In short, it comprehended a policy of exasperation which saved its exponents from treatment as social offenders, while it promised a sure, if not a speedy outcome to their purpose.

Davitt on his return to Ireland went actively to work. He gathered up the broken threads of Fenian organization, and enlisted a hearty co-operation of men schooled in the traditions of Grattan and O'Connell, and animated by the enthusiasms of Lalor and of Stephens. The failure of the potato crop in Western Ireland in '78 and '79 assisted him, and Connaught became then the scene of his earliest efforts. Mr. Parnell had at that time become a leader of the movement, and after his departure for America, Davitt and his lieutenants aimed to extend their operations from Western Ireland to all the prov-

inces, by transferring the seat of the Land League organization to Dublin.

From this point I shortly follow the course of events in America. Mr. Parnell's visit to this country at the juncture to which I have just alluded, was a memorable one in Irish history. He successfully appealed to all shades of thought among the Irish people here and skillfully influenced the sympathies, already active, which they felt for those at home. He did not remain long, being called back in a short three months after the beginning of 1880, by the dissolution of Parliament. In that short time he had, however, accomplished much. Assisted by the co-operation of patriotic Irishmen here, he accented the desire for organization among the Irish, and it was not long before the Land League in America became an accomplished fact. It succeeded in creating a public sympathy with the course of Irish leaders, which I deem hardly less valuable than the money, without which the parent organization in Ireland must have signally failed. It is unnecessary in the city of Boston, where the work accomplished by Collins and O'Reilly is so well known, to describe the details of the movement, spreading as it did from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and far into the North-west. It fulfilled the purpose for which it came into existence, and it at last changed its identity only when events at home had terminated the life of the Land League in Ireland.

In the meanwhile the elections consequent upon the dissolution of Parliament had taken place, and the Irish party had had an accession of strength which made them a formidable factor in any legislation affecting Ireland. They at once adopted tactics in strict accord with the programme laid out for the land league, and

which had been used, though by no means to the same extent, nor with the same degree of success, by the Home Rule party in the previous Parliament. They used every weapon which the rules of the House, adapted as they were to the facilitation of debate, put in their hands. They impeded legislation so successfully that some form of *clotûre*, or, as we know it, some form of previous question, was felt by Liberals and Conservatives alike to be a necessity. Mr. Gladstone brought forward a resolution giving the Speaker the powers of a dictator when urgency was declared, which, with amendments proposed by the Opposition, was adopted. The radical nature of this step is emphasized by the fact that but once in the course of two hundred years had a motion that a member be no longer heard been made. The House was thus enabled to pass the coercion bills which Forster had brought forward, and, after the transaction of necessary business, proceeded to the discussion of that remarkable measure, the Land Bill of 1881.

Those of us who can look back, as I can, thirty-five or forty years ago, to the condition of the peasantry of Ireland, have a realization of the then existing need of change in land tenures which none but an eye-witness can understand. The majority of the holdings in Ireland were at the mere will of the landlord. By a system of class legislation in favor of landlords, the process of eviction had been made inexpensive and summary, furnishing a marked contrast to that in use in England, which was tedious and costly. A tenant made improvements at his peril. His rent was certain to be raised by grasping landlords, or by the heartless agents of absentees, whose only interest in Ireland was satisfied by a heavy rent-roll. Eviction followed upon his failure

to pay, and his improvements were confiscated. One German writer, at a loss for an equivalent for the term tenant-at-will, says: "How shall I translate tenant-at-will? Shall I say serfs? No; in feudal times serfdom consisted rather in keeping the vassals attached to the soil, and by no means in driving them away. An ancient vassal is a lord compared with the present tenant-at-will, to whom the law affords no defense." Such were the mischiefs which the Land Bill of 1870 had been intended to remedy. Ten years' experience had shown that that measure, far-reaching as it was in principle, was insufficient to achieve the ends for which it was designed. Its first part had established a scale of compensation for improvements to be paid to the tenant before he could be evicted. The second and third parts, known as the Bright Clauses, went further. Landlords possessed of certain defined estates were authorized by the second part to agree with tenants for a sale of the estate, and, upon application to the Land Court established by the act, the estate of the landlord became vested in the tenant free from incumbrances. By the third part the Board of Public Works was authorized to advance to tenants, for the purchase of their holdings, an amount not exceeding two-thirds of the price. The second part, however, failed by reason of the cost attendant upon an application to the Court, and the third part chiefly by reason of the construction placed upon it by the judges themselves. By the Land Bill of '81, therefore, it was attempted to secure to tenants a fair rent, a fixity of tenure and the right of free sale or assignment. Rent was thereafter to be determined either by agreement, by arbitration or by an application to the Court. When fixed, the tenant held by a tenure which secured him the

