

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL'S LAST PUBLIC SPEECH

**September 27th, 1891, Creggs, County Galway. Extracts of
Parnell's speech taken From Words of the Dead Chief,
published in 1892.**

*(Though suffering greatly from an acute attack of rheumatism, he went to
Creggs against the advice of his doctor; and in the course of this, his last
speech, referring to his own health, he said: -)*

If I had taken the advice of my doctor I should have gone to bed when I arrived in Dublin the night previous, but if I had done that my enemies would be throwing up their hats, and announcing that I was dead before I was buried...

I have never kept the question of leadership up to the front, and I have never abandoned any question of leadership. My desire in setting out was not to lead any people, but to put our people in the path to lead themselves, so that they would be able to choose their own leader; and when that day comes that a self-governed Ireland is able to guard and cherish her own honour and her own destiny, then I promise these men who to-day talk about facts and will of the Irish nation, that I will poll throughout all Ireland man for man, and more than man for man, of independent Irishmen in protest against this doctrine which is now preached to us that the strong arm of the Liberal party is supreme for the purpose of gaining freedom for Ireland. We are told in these days that the voice of the Church is the voice of God, and that, therefore, it must be obeyed in politics. That was not the condition upon which I entered public life sixteen years ago. It never struck me at any time during these sixteen years that the Irish clergy were particularly skilful politicians....

(Referring to the Boulogne negotiations.)

...The great fundamental differences will be apparent when Mr. O'Brien publishes these proposals from himself, my counter proposals, and my amendment to those Liberal proposals. It will then be seen

that I was not fighting for my hand and for my own leadership, but that I was striving to secure as well as I could, in my hampered condition, some strength for Ireland to deal with her own future when the Liberals come into power...

I tell you, men of Roscommon and of Galway, that if the day ever comes when your Irish members come to believe that they cannot do anything without leaning upon the strong arm of the Liberal party, it is a good strong kick your Irish members will get from behind from the Liberal party...

I gave up none of my independence or that of my colleagues to Mr. Gladstone when I came out of Kilmainham to obtain these great benefits (the Arrears Act), and the truth of that was shown by our subsequent years of fight against Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party until we threw them out of power in '85 without Mr. Dillon's assistance, he having retired from his country to America, despairing of the future of Ireland...

We shall continue this fight. We fight not for faction, but for freedom... I know that you look to Ireland's future as a nation if we gain it. We may not be able to gain it, but if not it will be left for those who come after us to win; but we will do our best.