

## CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

During the last few years Ireland has advanced with rapid strides toward the goal of independence. What was a visionary and improbable scheme ten years ago is now almost a reality. The great success of the home rule party is largely due to the brilliant qualities of Charles Stewart Parnell, a man who will ever be honored as the highest type of pure patriotism, of unflinching courage and resolution, and of unselfish devotion to liberty, humanity, and the cause of his suffering land.

He was reared among the mountains of Wicklow during a time when famine and want were desolating Ireland; when O'Connell's highest hopes and brightest dreams were cruelly shattered by a brutal government; when disappointment and sorrow, almost despair, were settling upon the people of unhappy Ireland. It is no wonder, then, that Parnell felt a deep hatred for the system that was sapping the very life blood of his country and filling dungeons with men who in any other land would have been honored; a system that, under shadow of law, was dragging weary women and hungry children from their hovels and turning them out to die upon the roadside.

It must be remembered that the present contest is waged as much against a brutal, grinding, landed aristocracy as against British misrule; that Ireland needs freedom from landlordism as much as freedom from England.

For hundreds of years Ireland has been overpowered, crushed by force; she has been bound in fetters, but the spirit of her people is still as unconquered as when first the Saxon set foot upon her soil. Although a long night of darkness has enveloped her unhappy island, hope has never been excluded from the hearts of her people; for in every age noble and heroic men have arisen that have urged them on to national independence, and every page of her history is red with the blood of her martyrs. The spectacle of so many heroes persisting in their lofty purpose in the shadow of defeat and of death is sublime. One more timid than Parnell might well shrink from an undertaking that has brought nothing but suffering and disappointment to those who before him have attempted to obtain justice for Ireland. But no fear of failure prevents him from doing his duty. He knows what the bane of his country is, and, true to his noble nature, is using all his efforts to counteract it. It matters not to Parnell that defeat has ever been the reward of patriotic Irishmen; that the life work of Grattan was fruitless; that O'Connell died heart-broken because he was powerless to alleviate the sufferings of his countrymen. To lead a forlorn hope is noble; to champion a cause that has suffered innumerable defeats is something more than noble—it is heroic.

For hundreds of years Ireland has battled nobly for her rights. Her poets and orators have fired the breasts of her impulsive and liberty-loving sons with a desire for freedom. Noble and lofty-minded men have wasted away in dungeons what might have been lives of peace and happiness. Martyrs have freely poured out their blood, that the tree of liberty might be nourished on Erin's soil. Although Ireland has been served by men who would do honor to any cause and any land, it has been reserved for our age to behold the greatest man that Ireland has ever produced—Charles Stewart Parnell. Far be it from my purpose to lay a desecrating hand upon the memory of O'Connell or of Grattan. Nor would I despoil of a single gem the martyr crowns of Tone or of Emmett, or question their devotion to the purpose that led them on to their doom. All reverence to the memory of Moore, whose melodies, inviting at one time to smiles, at another to

tears, so strangely move the heart. But, while paying the debt of boundless love of reverence to the men whose deeds have made their names immortal, let no one fail to do full justice to Parnell, whose unselfish patriotism has caused him to sacrifice so much for his country; whose dauntless courage and unerring foresight have so often plucked victory from the jaws of defeat; whose perseverance has enlisted in the cause of Ireland the most humane and liberal of English statesmen.

In order to fully appreciate the nobleness of Parnell's nature and his heroic self sacrifices, we must remember that he is a landlord. Imagine yourself in the position of the great patriot at the beginning of his career. He was absolute owner of a large estate. He was an aristocrat. He belonged to a family that had often been honored by the English government. Two courses were open to him: the one led to comfort and ease, the other to toil and trouble; the one to wealth and independence, the other to poverty and suffering. Pride, comfort, desire for wealth, allured him to follow the one way; duty, patriotism, conscience showed him that he should pursue the other. But, forgetting that he was an aristocrat, he went about among the poor, like the Savior of the world, doing good. He forgot his own comfort; like Socrates, he sacrificed gain for duty; and like the Gracchi, he employed all his resources that each citizen might have a hearth and a home. Against the landlord system Parnell has declared a war of extermination. The English aristocracy know this well. In the crusade against the Irish landlords their English brothers see the handwriting upon the wall. If other men have discovered the cause of Ireland's woe, they lacked the courage to attempt to exterminate it. Parnell has seen the cause of the havoc and ruin that has depopulated whole districts in Ireland, and with unerring aim, in the shadow of defeat and the dungeon, turning neither to the right nor to the left, has fearlessly employed against it all the weapons that his fertile brain could devise.

If justice is always triumphant, why is it that so often attempts to establish freedom have been so ruthlessly crushed? Why is it that today the mines of Siberia are filled with the purest and most patriotic of Russians? On the side of injustice, wealth and power, and influence are generally arrayed. At the beginning of Parnell's career he found not only all the wealth of the country arrayed against him, but even the genius of the greatest of English statesmen. It was the Gladstone ministry that filled the jails of Ireland with men who never were justly charged with the commission of a crime. It was the Gladstone ministry that twice threw Parnell into prison without telling him why.

Parnell does not possess the great oratorical powers of O'Connell, which swayed so strongly the minds of the hearers. He does not possess the persuasive powers of the fiery Grattan, which, with the glittering bayonets of the volunteers, wrang even from England a slight recognition of Ireland's rights. Gifted with practical common sense and foresight, he may well afford to dispense with oratorical display, for the eloquence of Demosthenes multiplied a hundred fold would be powerless to excite in John Bull any feeling for the sufferings of his unfortunate victims. The cold, cruel heart of John Bull is not moved by eloquent appeals to his better nature; he is moved only when you touch his purse. Parnell forced the Irish question upon the unwilling British by preventing them from legislating for themselves until they had first examined the condition of suffering Ireland. For this he has been imprisoned and made the target for every calumny. But the malignant slanders have left unstained the spotless purity of his character. The criminal and malicious charges that have been fabricated by his ene-