possession of his holding for fifteen years, with a right of perpetual renewal. Eviction might be had for specified causes after due notice, but a liberal time was allowed the tenant for redemption.

Such was the measure which the agitation, conducted upon the lines laid down by the Land League, had succeeded in securing. Lalor's plan of a moral insurrection has stood the test of trial, and the name by which it has come to be familiar has passed into the language of two worlds. Boycotting has proven a surer weapon than bayonets, for it has pushed the English Government back step by step from its determination to control the movement through the ordinary processes of law, and has placed it in the extraordinary and questionable position of meeting a perfectly legal combination by the exercise of arbitrary power, by the suspension of the usual writs and by the passage of measures of coercive nature intended to compass the destruction of the League. How successful this attempt has been we all know. The Land League crushed to earth has again risen under a new name, with new life and with brighter chances of success than ever. The Clan-na-Gael and the National League are the heirs of all that it has accomplished, and with so rich a heritage may be confidently looked to to achieve the ends for which they exist.

In the meantime there have been changes and changes, and the English-speaking world is to-day watching intently the course of events in Great Britain. The recent elections have been so shrewdly managed by Mr. Parnell and his coadjutors, that the desire of either party for power can only be gratified by combination with him. How long it will be before he and the

Irish people will be paid the consideration of any contract, express or implied, which he may make as the condition of his support cannot be prophesied with certainty. But we may surely reckon that within the next three years we shall have a solution of the Irish question which, while it may leave Ireland something still to strive for, will be worth all that it has cost. There is but one way for Englishmen to defeat the logic of events, and that way is revolutionary. It is to expel the Irish party from Parliament; to deprive the electors whom they represent of all voice in the councils of the Empire; to say to Parnellite members, "although you speak as the accredited representatives of voters whom, under the Constitution, we are bound to hear, we will not listen to you." I need hardly say that this action is to be feared from neither of the great English parties, unless one of them be willing to sacrifice its identity by combination with the other. Less is to be feared from the Liberal party with whom Parnell finds his more natural alliance. The proverbial conservatism which tempers even a radical Englishman will call a halt in any march toward such a goal. Irishmen are to-day sure of a hearing, and a respectful hearing, from those who heretofore have had the power and the inclination to close discussion. Their opportunity has, indeed, come, and I, for one, am satisfied that their leaders have the skill to seize it and to turn it to the utmost advantage.

Yet the situation is full of difficulties. Three years ago Mr. Gladstone challenged the Irish members to draw a line of demarcation between local and imperial affairs. I believe that challenge to have been honestly made, and that Mr. Gladstone fully realized the

number and complexities of the compromises involved in any scheme of home government for Ireland. I believe, too, that no man is so fitted to disentangle those complexities as he; that to his wise patriotism and broad statesmanship Ireland owes much of what she has already gained, and that to him she will owe much of whatever measure of concession may be secured to her by the future. He has, indeed, been betrayed into many inconsistencies. He has frequently yielded positions which his own sincerity of intention would have led him to maintain, had not events left him trammeled in his purpose. But that he earnestly desires to crown his long and useful life, remarkable in the annals of statesmen, by an achievement more splendid than anything he has yet accomplished, I do not for an instant doubt. Through him, if his life be spared, and through Mr. Parnell, not less than through him, will that end be attained, which has been so earnestly, so faithfully and so unselfishly labored for by the Irish in America.