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SCOTCH-IRISH CHARACTERISTICS.

BY REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., OF NEW YORK.

My Fellow Citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen:—I can not give expression to the pleasure that I feel in being permitted to come and speak to so many of you, and in the circumstances in which we are gathered together.

I shall explain to you, in a word or two, the purpose that is before my mind. Many months ago, I received a communication from your friends who organized this society, asking me to come and take part in its proceedings. It appeared to me extremely improbable at the time that I could accept the invitation; and I took the liberty of naming an alternate, in the person of Dr. MacIntosh, of Philadelphia. Accordingly, it was arranged that he should come, and, properly speaking, my address will be delivered by Dr. MacIntosh, at such time as the committee may select.

It is said of a countryman of mine who settled in America, that he liked it so well that he resolved to make it his native land. You smile audibly at this statement, but, in point of fact, it is the very thing that Dr. MacIntosh did. He came over to Pennsylvania to be born, then went back to Great Britain to be educated, and finally came back to America, and has done nothing but honor to it ever since. (Applause.)

I do not propose, ladies and gentlemen, to go into the field of history that has been traversed already, and that will be traversed again, with so great ability. It is the story of a marked race. We all know how voluminous the authors of Germany are. One of them proposed to write a history of the world, and he set about the task. He completed three full volumes before he reached the creation. (Laughter.) I do not want to set out on that line, but rather to talk to you, in the simplest and most informal manner, about my observations among the people in the land from which the Scotch-Irish came. I belong to their race. I am of the sixth generation that moved over from Scotland into Ireland. They continued to live upon the same land, and I have the happiness of being the eldest son of the family, and of having the land upon which my ancestors dwelt for the six generations; and if ever you hear any thing spoken in the way of calling out sympathy for the tenants of Ireland, I hope you will extend a part of your

sympathy to me, for I belong to that category. It is two and twenty years since I left Ireland and became a resident of these United States. Speaking of this date reminds me of a circumstance that may interest some of you. One of our most prominent ministers, Rev. Dr. Beatty, made a visit to Belfast years ago, and a reception was tendered him and his associates by the town. When he was called upon to speak, as I am doing now, he came upon the platform and said: "It gives me great pleasure to be back here among my people. I left Ulster one hundred and thirty years ago." They opened their eyes widely, for they could not take in the thought that he was one hundred and thirty years old; but he explained that that was the time when his forefathers left the land and came to reside in America. It has been twenty-two years since I left that land, and, though I can say that I have in me the spirit of a true American citizen, I have not lost a particle of the love and affection that I cherish, and will ever cherish, for the people of my own native Ulster. (Applause.)

When I was in Cincinnati, in 1867, being sent over as a delegate to this country to the meeting of the general assembly, I went into a church. A gentleman was sitting by me in the audience, and was volunteering information to me about things that were going on around. My eye rested upon a man in the audience, and I said: "Is his name McKee?" My friend said: "Yes, he is McKee, of Louisville; a famous preacher there, I believe." A day or two afterward, I was introduced to the same gentleman; his face was so like that of the McKees in Ulster that I identified him at once. A few days after our introduction, he told me he came from Ulster, and that he heard there were several persons of his name in the ministry over there. I say to you, as I looked over the faces of the people here yesterday, I could hardly keep the tears from my eyes, as they rested upon so many heads and faces and figures like those with which I had been familiar in Ulster. The changes of a physical kind are far less than one would at first suppose; and I wish for nothing better than that you may keep pure the moral characteristics and the habits of private life that made the Scotch-Irish what, by the grace of God, they have been made.

I will say a few words as to the characteristics of the people as I lived among them. In the first place, I think it is true to say, that they are remarkably industrious as a people, and they succeeded in securing a degree of comfort in their homes, and respectability in dress and appearance, that would hardly be expected from their limited means. I remember that four or five or six acres of land was enough for a family. They raised crops upon it for the support of the family, and by means of weaving at other times, the men and the women

were accustomed to supplement the produce of the little farm, and secure a certain degree of independence and respectability. Those industrious traits are propagated still, and I hope they will continue to be. Just as soon as machinery came into use, the people of the north of Ireland availed themselves of it. They adapted themselves to the new conditions and circumstances, and its effect is visible at the present time. The one manufacturing region in Ireland you will find in Ulster. The only thing that has succeeded in money making in the way of manufacturing in the three other provinces are two forms of enterprise known as distilling and brewing; but in Ulster it is the other way. Many people in Ulster feel apprehensive in regard to contemplated legislation, for they say that, if a high rate of taxation should be put upon the provinces, the amount which would fall upon Ulster would be out of proportion to that upon the other provinces, and would tend to embarrass its industries.

