ENGLAND AND THE IRISH.

FATHER TOM BURKE'S FIRST REPLY TO MR. FROUDE.

Gentlemanly but Satirical Rejoinder—He Gives Mr. Froude Credit for Honesty of Purpose, but Thinks that he is Prejudiced—He Disputes Mr. Froude's Accuracy

Father Tom Burke last evening delivered the first of his series of lectures in reply to Froude. The Academy of Music was filled, not crowded. Father Burke was received with applause. He said:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: It is a strange fact that the old battle that has been raging for ten hundred years should continue so far away from the old land. The question on which I am come to speak on this evening is one that has been disputed at many a council board, one that has been disputed in many a Parliament, one that has been disputed on many a well-fought field, and is not yet decided—the question between England and Ireland. [Applause.] Among the visitors to America who came over this year there was one gentleman, distinguished in Europe for his style of writing and for his historical knowledge, the author of several works which have created a profound sensation, at least for their originality. Mr. Froude has frankly stated that he came over to this country to deal with England and the Irish question, viewing it from an English standpoint; that like a true man he came to make the best case that he could for his country; that he came to state that case to the American public as to a grand jury, and to demand a verdict from them, the most extraordinary that ever yet was demanded of any people, namely, a declaration that England was right in the manner in which she has treated my native land for seven hundred years. [Applause.] It seems, according to this learned gentleman, that we Irish have been badly treated; that he confesses, but he puts it as a plea that we only got what we deserved. [Laughter.] It is true, he says, that we have governed them badly; the reason is, because it was

IMPOSSIBLE TO GOVERN THEM RIGHTLY.

It is true that we have robbed them; the reason is because it was a pity to leave them their own, they made such a bad use of it. [Renewed laughter.] It is true that we have persecuted them; the reason is, persecution was the fashion of the time and the order of the day. On these pleas there is not a criminal in prison to-day in the United States that should not immediately get his freedom by acknowledging his crime and pleading some extenuating circumstances. [Applause.] Our ideas about Ireland have been all wrong, it seems. Seven hundred years ago the sagacities of the time demanded the foundation of a strong British empire. In order to do this Ireland had to be conquered, and Ireland was conquered. Since that time the one ruling idea in the English mind has been to do all the good they could to the Irish. [Laughter.] Their legislation and their action have not been always tender, but always beneficent; they were sometimes severe, but they were severe to us for our own good; and the difficulty of England has been that the Irish during all these long hundreds of years have never understood their own interests nor known what was for their own good.

Now the American mind is enlightened, and henceforth no Irishman must complain of the pains to which he has been put by which Mr. Froude puts it before us, and the amiable gentleman tells us that what has been our fate in the past he greatly fears we must reconcile ourselves to in the future. He comes to tell us his version of the history of Ireland, and he also

SEEKS TO SOLVE IRELAND'S DIFFICULTY,

and to lead us out of all the miseries that have been our history for hundreds of years. When he came many people wondered what was the reason or motive of his coming. I have heard people speak all around me assigning to the learned gentleman his motive or that. Some persons said he was an emissary of the English Government; that they sent him here, because they were beginning to be afraid of the rising power of Ireland in this great nation; that they saw here eight millions of Irishmen by birth and perhaps four millions of Irish immediate descent, and that they feared the result; that they knew that the Almighty God blessed them always with an extraordinary power, not only to preserve themselves, but to spread themselves, and that in a few years not fourteen but fifty millions of Irish blood and of Irish race would be in this land. [Laughter.] And, according to those who thus surmised, England wants to check the sympathy of the American people for their Irish fellow citizens. And it was considered that the best way to effect this was to send a learned man who, in his whole story to this country, a man with a singular power of viewing facts in the light in which he wished himself to view them, and to put them before them; a man with an extraordinary power of so mixing up these facts that many simple-minded people would look upon them as he puts them before them, and whose mission it was

TO ALIENATE THE MIND OF AMERICA

from Ireland to-day, by showing what an impracticable, unmanageable, unruly race we are. Others again surmised that the learned gentleman came for another purpose. They said, "England is in the hour of her weakness, she is tottering fast and visibly to her ruin; the disruption of that old empire is visibly approaching; she is to-day cut off without an ally in Europe; her army a cipher, her fleet nothing—according to Mr. Reed, the first author on this great question—nothing to be compared to the rival fleet of the great Russian power that is growing up; France paralyzed by her late defeat. England lost her best ally. The three Emperors the other day," they said, "completely ignored, and settled the affairs of the world without as much as mentioning the name of that kingdom that was once so powerful. Her resources of coal and iron are failing; her people are discontented, and she shows every sign of decay."

