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"This is true Liberty, when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."---Euripides.

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ELOQUENCE AS AN ART.

EMBRACING A GLANCE AT IRISH ELOQUENCE, WITH ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES FROM GRATTAN AND CURRAN'S SPEECHES.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE CATHOLIC YOUNG MEN'S INSTITUTE BY THE HON. EDWARD WHELAN.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—

You, Mr. President, are quite familiar with the anecdote of the Roman General, who, having been sent to subdue a hostile nation, found no enemy to confront him; but, in order to convince his countrymen that he had really visited the land to which he had been ordered, he commanded his soldiers to fill their knapsacks with pebbles, which they found on the beach, and which were paraded as a poor substitute for the "tributaries" that should

"——— Follow him to Rome,
To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels."

And every one is acquainted with the less classical but no less forcible anecdote of the man, who, having a fine brick mansion to sell, went about exhibiting a detached brick as a specimen of the whole edifice. When you have heard this Lecture you can make your choice of either anecdote—either will apply to it. To attempt to compass in a few pages, for the reading of which only an hour is allotted, a satisfactory view of the extent and richness of the annals of Irish Eloquence, with illustrations from the same, would be no less absurd than the act of the Roman General, when he attempted to convey an idea of the physical resources of *an enemy's* country by some knapsacks of pebbles. And if you hope to obtain, in the same compass and same space of time, a view of the magnificent monuments which have been reared by Irish genius to one of the most ennobling arts with which the Almighty has gifted mankind, so might you be able to estimate the value of the mansion of which a specimen brick was carried about, not in the hand, I suspect, but in the hat of the owner.

Before I proceed to speak of Irish Eloquence, it may be necessary to offer a few remarks on Eloquence in general. Like the sister arts of Poetry, Music, Painting and Statuary, Eloquence of the highest order must be born with its possessor. Genuine eloquence cannot be acquired by any extent of study. Hard and persevering study will make good speakers, as it may make tolerably fair painters, singers, rhymers and sculptors; but the genius which is to give immortality to a work in any department of art is alone the gift of the Almighty; and we should be, as I hope we are, humbly thankful that this, like all other gifts of Omnipotence, is confined to no privileged class. The peasant as well as the peer may possess it, and instances are not rare in the history of civilized nations showing how the peasant has raised himself to the condition of the peer by the possession of this divine attribute. It is not, perhaps, more than once in a generation, in any country, that a true orator, like a true poet, rises to startle and delight mankind. God, for his own wise purposes, has made the gift thus rare, because, perhaps, it is too precious to be lavished on the mass of mankind, and because, perchance, if too general, might be used for pernicious purposes. It is, however, the duty of those who may not possess the gift of eloquence to study it carefully in order to arrive at a correct appreciation of the art, and to be able to apply the tests by which genuine Eloquence may be detected from the spurious article which is so often palmed upon the world for the genuine, as is also the case in other departments of art. We have false coinage in Eloquence as we have in money, and it behoves us to be on our guard to be able to detect the ring of the true metal in either case.

Eloquence—when soaring to its highest altitudes—exercises immense influence in the affairs of life. Religious, moral, economical, and political questions are all vastly controlled by the breath of the orator. He who can exercise the rare gift in all its natural and majestic force may sometimes hold the destinies of empires and of individuals in his hands. His powers are enormous. His responsibilty to Society and to his Creator is equally so. It is given to him to bless or curse the sphere in which he moves—to be the benefactor or scourge of his country. Ancient and modern history presents remarkable instances of the power and influence of the orator in deciding the fate of nations—in sometimes plunging them into the dark abyss of war, inundating them with oceans of blood, and destroying the land-marks of peace, arts and civilization. And, again, the inspired lips of the orator, whose eloquence is attuned to softer and gentler chords, may win glorious chaplets to decorate the brow of the country of his love, to make its ways the ways of pleasantness, and all its paths the paths of peace.—Pulpit eloquence is always solemn and impressive. The sanctity of the place in which it is employed — the holiness of the day usually dedicated to its exercise—the alienation of the mind from earthly cares, and the contemplation of the miracles of divine love and mercy with which most Christians are occupied in listening to a good sermon—are things which give to the pulpit orator of even passable powers immense sway over the hearts of his hearers. But when the pulpit orator is one whose soul overflows with the divine afflatus—whose lips unroll the majestic periods—"the words that glow and thoughts that burn"—which tell—as no ordinary lips could tell—the long tale of man's sinfulness and the fearful price paid for his redemption—when the slumbering emotions of the heart are stirred to their innermost depths, and hope and fear are alternately excited—then Eloquence asserts its power as a heaven-born art — then may its influence be witnessed on the hitherto obdurate heart of the sinner; or in the fullness, brightness and ecstacy of the visions which fill the lately troubled spirit that toileth patiently and reverently through a world wherein human sympathy lightened not its travails, but which indulged in dim imaginings of that distant bourne where weariness finds rest, and patient tribulation, reward.