We should do the best that we can to propagate these habits of hard working and industry among the people with whom we come in contact. I will mention an incident that occurred in Ulster during the terrible famine in 1844-5-6. Owing to the complete failure of the potato crop in Connaught, the suffering there was very intense. Many contributions from America and elsewhere were sent in. Christian ladies resolved to make the people in Ireland self-sustaining. They corresponded with the people mostly in Ulster, and asked that teachers be sent out to give instruction in sewed muslin work. The result was, that female teachers, mostly the daughters of farmers in Ulster, capable and educated, were sent into Connaught, where the people were starving; and the result was the introduction, not only of a high moral training, but a teaching of industry, and habits of self-support and self-reliance, which is still visible in their condition to this day.

The second thing I have to notice, in connection with these Ulster people, is a certain unwillingness on their part to be the recipients of charity. There were various forms of charity scattered over the country, governmental and ecclesiastical. The Scotch-Irish, as a class, were usually the last to avail themselves of these opportunities. It is a governmental regulation in the old world that in the poor-houses there should be chaplains of the respective denominations. Presbyterian ministers used to smile over the fact that it was difficult to get their people into the poor-house. They had a small constituency in there. For nine years, I was chaplain of the Presbyterian order to the female convict establishment in Dublin, which represented all the female convicts of the country. My salary was not particularly ex-

travagant, but I used to feel compunction in taking it. We had in the establishment seven hundred female convicts. Usually, there would be about sixty-five that were Protestants of any kind, and fifteen of these were as many as usually fell to my lot, although the Protestant people represented a fourth of the population of the country. This unwillingness to be dependent upon charity is characteristic of the people. I am sorry to say, that there are some of my fellow-countrymen who do not inherit this self-respect. I remember a man that, some time ago, made application to me for aid on the ground that he was a Presbyterian "like I was," and therefore thought it best to apply to me. There was a certain brogue in his voice that put me a little in doubt. "Well," I said, "I know nearly every man that is in the congregation I serve, and I don't remember seeing you there." He convicted himself when he said, "Well, I am always there at vespers." The American way of describing it is, that he gave himself away without knowing it.

Let us cultivate in America this proud spirit of self-reliance. Where is there a land with the resources that this country has? I was taken out yesterday eight or nine miles to the old historic church, and as I gazed at the fertile land, the beautiful fields, the growing crops, the magnificent trees, the treasures of the southland, I could not but think what responsibility rests upon the people of these regions; how much God has given them, for which they should magnify, glorify, and honor him!

The third thing I would like to mention in connection with these Scotch-Irish people, is that they are very strict and conscientious in the matter of their religious observances. My memory goes back to the scenes that made the greatest impression upon me, I mean the communion seasons in the country congregations. There was a solemn assemblage of the people on Wednesday or Thursday, when the people were expected to be in church. There was another service on Saturday, the ministers generally getting some of their brethren to assist them in the exercises. The services of the communion Sabbath would last three, four, and five hours, and yet there did not seem to be any weariness on the part of the people.

I remember how, before the elders gave the cup, the people sang:

"I'll of salvation take the cup,
And on God's name will call;
I'll pay my vows now to the Lord
Before His people all."

