

# ADDRESS AT CARNEGIE HALL, NEW YORK.

By Douglas Hyde.

From *The Gaelic American*, December 2, 1905.

*(Opening two paragraphs translated from Irish)*

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen – It gives me very great pleasure to be with you to-night. When I see this great gathering around me and when I hear your voices, I feel as if I had never left Ireland, or if I did, that I had merely transplanted myself from one Ireland to another Ireland. There is this difference, however, between the two Irelands; that those at home understand the Gaelic League; they understand the work that we are doing; they understand its full significance, and they see the result of our work every day of their lives. I fear that you here do not understand it yet, and the task that I have put before me this evening is to explain to you the full significance of our movement.

What are we doing? I will tell you in one word. We are creating a new nation among the nations of the world. We are making the people self-confident, self-reliant. We are restoring the strength and the heart, the mind and the brain of Ireland as it was in the free and happy days of long ago. We are bringing back her own tongue that was half-dead; her own music that was half-forgotten; her own habits and her own customs that were dying day by day. We are putting a new soul into the people, and, as I have said, in one word, we are creating a new nation on the map of Europe.

I saw, when I looked around that time, a shade of apprehension on the expressive face of the Judge and I saw a trace of a panic down there, too. You thought I was going to speak Irish all night. Well, a very witty, and faith, a very wicked, Irishman too, said once: “To be intelligible,” says he, “is to be found out.” I do not care if I am found out. The Gaelic League in Ireland and America only wants to be found out, and when you find us out, you will stick to us.

I am not exaggerating when I say that I look upon the moral support of the Irish in America to be the most valuable asset that the Gaelic League at home could have; because every man and woman in Ireland today has a relative – many of them have a dozen relatives – here in the United States; and the immense reflex influence which you here in America can wield if you wish to wield it, upon Irish opinion is, in my opinion, of more importance for us to possess ourselves of, than any other asset whatsoever. I would sooner have the moral support of the Irish in America than a quarter of a million of dollars poured into the Gaelic League to-morrow.

I am here to-night to explain to you the life and death struggle upon which we are engaged in Ireland. I see that the more sympathetic of the New York papers say that this is the last grand struggle of the Irish race to preserve their language. Oh, gentlemen! it is ten times, it is a hundred times, it is a thousand times more far-reaching than that! It is the last possible life and death struggle of the Irish race to preserve their national identity.

We have now opened the eyes of the Irish race to the awful yawning chasm which gaped beneath us, over which a single false footstep would have taken us – the awful chasm of Anglicization, which, believe me, is only another name for national extinction, and when you in America understand that – and I shall fail in my mission tonight if I don't make you understand it – then, I know you will join us in saying to the devouring demon of Anglicization whose foul and gluttonous jaws have swallowed everything that was hereditary, natural, instinctive, ancient, intellectual, and noble in our Irish people – our language, our songs, our industries, our dances, and our pastimes – I know and say that you will plant your feet firmly and you will say, “Not one step more, demon! Back, demon! You shall never swallow one single mouthful more of the possessions of Irish Nationhood!”

### **A GREAT NATIONAL MOVEMENT.**

The movement on which we are engaged to-night is not the movement of a few faddists. It was thought to be so. That time has long gone by. So far is our movement from being a movement of

insignificant faddists that papers in Dublin, which are at daggers drawn amongst themselves, are at one in championing our cause. Churchmen like the Archbishop of Dublin and the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh are with us; even the organ of the independent Orangemen who seceded from the main body said, the other day, just before I left Ireland, that it was a movement which no Orangeman or Protestant need be ashamed to join. The Protestant Bishop of Derry, at a church conference spoke to the Northern Protestants most sympathetically about us, only the other day. The leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party has himself on many occasions spoken of the importance of our work, and, what is better, his own children are learning Irish.

One of the most remarkable of the Gaelic League festivals ever held in Ireland was held in August at a place where you know the River Bann runs into the sea, Toome Bridge, that for generations upon generations had been the battleground of Catholic and Orangeman; and what do we find? Under our aegis, Catholic and Orangeman came into the place in a spirit of brotherhood unexampled in that part of the world ever before, and I could not tell which was the most numerous at it.

