

# EXILE DE COBAIN NOW SAYING SOULS.

Expelled from the British Parliament  
After Being Charged with Terrible  
Crimes in Belfast, He Ap-  
pears in Brooklyn as  
an Exhorter.

SWEARS HE IS INNOCENT.

He Is Preparing Papers Showing That  
He Was the Victim of a Plot on  
the Part of the Irish Police,  
Whom He Had Denounced.

EITHER MARTYR OR SCOUNDREL.

After Leaving England He Went to France  
and Spain, and He Has Been in This  
City Since May—An Eloquent  
and Earnest Speaker.

In a little shabby tent in a vacant lot in South Brooklyn a revival meeting was held last evening, at which the listeners were excited by the stirring eloquence of a preacher who is either the wickedest man in America to-day or the most sinned against and most martyred on the face of the earth.

None of the little band of Methodists suspected the man's identity. To them he was a speaker of extraordinary talent who drew a score of them in



EDWARD DE COBAIN.

a strange, magnetic manner to their knees at the edge of the platform, all wrought up and some hysterical, and stirred others to rise and shout the praises of the Lord in the most fervent camp meeting fashion.

The preacher was Edward de Cobain, who for more than a year has been exiled from the United Kingdom with the foulest charge that can be made against a man hanging over his head. He was member of Parliament for Belfast, a city where he was well known and respected when at the beginning of 1891 the horrible crime was attributed to him.

He fled to the Continent, claiming that he was a victim of a police conspiracy that he could not withstand, and that there had been forged so strong a case that his innocence could not save him. He was expelled from the British House of Commons on his failure to return and face his accusers, and he is now a fugitive from justice.

Nothing definite had been heard from him. It was given out that he was in Spain or France. The offence of which he was accused was a misdemeanor and he could not be extradited. He had always been known as a man who took great interest in churches, and it was said that he was conducting revival meetings on the Continent. That he is in this country will be news to thousands who have heard of him.

HAS SPOKEN IN THIS CITY.

Mr. de Cobain is living in New York. He has addressed several meetings of Methodists in this city, he told me, but he had appeared at none in Brooklyn until last evening, when he walked into the tent at Fifty-eighth street and Third avenue, South Brooklyn.

A sort of camp and revival meeting is conducted there under the auspices of the Fourth Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church at Forty-eighth street. The ex-member of Parliament has never been in the church and has never met the pastor.

John Smith, who lives in Forty-eighth street and is a member of the church, met him at a gathering of Methodists last week, liked his style of oratory and invited him over to the tent.

About a hundred persons occupied seats under the canvas when he went in. He is a stout, tall, well built man, with a brown beard and rather distinguished bearing. He wore a long frock coat and a white slouch hat. Immediately on entering he sat down at the organ and announced a hymn which he sang in a deep voice by himself, the audience not having got warmed up sufficiently to join in. A little later they would have stood on their heads at his bidding. He sang:

I've found a friend in Jesus, He's everything to me;  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul!  
The "Lily of the Valley," in Him alone I see—  
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole;  
In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay;  
He tells me every care on him to roll;  
He's the "Lily of the Valley," the bright and morning  
Star;

He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul!  
Then he gave way to a young woman and two more hymns were sung, "Rescue for the Perishing" and "I hear Thy welcome voice." Mr. De Cobain after that called upon the congregation to devote themselves to silent prayer, and then he entered upon his discourse.

If the men and women in the tent had known to whom they were listening the proceedings would have had twenty times the interest to them, the vacant seats would have been filled and the standing room all occupied.

ASSOCIATE OF SALISBURY.

Mr. De Cobain, as the conservative member for Belfast, was known all over Ireland and England. In eloquent language he took the side of the workingman. He was what is known as a democratic conservative. His position made him the associate of Lord Salisbury and put him hand in glove with many of England's most celebrated men.

The police force of Ireland never liked him, and after the riots of 1876 he dubbed them murderers and proved, as he fully believed, that they had been guilty of assassination, so much so that coroners' juries in Belfast returned verdicts of wilful murder against them. This, he says, earned for him the undying enmity of the entire force, and when a warrant was sworn out for his arrest, based on the affidavit of a young man and backed up by the evidence of others, which he says was purchased, he was convinced that the whole thing was what some people in this country would call a "put up job."

There was no trace upon his face, as he pleaded earnestly with the little gathering to turn from their sinful lives, of the misery that one would expect to see after the charges of awful sins that had been made against him. He was smooth spoken, easy in manner and apparently in mind.

AS HE WAS REGARDED.