It is well, then, that we should comprehend the full extent of the tremendous power that Eloquence of the highest order can wield. And what constitutes Eloquence of the highest order? Not merely the learning of the schools—not the pedantry of the rhetorician—not the polish and grace of the courtier, or the craft of the statesman; but the great God-like gifts of Truth and Earnestness—the self-sacrifice of a pure and lofty spirit to the cause which enlists the oratorical power. The rhetoricians define Eloquence to be "the art of persuasion." To induce persuasion in the minds of his hearers, the orator must first convince them that he is in earnest—that he is truthful, to the extent of his conceptions of the truth; and that he is willing to sacrifice every earthly consideration for the sake of that truth. This earnestness, and truthfulness, and self-devotion, when combined with a lively imagination, a well-balanced judgment, a large experience of the world, and liberal acquirements in the domain of knowledge—can never fail to make the true orator, whose impress will live forever in the country honoured by his achievements, and be gratefully preserved in the language he has enriched.

Minds so gifted and endowed are exceedingly rare, and it is only the pressure of great events which now and then forces them into notice. If asked who are the great orators of the present day, speaking the English language on both sides of the Atlantic, it would be difficult to recall the names of more than three or four that would answer the description I have given. The United States of America abounds with ingenious debaters — Congress has them in abundance—the Lecture Room is crowded with them — the Pulpits groan beneath the rumble of their thunder; but the lightning of genuine Eloquence is scarcely ever visible. Since the time of Patrick Henry — who, by the way, was an Irish Orator of the purest water that first added lustre to the stars of the infant Republic — since Randolph, Clay, Calhoun, Webster and Channing — all now in the same shadowy land with Patrick Henry — the United States have not witnessed the rise of one great orator, unless we make an exception in favour of Edward Everett, whom I have had opportunities of listening to, and from all I have read as emanating from the other great men whose names I have mentioned, I do not believe he has ever come up to their standard. The Eloquence of our public men in the Colonies—and upon this point I must speak cautiously — is not certainly of a very inferior order, but it is not of the highest order—it will not give enduring fame to the history of the Colonies — it will not shed a ray of glory round their records such as the Eloquence of Curran, Grattan, Flood, O'Connell, Shiel gives to the annals of Ireland — such as the eloquence of Burke, Sheridan, Canning, and other great Irish Orators has given to the debates of the Imperial Parliament — such as the magnificent oratory of the great Lord Chatham, and the exquisitely polished periods of Lord Bolingbroke, gave to the Parliamentary Eloquence of England of a bygone generation.* It is a marvellous fact that in the British House of Commons at the present day — the most august assembly upon earth, in which there is more learning and genius and rank than in any other public body of which we have any knowledge—there is not one man who rises to the dignity of oratory except Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To the House of Lords the same remark will, to nearly the same extent, apply. Lord Brougham and Lord St. Leonards are the only two peers whose names can be brought in competition with the Chathams or Bolingbrokes of a past age, or with the Macaulays and Lyndhursts of a later day. Still, there are great debaters in both branches of the Imperial Legislature. Lord Russell cannot make so brilliant a speech as the late Lord Macaulay or as the late Lord Lyndhurst, but he is more practical than either—he is more of a business man—the nation will listen to him for his wisdom and sagacity—for his vast experience, his knowledge of the world — and will pardon the stutter and hesitancy of his manner for the plain truths which he inculcates, and which are more valuable to the nation than the brilliant corruscations which flashed from the lips of Macaulay or Lyndhurst at fitful intervals. In the House of Commons, I may point to Lord Palmerston as the greatest and most influential debater after Sir Robert Walpole that ever swayed the destinies of the British Empire. It is well known that he never made a speech that could be pronounced an eloquent one in the true sense of that term: but the greatest orators that ever adorned the House of Commons — neither Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, nor Burke—exercised so much influence and for so long a period as Lord Palmerston. Either of these orators far transcended Palmerston in the higher modes of eloquence,—in fact, the veteran Premier could not for one moment compare with any of them in making a brilliant speech. Sheridan and Burke charmed and delighted Parliament and people by sudden bursts of great oratorical power, but their influence, or I should rather say the glamour which their genius, like a wizard's spell, spread over the nation, died away almost with the echoes of their voice; while Palmerston's vigorous common sense, couched in unadorned homely Saxon phrase, sinks into the minds of the people who, like himself, are bent upon practical pursuits -- who could not understand or appreciate the flowing periods, the attic wit, the brilliant metaphor, the classic turn of thought with which the finished orator would embellish his discourse.