So, you see that we are no clique, we are no faction, we are no party. We are above and beyond all politics, all parties and all factions; offending nobody – except the anti-Irishman. We stand immovable upon the bedrock of the doctrine of true Irish nationhood – an Ireland self-centred, self-sufficing, self-supporting, self-reliant; an Ireland speaking its own language, thinking its own thoughts, writing its own books, singing its own songs, playing its own games, weaving its own coats, and going for nothing outside of the four shores of Ireland that can possibly be procured inside them.

The Gaelic League is founded not upon hatred of England, but upon love of Ireland. Hatred is a negative passion; it is powerful – a very powerful destroyer; but it is useless for building up. Love, on the other hand, is like faith; it can move mountains; and, faith, we have mountains to move.

The philosophy of the Gaelic League is this: that Ireland cannot compete with England in the things that come naturally to England

and that come unnaturally to us. We cannot, for instance – well, we cannot play cricket as well as Englishmen. Ah, but sure, we can beat the world at hurling. Upon our clay floors, we cannot dance the waltzes gracefully; but, sure, we can smash them at a jig or a reel. We cannot sing “Johnny, Get Your ‘Air Cut,” in the Coster pronunciation, but I defy an Englishman to whistle the Maidrin Ruadh. In one word, we aim at the de-Anglicization of Ireland.

Now it has been objected to me that that word, which I coined long ago for want of a better, *de-Anglicization*, contained in it something harsh, something virulent, something rebellious; and that it was calculated to alienate the good will of many people who would, otherwise, be our supporters; and, as that may possibly be so, and especially in a cosmopolitan city like New York, I desire to say, to set myself right before I go any further, that any ladies and gentlemen of English sympathies who may be here to-night – never mind, sure, there might be – well I honour and respect everything that is good in the great English race. I yield to no man in my appreciation of their perseverance, their business faculties, their practical qualities. They have colonized many countries; they called into existence scores of great cities; factories where the unceasing roar and hum of production are never silent. Theirs are the harbours thronged with their forests of mast, theirs, pre-eminently, are the mart and the counting house and the mercantile navy of the world. Wealth, power and the teeming fruits of industry are theirs; and those are things that mankind, in every age, and every race, have, rightly or wrongly – and, upon my word, I think very often wrongly – conspired to reverence and admire. Yes; whilst England can point to such advantages as those, she may laugh at those who would belittle her; and, in the history of the world, she has made her mark deeply. Her enemies may hate her – they do hate her; but they cannot despise her.

And yet, and yet, there exists there at her very doors an ancient nation whose half-deserted streets resound ever less and less to the roar of traffic, whose mills are silent, whose factories are fallen, whose very fields are studded only with ruined gables – memories of the past; and yet, around that nation, morality of life, purity of sentiment, unswerving devotion to faith, and to fatherland, and to language have

shed a halo in the eyes of Europe that is all its own. It is a halo, too, that is unstained by oppression of any man, untarnished by avarice of anything, and undimmed by murder.

Well, the characteristics of this Irish race of ours are lightness, brightness, wit, fluency, and an artistic temperament. The characteristics of the Teutonic race are an intense business faculty, perseverance and steadiness in details; and in America you have elicited a magnificent blend of both qualities in that free and noble race whose sons or whose adopted sons and daughters I see before me to-night. But mark this: neither race can, with any success whatsoever, cut itself adrift from its own past and throw itself in imitation of the other into habits of life and thought and manners into which God never intended it to be thrown.

### **THE CURSE OF ANGLICIZATION.**

But, alas! that is the very thing which the Irish race at home and abroad, dazzled by the material prosperity of the great country to which we are tied – many of them unwillingly tied – that is, I say, they very thing the Irish race have been doing. This folly, this madness, this suicidal mania (for I cannot call it anything else) of rushing to adopt pell-mell and indiscriminately everything that is English, not because it is good, but because it is English, has been bad for all parties. It has been bad for Irish Nationalists; it has been equally bad for Irish Unionists. It has been bad for our own country, and it has been worse for the country with which we are connected. The more divergence of thought and genius, of natural aptitudes, the better; because, I tell you, there is an individuality in nationalities exactly as there is in persons – and to attempt to mould or crush everything into one particular type has invariably been fatal to the people that attempted it.