Thus did some persons argue that England was anxious for an American alliance, for they said: "What would be more natural than that the old and tottering empire should wish to lean upon the strong, mighty, vigorous young arm of America?" [Applause.] I have heard others say that the gentleman came over on the invitation of a clique of sectarian bigots in this country; men who, feeling that the right of religious bigotry and sectarian bitterness is fast coming to a close before the increasing light of American intelligence and education, would gain prolong the darkness by an hour or two, by whatever help Mr. Froude could lend them. But I protest to you, gentlemen, to-night, that I have heard all these motives assigned to this learned man without giving them the least attention.

I BELIEVE MR. FROUDE'S MOTIVES

to be simple, straightforward, and patriotic. I am willing to give him credit for the highest motives, and I consider him perfectly incapable of lending himself to any base or sordid proceeding from a base or sordid motive. [Applause.]

But as the learned gentleman's motives have been so freely criticised, and, I believe, in many cases misinterpreted, so my own motives in coming here to-night to answer him may perhaps be misinterpreted or misunderstood unless I state them clearly and plainly. As he is said to come as an emissary of the English Government, I may be said to appear here, perhaps, as an emissary of rebellion or revolution. As he is supposed by some to have the sinister motive of alienating the American mind from the Irish citizenship of the States, so I may be suspected of endeavoring to excite religious or political hatred. Now, I protest that these are not my motives. I come here to-night simply to vindicate the honor of Ireland and her history. I come to tell the truth of my native land. I think that in this our day, or in any day, Ireland is to be left without a son who will speak for the mother that bore him. [Loud applause.] And first of all I hold that Mr. Froude is unfit for the task which he has undertaken for three great reasons. First of all, because I find in the writings of this learned gentleman that he solemnly and emphatically declares that he despairs of ever finding a remedy for Ireland, and that he gives it up as a bad job. [Laughter.] Here are his words written in one of his essays a few years ago:

The present hope is that by assiduous justice, that is, by conceiding everything that the Irish please to ask, we shall disarm that enmity and convince them of our good will. It may be so. There are persons sanguine enough to hope that the Irish will be so moderate in what they demand, and the English so liberal in what they will grant, that at last we shall fling ourselves into each other's arms in tears and mutual forgiveness. [Laughter.] I do not share that expectation. [Renewed laughter.] It is more likely that they will push their improvidence till at last we turn upon them and refuse to yield further. There will be a struggle once more, and either the emigration to America will in time assume a volume till it has carried the entire race beyond our reach, or at some chance or other they will again have to be coerced into submission. [Sensation.]

Banish them or coerce them! There is the true English tone speaking. [Cheers.] His only remedy, he emphatically says, my only hope, my only prospect of a future for Ireland is, let them go to America, and have done with the race altogether, and give us an Ireland at least such as we have labored to make it for seven hundred years, a desert, and a solitude. [Applause.] Or if they remain at home they will have be to

COERCED INTO SUBMISSION.

I hold that man has no right to come to America to tell the American people or the Irish in America that he can cast the horoscope of Ireland's future. He ought to be ashamed to do it after uttering such words as those. [Great laughter.]

And the second reason why I say he is unfit for the task of describing Irish history is because of his contempt for the Irish people. The original sin of the Englishman has ever been his contempt for the Irish. It lies deep, though dormant, in the heart of almost every Englishman. The average Englishman despises the Irishman, and looks down upon him as a being almost inferior in nature. Now, I speak not from prejudice, but from an intercourse of years, for I have lived among them. I have known Englishmen, amiable, gentle, religious, charming characters, who would not for the whole world nourish willfully a feeling of contempt in their hearts for any one, much less express it in words, and yet I have seen even them manifest in a thousand forms a contempt for the Irish, which seems to be their very nature. [A voice: "Froude."] I am sorry to say that I can make no exception of Catholic or Protestant among the English in this feeling. I mention this not to excite animosity, not to create bad blood or bitter feeling. No, I protest this is not my feeling. But I mention this because I am convinced it lies at the very root of that antipathy and hatred between the English and Irish which seems to be incurable. And I verily believe until that feeling is destroyed you never can have a cordial union between these two countries; and the only way to destroy it is to raise Ireland so by justice and by home legislation that she will attain to such a position as to enforce and command the respect of her English fellow citizens. [Long and loud applause.] Mr. Froude himself, who I am sure is incapable of any ungenerous sentiment toward any man or any people, is an actual living example of that feeling of contempt of which I speak. In November, 1865, this learned gentleman addressed a Scottish assembly in Edinburgh, and the subject of his address was the effect of the Protestant Reformation upon the Scottish character. According to him, it made the Scotch the finest people on the face of the earth. Originally fine, they never got their last touch, that made them as it were archangels among men, until