I have thus hastily sketched, without the aid of any authorities, the true character of Eloquence and the condition in which we find it in two great branches of the human family. I have glanced at the United States, at the Colonies, and I have run my eye rapidly through the British Parliament. The sketch I know to be lamentably imperfect, but time will not allow me to make it more elaborate. I cannot, however, leave this branch of my subject without inviting your attention, for one moment, to the great and learned profession of the law in England. There is no profession in the world in which there is so much talent and learning centred as in that profession — it constantly recruits the Commons and Peerage of Great Britain, and is frequently giving valuable additions to our literature. In England the members of that profession are counted by thousands; and he who attains high rank in it where the number of competitors is so great, must possess extraordinary powers. Parliamentary influence or great noble connexions will sometimes procure a seat on the Bench for an active Barrister; but there is not, perhaps, an instance upon record, except a recent one, where we have seen that great genius as an Orator, combined with high integrity and legal acumen, have effected that consummation so devoutly to be wished for by all who wear the long robe. You must perceive that I allude to the elevation of Mr. Shee. He was an Irish Barrister, and a Catholic one, without any Parliamentary influence,—he had no high connexions in the Peerage, and he had no pre-eminent claims upon the Ministry. But the Ministry—controlling the action of the Lord Chancellor — have, for the first time, since Catholic Emancipation, paid a graceful tribute to Irish genius in the high department of Eloquence, by appointing Mr. Shee to a Judgeship, and this they did without considering his religion to be a disqualification. How the Orange bigots of Prince Edward Island must gnash their teeth in bitterness of soul when they reflect that a Catholic Judge has been deemed worthy of administering law to Protestant England! How they would fume and rage if a Catholic Barrister, supposing we had one of brilliant genius and character, were raised to the Bench in this Colony! But this is not the point I wish to observe here. Nearly all the English papers have heartily commended Mr. Shee's appointment — they praise the Ministry for this tardy act of justice; but they lament that in Mr. Shee's leaving the Bar he leaves no orator behind him! This is a splendid tribute to Irish genius in the department of Eloquence, to say that amongst the thousands of Englishmen and Scotchmen who fill the Inns of Court in England—who have access to the Parliament and to the halls of the Nobility—who have rank and wealth—and who are illustrating by their learning and talents the most laborious, most abstruse and, perhaps, most useful of all the professions—a Catholic Irish Orator in a Protestant country is considered the only man worthy of wearing the ermined robes.

But let us now turn to the country which rejoices in having given birth to the new Judge, and glance at a period when it might have been truly said she *was*

"Great, glorious and Free,
First flower of the Earth, and first gem of the Sea."

The memorable year of 1782 was the golden era of Ireland's independence and prosperity. For nearly thirty years before that time, the Parliament of Ireland maintained a struggle, with more or less vigour, against the Parliament of England as to the right of the latter to make laws for the Government of Ireland. This assumed right was based upon a Statute passed in the reign of Henry the Seventh, commonly called Poyning's law, under which the trade and commerce of Ireland were greatly fettered. The result was, that the country was impoverished, and the Parliament of Ireland was a mere slave to the English Minister. Irish resistance to English pretensions culminated shortly after the close of the American war. England was humbled by that war, as well as by the wars between herself and France and other European Powers. Her Army was withdrawn from Ireland; and then sprang up the most splendid organization ever witnessed in ancient or modern times—splendid, because it was spontaneous, because it was an outburst of patriotism, because it was unsupported by the Crown, because it was always loyal to the Crown, and because the Crown was forced to rest upon it for the defence of its authority. The Army of Cornwallis, just returned from their defeat in America, spread themselves, to a great extent, through Ireland; and spread, likewise, the liberal opinions which they imbibed on this side of the Atlantic. The remnant of the army of Cornwallis became incorporated with the Volunteers of Ireland—they could not understand why Ireland should not aspire to freedom as well as America; and their enthusiasm, experience, and valour greatly served to increase the efficiency of the Volunteers. In the face of a great Army, thus improvised, while England was weak, England was not able to resist the just demands of the Irish Parliament, and reluctantly conceded legislative independence to Ireland in 1782, under which every impediment to trade and commerce was removed, and the country attained to a degree of prosperity such as she never before or since experienced. Arts and manufactures were liberally encouraged—the most splendid edifices were erected in every city—some of the costliest public buildings in the metropolis of the Kingdom, such as the Four Courts, the Rotunda, and the Custom House in Dublin, were built during the eighteen years which elapsed between the Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation. The wealthy Nobility spent their large revenues in Dublin, and every species of art was stimulated by generous patronage. Lord Clare, who was no friend to Ireland, and who was one of those who helped to destroy her nationality, declared in one of his speeches, "that no nation on the habitable globe advanced in cultivation, commerce and manufactures, with the same rapidity as Ireland from 1782 to 1860." Another author, alluding to the marvellous mental activity which was one of the happy results of legislative freedom in Ireland, says:—"Cities, and temples, and canals, and highways, are perishable, but the fragments of the ennobled mind of a nation live on through ages, when all else has perished. We can readily imagine, indeed, how the mind of Ireland was ennobled by the radiant action of her native parliament; how her youth prepared themselves for a distinguished manhood in the Senate, at the bar, or in the walks of well-fostered science. We can imagine her classic youth of the University, who, from drinking in the eloquence of Cicero or Demosthenes in the day, came to *hear* eloquence as inspiring, as lofty, and as pure, from the living lips of Grattan, Flood, Burgh, or Curran, in the evening. All that history relates of the proud and virtuous Cato was realized before his eyes in the inflexible Henry Flood; all that is in eloquence attributed to Demosthenes was realized to his ravished senses in the equally eloquent harangues of Grattan; and Cicero found an embodiment in the philosophic and transcendant Curran. This teaching of the Irish mind produced a race of scholars, philosophers, patriots, and orators, whose brilliant track in the field of time stands out a beacon light, inviting their admiring posterity to a vigorous emulation."