In our case, gentlemen, that attempt has been fatal. If you take a bird's-eye view of Ireland to-day and compare it with what it was, you must be struck by the fact that the nation which was at one time the most classically learned and cultural nation in Europe, is now one of the least – how a nation which was one of the most reading and literary peoples in the world is now one of the least reading and the most unliterary, and how the art products of one of the quickest, most

sensitive, and most artistic of all populations are now distinguished only by their hideousness!

The causes of this ghastly failure may all be summed up in one word: we have ceased to be Irish without becoming English. It is to this cause that I attribute more than to anything else our awful emigration and impoverishment. Irishmen leave Ireland to-day because they have ceased to feel that they have a country. They will not accept English as their country, and yet in the Ireland that the Gaelic League found before it, there was nothing to suggest to them anything else than an imitation England, and the public mind had become hopelessly confused and Irishmen had no standard to live by and they emigrated in their thousands.

I want to show you to-night hard facts; I want to show you that in Anglicizing ourselves we have thrown away with a light heart the best claim, the only true claim, that we can make upon the world's recognition of us as a separate nationality. What did Mazzini say? What is Goldwin Smith, back there in Canada, never tired of declaring? What does the *Spectator* and the English *Times* harp upon in every issue almost? Why, that we should be content in Ireland to become a big English county, because we have lost the notes of our nationhood, our language and our customs.

What is the answer to that? Have you any answer for it? I declare to God I see no answer to it except to take to our bosoms again the things we have discarded, our language and our customs, and to build up out of them an Irish nationhood anew.

### **LANGUAGE AN ESSENTIAL OF NATIONALITY.**

I cannot understand for the life of me how it is that Irish sentiment sticks in a kind of half-way house. Why does it continue to say that it hates the English and at the same time continue to imitate them? Why does it clamour for recognition, noisily clamour for recognition as a separate nationality when at the same time it throws away with both hands the only thing that would make it so? Why, if Irishmen only went a little further, they would become very good Englishmen in sentiment also. And why don't they do it? Because, whether we regret it or not – some of us regret it; others don't – but

whether we regret it or not, the very people that adopt English habits and copy English in every way, still continue to talk of their oppressed country and to sing “Paddies Evermore” and “The Green Above the Red,” and if I were to plant a Union Jack over their houses, they would brain me with a lump of a stone.

And, strange as it may appear, I see no signs at all of their thinking any way differently; and it is perfectly certain to my mind – whether we like it or don’t like it – that so long as England refuses Irishmen the right to govern themselves, so long they will continue to dislike her, and movements like Young Irelandism and Fenianism and Land Leagueism and Parliamentary obstruction – all those things will crop up time and again, time and again. And that is why I say since they won’t become proper Englishmen; and that since they won’t become the one thing, Englishmen in sentiment, then, in God’s name, let them become the other thing – let them come in with us and build up an Irish-Ireland!

Now, if you say that Ireland has not prospered under English rule, why it is only a truism. All the world admits it. England itself does not deny it! But, of course, the English retort is ready: “You did not come in like the Scotch and form part of the Empire.”

“Twenty years of good grandfatherly government,” said a late well-known Prime Minister, “will solve the Irish question.” Well, I think, the gentleman made the time a little too short. But suppose now with me to-night, suppose – a thing that is impossible – that a series of Oliver Cromwells were to arise in England not for a space of twenty years, but for a space of one hundred years – able administrators of the Empire; careful rulers of Ireland, developing to the utmost our national resources, whilst they unremittingly stamped out every spark of the national feeling, leaving Ireland a land of wealth and factories; leaving us, after a hundred years of good government, fat, wealthy populous, prosperous, but with all our characteristics gone; with every external that differentiated from them lost or dropped; our Irish names of people and places changed into English ones; the Irish language completely extinct; the O’s and the Mac’s dropped; our Irish intonation changed by English schoolmasters into something English; the names of our rebels and our martyrs blotted out; our battlefields

and traditions forgotten; the fact that we were not of Anglo-Saxon origin dropped out of mind and memory – and now let me put the question to you, How many Irishmen are there who would accept material prosperity at such a price as that? (Shouts of None.)