THE HOLY HAND OF JOHN KNOX

touched them. [Laughter.] On that occasion the learned gentleman introduced himself to his Scottish audience in the following words:

I have undertaken to speak this evening on the effects of the Reformation in Scotland, and I consider myself a very bold person to have come here on any such undertaking. In the first place, the subject is one with which it is presumptuous for a stranger to meddle. Great national movements can only be understood properly by the people whose disposition they represent. We say ourselves about our own history that only Englishmen can properly understand it. It is the same with every considerable nation. They work out their own political and spiritual lives through tempers, humors, and passions peculiar to themselves, and the same disposition which produces the result is required to interpret it afterward.

Did the learned gentleman offer any such apology for entering so boldly on the discussion of Irish affairs? Oh, no! There was no apology necessary. He was going to speak merely of the Irish. There was no word to express his own fear that perhaps he had not understood their character or the subject with which he was about to treat. There was no apology to the Irish in America, the fourteen millions before whom he so boldly told his story, endeavoring to hold them up as a contemptuous, obstinate, ungovernable race. Not at all. It was not necessary; they were only Irish. [Loud laughter.]

If they were Scotch the learned gentleman would have come with a thousand apologies for his own presumption in venturing to approach such a delicate subject as a delineation of the Scotch character, or anything connected with it. [Laughter.]

What, on the other hand, is his treatment of the Irish? I have in this book before me the words from his pen, and I protest as I read them I felt every drop of my blood boiling in my veins; I felt how bitter the taunt when he said,

"They may be good at the voting booths, but they are no good to handle the rifle." [A voice—"That's a lie," and applause.] He compares us in this essay to a pack of hounds, and says:

To tell Ireland to go in peace and freedom would be the same as if a gentleman addressed his hounds, and said I give you your freedom; now go out and act as you please. It is needless to say that after worrying all the sheep in the neighborhood, they ended by tearing each other to pieces.

I deplore this feeling. The man who is possessed of it can never understand the philosophy of Irish history. [Cheers.]

FROUDE AND THE CATHOLICS.

Thirdly, Mr. Froude is utterly unfit for the task of delineating or interpreting the history of the Irish people because of his more than contempt, the bitter hatred and detestation in which he holds the Catholic clergy and Catholic church. In this book before me he speaks of the Catholic Church as the "Old Serpent whose poisonous fangs have been drawn from her," as the "Witch of Endor, mumbling curses today because she cannot burn at the stake and shed blood as of old." He most unfairly charges the Church and Catholics here responsible for the French massacre of St. Bartholomew, for the persecutions which originated from the revolt of the Netherlands under Alvah and Philip II., for every murder and butchery that has been committed in Ireland, and he paints the vices of the most intense prejudice, that the Catholic Church lies at the bottom of them all, and is responsible for them. [Applause.] The very gentlemen that welcomed him and surrounded him when he came to New York gave him plainly to understand that in their eyes Catholic religion is involved, where a favorite theory is to be considered, or a favorite view to be proved, they did not consider him as a reliable or trustworthy witness or historian. [Cheers.] Not, I again declare, not that I believe this gentleman to be capable of fraud. I do not. I believe he is incapable. But wherever prejudice comes in, such as his, it distorts the most well-known facts for its own purpose. Thus, the gentleman wishes to exalt Queen Elizabeth by

BLACKENING MARY QUEENS OF SCOTS,

and in doing this he has been convicted by a citizen of Brooklyn of putting his own words as if they were the words of ancient chronicles and ancient laws and documents, and the taunt has been flung at him: "Mr. Froude has never grasped the meaning of inverted commas." [Loud applause and laughter.] Henry VIII of blessed memory [laughter] has been painted by this historian as a most estimable man—a church saint as a monk. [Laughter.] Bless your souls! You are all mistaken about him! A man that never robbed anybody; burning with zeal for the public good; his putting away his wife and taking up Anna Boleyn to his embrace—his is that was a chaste anxiety for the public welfare. [Laughter.] All the atrocities of this monster in human form melt away under Mr. Froude's justification, and Henry VIII. rises before us in the Irish in America, the fourteen millions before whom he so boldly told his story, endeavoring to hold them up as a contemptuous, obstinate, ungovernable race. Not at all. It was not necessary; they were only Irish. [Loud laughter.]

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