Sir Jonah Barrington, alluding to this period in his "Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation," says:—"The habits of commerce and the pursuits of avarice had not, at this period, absorbed the spirit or contracted the intellect of the Irish people. That vigorous, comprehensive and pathetic eloquence, so peculiar to Ireland, which grasped at once the reason and the passions, still retained its ascendancy at the bar, and its preeminence in the Senate; and the Commons House of Parliament, about the period of Lord Clare's first introduction into public notice, contained as much character, as much eloquence, and as much sincerity, as any popular assembly since the most brilliant era of the Roman republic."

A far higher authority than Sir Jonah Barrington depicts in more forcible and glowing language the greatness and prosperity of Ireland when the Volunteers, with arms in their hands, demanded Legislative independence and free trade. Henry Grattan, whose patriotism and genius were the chief instruments in effecting the Revolution of that time, thus bears testimony to the proud attitude of the Irish nation, contrasted with the weakness and prostration of England:—

"England now smarts under the lesson of the American war; the doctrine of Imperial legislation she feels to be pernicious; the revenues and monopolies annexed to it she has found to be untenable: she lost the power to enforce it; her enemies are a host pouring upon her from all quarters of the earth; her armies are dispersed; the sea is not hers; she has no minister, no ally, no admiral, none in whom she long confides, and no general whom she has not disgraced; the balance of her fate is in the hands of Ireland. "You," said the orator, addressing the Irish Parliament, on the 19th of April, 1780, in support of a motion claiming the Legislative independence of Ireland—"You are not only the last connexion of England you are the only nation in Europe that is not her enemy. Besides, there does, of late, a certain damp and spurious supineness overcast her arms and councils, miraculous as that vigour which has lately inspirited yours:—for with you everything is the reverse: never was there a Parliament in Ireland so possessed of the confidence of the people: you are the greatest political assembly now sitting in the world: you are at the head of an immense army: nor do we only possess an unconquerable public force, which has touched all ranks of men like a visitation. Turn to the growth and spring of your country, and behold and admire it: where do you find a nation, who, upon whatever concerns the rights of mankind, expresses herself with more truth, or force, perspicuity or justice? not the set phrase of scholastic men, not the tame unreality of court addresses, not the vulgar raving of a rabble, but the genuine speech of liberty, and the unsophisticated oratory of a free nation."

Grattan's fame as an orator rests chiefly on his speeches in the Irish Parliament; and on three events in that Parliament. 1st. His advocacy of free trade and a free Parliament—2d. His support of the Catholic claims to a participation in the benefits of the Constitution; and 3d. His strenuous opposition to the Act of Union. For the first, his grateful country presented him with a magnificent gift of Fifty Thousand Pounds Sterling, which he truly said was no more than his deserts; and for the second and third, all Irishmen, no matter whether Catholics or Protestants, who truly love their country and despise intolerance and prejudice, will forever venerate his memory. The year after the Act of Union, in 1801, Mr. Grattan was elected to a seat in the Imperial Parliament, which he held until 1820, where he signalized himself by unwavering devotion to the cause of the Catholics; but his eloquence did not appear to possess that force, fire and majesty which characterised it in his own country. He certainly did not command in the British House of Commons anything like the influence which he exercised in the Irish House. He died in 1820, and though his health was enfeebled for several years before his death, that event was undoubtedly precipitated by his devotion to the Catholic cause. Contrary to the advice of his medical attendants, he left Ireland to attend Parliament solely for the purpose of presenting a petition in favour of Catholic claims; but he never survived the fatigue of the voyage. His death was regarded as a national calamity, and lamented by all ranks and conditions of men in the Empire. His remains were deposited in Westminster Abbey at the earnest solicitation of his English admirers, of whom Lord Brougham, who has paid an eloquent tribute to Grattan's memory, was one of the foremost.

