

# THE SCOTCH-IRISH IN AMERICA.

---

PROCEEDINGS AND ADDRESSES

OF THE

FOURTH CONGRESS,

AT

ATLANTA, GA., APRIL 28 TO MAY 1, 1892.

---

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF

THE SCOTCH-IRISH SOCIETY OF AMERICA.

UNIVERSITY OF

~~NASHVILLE~~

LIBRARY

NASHVILLE, TENN.:

PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

BARBEE & SMITH, AGENTS.

---

COPYRIGHT, 1892.  
SCOTCH-IRISH SOCIETY OF AMERICA.

---

W. W. BROWN  
ATLANTA,  
1892

## THE IRELAND OF TO-DAY.

BY DR. JOHN HALL, OF NEW YORK.

*Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen:* On the same day, I have learned, on which I was born, an aunt of mine, the mother of a large family, with her husband sailed for Canada, and of course I used to hear of them from time to time as the years passed on. When I was a visitor to this country in the year 1867, I managed to get a few days to make a visit to her and her household in Canada. They persuaded me to stay over a Sabbath, and of course they gave me an opportunity to preach in the church. One of the elders of the Church, a cousin of mine, made this statement to me before the beginning of the services: "There is not a family in the Church that is not related to you by blood, so that you needn't have the least hesitation in saying to us 'Men and Brethren.'" Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am bound to say that I feel somewhat in this frame of mind as I stand up to speak to you here in Atlanta. [Applause.] You have been so kind, so genial, so courteous, and you have told me so much regarding the people of my race who are in this state and a round about it, and I have had the privilege of being introduced to so many of you with whose kindred, judging from names and from other considerations, I was conversant in the old world, that I am free to say that I feel at home among you. I feel that I can, with perfect honesty, and in a way that is true to the truth of things, speak to you as "Men and Brethren."

To-day a lady—I will not put in those adjectives that you sometimes hear in that connection, beautiful, and charming, and lovely, and so on—but a young lady summoned me over to this side of this room and after a few pleasant words said: "My grandmother was named Hall, and I want therefore to put this bouquet into your hand," and she gave me a very beautiful bouquet. I am not very sure that she did not learn from some quarter that my speaking and preaching were both singularly devoid of flowers, rhetorical and oratorical, and so, possibly, she intended to give me a little suggestion in the delicate and gentle womanly way in which women instinctively have the power of making suggestions and giving hints that we bigger human beings are not at all able to rival.

(150)

I shall not attempt to bring the flowers here, but I will say a word to you if you will kindly allow me, in relation to that particular province to which in various ways so many allusions are naturally made by a congress like this. I allude to the province of Ulster in the North of Ireland. I have sometimes noticed a little confusion of mind in relation to the phrase "Scotch-Irish," as if it meant that Scotch people had come over and intermarried with the native Irish, and that thus a combination of two races, two places, two nationalities had taken place. That is by no means the state of the case. On the contrary, with kindly good feeling in various directions, the Scotch people kept to the Scotch people, and they are called Scotch-Irish from purely local, geographical reasons, and not from any union of the kind that I have alluded to. I haven't the least doubt that their being in Ireland and in close contact with the native people of that land, and their circumstances there, had some influence in the developing of the character, in the broadening of the sympathies, in the extending of the range of thought and action of the Scotch-Irish people; but they are Scotch through and through, they are Scottish out and out, and they are Irish because, in the providence of God, they were sent for some generations to the land that I am permitted to speak of as the land of my birth.

Now, I have had the pleasure of going over for many years, from summer to summer, to the old world, and of course I go always to the home at which I was born. I happened to be the eldest child of the family, and so I am in possession of the modest little place on which they settled. I am one of the seventh generation after their coming over from old Scotland, and I never go over, of course, without renewing the pleasant acquaintances with the people among whom I grew up as a child and as a boy, and in whom, as a matter of course, I still feel the deepest and the liveliest interest. I was last summer, as usual, in that region, and I have thought that it would, perhaps, interest many of you if I were to say a few things to you as to the condition of the people of the province who are the blood relations of so many in this audience.

