

LECTURE TO CARRICK-ON-SUIR BRANCH OF THE GAELIC LEAGUE.

By Pádraig Pearse.

**Extracts from a Gaelic League lecture given on Sunday 31st
December, 1911 to the Carrick-on-Suir branch of the Gaelic
League.**

To be logical, I will begin and end in Irish, but it may be that there are some present who cannot follow me in that language. Ireland is the only country in the civilised world in which a person addressing a gathering of natives of the country has to make a shameful admission that most of his audience will not understand an address delivered in their country's language. The people of Ireland have thrown over the Irish language? And what have they got in its place? They think they have got English, but the broken English they speak is very far from being the English of England. Furthermore, they in Ireland will never be able to speak English, and the most they will ever get in exchange for Irish will be a mongrel gibberish full of the idioms and expressions of the Irish mind that was meant by God to speak Irish.

The subject in which I am about to address to you this night – the Education of the Children of the Nation – is the most important subject that can engage the attention of any people. The Irish people are just now on the eve of momentous issues, and in the near future they may be called upon to provide for the country a system of genuine national education. The philosophy of education and the psychology of the child has been engaging a good deal of the attention of learned people of late. The ancient Gael had developed a system of education which has never been surpassed by any other people. Under Home Rule Ireland would have an Education Board, having at its head an Irish Minister responsible to the Irish Executive. The business of that education department would be to Gaelicise Irish Education.

If Home Rule does not come what will happen? Will the Irish people haul down the flag of Irish Nationality that they have kept aloft for 700 years, and for the sake of which so many have fought and died. No, they will not. We cannot afford to let this Irish nation perish after having kept up the struggle for freedom so long. If Home Rule does not come then momentous events may happen and happen soon. The people of Ireland may be called upon sooner than they may expect to make great sacrifices for their country. What will happen if Home Rule does not come can be left to the young generation to settle and I can assure you that the young generation will know what to do if the crisis comes.

In this great last fight for Ireland and for the Irishising of Irish education and the killing of West Britonism in their schools every man and woman in Ireland must decide now on which side they will be found – the side of West Briton or of Ireland. The system of education they will have in future should be practical and should teach boys to be useful on their father's farms and in their business houses and girls to be useful in their homes. I would not desire to see any change made in the present managerial system.

In conclusion, you should remember that this country is Ireland, not England, and that you are Ireland's sons and daughters owing devotion and duty to the motherland. In the great struggle that is coming, and which may come in our own time, we must all make up our minds to be on one side or the other. No man can serve two masters. We cannot serve Ireland and serve against her. We must now decide on which side we are to be. If there will be any of Ireland's children found against her then they will be terribly untrue to all their traditions.

The near future is to decide whether this ancient nation is to perish after such a long and glorious struggle, or whether we are to rear for her a race of men and women that will stand, when the time to do so comes, for right against might, for truth against falsehood, for Ireland against the world.