Before giving a brief summary of Grattan's intellectual character, I shall give two or three specimens of that forcible, vehement, brilliant, and antithetical style of oratory, which was altogether original with him—which has baffled imitation—and which has never been excelled in any modern assembly, nor, perhaps, by the best orators of ancient times. The first extract I shall give will be from his speech in the House of Commons, on the 19th April, 1780, wherein he admonishes his countrymen in the Irish House to cast aside the yoke of the Imperial Parliament, and declare for Irish legislative independence:—

"Do not," says he, "tolerate a power—the power of the British Parliament, over this land, which has no foundation in utility or necessity, or empire, or the laws of England, or the laws of Ireland, or the laws of nature, or the laws of God,—do not suffer it to have a duration in your mind.

"Do not tolerate that power which blasted you for a century, that power which shattered your loom, banished your manufactures, dishonoured your peerage, and stopped the growth of your people; do not, I say, be bribed by an export of woollen, or an import of sugar, and permit that power which has thus withered the land to remain in your country and have existence in your pusillanimity.

"Do not suffer the arrogance of England to imagine a surviving hope in the fears of Ireland; do not send the people to their own resolves for liberty, passing by the tribunals of justice and the High Court of Parliament; neither imagine that, by any formation of apology, you can palliate such a commission to your hearts, still less to your children, who will sting you with their curses in your grave for having interposed between them and their Maker—robbing them of an immense occasion, and losing an opportunity which you did not create, and can never restore.

"Hereafter, when these things shall be history, your age of thraldom and poverty, your sudden resurrection, commercial redress, and miraculous armament, shall the historian stop at liberty, and observe—that here the principal men amongst us fell into mimic trances of gratitude—they were awed by a weak ministry, and bribed by an empty Treasury—and when Liberty was within their grasp, and the temple opened her folding doors, and the arms of the people clanged, and the zeal of the nation urged and encouraged them on, that they fell down, and were prostrated at the threshold.

"I might, as a constituent, come to your bar, and demand my liberty. I do call upon you, by the laws of the land and their violation, by the instruction of eighteen counties, by the arms, inspiration, and providence of the present moment, to tell us the rule by which we shall go—assert the law of Ireland—declare the liberty of the land.

"I will not be answered by a public lie in the shape of an amendment; neither speaking for the subject's freedom, am I to hear of faction. I wish for nothing but to breathe, in this our Island, in common with my fellow subjects, the air of liberty. I have no ambition unless it be the ambition to break your chains, and contemplate your glory. I never will be satisfied so long as the meanest cottager in Ireland has a link of the British chain clanking to his rags; he may be naked—he shall not be in iron; and I do see the time is at hand, the spirit is gone forth, the declaration is planted; and though great men should apostatize, yet the cause will live; and though the public speaker should die, yet the immortal fire shall outlast the organ which conveyed it, and the breath of liberty, like the words of the holy man, will not die with the prophet, but survive him."

The great error of Grattan's public life consisted in not taking a leading part in the movement for Parliamentary Reform, as he alone was able to do, when that measure was pressed upon the attention of the Irish House of Commons by the Armed Volunteers, with Lord Charlemont and all the leading men of Ireland at their head. Although the Irish House achieved a brilliant victory over the English Ministry, when the latter was weak, and when a sudden glow of patriotism was diffused through the former by the Volunteers, still the Irish House was radically corrupt and venal, and in eighteen years fell a victim to the corruptions of Lord Castlereagh and the other minions of power. Grattan saw, when it was too late, the error he committed in taking a neutral position in the agitation for Parliamentary Reform. This neutrality was induced by two circumstances. His great services to the nation were, for a short time, undervalued,—by one of those strange infatuations which will sometimes take possession of the public mind, the idol of public affection was hurled from his throne, and Henry Flood became the reigning deity. Grattan, though not jealous of Flood, still felt that he was injured by the undue preference given to the latter, and left his great rival to work out Parliamentary Reform as best he might. Flood was not equal to the task, though his popularity was great, and he possessed talents of a high order. Besides, Grattan held too high an opinion of the virtue and patriotism of his countrymen in the Irish Parliament. He regarded the majority of the Parliament as bold and incorruptible as himself. He viewed them from the stand point of his own excellence; and in this he was greatly deceived. Had the Parliament been reformed, when the Convention of Armed Volunteers demanded it—when the British Ministry dreaded it, as the crisis of the peaceful revolution of 1782.*—when Parliamentary Reform could have been accomplished through the genius, energy and courage of Grattan, some of the private friendships of that great man would have remained unbroken—the Rebellion of 1798 might have been averted; and certainly the Parliament of Ireland would have been purged of the venality which gnawed into its vitals,—no English Minister could purchase it, and no Union would have been effected.

