

THE TOCSIN OF IRELAND.

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Ireland is perhaps at this hour in arms for her rights; in arms for the rights so patiently solicited, so perversely refused, so tyrannically trampled upon while one fragment of them remained.

The rights which she sought in vain to purchase with her tears; which she springs up at last to purchase with her heart's blood only when the sacred charter of manhood without which our life is lower than the dog's or the slave's is trampled under the feet of her foreign lords.

It is her last resource, long evaded, long postponed; the bitter cup which Heaven would not permit to pass away from her; and now in the face of Europe, in the face of America, in the face of our kindred, our race and our nation, in the face of our Great Creator of us all, we declare that this war is just and necessary; that men may enter upon it with a free conscience, and a full assurance that it is Heaven's work.

It is no light or factious quarrel. Oh! surely not, my friends! *We fight for liberty to live.*—Hundreds of thousands of Irishmen would again die in the tortures of famine; hundreds of thousands of Irishmen would again fly over the wide sea to perish of unknown horrors in the swamps of Canada and the woods of Michigan. If we bowed our neck to the parliament of England at this hour. We fight for liberty to retain the rights of manhood—that, in common with every nation in Europe, we may possess arms—that our lips may be free to utter just complaints—that the laws may be our protection, not alone against the common robber and housebreaker, but against the robbery in the livery and arms of authority, and the housebreaker carrying the ukase of a Privy Council or the edict of a Secretary of State. We fight to resist outrages on a people more grievous and dishonouring than those for which an English King was carried the block; outrages which at this hour would cause the swords of France or Italy to spring from their scabbards to strike dead their audacious author.—We fight

because there is no remedy but the sword; because in this island, as favoured by Heaven; our traders have been made bankrupts, our peasantry have been transformed into hideous paupers, our gentry erected into a hostile garrison, and our educated classes corrupted into stipendiaries and arch-detectives, by the diabolical acts of England. Between the seeds of hatred between creed and creed, between class and class, between man and man, have been studiously sown by her hand, for the ruin of our strength and of our honour. Because we have been an exception to the nations of the earth. Throughout all Europe there was scarcity in the past year; in Ireland alone there were famine and death. Throughout all Europe there have been concessions to the will of the people; in Ireland alone was there insolence for concession and tyranny for justice. We fight because we are denied peace, except at the price of dishonour; because the men who have abandoned the enjoyments of wealth and civilisation to fight in the ranks of the people are doomed to the prison, perhaps predestined to the grave of Tone and Fitzgerald, if the people permit them to fall into the hands of their enemy. We fight, because the honour, the interest, the necessity, the very existence of this ancient nation depends upon our valour and devotion at this hour. If we cower, if we flinch, if we falter, the hopes are gone for which our fathers gave their life's blood. Gone in the stench of dishonour and infamy that will cling to us forever.

For 500 years the flower of every generation of Irishmen have been killed on the battle-field or murdered on the scaffold, or driven into desolate exile, for this cause. Genius and courage that would have made our island illustrious in all ages have been scattered over the earth, or wasted in feverish projects of redemption. It is time this should end. In God's name let it end now. Let this be our last struggle. Earth is weary of our groans; let us kindle her heart anew with the roar of our onset, and soothe it with the *Te Deum* of a holy victory.

Arise, then, brave comrades, arise! since it must be so. The fieriest soul is now the wisest and the best. This is the hour when individual manhood is worth all the arts and science of diplomacy. Who will strike fearlessly at the night hour is a deliverer and a king. The destiny of a nation, the hopes of mankind, to-day asks but us. Sicily beating on the breast of Ireland. Come then, dear friends, by our love of the old

land, by the stern memory of our wrongs, without redress and without hope, save in our own courage, come and rally round the green banner wheresoever it floats. We are the millions and irresistible. They are but the units, to be scattered before us like a single hunter before the whole forest at bay. For in our noble cause every man has a part and an interest, every village is a depot, every hand is an ally, every stick, every stone is a weapon. They can stand before us no more than the grass before the lava—the brushwood against the avalanche. Be bold and true, and one moon will not swell and fade till the battle is won—won for us and our children and posterity for ever—won for all the races scattered over that wide desert of sordid tyranny upon which the sun never sets.

There is no neutrality now. You must choose your side, and choose quickly. If you love famine, stripes, and dishonour—if you are prepared to abandon your arms and your liberty—join the red ranks of England. If you love justice—if your heart warms at the memories of this dear land—if it swells with the hope of her deliverance and her glory, God bless you, your side is with your country—your rank is beneath the green banner of Ireland.

Let no man who has stimulated this quarrel, by word or deed, presume to hold back now. If he does he is dishonoured and accursed—

‘Earth is not deep enough to hide
The coward slave who turns aside;
Hell is not enough to scathe
The traitor knave who’d break his faith.’

If we fail—if our success is not instantaneous and overwhelming—the shame will be with men pledged to the cause, or secretly devoted to it, but who hold back at the right minute for action. And verily they will have their reward. If this cause perish no cowardice, no caution will save *them*. Disgrace will dog them to the death—Dishonour will sit like a household fiend on their hearths. They will be a byword of scorn—and men will point their fingers at them, till the grave covers them, and the worms prey upon them.

And worse scourges than war lie in wait for them. Down will come the potato blight like a curse of God for their cowardice. Down will come the exterminators more desolating than a famine. Down will

come Twistleton and his horde of obscure harpies to seize upon the last fragment of their subsistence. Down will come the British parliament to scourge them with new taxes, new coercion bills, new insults and new robbery. Down will come the ruffian gang of Irish members to mock at their despair and sell the trust they gave them; and where then will the people look for a protector? Who will left his voice for that base generation who have abandoned their generous leaders, their plighted honour, and their immortal hopes from cowardice.

But if we succeed—*when* we succeed, did God ever bless men with so intoxicating a triumph as will be ours. To see our nation rise again like a young queen, proud and happy. To see prosperity run like fresh blood through all the veins of society. To see our Irish race year after year growing more prosperous, more manly, more virtuous. To see the green banner that we love still floating before eyes, like the star of our destiny. To see all the Irish race, without distinctions of class or creed, united in our love, and ready to maintain the rights of our ancient land against all mankind. Oh! God grant it! God send it soon though our blood be part of the price to purchase that immortal treasure of liberty.