

Mr. Bryan's Speech Before The Irish Club

A Dublin newspaper printed the following account of Mr. Bryan's reception by the Irish club at London:

Mr. W. Jennings Bryan, the democratic candidate for the American presidency, was present at a reception given in his honor by the Irish club, at its magnificent new premises, Charing Cross road, last evening. The function was one which excited great interest, and long before the hour appointed, quite a large crowd had collected in the street for the purpose of catching a glimpse of the distinguished American as he entered the club. There were numerous photographers with their cameras ready to snapshot Mr. Bryan the moment he alighted from his cab. Mr. Bryan accepted the invitation to attend the reception a week or two ago, notwithstanding the fact that his time had been fully allocated to the round of engagements which monopolized every available hour, and which deprived him almost of a moment's leisure.

The club was beautifully decorated, and American and Irish flags floated in the breeze from the windows and from the roof of the building. Several hundred guests assembled, and when Mr. and Mrs. Bryan, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. John Redmond and Mr. T. P. O'Connor entered the reception hall, shortly after 6 o'clock, they were received with an outburst of enthusiasm which affected the distinguished visitors. The scene was an exceedingly brilliant and animated one.

Mr. T. Rouse, president of the Irish club, presided at the reception. Amongst those present were: Mr. W. J. Bryan and Mrs. Bryan, Mr. John E. Redmond, M. P., and Mrs. Redmond, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M. P., Mr. John O'Connor, M. P., Mr. J. Annan Bryce, M. P., and Mrs. Bryce, Messrs. T. Condon, M. P., J. P. Hayden, M. P., C. Dolan, M. P., W. McKillop, M. P., D. Coogan, M. P., J. O'Dowd, M. P., R. Hazleton, M. P., P. J. O'Shaughnessy, M. P., Mr. Joyce, Mr. J. Cullinan, M. P., W. Duffy, M. P., J. McKean, M. P., O. Nolan, M. P., W. O'Malley, T. Harrington, M. P., W. Landon, M. P., W. Devereux (mayor of Southwark), Mr. McAleer (mayor of Workington), Captain Hon. Fitzroyal Hemphill, Rev. E. Malley, Rev. P. Roe, Rev. J. Boyle, Rev. W. Byrne, Waterford; Rev. Mr. Lynch, Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, Thomas Curran, senior, Councillor M. C. Walsh, Ald. Anglim, Councillor MacManus, Councillor Leach, E. Cunningham, M. Keating, R. A. Walker and Mrs. Walker, S. Geddes, F. Salles and Mrs. Salles, H. McGrath, John Keating and Mrs. Keating, Miss Flynn, J. Cunningham, W. P. Ryan, J. P., Jr. Matthew, Mr. W. Ludwig, John Ryan and Mrs. Ryan, Miss E. Rouse, Miss F. Rouse, Dr. Harold C. O'Malley, Mrs. O'Malley, the Misses O'Malley, Miss Ryan, etc.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M. P., who was received with applause, said: Mr. Bryan, on behalf of the Irishmen of London and of Great Britain generally I offer you hearty welcome, a *cead mile failte* to the Irish club. Your name is one which even centuries ago was prominent and historical in the annals of Ireland. May we not also believe without any lack of modesty that some at least of your many gifts—your eloquence, your political insight, your imagination, your ready sympathy, your geniality, your amiability—are in part derived from your Celtic ancestors (applause). But, Mr. Bryan, you would be a welcome guest among us whatever the origin of your family in the mere fact that you are a distinguished citizen of the United States (applause). A little touch of American nature makes the whole world kin. To every land and every race your country has been a land of promise, of hope, of larger liberties, greater equality of opportunity, beneficial change of environment (applause). To the Irish in particular your country has been an asylum and a refuge. Nearly forty years ago England's greatest tribune used these words: "You will recollect that when the ancient Hebrew prophet prayed in his captivity he prayed with his window open towards Jerusalem. You know that the followers of Mahomet when they pray turn their faces toward Mecca. When the Irish peasant asks for food and freedom and blessings his eye follows the setting sun. The aspirations of his heart reach beyond the wide Atlantic, and in spirit he grasps hands with the great republic of the west." To us it is often the cause of bitter wail, and sometimes almost of despair, that so many millions of our race have been driven by evil laws from our own beautiful and fertile land, but it is some consolation to us that so many of these millions have found happy and prosperous homes in the hospital and glorious bosom of the great republic of the west (applause).

We are proud that they have done their

duty for their new country in battle by land and sea, that in the pursuits of commerce they have taken their due share, and we are proud and grateful also that while no race of the many in your land are more ardently patriotic, and I might say more vehemently American, yet they have not forgotten that sad little island from which their race springs (applause). In your visits to our country you must have been struck by the palpable signs all around you—the close and myriad ties that bind our people to the United States. There is scarcely one in the thousands of cottages by which your train has sped in which America has not a dally and hourly thought in one gray-haired father or mother, brooding over some beloved son or daughter who has left them to find work in America. This man has a brother there; this woman a sister; in short while millions of our people remain in the flesh within the shores of Ireland, the dearer part of their hearts and their souls lives in the lands of the Stars and Stripes, with the living or the dead—who has found a last resting place in American earth (applause).

