

PRESENTATION OF THE IRISH TRICOLOUR.

Music Hall, Dublin, 14th April, 1848.

[The return of the Deputation from France was celebrated by a banquet, at which two thousand of the Nationalists of Dublin attended. Several members of the '82 Club were also present in their uniform. One of the regimental colours of the old Dublin Volunteers was presented to Mr. Smith O'Brien. Mr. Meagher presented a Tricolour, through the President of the banquet, to the citizens of Dublin.]

I went to France animated with a love of freedom, and glorying in its service. I have returned from France with this love deepened in my soul - worshipping no other object on this earth save that one radiant and stately image, to which, in Paris, in Vienna, in Palermo, the breath of the people has imparted life, vigour, and immortal beauty.

For any fate to which this love and worship may impel me, I am not only willing but ambitious.

Mingling in the crowds that gathered round the trees of liberty, which the brave hands that built the barricades have planted, to commemorate the virtue, the invincibility of the people - contemplating those simple ceremonies, in which the enthusiasm of the most gifted and gallant nation in the world displays itself so gently and so grandly - turning from these scenes, and looking upon the wounded of the 24th of February - sufferers over whose features the consciousness of having played a glorious part had diffused a glow of health and rapture, and from whose lips there escaped no selfish penitence for the blood which their hearts had offered up - finding those sick-beds resorted to by the fairest and highest of the land, and the sufferers honoured more loyally than ever kings were honoured - following, then, the coffin of some poor fellow who had died of his sacred wounds, and round whose pall the waving palm-leaf mingled with, and mellowed, the glittering of the bayonet and the golden cross - beholding there the holy homage which a free state is sure to render those whose blood has made her free - a witness of all these scenes, I

have become reckless of that life which cautious legal men - grand jurors of the city - Attorney Generals of the English Crown - solemn judges in red cloth and ermine - men of withered hearts and cunning brain — would exhort you to preserve, for the sake of peace and place, the gold dust of the Crown, and all the other perquisites of enlightened slavery.

From Paris, the city of the tricolour and the barricade, this flag has been proudly borne. I present it to my native land, and I trust that the old country will not refuse this symbol of a new life from one of her youngest children.

I need not explain its meaning. The quick and passionate intellect of the generation now springing into arms will catch it at a glance.

The white in the centre signifies a lasting truce between the “orange” and the “green” — and I trust that beneath its folds, the hands of the Irish Protestant and the Irish Catholic may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood.

Should this flag be destined to fan the flames of war, let England behold once more, upon that white centre, the Red Hand that struck her down from the hills of Ulster - and I pray that Heaven may bless the vengeance it is sure to kindle!