

BRADLAUGH.

"THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND."

Lecture in Music Hall, Last Evening, by Charles Bradlaugh, the Noted English Republican.

Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, in delivering his lecture on English Republicanism at Music Hall, last evening, was complimented with an audience which exceeded in size and equalled in character the average of such assemblies. Boston further recognized him, and assemblages, the work in which he is engaged, by the appearance of some of her most celebrated sons, who thus apparently signified their approval. The audience appeared to be in full sympathy with the speaker, and applause was liberally bestowed.

At 7 1/2 o'clock, Mr. Bradlaugh came upon the stage, accompanied by the Hon. Wendell Phillips, the Hon. Charles Sumner, the Hon. William Lloyd Garrison, the Hon. Thomas Russell, and the Rev. A. A. Miner. The speaker was introduced by Mr. Phillips, who, in doing so, spoke as follows:

I never doubted the final success of our republican experiment, but great obstacles oppose; heavy clouds hang over our horizon. If any man should ask me how we are to surmount these obstacles, I could not tell him. I believe, but I do not see. The law I cannot tell; of the result I am sure. We shall succeed. But one thing is evident; we should long ago have lost half our earnestness in this struggle but for European example. The enthusiasm of the Old World pours life into our veins. When we see the whole-souled devotion of European Republicans to civil life, and that they gladly face death on the scaffold or battle-field to get a republic, it shames, it spurs us to save the republic we have inherited. I believe that the debt which Europe owes us for '76, she is repaying in this generation; and many times. Within the last twenty years, but for this rivalry and inspiration, I should have despaired of the republic. You can imagine, then, ladies and gentlemen, with what pleasure, with what pride I welcome, tonight, one of the most eloquent, influential and devoted of European Republicans; the man whom Sir Charles Dilke said does the thinking for more minds—has more influence than any other man in England. I once heard Ralph Waldo Emerson say of a Massachusetts Senator that he knew well John Hancock and Samuel Adams of '76, but, poor man, he would not know the Hancock and the Adams of 1850 if he met them in the streets. Samuel Adams, the eloquent agitator, the most statesmanlike man God sent New England in 1776. Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce to you the Samuel Adams of 1783. After the applause subsided, Mr. Phillips, who had retired, again came forward, and added: And he asks me to say that he wishes no exception to his usual practice to-night, that if any man in the audience wishes to question him, he is more than ready to stop and add any information or explanation of what he says.

Mr. Bradlaugh, upon rising to speak, received a good round of applause. He began as follows:

I need no excuse for speaking to you upon the republican movement in England, and it would be strange indeed with a republic making itself heard in France and felt in Spain, if in England we had not some hope from movement towards it. My object, tonight, will be to put before you a view of the movement, which could hardly reach you by any other fashion. There are men to speak for England's culture, and power and welfare; there are but few who dare speak for the poor. I am here to speak for them, because I am of them. I am here with no word of endorsement which any university can give me other than that, greatest of all, whose hard labor is everything. When I speak of a republic in England, and with reference to France and Spain, it is necessary for me to tell you what I mean by republicanism. You may think that in a republican country, and in speaking to republican people, that is a work that well might be left undone. Let me forget, at this stage of my speaking, at least, that I am addressing Americans. There is not a republic in France, there is not a republic in Spain. To establish and maintain a republic it is necessary that a majority of the citizens should be ready to do their duty as well as to claim their rights. When people look to the Government to provide for their welfare, they are not republicans; republicans look out for their own welfare; the Government is a mere machine to represent the people. France is not yet fit for a republican Government, and it can never be a republic while it is governed by one man, while power is centralized in Paris, so that Paris must be looked to for everything. Spain is not fit for a republic. Republican forms are in both because monarchies have failed and broken down. Spain may give a good example, but so long as she needs a Government of force she is no republic. I have hopes that England may obtain a republic in reality before France or Spain.

We have training schools in which the people may learn to govern themselves, and so we have hopes that we may grow into a republic in place of springing into it. You can make a republic only by making a majority of the men in the country bigger than anything to be read of in the history of the world. We in England have difficulties which they have not in France or Spain. We have an agricultural population which would be a disgrace to any country in the civilized world, and we have at present in England a small landed aristocracy, who monopolize the political power and keep the mass of the people politically dead. Many of those who stand in our way, refusing the little things which we ask, will some day hear the thunder-storm of a forced movement because they will not listen to our words. There cannot be any real republic where a government exists in which one man or a few men rule the politics of the country and work it as if it were a game. France is not a republic, today. On that 4th of September, 1870, there was not even a form of words in a proclamation of a republic. The empire was gone; there was nothing to fill its place, and so the republic, so called, came in. The misfortune of a republic, as in the case of France, is that, when the country is almost ruined by a monarchical form of government, the men who spring to the front under the name of the republic have to bear the blame of the mistakes and crimes of their predecessors. But, though France is not a republic, it is coming to it. Though we read of the possibility of a Bourbon success, I do not believe it. The desire for a republic is so great that the mockery of a monarchy never again will cast France under a Bourbon. The Bourbons went down with the Bastille, and it is as nearly possible to restore it to its old place as to put Henry V. upon the throne of France.

England was never a republic, not even under Cromwell. Under him, it was more of a monarchy than it is today, for then there were feelings in connection with the Stuarts which do not exist, today, for the ruling house. Cromwell made no republic, for, when death took him away, the English people could not get a man to take his place, for Cromwells are not made every day. Cromwell tried to rule in England for the welfare of the people, to make what he considered his country grand and glorious, but it was not a republic. There is no republic in Spain. It is something that one can say, without a suspicion of flattery, that Castelar and his fellow-workers have followed the example and have been guided by the experience of the men on this platform, whose labors for the slave are known to all. Castelar may fail, but if he does he will fail gloriously. I have hopes, though, that he won't fail. If the Bourbons can be kept out of France, you need have no fear of this wretched Carlist insurrection, for it will not last long. It may be asked, What has all this to do with what you came here to speak to us about? A great deal; for two neighbors who live in an entirely different way cannot expect to get along very well together. You, who live under a republic which was won for you a hundred years ago should remember that those who fought against you then and would have laughed at and derided you if you had failed, are the very ones who are struggling against us.