There is not a ship that crosses the Atlantic which does not bear thousands of messages of love from the scattered children of the Gael to each other. The Christmas letter that brings help and often the very necessities of life to the poor people left at home from relatives that have prospered in your land, is still one of the great events of Irish life, still one of the epochs of the Irish year (applause). With the ties so close and so numerous, even the breadth of the Atlantic can never make an Irishman think of America as far away. It is so near to the hearts of our people that it seems just next door. The surf that beats against the shores of our little island has apparently traveled from some spot on your great coastline (applause). We look on you, sir, as one of our truest and most powerful friends. We wish you just as well as we know you wish us (cheers). It is not for us to make any pronouncement, or even to express any personal sympathies, on questions of internal politics in America. We have friends in all parties (applause). We have admiration for men in all parties, and not the least for the courage of the resolute and honest man who is now your chief magistrate (applause)—a sentiment we know will be welcomed by you, whose strong advocacy of your own political views has always been tempered by your genial and kindly estimate of the personal merits of your political opponents (applause). What great destiny may be reserved for you in the future is not for us to forecast. That rests in the hands of your own great and gifted people. To us it is your personality that makes the appeal (applause). It is not the first time we have met you here in London. You have grown upon us the more we have known you. Millions of your own countrymen look to you with enthusiastic affection and admiration as a political leader. We bear you the same feelings as a man (applause). We admire, we respect—may I not even say love?—you for yourself (applause). We wish you God-speed, a safe return to your own land, and many long years of health and life for the service of your people and your country. We wish the same blessings to the true and sweet companion who is here with you, and who is so splendid a specimen of America's noblest product, the American woman (applause). Mr. and Mrs. Bryan, I utter to you together the pleasant and sad greeting, "*Welcome and farewell. Cead mile failte agus beannacht libh*" (loud applause).

Mr. Bryan, who was received with loud and continued applause, said: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is very kind of you to give us this cordial welcome and this friendly farewell. I appreciate the compliment that is paid to us by the invitation to attend this club, the compliment paid to us in the speech of Mr. O'Connor, and the honours done us by the presence of Mr. Redmond, the leader of the Irish party in parliament (applause). My only complaint is that in being more than complimentary Mr. O'Connor has been less than kind, for he has said so much in that generous commendation that it makes it a little embarrassing for me to speak at all. I think I made a great mistake when I was a candidate for office. If I could have stayed at home and kept still and let Mr. O'Connor tell the people what a good man I was, I think I would have been elected by an overwhelming majority. His introduction of me is much more embarrassing than one I received some years ago. It is now twenty-two years since I visited an Irish settlement near the town in which I lived, and the chairman of the meeting, whose name was Timothy Flynn,

came and told me that he was to preside and would I tell him how I wished to be introduced, and he would introduce me (laughter). I was then a young lawyer just beginning practice, and I thought it might be well for the people to know that (laughter), and to know that in case they had need of a lawyer's services I was prepared to render them at a reasonable charge (renewed laughter). So I told him to say that Mr. W. J. Bryan, an attorney, of Jacksonville, would now address them. It was a modest introduction, I think, but he had my professional card in it. He went over it several times, and just before calling the meeting to order he asked me to repeat it, and I gave it to him again. He called the meeting to order, and instead of introducing me as I had requested, said: "The meeting is called to order. O'Bryan will now speak." Laughter. I look back to it as the best introduction I ever had, for it raised no false hopes; it threw me on the result of my chance, and left me to hold my own road (hear, hear).

Yes, I have some Irish blood in my veins (applause). Just how much I do not know. I hope it will not be necessary to investigate, for I think I claim more than I could prove (laughter). I have the testimony of my father that we were of Irish extraction, although we don't know when our ancestors landed in America, or from what part of Ireland they came. I know that I am part Irish; my name helps me out in that. I am part English. My father's mother's name helps me out in that. I am part Scotch. My mother's mother's name helps me out in that (laughter). But I am all American (applause). I think my wife not only has some of the blood of each of these countries, but as she goes beyond me in nearly every other respect, so in this, she traces her ancestry to one more race than I do, and mixes a little German with Irish, English, and Scotch (applause). So that you can understand we have a double reason for appreciating the cordiality of your welcome (applause). Mention has been made of the fact that some of your countrymen have gone to America. That is true (laughter)—a great many. In fact so many, that when I was in Ireland the other day I could not help noticing the number of American names you have on your buildings (laughter and applause). I saw nearly everywhere, names with which I am familiar, on the buildings in Cork, Dublin and Belfast. I may say to you that the Irish who have gone to America have been a great help to our country. I can say without flattery that no people have come amongst us who have shown themselves more capable of efficient participation in every department of American life (applause). You may go into any section of the country, you may go among the people of any occupation, of any profession, of any calling, and you will find the Irish there (applause). There is no department of work in America in which they have not played a conspicuous part. They have been prominent in the ministry, they have been prominent in statesmanship, they have been prominent at the bar, and in every industrial occupation they have borne their part. It is not strange, therefore, that there should be a sympathy between the people of Ireland and the people of the United States (applause). It is not strange, therefore, that everything that affects your welfare interests them, that every aspiration you have for the development and elevation and progress of your people finds a warm response in the hearts of the American people (applause), and that is true, as has been so eloquently said, without regard to party, and without regard to creed (applause). Just as in Ireland, O'Connell, the Catholic, and Parnell, the Protestant, found common ground in advocating the rights and interests of Irishmen, so in my country Protestants and Catholics look with friendly eyes upon the Emerald Isle, and wish you great prosperity and the advancement of your people (applause). It is true, also, in politics, for while I think I can say that the majority of the Irish of America belong to the party to which I belong, I must be frank enough to tell you that sympathy with the Irish cause is not monopolized by the democratic party. The republicans, as well as the democrats, look with interest and deep concern upon all that appertains to your welfare, and your development, and your ambitions (loud applause). I think I owe that to the people of my country, to my political opponents, to say that we, democrats, can not claim any greater love for you, or greater interest in you, than the republicans can, for I believe this feeling is well nigh universal (applause).

If I was speaking merely from the political standpoint I might express regret that your peo-