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The Wrengs of Ireland.

Junior Prizes Contest.

Dickinson College.

June 25th 1866.

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There are certain inalienable rights, devolving upon man as a consequence upon his creation as a moral and intellectual being; the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Although by his fall he may have lost that innate purity, which secured for him direct communication with his maker; yet these, with his unaltered intelligence, remained as absolute and unchangeable as the principles which the great Architect has established for the government of the material universe. Any infringement upon them, is an infringement upon the design of perfection, and regarding not the wrong involved, is as much an absurdity as an attempt to oppose the laws of nature.

As the race increased in number and spread itself abroad,

in obedience to the social laws of its nature, as well as for mutual defense, mankind joined together in communities of the patriarchal order, the type and the origin of the idea of government.

Still progressing and extending, and in obedience to the same laws, governments were formed upon the broad principles of right and justice; but soon they were degraded by oppression and wrong from all similitude to the ideal Christianity, by its perfecting influence and divine precepts, has in a great measure restored a reign of comparative justice to the world: Yet even now, with all our boasted superiority in morality and justice, over ages that have past, may be found examples of tyranny and oppression, which

were they not well known, would surpass belief.

Such examples of bare-faced outrage on the rights of man, such crimes committed withal in the sacred name of justice, as must ever remain a foul blot on the history of our age, to serve as monuments of inhumanity, the relics of barbarity, for future ages to point to us with scorn and contempt justly deserved, and as beacon lights to warn them against examples like ours.

I refer to England, and the history of Ireland will more than meet the assertion here laid down.

The history of no nation, perhaps, exhibits such an uniform series of misery, oppression and misfortune, as that of Ireland.

Amidst the cruel

and impolitical restraints of which she has been the victim, since the tyranny of England was forced upon her, is it to be supposed that the people could emerge from barbarity?

On the contrary the universal voice of history tells us that they were rendered discontented and ferocious by oppression; and three succeeding national insurrections, the fruits of a despicable and perfidious policy, prove better than any testimony, that their servitude was equally galling and ungrateful.

All the bitterness of religious intolerance, was superadded to civil disability;

The trampled populace were goaded to resistance - their smothered resentments burst into a flame that was not easily extinguished.

"The people like the air is seldom heard save when it speaks in thunder."

The causes that induced Ireland to rebel so often, were not merely incidental in their nature.

There is not any inherent and insuperable bias in their national character.

Their rebellions sprung from odious and long continued persecutions.

A conquered people - forced into an unwilling subjection to England; the very remembrance of these, would be sufficient to keep burning the fires of hatred within their breasts.

Not only were they held in subjection, but they were likewise oppressed.

Contempt became the sentiment, and continually the

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expression, to which a conquered nation is always exposed.

Moral justice between man and man seems to be generated only by the power which each has of enforcing it.

England possessing, Ireland wanting that power, it follows that moral justice was not recognized and that oppression took its place.

By confiscation of property, by degrading the people, they have made wounds which can never heal until they shall have acquired their independence.

Oppressed by the parliament, from whom alone they might expect an amelioration of their condition, what other resource had they but the sword?

Centuries of remorseless aggression

and fierce retaliation, had swelled the tide of conflicting passions and hatred, and the foaming and chafed waters of bitterness had never been permitted to subside.

To be invaded as enemies, to be treated as foes though willing to be friends, to be held as aliens in their native land, to be refused naturalization in the country of their fore-fathers, to be punished by the laws of peace and war at the same time; was what human nature could not, and manhood should not endure.

Such inhuman outrage demands in the name of humanity, instant redress.

Seven millions of people ground beneath the iron heel of a remorseless tyranny, their supplications ascending daily to the throne of Jehovah, cry with an unceasing voice for justice.

And shall they cry in vain?

At last after many years of anxious expectation, the prayers of unhappy Ireland appear to be on the verge of consummation.

An organization, having for its sole object the deliverance of that people, has sprung up in our midst. It has gained the sympathies of all classes. All Ireland stands ready to leap to arms at a moment's warning, and strike for that liberty so long withheld. Their cause is a sacred one, and must succeed.

Already the fears of England have been aroused.

Let the first blow be struck, and we may follow the example of our magnanimous friend, and show our neutrality by sending our amicable Alabamas,

Shenandoahs, and the like.

Thousands of brave champions of liberty, whose courage has been tested on many a blood bought field, will fly to the rescue.

The Nineteenth Century is the great revolutionizer of the world.

Stately chastened by misfortune is gathering strength for a nobler destiny, and ere long the armies of North America thundering through the walls of the Mexican Capital, shall pull down the throne of the would be dynasty, and beneath the blue waters of the Pacific; Maximilian's scepter shall sink to rise no more.

But shall the shout of freedom ascend alone from the shores of the West? No! Methinks as its notes of thrilling cadence are borne to the far off side of the Ocean,

we shall hear like a returning echo
the war-cry of Ireland.

All honor to the
gallant men whose lives are pledged
for the redemption of the "Emerald
Isle".

"Conquer they must, for their cause
is just".

Now the day for liberating
Ireland has come; when all is to
be won or lost; and voices,
which the executioner may have
silenced, will rise from out their
graves, and marshalling together
the living and the dead, rally all
friends of freedom to their glorious
standard, and the hirelings of the
oppressor will be struck dumb
when they shall meet the invincible
champions of liberty, led on by
departed spirits

Then may our nation the first
of Republics, be the first to salute
the banner that bears the "Green
Shamrock".—

1866 Junior Prize Contest Oration of Newton Edward Kupp
Transcribed by Krista Gray, September 2008
Edited by Don Sailer, November 2009

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