They would take a seat at the table, then communion services would follow, and thanksgiving would be raised for the blessings they enjoyed, and then the visiting minister would take charge. The impression made by those services I will carry to my dying day, and I could wish nothing better for the Scotch-Irish race

than that, reasonably dependent upon new conditions, we should retain the same loyal attachment to God's truth, the same high appreciation of Christian privileges, and the same spirit of consecration to him whom we call the God of our salvation, and before whom we rejoice as the God of our fathers. I remember the first time I was taken to Sunday-school. Two girls, relations of mine, told me that they would call for me. I can remember the picture that was then presented to me. They had on their Sunday dresses, of course, nice, clean, with a pocket handkerchief wrapped reverently around a little Bible, a flower stuck in the end of the Bible. The girls carried this in their hands in a decent, quiet way, and they brought me thus to school. At that time we had no international lesson system, and no modern methods of teaching. We boys, after school, would compare notes and say: "How many chapters did you read? We have read thirteen." The reply would be, "Oh, we did better than that; we read fourteen." The work consisted mainly in the children being grouped together and reading verse after verse. The teacher confined his instruction mainly to correcting errors in pronunciation, and keeping the boys in good order. An immense change has taken place to-day, and you would not find in Christendom better organized Sunday-schools and better teachers than there are in Ulster at the present time. Let us continue the same methods over this land, without partisanship, but in the true spirit of patriotism. You and I will agree in the declaration that if we would have the righteousness that exalteth a nation, and keep away the sin that disgraces a people, we must get the word of the Lord into the hearts of the people, we must educate the conscience and keep it educated, and then men will fear God, and work righteousness.

One other thing characteristic of the people as I knew them: that is, the great interest they felt in education. This is a fruitful theme, but I will not dwell long upon it. I will only mention that for generations, in the province of Ulster, an educated ministry was always sought and obtained; but that these men might be educated had given the greatest trouble and difficulty. No college would admit them. Trinity college was founded upon a broad basis, and the two first fellows were Presbyterians and Scotchmen. But this was taken away, and the boys had then to go to Scotland. They walked fifty or sixty miles with a package on their shoulders. They stopped at the farm-houses, and they never were refused hospitality. They would land at Glasgow and walk to Edinburgh, and accept hospitality from the people. Dr. Henry Cook, one of the greatest men that Ireland ever produced, made his way thus to a Scottish university. The process of

conflict, of self-denial, of constrained ingenuity that these young men were compelled to go through in order to obtain an education, made them in a high degree strong men, capable men, business men, effective men in doing the work that was given them as leaders of the people, and instructors in the interests of good. Some of the best instructors that the people call Scotch-Irish were found in the persons of ministers. A minister would set up a classical school to which boys would come to get an education that was necessary to fit them for entering college. Many came who did not want to learn the classics. All paid school fees regularly, and maintained their independence. In this connection I think of the Rev. Mr. Blakely, minister in Monahan, where there are hundreds of men, and not a few upon this continent to-day, who will tell you that they owe every thing in life to the teaching of that faithful minister, who did the duties of his charge at the same time he was giving this instruction. Another specimen was Dr. McKee, a kinsman of the man to whom I have alluded.

It is my misfortune that I am tall. I am a high churchman by nature. I was tall as a boy, but Mr. McKee was taller, six feet, seven, and perfectly straight. I remember to-day with pride that he laid his hand upon my head and gave me a pleasant word. I was a student then, but I never forgot it. He had a fine school and a large congregation. He was a farmer, and managed his farm with skill and ability. He had a good horse, and like Mr. Bonner here, he was very proud of horses, but he never touched any thing like betting or gambling on races. He was driving through his parish one afternoon on one of his extremely good horses. It was a day like this, with a strong sun. There was a poor man working in a field by the roadside, with his coat off, and his shirt badly torn. The consequence was that the sun had reddened that portion of his skin which was exposed, as if it would blister it. McKee looked at the man and pitied him. He dismounted, and having long legs, stepped over the fence. "My friend, come here," and McKee took off his waistcoat and shirt, and made the man put on the shirt, and then buttoning up the coat, said, "Nobody will miss my shirt before I get home," and he left it there. He was the only Presbyterian minister in Ireland that was invited to go and to speak in a Roman Catholic Church. The people regarded him as an honest, God-fearing man, and they said: "Whatever he says we must do." He passed away, but left a son behind who was my successor in the large church in Dublin. He was minister in the north of Ireland before being brought to Dublin. I heard a circumstance concerning him that I will repeat now. "You ought to have a better salary," said some of his deacons