It is exactly such a question and the answer that you gave me to it that mark the difference between the two races, a difference as wide as the grave; for I believe that nine Englishmen out of ten would jump to accept it, and I equally believe that nine Irishmen out of ten would indignantly refuse it.

### **FORGOT THEY HAD A BIRTHRIGHT.**

Well, that Anglicization that I pictured to you had everywhere eaten like a disease through Ireland. Nobody noticed it; nobody was told of it; but when Irishmen know, then Irish sentiment becomes a power in the land and refuses indignantly to relinquish its birthright. Ah, but the Irish had forgotten the fact that they had a birthright at all. That is the truth of the matter. They had forgotten that they were Irishmen in any sense of the word. The old race, the Mac's and the O's and those who should have Mac's and O's before their names – those are the descendants of the men who Christianized and who civilized Western Europe, the descendants of the men who, for three centuries, amid the horror and the darkness and confusion of the Middle Ages held aloft the torch of learning and of piety unto every race of mankind. They are the men, Mr. Chairman, who now for the first time since the Battle of the Boyne, have been appealed to through their Milesian instincts. And Mr. Bourke Cockran marvelled that it brought about this great change in Ireland; and I tell you it is because the men who were crushed at the Battle of the Boyne have been appealed to through their Milesian instincts by the Gaelic League that you see the old Irish race rising on its feet to accept the new doctrines, ever new and ever old.

Those are the men of whom our farmers and our artisans and our shopkeepers consist, and in whose hands is to-day the making or the marring of the Irish nation. But they are just on the point of recovering the possession of their own land, and their sons and daughters, please God, will have it after them and it is now more

necessary than at any time before for these men to decide what they will be. On this side, an Irish nation built up again as it is being built up within our own recollection; on the other side an imitation England.

When the Gaelic League started up, we found that these men were losing everything that connected them with the Christianizers of Europe, that connected them with the era of Cuchullain and Oisín; that connected them with Brian Boróimhe and the heroes of Clontarf; that connected them with the O'Neills and the O'Donnells; that connected them with Rory O'Moore and with the Wild Geese; that connected them with the men of '98. They had lost all that others had, language, traditions, music, genius and ideas; and now, just at the moment when we are becoming masters again of our own land, we find ourselves despoiled and robbed of the old bricks of our nationality, and we must set to work to make new bricks of new clay in a new kiln, to build it with.

Do you believe in burning new bricks of new clay for the old Irish house? I do not believe in it. I believe in going here and there throughout the entire island and gathering together, here and there, every relic of the past upon which we can lay our hands and gathering them together into one great whole and building and enshrining every one of them in the temple that shall be raised to the godhead of Irish nationhood.

### **ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE A MISTAKE.**

The rise of O'Connell and the establishment of Maynooth – Maynooth is now, you will be glad to hear, the most Irish spot in Ireland, the rise of O'Connell and the establishment of Maynooth synchronized with the decay of Irish Ireland. The Irish race, the fathers of the present race of Irish-Americans, really lived in the closest contact with the traditions of the past and the national life of nearly eighteen hundred years, until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Not only so, but during the whole of the dark penal times they produced amongst themselves a most vigorous literary development.

Thomas Davis and the Young Irelanders came just at the parting of the ways, when the nation was, as it were, still in a state of flux and capable of being turned either to one side or the other.