The republican movement is new in England, and by that I mean that never in the history of England were there organizations throughout the whole country, clubs which hold their meetings in defiance of the country; but it is so, today. We have them everywhere; in London, in Birmingham, in Manchester, in Sheffield, in Glasgow, in Aberdeen, close to the royal residence itself, in Windsor, under the very shadow of the castle, and in the Isle of Wight, not very far from Osborne House. All hold their meetings publicly, and have no secrets. If you say we don't want to know so much about your clubs; we want to know what hold you have upon the people; to that question it is a sufficient answer that in Birmingham, on the 11th of last May, more than 5000 people met in the Town Hall, which was itself granted for the purpose by the Town Council, a resolution in favor of a republic was put, and out of all that vast throng but fifteen hands were lifted in the vote in favor of monarchy.

I will now endeavor to show that our movement is a legal one. It is neither international nor communistic. Not that I attack either, but it has nothing to do with them. When I speak of legally establishing a republic under a monarchical government, some, doubtless, will laugh. They think, to begin with, that the monarchy in England is hereditary, but there never was such a mistake made. Of the thirty-six monarchs since William the Conqueror, twenty ascended the throne by election, more or less regular, and but sixteen had any pretence of being hereditary rulers. Coming down to a comparatively recent date, we find that the convention of 1688 deprived James II. of the throne, and treating his son as if he did not exist, gave it to his family. In default of issue it was given to the present family; given by Parliament, and what Parliament gave, it can take away. In 1788, George III. was officially mad, and his son wanted to act as regent. William Pitt opposed him, and William Pitt, who was no radical, William Pitt, who was no demagogue, following the dictum of Lord Somers, which Hardinge, the Solicitor-General, and Earl Abingdon, the Marquis Lansdowne, who the Stormont, all agreed that whenever the executive hand has lost its power, the people alone, through Parliament, have the right to supply the deficiency. It is then a legal right to establish a republic, for the monarchy is an elective one. The sovereignty of the people has never been parted with, and the governing power they have a right to retake and reuse whenever good to them may be. It may be said that it is of but little consequence whether it be legal or not. But it is of great consequence, for when a movement is illegal you have to work for it in the dark, not openly.

Then, it may be said, granting the reality and the legality of the movement, what are the reasons for it? There are reasons against a monarchy in England, which are personal for the present family, and general against the entire system. The personal reason, which includes all others, is that during the 160 years in which the family has ruled, the whole work it has accomplished has been ruinous to the

people. When the ascendancy of the family began the yearly tax was £6,000,000, and, today, it is £76,000,000. In the present reign it has increased from £46,000,000 to £76,000,000. When the reigning family came into power the debt was £50,000,000; today, it is £800,000,000. Of all this £800,000,000, not one penny went for the good of the people; it is what remains of a debt of £1,000,000,000, contracted during the reign of George III.

These people are all Germans; not Grand Germans, but petty ones—the worst of all. Read the views of the greatest men of England concerning them, and so far from wondering that we want a change of government, you will wonder how they ever got and kept their hold. Look at the reign of George III. It is unnecessary to speak of the story of what began in Boston Bay. Soon after the American colonies had obtained their independence, poor France tried to struggle with a republic. Her people rose from hunger, not from reason. George then entered with a treaty, without the consent of Parliament, to furnish English money and English arms to support Louis XVI. in his endeavor to break the constitution which he had just signed. This ended, after countless breaches of faith and other disgraces, in the expenditure of £1,200,000,000. The horrors of the French revolution came from mad George III. Then there is the private immorality of the family, with a recital of which I will not insult you. Take our help apparent; his virtue, his intelligence, his ability, do not need mention. There have been taken from the poor and given to the rich, 7,000,000 acres of land. In our land, 160 families own one-half of England, one-half of Wales, more than one-half of Ireland, and four-fifths of Scotland. The condition of the agricultural laborers is sad indeed. Official reports tell you that the average wage of the laborer is about fourteen shillings a week, and the least eight shillings. In addition to this, it must be remembered that many of them are, weeks and months in the year, without earning anything. If you average, for all the year round, nine shillings or nine shillings and sixpence, you will have an average larger than the correct one. What is that for a man, with a wife and four or five or six children, to live on? They do not live; they merely exist. We are striving to break up the landed monopoly in our country. If the holders of the land will give us a little that we ask, we will wait; we want to prepare our paupers for freedom by giving them an opportunity to support themselves. If they will not consider us, then there are thousands of us who say that we cannot cross the Atlantic, and we are determined that we won't do; that we will live and work, and crumble the crown. I am aware that I am accused of speaking for a mob. Well, I do, but it is not a rough mob; it is one with a child, a wife. It is a mob, and it is ignorant because education was refused it. If I come here, it is because I want to plead with you. Not for money, not for your swords or for physical help, for a country which cannot win its own freedom is not fit to possess it. I ask for a verdict in favor of the justice of our cause.

Mr. Bradlaugh concluded thus, and was freely applauded. He came forward again, and said: Permit me now to tender, not so much to you, my thanks for the attendance you have given, but to these old and true workers who have been present and have given me encouragement in this, my pleading.

More applause followed in which calls for Senator Sumner were mingled, but those who occupied the platform retired, and the audience dispersed.