One would never have taken him for the man of whom "A Member of Parliament," in his cable letter to the HERALD, said, on February 23, 1891:—

Mr. De Cobain's case lacked nothing to make it detestable in the eyes of mankind. Revolting in itself, he made it worse by the dreadful religious hypocrisy he associated with it. His victims were attendant at a

Bible class, and the scoundrel himself never failed to be present at the private prayer meeting which was sometimes held in the Houses of Parliament.

And again on another occasion:—

As for the other fugitive, De Cobain, I repeat that he will never dare to show his face in this country again. About his guilt there can be no doubt and there is a strong feeling on the conservative side of the House of Commons that active steps should be taken to clear the party of all suspicion of an endeavor to shield him from justice.

Mr. De Cobain was supported for a long time by the local electors of Belfast, until his failure to return made it hopeless to fight his case. To a committee that wrote to him in Spain urging him to come back he replied:—

"I do not feel that the Lord points out to me as the path of my duty that I should meet my accusers at this time and imperil my life and liberty by swearing against a large number of perjured ruffians. God's guidance does not require that I should make such a sacrifice."

HIS EXHORTATIONS.

Mr. De Cobain's voice rose louder as he proceeded with his sermon:—

"Christ will save you from your sins," he said.

"That does not mean that he will save you from half your sins or two-thirds. He says 'From your sins,' and that means all your sins. The blessed Lord asks you to meet Him to-night. How many of you will shake hands with God before you go to bed? I want to know if some of you won't come up here and kneel down in front of the platform and say a few words of prayer. Brother Smith says there is no altar rail, but how good it feels to kneel in the straw and praise His name."

An old lady went down from the platform and, kneeling devoutly, lifted up her voice.

"Now I want some more," cried Mr. De Cobain, beckoning encouragingly, and presently the space before the platform was crowded. There were loud cries of "Glory to God!" and "Hallelujah!" When the space was filled with people kneeling on the straw he called on the rest to kneel at their places. When they had done so he left the platform and visited those near him. Putting his hand on their shoulders he would ask, "Do you trust Him, brother?" and when the answer was in the affirmative the rest broke out into a chorus of praise.

The kneelers returned to their seats presently, and then Mr. De Cobain called upon the congregation to tell what the Lord had done for them, and many did so in a few impassioned words. An old farmer from Long Island City said that it was not hard to lead a Godlike life there.

"I own several farms," he said. "Thank the Lord. Hallelujah! Some people say it is hard to live a Christlike life, I find it easy."

"Praise His name," cried the people.

"When I buy land," the farmer went on, "I first look to see if there is any mortgage on it. That's just like the Lord. He looks to see if your soul is encumbered. If the devil has a lien on it you are lost."

AN OATH OF INNOCENCE.

The hymn "Nearer My God to Thee" closed the services. Thereupon I introduced myself to Mr. De Cobain, and we travelled toward New York together by way of the Thirty-ninth street ferry.

"It's an awful thing," he said, as he looked at the lights of what to him is a strange city. "It's an awful thing to feel one's self three thousand miles away from home with so black a charge hanging over one's head."

"You do not know me nor I you, but I swear to you before my Maker that I am innocent of the crimes with which I am charged. I am preparing papers to prove my case, and I think I can absolutely demonstrate my innocence. The fact can be shown that both the men who made the affidavits were in the pay of the Belfast police, one of them receiving a stipend of thirty shillings a week and the other being promised £100 on my conviction."

"The Irish police are the tools of the Ministry in power. My position in Parliament was wanted by a rich man who thought he would like the prestige of it. I have a letter from him offering to pay my expenses if I would retire in his favor. The aristocrat element of Belfast did not like my independence or my friendliness for the workingmen. Out of this and the enmity of the police force grew the most devilish plot that was ever concocted. I will show the papers in the case to the HERALD, which I have always been taught is the greatest paper in this hemisphere, and I am sure they will be sufficient to acquit me in the eyes of the American people."

CAME HERE LAST MAY.

"After my retirement from England I went to France and Spain. I did not hold many meetings in those countries, the difference in language being an almost insuperable difficulty. I came to America last May."

"Do you intend to return to England to prove your innocence?"

"Not yet. I am working with my friends and lawyers, and I am taking their advice. Copies of the declarations have been sent to London, and we hope to reopen the case in Parliament. One of the most distinguished New York lawyers with whom I have consulted says that he feels like putting all the papers in his gripsack and going to England to make a fight, and he thinks he can show that the whole thing was a plot. He is away in the country now and I am awaiting his return."

Mr. De Cobain is a most entertaining talker with a remarkable flow of language. He said that he had made no efforts to conceal his presence in this country and none to announce it.