Thomas Davis – that Irishman without fear and without reproach, whose name shall live forever in the grateful hearts of his countrymen – and the Young Irelanders generally, produced, a new literature throughout the country. It was a literature in which they strove to compete with England herself upon England's own lines. The effect was enormous for a time, but it cannot be said to have been enduring. The fact is that the bark had been so recently stripped off the stem of the Irish tree that this attempt to replace it by a new bark, stuck on, as it were, with English gum and glue and stick-fast, failed to incorporate itself with the ancient stem, and finally fell off from it, as it were, in flakes. English gum is no substitute, and never can be a substitute for Irish sap. Fifty years of bitter experience have taught us that the Young Ireland heroes did not arrest, and to my thinking could not arrest, the denationalization of Ireland by a literature which, rousing and admirable as it was, was still only a literature written in the English language and largely founded upon English models. Remember, I am not saying one word in disparagement of the Young Ireland movement or of the splendid men who created it. If we had been in their place, God knows we might have pursued exactly the same tactics. But I claim that our fifty years of experience should now be made use of and that we go a step farther than they went and allow the natural bark, the Gaelic bark, thin though it may be at the first and slender though it may be, to grow with the growth of nature upon the trunk of the ancient Irish elm.

The greatest misfortune that ever befell Ireland has been the loss of her language. I often heard people thank God that if England gave us nothing else, she gave us at least her language. Certainly (turning to Bourke Cockran), I have heard one of the most eloquent expositions of its power to-night that I have ever heard in my life or ever hope to hear again. Well, in that way people put a happy face upon it, and have pretended that the Irish language is not worth anything, and that it has no literature. And if the Irish language is worth nothing, why have I met professor after professor from Denmark, from France, from

Germany, studying in the mountains of Connacht in order to learn the language that is there banned by the people themselves? And it does possess a literature, or why would a German have calculated that books produced in Irish from the tenth to the seventeenth century, and still extant, would fill a thousand octavo volumes?

### **EVIDENCES OF NATIONAL DEGENERACY.**

Now do not think, please, that I am exaggerating in any way when I say Ireland was threatened with national extinction if the Gaelic League had not stepped into the breach. I will tell you some instances which first drew my attention to the appalling state of public opinion in the Irish-speaking country. I remember the first thing that opened my eyes was one day that as I was going from the fair of Tuam. I was selling cattle there. I am not ashamed of it; all Irishmen sell cattle when they have them to sell; and very glad to have them. I overtook a young man driving a cow before me, and I spoke to the young man in Irish, and as I was speaking in Irish he was answering in English, and at last I said to him, "Don't you speak Irish?"

And what was his answer? "Well, I declare to God, sir, that neither my father nor my mother has one word of English and still I can't spake and I won't spake Irish."

And I, who had just left Professor Georges Godet, of Brittany, France, and Professor Hakon, of Copenhagen, in Denmark, and Kuno Meyer, of Germany, living on buttermilk and potatoes on the mountainsides of the houses of the peasantry to learn to speak the language that this reptile was discarding – to tell you the honest truth I lost my temper. I lost my temper and I stood out from him, and to tell the honest truth, I hit him one kick. And, mind you, it just shows you what the loss of your native language does for you, the poor, unfortunate devil, he didn't have courage enough to turn around and knock me down.

I remember another day, I was about six miles from my own house passing along the road when the children came trooping out of what is commonly called a National School; and there was a little "gossoon" there that I was talking Irish to. I had some questions to ask about people in the neighbourhood, and as I talked to him in Irish

he answered me in English. At last, I said to him, “Don’t you speak Irish?”

What was the answer? “And isn’t it Irish I’m speaking?”

“No, *a chuisle*,” said I, “it is not Irish you are speaking.”

“Then this is how I spoke it ever!” says he.

That meant that poor little boy coming out of a National School was so densely, darkly and brutally ignorant that he did not know that I was speaking to him in one language and he was answering me in another. That is what passes for Government education in Ireland, but it won’t pass in future for Government education, or for any kind of education.

I remember another day, in the County of Sligo, the first of these instances happened in Galway, the second in Mayo, and this in Sligo. I went into a house to wait for a train and there was a pretty little girl at the fireside, and I sat down on a “creepy” stool and began to talk to her, and, after her first shyness, she began talking Irish very nicely to me, and we were having a pleasant conversation when a dirty little unwashed red-headed brother stuck in his nose, out of a door, and he cocked his nose at her and said, “Now, Mary, isn’t that a credit for ye?” and not a word could I get out of Mary from that time on. You laugh, gentlemen, and, God forgive me, I laughed, too; but when I went home and thought over it, I swear to you that I cried, because I saw it was the tragedy of a nation in a nutshell.