to him. "Why?" said he. "Well, you have to go to more expense than we," they said. "You have to wear better clothing, and keep up better style." "Clothing," said he, and he turned around and laid his hand upon the head of one of his elders who was near, and said: "He is a better man than I; why should I have a better coat than he?" That was the style of the man; unselfish, noble, heroic, living for the truth; and when his health broke down, and he had to go to Australia with the hope of improving it. It was proposed by and by, in the course of time, that there should be established a national system of education. All united secular education was fought by the Catholics. The Presbyterians first took their stand in the support of that system. The time was when my poor countrymen who came here from the other provinces of Ireland could neither read nor write, and came as navvies, porters, and railroad hands. The corresponding class coming to this country to-day does not come to be porters and railroad workers, but present themselves at the dry-goods stores and other such occupations, because they have an education that can sustain them. There have been established in Ireland colleges—three Queen's colleges and two other institutions under the control of the General Assembly, and the best educational facilities are enjoyed by the people; and it is with great satisfaction that I notice from time to time in the contests in the three kingdoms, that the male and female students from these Irish institutions take their places among the foremost. Ulster is keeping its ground in the forefront in the education of the country.

I am unwilling to take up too much of your time, but will say a single word in relation to things denominational there at this time. A very intelligent man said to me a short while ago: "I am glad to see you, and to shake hands with you. When an Irishman becomes a Presbyterian, he is sure to be a good one." That gentleman had in his mind the idea that all Irishmen in their native land were other than Protestant. That is a mistake. I might say in rough numbers that one-fourth of the people of Ireland are Protestant, and nearly one-half of these retain the Scotch Presbyterian type. The other half is the Protestant Episcopal church, which is strongest in Ulster, but is to some extent spread over the kingdom. I accordingly say to the gentlemen who are round about me, that when you are trying to form an estimate of proposed legislation for Ireland, of which we read so much, take into consideration the historic claims of this portion of Ireland, and its peculiar position; for, unless we do so, we can not rightly judge of the situation. The Irish General Assembly does not contain many rich people. They are found mostly in Belfast and the manufacturing centers, but although these people were

poor they founded colonial missions; preachers were sent to Canada and Australia, and these reflected gratitude to the feeble Presbyterian church of Ireland by establishing kindred institutions in those two dominions. The General Assembly now has missions in India, and in China, and in Spain. It has six hundred congregations as many ministers, and I might say that to-day there can not be found in Christendom a more determined body of ministers. And I am also glad to speak a word on behalf of the Protestant Episcopal church, which has working members and ministers. The disestablishment which took place, it was supposed by many, would destroy that institution, the state and church being so intimately connected. But the crisis was passed, and the members of the church found a responsibility resting upon them which they did not feel before, and though there have been a few local troubles, the Protestant Episcopal church in Ireland is stronger and better than before the disestablishment. This is one more illustration of the way in which the United States is setting the example to the nations and the countries of the world, of breaking down prejudice and making friends.

This meeting is the beginning of a series, the commencement of an organization that I think may do great good over this land. Let us know one another, and have sympathy with one another. Let it be intelligent sympathy. Let us try to understand the historical incidents of the country, and of the people to which we belong. Let us know how God led them. I can but think that the eye of America is seeing more distinctly than it once did, the way in which its life was shaped. There were Huguenots who suffered temptations and learned the trials of freedom. The Puritan passed through the same experience. He knew the blessing of free conscience, free worship, free legislation; and there are Scotch-Irish well fitted to be their companions, their comrades, their fellow soldiers, and fellow workers in the building up of a great nation, where God on the one hand shall have his rights, and his creatures on the other hand shall have their rights that he intended them to enjoy, and with which He blessed the community. Let us know one another, care for one another, love one another; let us help one another, and feel that it is a dignity that God has put upon us when he permits us to co-operate with these, our brethren, without sectionalism, partisanship or political feeling, in developing our great nation. On higher grounds let us come together and co-operate in building up and perpetuating the power of this great and glorious country: and then we, the children of the Scotch-Irish, will be moving upon the lines along which our fathers have gone in the generations that preceded us.