To begin with, then, let me say a word about the homes of the Ulster people. Outside the towns the people live by their farms, and I dare say some of you can remember what the character of the house was in which the Ulster farmer lived, modest in design, and frequently uncomfortable, one story high, built of earth or stone, the roof thatched, with a middle room which was called the kitchen, where the cooking went on and where the family lived a good deal of the time. At one end was the section where the sleeping apartments were, and frequently at the

other end, what was emphatically *the* room which did duty as a parlor or drawing-room, with, very frequently, a handsome mahogany table and sometimes a handsome set of mahogany drawers, in which, I am bound to say from my observation and in some measure from my experience as gentle, as genial, and as real hospitality used to be dispensed as one can find in more magnificent mansions in any part of the world. [Applause.] A great change has taken place in the matter of these homes, for many of them have been exchanged for handsome two-story houses, carefully ceiled, with modern windows, and when you enter their homes you find that carpets have taken the place of the earthen floors that used to be, with here and there musical instruments, cases of books and various other things, indicating extended culture and improved general conditions on the part of many of these people. I think that statement is true generally in relation to the whole of the portion of the province that is occupied by the Protestant people.

It is fair to say that in point of agricultural progress I have been pleased and delighted from year to year. The whole reaping used to be done with the hook, as it is sometimes called. The sickle is the proper classical word. These instruments have given place in a great degree to reaping machines, and the immense amount of work that used to be done by hand is now done by machinery. Not only is that the case, but a great change has taken place in relation to a class of houses that used to be called in my childhood "cotter houses." To a large extent they have disappeared; that element has been thinned off, and the necessity has risen, in consequence, of doing a good deal of the work that was done by hand by the aid of machinery. I never saw the province of Ulster, in the matter of the homes of the people, in the matter of the harvests, in the matter of their comforts, in apparently a more happy and prosperous condition than I have seen them in the last year and the year before.

Now as to the towns, the names of many of which are familiar to you, I think that in most of these towns there is a conspicuous progress. In many of those which some of you can recollect there is a steady progress. There is no boom; that is not the way among the Irish people, but there has been steady, diligent, regular work, and there is a greater degree of what might be called social and civil purity in the towns, that I think we can all admire, and for which the people have cause to be thankful. You go to Belfast. It is now the most important town in the province of Ulster, and probably the most important in all Ireland. In fact, it is virtually the capital now; in population it is equal to Dublin, if not ahead of it; in manufactures, in various forms

of industry in which employment is given to great numbers of people, it is a long way ahead of the nominal capital, and the statement is made that the province of Ulster, one of the four provinces of the island, is paying on an average about 46 per cent. of the taxes of the whole island. If you should have occasion to cross the ocean, as some of you doubtless will, from time to time, you will be told of beautiful and magnificent steamers, like the "Teutonic," like the "Majestic;" those steamers have been built in the docks of the city of Belfast, for it is a city now. I was taken over the docks of a great shipbuilding company in that city last summer, and I have seen the principal cities of Europe, and I have seen some cities upon this continent; but I am bound to say that I never saw anything to compare with the skill and adaptation of the docks that have been constructed there for the carrying on of the great shipbuilding work of which Belfast is now becoming an important center.

I regret to say that in parts of Ireland outside of Belfast and Ulster distilling and brewing are the most remunerative forms of the use of capital that you can find. That is all I have to say upon that particular aspect of the case.