### **A WONDERFUL GALWAY PEASANT.**

I passed through the County Galway a few months ago, and I came across a man who could neither read nor write nor speak English. Quite right, gentlemen; it was all his luck. An ordinary English tourist would put that man down as a mere brute; but what a mind that man had! What a memory! What a wealth of song! What a fund of story! What a variety of information! I wrote down from him at one sitting an Ossianic poem of four hundred lines never before printed or heard of.

He had a marvellous fund of folk tale, remainders of Ossianic lays, of religious poems, of songs, parodies, proverbs – in a word, everything that could go to enrich the mind and the moral nature. And

all *that* must die with him! And what were we going to replace it with in his son? We were going to replace it with the Third Reading Book, and I would as soon have a lump of ashes choked down my throat as the Third Reading Book of the National Schools.

Now the Gaelic League is engaged upon a grand, reconstructive policy, the policy of creating a new nation upon the old lines, and before we can build up, it is necessary for us to place our finger on the blots.

Well, first, there is the language question of which I have spoken; but a number of other things hang from that language question. And first, strangely enough, comes the question of our own names. It has always seemed to me that a man's own name is part and parcel of himself. I am quite sure that if you changed my name tomorrow I would feel that I was changed myself; I would not understand it. And yet, within the last sixty or seventy years, Irishmen undergoing this awful process of national extinction, have been greedy to change their honourable, ancient, proud Milesian names into some abominable monosyllable because it sounded like something English. Some of the O'Connors became Conyers; the MacRorys, Rogers; the O'Donnells, Daniels; the McCarthys, Carters, and so on.

### **CHANGING THEIR FINE OLD IRISH NAMES.**

I remember Daniel O'Connell once, at a great mass meeting, speaking against an opponent of his, Lord Chancellor Sugden: "Why," said O'Connell, in his best O'Connellite manner, "you wouldn't call a decent pig Sugden," and yet he never uttered one word of remonstrance when he saw the McGraths, the Brannigans and the McRorys changing their names before his very eyes to Guthries, Brodericks, and Rogers. And the melancholy part of it was that not one single word of warning was ever addressed to the Irish race by their public men, or by their papers, to put a stop to this colossal attempt at vulgarity and degradation until we arose to-day at the eleventh hour. Look at our Christian names. I would have thought the names that were good enough for my grandfather and great-grandfather before me should be good enough for me. Where are our magnificent names of men and boys, Cathair and Domhnal and Angus

and Fergus and Cormac and Diarmuid, and so forth. Where do you meet those names now? The man that you call Diarmuid when you speak Irish, an anti-Irish, degrading custom, begot by slavery, propagated by cringing, and fostered by flunkeyism, forces you to call Jeremiah, Jer-em-i-ah. Where are our beautiful female names, Nora and Una and Eibhlin and Moirin and Brighid? Where are they? A woman said to me not so long ago, "God forbid," said she, poor thing, "God forbid that I should handicap my child in life by calling her Bridget!" She was wrong! She did handicap her child in life, but it was when she taught her to be ashamed of the patron saint of her own country. There are ten, twenty thousand honest Irish girls whose mothers christened them Bridget at home, who, the moment they touch American soil, call themselves Bride, and Bridie, and Delia and Bedelia. The spirit of Irish nationality as it speaks through the Gaelic League will never be appeased so long as our boys are called Daniel and Jeremiah, instead of Domhnal and Diarmuid, and our girls Helen and Julia, instead of Eibhlin and Sidhle.