I have not space for a detail of the events thus briefly noticed. The Act of Union met with the unqualified opposition of Grattan on all occasions. In sickness or in health his courageous and eloquent voice was raised against it. His patriotism never shone more brightly than it did in his struggles against the Union. Neither the frown of the Minister, nor the insolence of Power, nor the infirmity of body, ever prevented him from denouncing the measure as suicidal to the liberties of his country; but, on the contrary, his eloquence glowed and sparkled under ministerial opposition—his courage, in the possession of which quality no man was his superior, rose with the great occasion, and if apparently docile in the absence of a foe—gentle always to those who enjoyed his affections, simple as a child in the domestic circle, playful as a boy to those who knew him well and could appreciate the outpourings of an undefiled heart,—yet he was fierce as a lion, and more unconquerable than one when the whole phalanx of the English and Irish Ministry assailed him. In one of the debates on the Union question he was very violently attacked by a member of the Irish Government, Mr. Chancellor Corry, and he replied in the following strain of invective, the most scathing and eloquent ever uttered:—

"Has the gentleman done? Has he completely done? He was unparliamentry from the beginning to the end of his speech. There was scarce a word that he uttered that was not a violation of the privileges of the House; but I did not call him to order—why? because the limited talents of some men render it impossible for them to be severe without being unparliamentary. But before I sit down I shall show him how to be severe and parliamentary at the same time. On any other occasion I should think myself justifiable in treating with silent contempt anything which might fall from that honorable member; but there are times when the insignificance of the accuser is lost in the magnitude of the accusation. I know the difficulty the honourable gentleman laboured under when he attacked me, conscious that, on a comparative view of our characters, public and private, there is nothing he could say that would injure me. The public would not believe the charge. I despise the falsehood. If such a charge were made by an honest man, I would answer it in the manner I shall do before I sit down. But I shall first reply to it when not made by an honest man.

"The right honourable gentlemen has called me 'an unimpeached traitor.' I ask, why not "traitor," unqualified by any epithet? I will tell him; it was because he dare not. It was the act of a coward, who raises his arm to strike, but has not the courage to give the blow. I will not call him villain, because it would be unparliamentary, and he is a privy counsellor. I will not call him fool, because he happens to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. But I say he is one who has abused the privilege of parliament and freedom of debate to the uttering of language, which, if spoken out of the House, I should answer only with a blow. I care not how high his situation, how low his character, how contemptible his speech; whether a privy counsellor or a parasite, my answer would be a blow. He has charged me with being connected with the rebels: the charge is utterly, totally, and meanly false. Does the honourable gentleman rely on the report of the House of Lords for the foundation of his assertion? If he does, I can prove to the committee there was a physical impossibility of that report being true. But I scorn to answer any man for my conduct, whether he be a political coxcomb, or whether he brought himself into power by a false glare of courage or not. I scorn to answer any wizard of the Castle throwing himself into fantastical airs. But if an honourable and independent man were to make a charge against me, I would say: "You charge me with having an intercourse with the rebels, and you found your charge upon what is said to have appeared before a committee of the Lords. Sir, the report of that committee is totally and egregiously irregular."

"The right honourable member has told me I deserted a profession where wealth and station were the reward of industry and talent. If I mistake not, that gentleman endeavoured to obtain those rewards by the same means; but he soon deserted the occupation of a barrister for those of a parasite and pander. He fled from the labour of study to flatter at the table of the great. He found the lord's parlour a better sphere for his exertions than the hall of the Four Courts; the house of a great man a more convenient way to power and to place; and that it was easier for a statesman of middling talents to sell his friends, than for a lawyer of no talents to sell his clients.

"For myself, whatever corporate or other bodies have said or done to me, I from the bottom of my heart forgive them. I feel I have done too much for my country to be vexed at them. I would rather that they should not feel or acknowledge what I have done for them, and call me traitor, than have reason to say I sold them. I will always defend myself against the assassin; but with large bodies it is different. To the people I will bow: they may be my enemy—I never shall be theirs.

"At the emancipation of Ireland, in 1782, I took a leading part in the foundation of that constitution which is now endeavoured to be destroyed. Of that constitution I was the author; in that constitution I glory; and for it the honourable gentleman should bestow praise, not invent calumny. Notwithstanding my weak state of body, I come to give my last testimony against this Union, so fatal to the liberties and interests of my country. I come to make common cause with these honourable and virtuous gentlemen around me; to try and save the constitution: or, if not to save the constitution, at least to save our characters, and remove from our graves the foul disgrace of standing apart while a deadly blow is aimed at the independence of our country.

"The right honourable gentleman says I fled from the country after exciting rebellion, and that I have returned to raise another. No such thing. The charge is false. The civil war had not commenced when I left the kingdom; and I could not have returned without taking a part. On the one side there was the camp of the rebel: on the other, the camp of the minister, a greater traitor than that rebel. The stronghold of the constitution was nowhere to be found. I agree that the rebel who rises against the government should have suffered; but I missed on the scaffold the right honourable gentleman. Two desperate parties were in arms against the constitution. The right honourable gentleman belonged to one of those parties, and deserved death. I could not join the rebel — I could not join the government—I could not join torture — I could not join half-hanging — I could not join free quarter — I could take part with neither. I was therefore absent from a scene where I could not be active without self-reproach, nor indifferent with safety.

"Many honourable gentlemen thought differently from me: I respect their opinions, but I keep my own; and I think now, as I thought then, that the treason of the minister against the liberties of the people was infinitely worse than the rebellion of the people against the minister.