There are some other things in which you would naturally feel some interest. Take the question of education. Many of you know that forty or fifty years ago when the average Irishman—I don't say the Scotch-Irishman—came over to this country, the most that he was supposed to be capable of doing was the work of a navvy or something else where mere hand power was needed. There has been a system of education maintained by the British Government for a generation past that has told upon the whole population to a degree, and the result is now that the average young Irishman when he comes to this country is ready to take a place in the dry goods house or some other business, or where reading and writing and arithmetic are necessary preparations for his work; but in the province of Ulster especially the cause of education is steadily and continuously advancing. There are two colleges in Belfast and a college in Londonderry that I think will compare favorably with any similar institution in almost any part of the world. Then there is a Ladies' college, now known as Victoria College. Some of the young ladies who were students of that college have been taken over to the great competitive examinations in England, and they have achieved such conspicuous success as directed the most favorable notice to the institution with which they are connected; and I am glad to say that in the civil service examinations in connection with the British Empire a great number of young men who were educated in Ireland

have been successful. The result is that they are sent to India or some other of the British colonies, and thus secure valuable and remunerative employment. One result of this is that we are getting into the United States now a smaller proportion than we used to get of the thoroughly educated and competent men, because these openings are made. The province of Ulster two or three generations ago was ahead of the other three provinces in educational matters. It is keeping that place relatively with the other three provinces, and we have the greatest reason to rejoice over the earnest and intelligent prosecution of education for the benefit of the people of that northern province.

Now perhaps it will not be out of the way if I say a word to you about another matter—namely, the Churches as we find them in the province of Ulster. I do not hesitate to speak of them, because I am one of those who believe that the strongest and the best elements in the Scotch-Irish character are due to the influences which it is the business of the Church to bring to bear upon the judgment and the consciences of the people. We will begin with the Baptist brethren. They are not at all a numerous body in Ireland, but there are some of them there, and a very good people, and it is a pleasure to me to say that they have been making much advance in proportion to their numbers, and I am sure are bearing testimony to the truth in the places where, in the providence of God, their Churches are established. The same is true of the Congregationalists and the Methodists. Then you pass to the Episcopalians. They are comparatively strong through Ulster; but they are, of course, comparatively feeble and scattered through a large proportion of the other three provinces. I am bound to say that the Episcopal Church has been keeping its ground since disestablishment. It has probably been increased in this manner, for while the laity had comparatively little to do with its operations before disestablishment, since disestablishment the laity have been called into various places in assemblies, in congresses, in conventions, and so on, and they are taking a personal and practical interest in the work of the Church, which I think they did not before; and while there are some things that I would be inclined still to criticize, I am bound to say that the Protestant Episcopal Church, as we call it, is with increasing ardor and earnestness trying to do its work in Ulster and over the other provinces of the land. Then next come the Presbyterians. Many of you perhaps do not know exactly what the statistics of the Church in Ulster and over Ireland are. Of course the great bulk of its congregations you find in the province of Ulster, but there are eight or ten congregations in Dublin, some in Cork, Kilkenny, and the other points of like kind scattered

over the other three provinces. There are altogether somewhat over six hundred Presbyterian congregations, and although the temptation to me, at a distance from a Church in which I was brought up, and which with my whole heart I truly love, is perhaps to dwell upon the virtues and shut my eyes to any defects, yet I am bound to say, and I think I say it truly and with sincerity, that for earnestness, for diligence, for consistency, for systematic and effective teaching of substantial truth to the people, there is not in Europe any body of clergy that will stand higher than the ministry of that Church, and there is not any body of people that will take a higher place in degree of intelligence, of purity, and of liberality. [Applause.]