Take our music. After all, the bagpipes, though you may not love its sound, was an artistic instrument; no man but an artist could play upon it. The violin is an artistic instrument; no man without a soft touch, a fine ear, and artistic feeling can play upon the violin. The violin and the bagpipes were in every parish when I was young. Where are they to-day? What has taken their place? What grand, artistic instruments have taken the place of the bagpipes and the violin? Here they are (imitates the playing of the accordion and the concertina.) Or, if it isn't that, then this has taken its place (imitates the motion of playing the hand organ.) That is called, I suppose, being an Irish nation. Ah! where is the venerable custodian of Ireland's song and music, the man who always commanded a welcome at the peasant's fireside as he trudged through the bogs and over the mountains and through the woods of the country? He sleeps with his green bag beside him under the green sward. In his place have come upon the village stage that quintessence of all vulgarity and all abomination, known throughout the world as the "stage Irishman." Gentlemen, your action in dealing with that monster in New York gave me a greater gratification and impressed upon me the imperishability of the Irish

character, the possibility of welding our race together, more than any other thing that I remember reading in the American papers.

### **WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE LEAGUE.**

Well, I said at the outset that I would have failed in my mission to-night if I did not convince you that Ireland was really threatened with national extinction in the most far-reaching and vital sense of the word; and I think I have shown you that it was. I said I would put my finger on the blots, and now you will ask me what have we done to fill them? I will tell you. A dozen years ago, Irish was taught in less than a dozen schools; six years ago it was taught in 105 schools; to-day it is taught, more or less, in something over three thousand of the eight thousand schools of Ireland. Between public and parochial schools, between colleges and convents, there cannot be less than a quarter of a million people now studying to read and write the language. Six years ago, in intermediate education only 260 pupils passed in Irish; last year over two thousand.

Six years ago no stranger coming to Ireland would have seen anything to tell him he was not in a big, vulgarized English county. Now, in many of the large towns, and in Dublin, the capital, you see the names of the streets put up and the names of the roads, and the names of the towns printed in Irish capitals at the corner of the streets, and you know that you are not in England. Six years ago, scarcely a paper printed a word of our language. Now all the national daily papers and very many of the weekly papers print columns of it. Six years ago, an Irish book was a rarity that appeared only at intervals of many months. Now not a week goes by but a new book printed in Irish is issued from the press, and the distribution of books and pamphlets from our own office alone, not to speak of the booksellers, has been something over a quarter of a million for every year of the last four.

Six years ago, if you spoke Irish as well as Owen Roe and wrote it as well as Geoffrey Keating it would not be worth a *traithnin* to you. Now you cannot obtain a place under the Corporation of Dublin, under the Corporation of Limerick, under the County Councils of Cork or Mayo, and a dozen other places, unless you know the language of your country. Six years ago if the products of Irish hands and Irish brains

were to find a market they had to come back with the hallmark of London or of Paris upon them. To-day we are rearing and raising a race of men whose one object will be that the article that they buy shall bear the hall mark of "Made in Ireland"; and the results have been amazing.

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We have two training schools, one in Munster and one in Connacht, to teach the people how to teach. We have a school of higher Irish learning which Kuno Meyer and Professor Strachan, the greatest masters of old Irish and of phonetics in the world, are teaching, and in which they are doing what Trinity College, with all its wealth, refused to do – training up a race of Irish scholars that will take rank among the foremost scholars of the world. We have a fine place of our own in Dublin. We have only twenty paid officers. We have a weekly paper and a monthly magazine. We have organizers who work night and day, Sunday and Monday, at their hard task of persuading the people to be Irish again, and who work and sweat themselves to death at a miserable wage that here you would not offer to a fifth-rate stenographer. And they have a corps of two hundred teachers with them. Wherever they go they bring with them a whiff of ancient Ireland. They teach not the language and the music alone, but the traditions, the dances, and the history of the race.

### **THE HOPE OF NATIONHOOD.**

To my mind the existence of Ireland, a nation, depends upon this – whether we can keep those men doing the work or whether we cannot keep them.