"I have returned, not as the right honourable member has said, to raise another storm—I have returned to discharge an honourable debt of gratitude to my country, that conferred a great reward for past services, which, I am proud to say, was not greater than my desert. I have returned to protect that constitution, of which I was the parent and the founder, from the assassination of such men as the honourable gentleman and his unworthy associates. They are corrupt—they are seditious—and they, at this very moment, are in a conspiracy against their country. I have returned to refute a libel, as false as it is malicious, given to the public under the appellation of a report of the committee of the Lords. Here I stand ready for impeachment or trial: I dare accusation. I defy the honourable gentleman; I defy the government; I defy their whole phalanx; let them come forth. I tell the ministers I will neither give them quarter nor take it. I am here to lay the shattered remains of my constitution on the floor of this House in defence of the liberties of my country."

Another beautiful passage on the Union question I cannot forbear reading. Eloquence, poetry, passion, patriotism, are all combined in it:—

"The constitution may be *for a time* so lost: the character of the country cannot be lost. The ministers of the crown will, or may perhaps at length find that it is not so easy to put down for ever an ancient and respectable nation, by abilities, however great, and by power and by corruption, however irresistible: liberty may repair her golden beams, and with redoubled heat animate the country; the cry of loyalty will not long continue against the principles of liberty; loyalty is a noble, a judicious, and a capacious principle; but in these countries loyalty, distinct from liberty, is corruption, not loyalty.

"The cry of the connection will not, in the end, avail against the principles of liberty. Connexion is a wise and a profound policy; but connexion without an Irish Parliament, is connexion without its own principle, without analogy of condition, without the pride of honour that should attend it; is innovation, is peril, is subjugation—not connexion.

"The cry of disaffection will not, in the end, avail against the principles of liberty.

"Identification is a solid and imperial maxim, necessary for the preservation of freedom, necessary for that of empire; but, without union of hearts—with a separate government, and without a separate parliament, identification is extinction, is dishonour, is conquest—not identification.

"Yet I do not give up the country: I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead: though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheek a glow of beauty—

"Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there."

While a plank of the vessel sticks together, I will not leave her. Let the courtier present his flimsy sail, and carry the light bark of his faith with every new breath of wind: I will remain anchored here with fidelity to the fortunes of my country, faithful to her freedom, faithful to her fall."

Grattan's Philippic against his former friend Flood has been often quoted, as a masterly display of oratorical power. I do not believe that anything equal to it has been ever uttered; certainly it would be difficult to find any composition in the English language so severe and cutting. The Irish House of Commons permitted Mr. Flood to make a most ungenerous attack on Mr. Grattan, in which the latter was denounced as "a mendicant patriot," who, having been provided for by the nation, sold his country to the Government "for prompt pay;" the House could not, therefore, refuse to hear Mr. Grattan in reply, and he was only too glad to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded, and which he had artfully provoked. I will read a short extract from his speech:—

"But it is not the slander of an evil tongue that can defame me. I maintain my reputation in public and in private life. No man, who has not a bad character, can ever say that I deceived; no country can call me a cheat. But I will suppose such a public character. I will suppose such a man to have existence: I will begin with his character in his political cradle, and I will follow him to the last state of political dissolution.

"I will suppose him, in the first stage of his life, to have been intemperate; in the second, to have been corrupt; and in the last, seditious: that, after an envenomed attack on the persons and measures of a succession of viceroys, and after much declamation against their illegalities and their profusion, he took office, and became a supporter of Government, when the profusion of ministers had greatly increased, and their crimes multiplied beyond example; when your money bills were altered without reserve by the council; when an embargo was laid on your export trade, and a war declared against the liberties of America. At such a critical moment I will suppose this gentleman to be corrupted by a great sinecure office to muzzle his declamation, to swallow his invectives, to give his assent and vote to the ministers, and to become a supporter of Government, its measures, its embargo, and its American war. I will suppose that he was suspected by the government that had bought him, and in consequence thereof, that he thought proper to resort to the arts of a trimmer, the last sad refuge of disappointed ambition; that, with respect to the constitution of his country, that part, for instance, which regarded the mutiny bill, when a clause of reference was introduced, whereby the articles of war, which were, or hereafter might be, passed in England, should be current in Ireland without the interference of her Parliament; when such a clause was in view, I will suppose this gentleman to have absconded. But a year and a half after the bill had passed, then I will suppose this gentleman to have come forward, and to say, that your constitution had been destroyed by the perpetual bill. With regard to that part of the constitution that relates to the law of Poynings, I will suppose the gentleman to have made many a long, very long, disquisition before he took office, but, after he had received office, to have been as silent on that subject as before he had been loquacious. That, when money bills, under colour of that law, were altered year after year, as in 1775 and 1776, and when the bills so altered were resumed and passed, I will suppose that gentleman to have absconded or acquiesced, and to have supported the minister who made the alteration; but when he was dismissed from offices and a member introduced a bill to remedy this evil, I will suppose that this gentleman inveighed against the mischief, against the remedy, and against the person of the introducer, who did that duty which he himself for seven years had abandoned. With respect to that part of the constitution which is connected with the repeal of the 6th of George the First, when the adequacy of the repeal was debating in the House, I will suppose this gentleman to make no kind of objection; that he never named, at that time, the word renunciation; and that, on the division on that subject he absconded; but, when the office he had lost was given to another man, that then he came forward, and exclaimed against the measure; nay, that he went into the public streets to canvass for sedition, that he became a rambling incendiary, and endeavoured to excite a mutiny in the volunteers against an adjustment between Great Britain and Ireland, of liberty and repose, which he had not the virtue to make, and against an administration who had the virtue to free the country without buying the members.