Now perhaps I may be permitted to allude to a matter that is engaging the attention of Ulster and every other portion of Ireland. I allude to the political discussion that has been going on there many years, and to the impression on the part of many people that, should Mr. Gladstone come into power again, there will be developed a system of political policy that would be practically upon the same lines as the repeal movement that was agitated a generation ago, and that ultimately fell to the ground. I will only state to you facts upon that matter. I think to a man—I do not know of as many exceptions as the fingers upon my hand—to a man the Protestant clergy of all denominations and the Protestant people regard with the greatest fear and apprehension the steps of the movement that is expected to be carried or to be pushed if Mr. Gladstone, that distinguished statesman, should come into power. So strong is the feeling, that the people of the various denominations have leagued themselves together, not under any party name, but they have leagued themselves together to protest against such changes as have been demanded, including the Parliament in Dublin, supervision of the police, of education, of the military, etc.; and, seeing that the Nonconformists in England and Scotland, with indiscriminating love for liberty and with imperfect understanding of the case, have been taking the ground that is supposed to be Mr. Gladstone's ground, these Protestant Christians have decided to send over some hundred delegates to England and Scotland to instruct these people upon the actual facts of the case, and to make them understand that while they would approve of certain local changes, certain county reforms, certain changes in local government and administration, yet they would look upon the policy that is accredited—whether justly or unjustly it is not for me to say—to that distinguished statesman, as subversive of the real prosperity of the island and as destructive, in all probability, of their comfort and their safety as residents of the island.

[Applause.] Do not understand me as expressing convictions with a view to persuade you. My convictions are founded substantially upon the ground that they take, and, ladies and gentlemen, if you accept to be true those most eloquent statements that were made to us last night and which you applauded, regarding the prudence, the wisdom, the foresight, the sagacity, the integrity of my countrymen and the people of my race, the Scotch-Irish race—if you accept all those, then you must surely come to the conclusion that it is not without reason that this attitude of antagonism is taken to what is known commonly as the Home Rule policy. [Applause.]

This is the fourth time that I have been at this delightful Congress, and once or twice I have told some of my friends that when I am here I have had brought to mind a little story for which an English author gets the credit and the moral of which seems to be quite necessary to myself. I do not speak for anybody else. According to that little story, a bright girl was in the habit of reciting to her friends and acquaintances a long catalogue of her own virtues and personal excellencies, and she always wound up with a statement like this when she had concluded the lengthened list: "But I am not proud, for Ma says that is sinful." [Laughter.] I feel the necessity of coming to some ground like that when I come to these delightful Congresses. I hear so much of laudation, so much of hearty praise which I am bound to say is sustained by facts, and so many of these facts, I am free to say, in relation to these United States, new to me, that I do feel that there is a necessity to keep down self-complacency. [Laughter.]

I have only one word to say as I conclude, thanking you for the attention with which you have listened to me. Great numbers of our countrymen profess to have made brilliant successes in this land. Thank God that great numbers of them now are in conditions of thriftiness and of influence; but there are still numbers of them that are in comparative ignorance and comparative poverty, in need of friends, in need of loving agencies to be brought to bear upon them. Descriptions have been given me of some of these men and women and children in the valleys between the mountains over this magnificent region, where the public schools do not provide, and have not provided, adequate opportunities for teaching; where a strong, sturdy, vigorous race has grown up combating with external difficulties, but with comparatively little education, and in many instances without the means of grace. Ladies and gentlemen, there is a Latin proverb to the effect that the corruptions of the best things are the worst; and if these strong, sturdy, energetic, vigorous Scotch-Irish people are not upon the lines

of intelligence, the lines of purity, the lines of sobriety, the lines of virtue, then the very natural qualities that they possess become the greater facilities for them of going astray, and astray on a track that leads to destruction. Wherever you can hold out a loving hand to them, wherever you can send the Book and the schoolmaster to them, wherever you can send the Sunday school teacher to them, wherever you can send the minister to them, wherever you can try to bring to bear upon them the forces that made our race in the face of innumerable difficulties, do so in the love and the fear of God. They are of our blood; they are of our race; they bear our names; they have gone through hard struggles; if we can hold out to them a loving, brotherly, gentle, Christian hand and lift them up, we shall be doing good to the land; we shall be doing indescribable good to them; and we shall be honoring those who gave us the benefits and the blessings for which we are to be profoundly thankful to our Creator. [Applause.]