And now you will ask me how we manage all this. Where do we get the money for it? Well, it has not been out of the pockets of the

great or of the rich in Ireland, I assure you. Who was it that gave us our first legacy, more than five years ago. Who was it that saw floating before his dying eye, as it were, the vision of an Irish nation? Who but a hard working gunsmith, Patrick Mullins, here in New York. He left us by his will ten thousand dollars, and never before did Ireland get, and never again will she get, as much value for money received. And I desire here, on behalf of every Gael in Ireland, to thank Patrick Ford and the *Irish World*; to thank John Devoy and THE GAELIC AMERICAN; to thank that magnificent body of Irishmen, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and to thank one and all, papers and societies and individuals, who have tried to assist us in the hour of our weakness. Now we make an appeal every year to our fellow-countrymen, during the week in which falls St. Patrick's Day, and our countrymen contribute, almost entirely in pennies and sixpences and shillings, a sum of between three thousand and four thousand pounds, and we make ourselves a sum of between three and four thousand pounds from the sale of our books, pamphlets and newspapers; and with that money we are reviving the soul of Ireland.

But, alas! our work is circumscribed; it must necessarily be circumscribed; we are a poor country; we are an impoverished people. The pennies and the shillings of the poor do not go very far. We are accomplishing our great work, as it were, from hand to mouth. One thing and one thing alone has saved the Irish nation, and it has been the gallant self-sacrifice and devotion of the men who are engaged in this task. I could point to man after man broken in health, broken in wealth, who lay down and died in the cause of what they believed was Irish nationhood, as truly martyrs to the cause as if you had placed them up against that wall and fusilladed them with a file of soldiers. And without that devotion, a million of pounds could have worked no miracle.

Ah! if we only had an intellectual headquarters for the Irish race; if we only had an assured position but for ten short years; oh, if we could only send an organizer into every single diocese in Ireland – then the Irish nation would be saved beyond any shadow of doubt!

### **THE WORK AHEAD.**

Well, it is getting so late, I do not want to speak any more, but I had a lot more to say to you. Well, just remember this: The Irish language, thank God, is neither Protestant nor Catholic. It is neither a landlord nor a tenant; it is neither a Unionist nor a Separatist; and, in taking it for our platform, we have achieved what is to my mind the supreme and crowning glory of the Gaelic League, because, for the first time in Ireland within my recollection, Catholic and Protestant, Unionist and Nationalist, landlord and tenant, priest and parson, came together, all working hand in hand in the interest of Ireland's life and intellectuality, and we are realizing for the first time, the glorious dream of Thomas Davis:

“How every race and every trade  
Should be by love combined.”

We are working together in a common cause, in a spirit of good fellowship. Mr. Chairman, that word is not strong enough; in a spirit of loving brotherhood, which has, of recent years, been unexampled in Ireland; and we are not engaged in doing anything that is impossible. It is perfectly possible, and we know it, and we see it.

But I tell you that there is no royal road to the recovery of our nationality. It is a difficult, it is an arduous task, and it demands self-sacrifice. If we are in earnest and have behind us the moral support and the good wishes of America, we must succeed. If we are only playing at being in earnest – and that is a game Irishmen are very good at – then we shall fail and the whole world will deride us, and the historian will take his tablets and write the words: *Finis Hibernia* – the end of Ireland.

The Gaelic League is in earnest. It knows what it is asking and it know why it is asking for it. It will abate no jot and no tittle of its demand. The oftener it is knocked down the more vigorously will it rise up again. It will accept no defeat. We have upon our side, right, justice, reason, the memory of our dead, and, though it may seem a strange thing to utter it in this town of roaring commerce, yet I believe in my heart that the dead are often more potent than the living.

We have the sympathy of the scholars of Europe. We have the good will of all well-wishers of Ireland, and against us we have only

race hatred, anti-Irish bigotry, and Trinity College, Dublin, and the time has gone by when that combination, from which nothing constructive ever yet emanated – the time has gone by when they shall win any more battles in Ireland.

Pardon me for having kept you so long. Pardon me for speaking to this late hour of the night. I shall end. But I earnestly implore every one of you, whether he be a Nationalist or a Unionist – whatever his politics may be – for this is surely no political matter – to do his best to help the Irish race to develop upon Irish lines, because on Irish lines alone can the Irish race once more become what it was of yore – one of the most original, artistic, literary and charming peoples in Europe.

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