"With respect to commerce, I will suppose this gentleman to have supported an embargo which lay on the country for three years, and almost destroyed it; and when an address in 1778, to open her trade was propounded, to remain silent and inactive; and with respect to that other part of her trade, which regarded the duty on sugar, when the merchants were examined in 1778 on the inadequate protecting duty, when the inadequate duty was voted, when the act was recommitted, when another duty was proposed, when the bill returned with the inadequate duty submitted, when the altered bill was adopted, on every one of those questions I will suppose the gentleman to abscond: but a year and a half after the mischief was done, he out of office, I will suppose him to come forth, and to tell his country, that her trade had been destroyed by an inadequate duty on English sugar, as her constitution had been ruined by a perpetual mutiny bill. With relation to three-fourths of our fellow-subjects, the Catholics, when a bill was introduced to grant them rights of property and religion, I will suppose this gentleman to have come forth to give his negative to their pretensions. In the same manner I will suppose him to have opposed the institution of the volunteers, to which we owe so much, and that he went to a meeting in his own county to prevent their establishment; that he himself kept out of their associations; that he was almost the only man in this House that was not in uniform; and that he never was a volunteer until he ceased to be a placeman, and until he became an incendiary.

"With regard to the liberties of America, which were inseperable from ours, I will suppose this gentleman to have been an enemy decided and unreserved; that he voted against her liberty; and voted, moreover, for an address to send 4,000 Irish troops to cut the throats of the Americans; that he called those butchers "armed negotiators," and stood with a metaphor in his mouth and a bribe in his pocket, a champion against the rights of America, the only hope of Ireland, and the only refuge of the liberties of mankind.

"Thus defective in every relationship, whether to constitution, commerce, toleration, I will suppose this man to have added much private improbity to public crimes; that his probity was like his patriotism, and his honour on a level with his oath. He loves to deliver panegyrics on himself. I will interrupt him, and say: Sir, you are much mistaken if you think that your talents have been as great as your life has been reprehensible; you began your parliamentary career with an acrimony and personality which could have been justified only by a supposition of virtue: after a rank and clamorous opposition you became on a sudden *silent*; you were silent for seven years: you were silent on the greatest questions,

(*Concluded on fourth page.*)

* I should not like to convey the impression that our Colonial Legislatures have not been, or are not yet distinguished for eloquence of a very high order. In the Parliament of Nova Scotia, few men, in any country, could surpass, and not many could equal, the late James B. Uniacke, when in the full vigour of his health and faculties, about twenty years ago. He had a fine commanding figure, and a voice of singular power, melody and sweetness. The Hon. Mr. Howe, his contemporary, his rival, and latterly his friend and companion in political strife, was often equal to Mr. Uniacke in glorious bursts of eloquence, and generally his superior in wit and humour, in solid argument, and in matters of detail; but Uniacke was the orator *par excellence*. The Hon. S. G. W. Archibald, formerly Chief Justice in this Island, and in his latter years Master of the Rolls in Nova Scotia, who preceded Howe and Uniacke in his entrance into public life, bore a very high reputation for great oratorical power. I can only remember him when the "sere and yellow leaf" had fallen on his days, and when, calm as a glorious autumnal evening, he closed a useful and well spent life.—The Hon. William Young and the Hon. J. W. Johnston should not be passed over in a note of this kind. The opportunity for oratorical displays on the part of the former is now passed by — the stateliness and dignity of the Bench checks the impulse to passionate and brilliant declamation, which was felt on the floor of the House, and which often enraptured Parliament and People. The same may, to a great extent, be said of Mr. Johnston. He is not on the Bench, although I should be glad to see him there; but he has no "foeman" in the House, in the absence of Uniacke, Howe and Young, "worthy of his steel;" and the polished rapier which he used with so much effect against such valiant foes, must e'en now rust in the scabbard. The Parliament and people of Nova Scotia are, however, justly proud of his genius, and will not soon part with the recollection of the great intellectual combats in which he was one of the most prominent figures. If he was not often the victor in his contests with Uniacke, Howe, and